



# PRESS RELEASE



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**May 14, 2019**

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## **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVOR CALLS ON SALVATION ARMY TO RELEASE PREDATOR NAMES.**

**Manhattan, New York** – Nicole Sprout, a BLANK year-old mother of two, and her attorneys held a news conference in front of the Salvation Army Headquarters in downtown New York to demand transparency by that organization on the issue of child sexual abuse.

Ms. Sprout said, “Sexual abuse leaves a mark of shame on the abused as it did for me. Despite years of counseling, I was left with a feeling of inadequacy, eating disorders), relationship difficulties, abandonment at the age of 16, and so much more. My greatest fear during the abuse was losing the family that had taken me in. I loved the Salvation Army and all that it represents. I trusted them as the church I grew up in but felt incredibly betrayed when the leaders I once admired did nothing to hold my abuser accountable. It's broken my heart to walk away from an organization that I love but that held too many painful memories.”

“I call upon the Salvation Army to release the names of all officials and employees credibly accused of child sexual abuse to district attorneys and attorneys general throughout the United States. And I strongly encourage these law enforcement officials to act immediately to investigate this organization and shed light on its history of covering the crimes of sexual predators,” said Ms. Sprout

Ms. Sprout alleges sexual abuse by Gary Crowell, a commanding officer at the East Northport Corps. of the Salvation Army beginning at age 13.

Nicole Sprout’s mother introduced her to the Salvation Army when she was a young child. Her mom received help from them after her father left the family and she was a single mom struggling to raise her two kids.

Gary Crowell and his wife Carol Beth were the commanding officers at East Northport Corps. Ms. Sprout formed a relationship with them, babysitting for their two young children. By the age of 10 or 11 she was often sleeping over at their house. It is alleged that Gary Crowell began to groom Ms. Sprout at age 11 or 12 engaging in horseplay which progressed to inappropriate touching of her private areas.

Nicole's mother continued to struggle depression and financial problems and eventually signed and agreement to have the Crowells care for Nicole as her legal guardians. Shortly thereafter, it is alleged that Gary Crowell began to make sexual advances towards her. By the age of 13 through 15 Gary Crowell engaged in full sexual contact and intercourse with Nicole.

More than 20 years later, Gary Crowell contacted Nicole on Facebook and apologized for his abuse. In his apology he admitted that he had disclosed his abuse to higher ranking officials within the Salvation Army. He was removed from his ministry, but these officials did not report him or his child sexual abuse to authorities as required by law.

Crowell's apology stated in part: "I will say it again, so that there is no mistaking it. I am so sorry. I take full responsibility for my actions, and have for a very long time. I recall, like it happened yesterday, the night I sat in my living room and had to put into writing with Col. Pigford, NOT BASSETT, the very awful things I had done and had to accept what I had done. I was a horrible person, I am NOT now, I behaved horribly, I do NOT now. I know the pain I caused everyone then, mostly you and CB. My ministry was terminated as a result of that. We had to uproot, and start over, something I have never explained to anyone. This is in no way meant to make you feel bad for me. I fully understand from all you have said that you have suffered and I am so very sorry for that."

Carol Beth is still working with children, supervising the youth program at the Salvation Army facility at Old Orchard Beach, Maine.

Attorney Sarah Klein, working with Ms. Sprout, said, "It is clear from the information provided to us by our client and the admissions by her abuser that her abuse was known by others in the hierarchy of the Salvation Army. They did nothing to stop it and they did nothing to hold her abuser accountable. In fact, they continue to allow him to participate in Salvation Army religious services and other activities where he has access to children. We plan to file suit against the organization as soon permitted by New York new Child Victims Act."

Salvation Army organizations throughout the United States and the world have been investigated, sued and settled claims for hiding child sexual abuse.

In 2016 The Guardian Newspaper reported that widespread child sexual abuse in Salvation Army homes throughout Australia often went unreported because the victims didn't think they would be believed. A Royal Commission investigation on abuse found evidence that thirteen former residents of Salvation Army homes suffered shocking instances of physical and sexual abuse. One man reported that he was abused at least 200 times beginning when he was just seven years old.

The Salvation Army confirmed that they reached settlements with 418 alleged victims in Australia between 1995 and 2014.

Years earlier the Salvation Army in Los Angeles was criticized by police and prosecutors for putting up \$2000 in bail for a former commander who had been convicted of molesting girls at the organizations Burbank headquarters.

In addition, the organization hired a private detective to help prepare the offenders trial defense and provided money for his attorney's fees. The girls were between 11 and 16 years old at the time of their abuse.

Victims attorney John Manly said, "Because of recent actions by state attorneys general, we now have much more information about clergy abusers in the Catholic church. However, there have been allegations of sexual abuse by pastors, teachers and coaches working within the Salvation Army for decades. Yet the names of those credibly accused of sexual misconduct have never been made public and they should."

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[Manly, Stewart & Finaldi](#) is California's leading law firm representing child victims of sexual abuse. The firm has represented more than 150 victims of clergy sexual abuse in California and hundreds of others throughout the United States. The firm also represented plaintiffs in the \$140,000,000 settlement against LAUSD in the Miramonte case, the largest sex abuse settlement against a School District in the US. The firm currently represents more than 180 alleged victims of former Michigan State University and U.S. Women's Gymnastics Olympic Team doctor Larry Nassar. Michigan State University has settled this case for \$500,000,000, this is the largest settlement of any personal injury case against a University.

[Dalton Law Firm](#) is a Delaware based law firm representing victims of child abuse, medical malpractice and automobile accidents. Founding partner Bart Dalton is a former Delaware Deputy Attorney General and past president of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Mr. Dalton holds the largest Medical Malpractice and automobile accident verdicts in the history of Delaware.