



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

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Fall 2003

Dear Friend,

Thank you for coming forward to say, "I want to serve the people of God in the Church of Baltimore." We are blessed to have the gifts and talents of so many placed at the service of the community. May you find your efforts rewarding and a service of true blessing!

As an Archdiocese, we are committed to providing a safe environment for all people, particularly our children and youth. Children and youth are vulnerable, and in an effort to provide for their safety, we are undertaking a significant effort. We have enacted a policy that requires all volunteers to complete an *Application for Volunteer Service* including receiving and reviewing the *Statement of Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth* and the *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel in the Archdiocese of Baltimore*.

We, like other youth serving agencies, have moved to a process of screening volunteers who have substantial contact with children and youth. The Boy Scouts of America, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and Little League Baseball have all found screening to be a valuable tool in meeting the goal of providing a safe environment. While some may have difficulty understanding why this is a necessary intrusion, most parents are grateful to know that we are doing our best to provide a safe environment. Those of you who are expected to have substantial contact with children are required to complete an *Application for Volunteer Service*, provide three references, complete a *Volunteer Criminal History Screening Consent form*, and attend training regarding child abuse and the protection of children, including viewing the STAND video.

The information we receive is of a sensitive nature, and we will maintain that information in a confidential and secure way. Our Information Technology staff has assured me that the volunteer criminal history screening service we have chosen utilizes the same secure methods used in banking and other businesses with highly sensitive information.

Thank you for your commitment to our children and youth. This commitment is expressed in your "yes" when asked if you would serve. It is further expressed in your willingness to participate in the screening process, and advancing efforts to provide a safe environment. May God bless you abundantly!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Baltimore