

# S.T.O.P. Debuts with Author Erin Dolgan

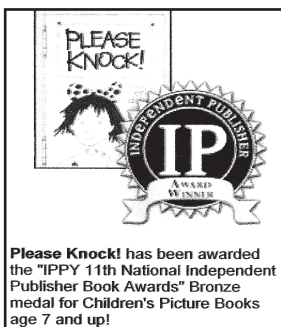


## Erin Dolgan, M.A., LPC addresses the subject of Child Predators at lecture in Thurmont

by Vickie Grinder

For those of you who did not attend the debut of S.T.O.P., I have one comment to make; you missed out! The Thurmont Times has brought you the introduction of S.T.O.P. (Speak up and Tell On Predators) through a series of articles over the last several months. The program was originated by Charline Zalewski a local resident of Thurmont and a victim herself. Mrs. Zalewski and the Thurmont Police Department have joined forces to introduce S.T.O.P. via a threefold process. The first premier of S.T.O.P. was kicked off September 12th at the Thurmont Regional Library with an educational adult lecture by child predator expert Erin Dolgan M.A., LPC. Charline Zalewski contacted Ms. Dolgan to assist her with S.T.O.P. for proper accreditation to the child awareness program. In addition, Charline arranged for Ms. Dolgan to visit Thurmont to address the issues of child pedophilia and the characteristics of these disgusting offenders. First, I must back pedal to April. Prior to meeting Mrs. Zalewski earlier this year, I had no idea of the cases reported locally and nationally. What I learned which was even more alarming, the cases which are not reported and the relative danger concept which currently serves as the common denominator in ninety seven percent of all cases. I was introduced to the statistics via Charline through Erin Dolgan's website [relativedanger.com](http://relativedanger.com). The statistic is black, white and documented. Ninety seven percent of all children sexually victimized-the child knew. Again, ninety seven percent of child predator cases the victim knew. Unbelievable? You bet! But the statistic is just the tip of the iceberg. I attended Erin Dolgan M.A., LPC lecture and was completely captivated for the next one hour and half by Ms. Dolgan's presentation. Ms. Dolgan has worked with victims and parents of child predators, and decided it was time to make a difference for these victims. Not just listen and counsel these families; but to challenge the awareness and work with authorities for stricter sentences for these offenders. Erin interviews predators on the street, in prison and on probation where she makes evaluations for the court. Trying to establish behavioral patterns and monitoring these menaces to society has led to convictions, longer probations and the conception of her book "Please Knock." Ms. Dolgan opened the lecture explaining the target demographic groups for which she counsels. Groups which have been no stranger to any of the children violated, but in fact a friend or family member of the victimized child. Remember the ninety- seven percent rule? Relative danger is the socioeconomic portion of this equation. "They are not gross looking or what you would visualize as a child predator" says Dolgan, "but quite the opposite." Dolgan goes on to say, "They have money, they are educated and pillars in the community, workplace and other organizations." Ms. Dolgan further explained her frustration with battling these creeps in court. "We are not aware of the threat which lurks around us and the laws protect the predator not the victims." She further states, "I have interviewed individuals who have violated children repeatedly and never served one hour in jail or any type probation." Dolgan firmly attested the laws are not going to change which is to blame for a portion of the problem. "I think most of us have seen this evidence just by listening to the news." So what is the other side of the equation for these offenders and how do they get so close to children? Opportunity and access says Dolgan. With relative danger both are conductors for unsuspecting children who fall prey to these familiar faces. So how do you combat these unsuspecting predators before they strike? Dolgan believes that piece is awareness from a very early

age. "We make sure our daycares and schools have fire drills to prepare the children in the event of a fire, and how many schools burn down with the children in it? We know the answer-because the children are prepared and aware from an early age. Educating children on predators should be treated no differently" said Dolgan. Erin's book, Please Knock is that fire drill. The publication is full of poems, illustrations for empowerment and personal body safety which is appropriate for children of any age in a non-offending fun text. Please Knock breaks the barrier for anyone raising a child by identifying potential problems from an early age without instilling any fear for the child. Dolgan said you cannot talk to your child about terrible things which as adults we cannot begin to even imagine. "But after we cannot just cross our fingers and hope it doesn't happen to my child." Children and parents have to have not only a defense but an offense as well. Please Knock teaches in proximity examples of the parameters set from an early age.



Please Knock! has been awarded the "IPY 11th National Independent Publisher Book Awards" Bronze medal for Children's Picture Books age 7 and up!

An example Dolgan gave is the word "secret." Dolgan is passionate about this philosophy, "We teach our children from an early age the word secret. Don't tell daddy what we got him for his birthday, it's a secret." Remember opportunity and access? Add the word secret to that equation and you have your components for relative danger! These sick individuals use this word after the abuse has been committed. "Don't tell anyone, it will be our secret," Dolgan says. She suggests using the word surprise from an early age with children; this is one strike against a predator. Ms. Dolgan throughout her lecture repeatedly drove home the point of relative danger, "The person you least suspect is usually the culprit." She also explained to the group about the three A's as your first step to becoming proactive about child predators; "Admit there is a potential risk, Acceptance that such a risk does exist and Apply which is what you are going to do." Dolgan introduced an older philosophy by some psychologists which teaches children the bathing suit concept. This concept teaches the child at an early age that no one should touch them where their bathing suit covers their body. Dolgan says "This philosophy does not work simply because once the child has been touched in those areas it is too late. They must be taught from an early age that touching on their arm or head is inappropriate if the child does not want that gesture even if it is innocent." Erin Dolgan, M.A., LPC is passionate about victims and their families of child predators and advocates for stronger sentences and treatments for these offenders but most importantly, make sure they never harm another child. Ms. Dolgan advocates awareness via Please Knock and has made appearances on several television shows. Erin's lecture exposed a "secret" or closet conversation facts which have been ignored for years, but more importantly how to combat this societal problem in a positive manner while also understanding what drives this horrid vehicle to the point of no return. Thank you Erin Dolgan for an informative workshop and Charline Zalewski for brining Ms. Dolgan from Denver for this lecture! Mrs. Zalewski and friends were on hand for Police Night out on September 26, at the Thurmont Police Department handing out the S.T.O.P. program brochures, which was the second exposure to S.T.O.P. I had the opportunity to interview Ms. Erin Dolgan on statistics and characteristics of these predators with eye opener answers. Please look for Erin's interview with me next month on pertinent questions everyone should know about child predators. If you missed the lecture, you won't want to miss this interview. For questions or to get and information on S.T.O.P. please email Charline at [stopcsa@verizon.net](mailto:stopcsa@verizon.net)