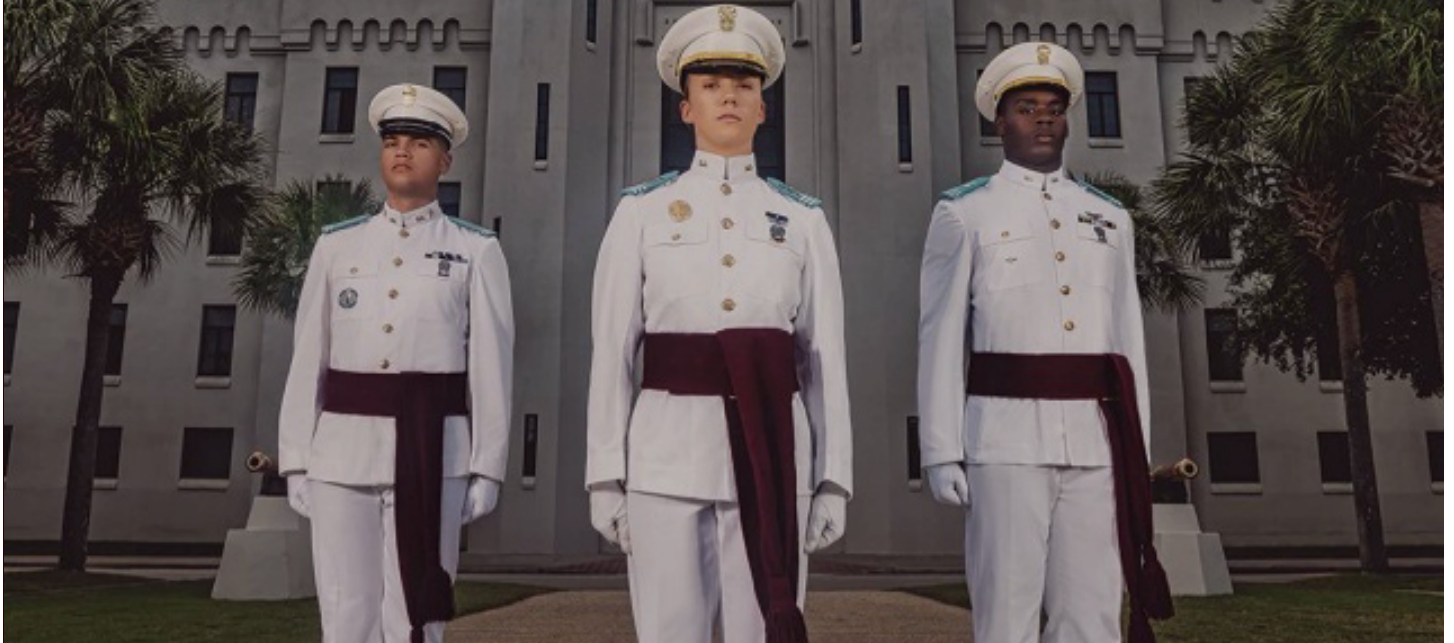


# THE CITADEL



**THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF SOUTH CAROLINA:**

**SETTING A NEW STANDARD FOR  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

**2020 CHILD PROTECTION CASE STUDY**

**20** DARKNESS TO LIGHT®  
YEARS TWO DECADES OF PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

How and why does a college become a model for the nation in the prevention of child sexual abuse? Just look to The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina.

**“The Citadel has a duty to maintain a secure environment for our cadets, students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Our partnership with Darkness to Light illustrates our commitment to keeping our campus safe.”**

**– General Glenn Walters, USMC (Ret) '79, Director of Executive Operations.**

This philosophy propelled The Citadel to become the first college in the nation to establish ongoing child sexual abuse prevention and intervention training for all students, faculty, and staff. They serve as a model for colleges around the nation.

## THE CHALLENGE

Most college campuses host thousands of children on campus each summer, and many conduct camps of various types. During the school year, students interact with children in the community by interning and volunteering at local businesses, non-profits, and government agencies. Therefore, it is common that students, faculty, and employees of a college interact with children. How does a college or university lessen the risk of sexual abuse for children associated with these programs? How does a college or university meet its responsibilities for creating safe environments and ensuring proper reporting?

The answer is clear. Policies, procedures, and training to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse for all college

faculty, employees, and students is necessary to foster a culture of child safeguarding.

## A LONG HISTORY

The Citadel first recognized the importance of child safety and protection before other academic institutions. In 2006, The Citadel School of Education was the first in the nation to incorporate Darkness to Light's *Stewards of Children*® child sexual abuse prevention training as part of its curriculum and to make it a graduation requirement for both undergraduate and graduate students in its teacher education, counseling, literacy education, and educational leadership programs. The *Stewards of Children*® training was also offered within the college's psychology program.

## A NEW STANDARD

Clearly, the Citadel saw an opportunity to create a new standard for child protection on college campuses and in college programs. The Citadel became the first college or university in the nation to make child sexual abuse prevention training mandatory for all students, faculty, and employees.

The Citadel chose to use Darkness to Light's *Stewards of Children*®

**“The Citadel has the challenge and opportunity to set a new standard within our community. This partnership with Darkness to Light demonstrates our commitment to serving as an example to others and making The Citadel a safe place to live, learn, work, and visit.”**

**– Lt. General John W. Rosa, Citadel President, 2012**



child sexual abuse prevention training because of its wide base of evidence, ease of delivery, specificity, and empowering message.

Dr. Stephenie Hewett, associate professor in the Citadel School of Education, was tasked with leading the training initiative at The Citadel. In 2012 and early 2013, she oversaw the training of 3,650 individuals who live and work on The Citadel campus, using the *Stewards of Children*<sup>®</sup> program. A new protocol was developed which required training for new hires and incoming students. It also mandated re-training for faculty and employees.

**“At first, some faculty and employees did not want to participate because they did not interact with children in their jobs. However, after taking the *Stewards of Children*<sup>®</sup> training, most were amazed at how useful and empowering it was.”**

**– Dr. Stephanie Hewett**

In addition to its model training program and regimen, The Citadel went one step further in ensuring ongoing success. The college created the position of Chief Protection Officer in the Office of Institutional Compliance to oversee compliance with reporting laws and college policies.

## THE RESULT

The ongoing Citadel initiative has proven to be both effective and manageable over the long-term. The Citadel has become Darkness to Light's largest *Partner in Prevention*, an annual distinction awarded to organizations that implement safety policies, conduct background checks on youth-serving employees and volunteers, and train 90%



or more of employees to in *Stewards of Children*®.

The Citadel offers the *Stewards of Children*® training in both online and in-person, facilitator-led formats. The Corps of Cadets (resident students) and most faculty are trained with the in-person format, while most of the students in the evening and graduate program use the online version. The Citadel has 20 active facilitators, most of whom are faculty members and employees, although there are also cadet facilitators. To date, the Citadel has provided training and re-training for more than 7,000 students, faculty, and employees.

The impact of the *Stewards of Children*® training program, particularly on Citadel Cadets, has been tremendous. In a recent study, 75% of Citadel Cadets demonstrated a significant increase in knowledge after completing the program.

Even more impressive is the attitude and behavior change in those that complete the program. Participants agreed that the training program is effective in teaching adults about sexual abuse with a score of 8.97 out of 10. More importantly, there were significant increases in child-protective behavior changes after taking the *Stewards of Children*® program, evidenced at both a 2-month and 6-month follow-up.

**“Not only is the implementation of a campus-wide sexual abuse prevention training initiative cost-effective and manageable, it is effective in creating an environment that is empowered to prevent and intervene properly in child sexual abuse, helping to keep all of their young visitors safe. That is priceless and helps keep kids safe.”**

**Katelyn Brewer, President & CEO of Darkness to Light**