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WORKING
TOGETHER
TO PREVENT
SEXUAL
VIOLENCE

Immediate release

PCAR, NSVRC respond to verdict in Sandusky trial

HARRISBURG—The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center is pleased that jury members have found Jerry Sandusky guilty on 45 of 48 counts of child sexual abuse. It is a verdict that we believe is just.

We thank the prosecutors for their diligence in seeking justice, and also the many members of the press who provided thorough coverage without printing the names of the victims in this case.

PCAR commends the victims who courageously testified and told their painful stories after years of harboring the burden of Sandusky's abuse. Their testimony will ensure that Sandusky will not harm another child.

However, justice in the criminal courtroom does not mean that the healing process for Sandusky's victims is complete. Far from it. A conviction does not heal the pain of sexual abuse.

Survivors must manage the impact of the abuse throughout their lifetime. Some move beyond it, while others struggle.

We urge community members to continue to support not only the victims of Sandusky who have come forward, but all survivors of sexual abuse. We urge you to believe your son or daughter or friend when they speak of abuse. And we urge you to trust your gut if you believe an adult may be harming a child.

Throughout this trial, we heard stories of how a powerful and often admired former football coach used his position to "groom" his victims with attention, a family environment, and gifts like trips to bowl games and access to Penn State players.

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We heard many instances where Sandusky's suspicious behavior raised red flags among bystanders who chose to disregard his actions and their own sixth sense that there was a problem. They wanted to believe the façade Jerry Sandusky created to hide his crimes. They did not want to think he could commit such egregious acts.

But he could. And he did.

His actions are not unique. They are common practices among people who sexually abuse.

This trial garnered national and international attention because of the notoriety of Penn State football and Sandusky's legacy as a championship coach. But there are children being abused by adults throughout Pennsylvania and the country, and they deserve the same level of outrage.

We hope that the national outcry to this case empowers others to come forward and pursue their own paths to healing and justice. We also hope this case serves as a catalyst for parents, relatives, friends and others to learn to recognize and respond to offender behaviors, and to report suspected abuse.

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