

## Donna Rice Hughes *Biography*



Donna Rice Hughes has more than twenty-eight years of progressive leadership expertise as a Social Entrepreneur, Internet Safety Expert, Author, Speaker, Educator, Media Commentator, Communications and Marketing Strategist, Child Advocate, Filmmaker/Producer, and Thought Leader. She serves as CEO and President of Enough Is Enough® (EIE), a national, non-partisan, secular, non-profit organization that pioneered and has led the fight since 1994 to make the Internet safer for children and families. She was a key figure in birthing the Internet safety movement nationally in 1995, including a historic leadership event hosted by EIE on Capitol Hill, with Congressional leaders, national media, and community leaders. Subsequently, Ms. Hughes immediately became the national voice and face for the prevention of Internet-initiated sexual exploitation of children. Her recent Ted Talk, launched in 2022, **“Imagine what a safer Internet could look like if we all do our part”** challenged Big Tech, Big Government and Big Porn to do their part to protect the innocence and dignity of children in the digital world.

During an era in which imminent dangers emerging from the Internet were widely unknown, she had the foresight to develop preventative efforts to keep children safe online; all of those tenets are still in place today. She initiated a 3-pronged strategy adopted by industry and governments worldwide that included the public, the technology industry and legal community in sharing responsibility to protect children online from pornography, child pornography and sexual predators.

It was during that same era that Ms. Hughes advocated for key bi-partisan legislation to protect children from Internet pornography, sexual predators and other dangers including the Communications Decency Act, Child Online Protection Act, Children’s Internet Protection Act, and the Child Pornography Prevention Act. Concurrently, she led the development of the ISP Code of Ethical Conduct Proposal that called on Internet service providers to adopt a voluntary default filtering standard (introduced at the Children's Online Summit in 1997, where she served on the Executive Committee). At the Summit, she also led the adoption of a “Zero Tolerance Policy” of online child pornography which was endorsed by the White House and Department of Justice. In 2013, Great Britain's Prime Minister, David Cameron, successfully initiated a similar model which has resulted in a safer Internet experience for children and families in the U.K.

Ms. Hughes is regularly sought out by the media, educators, Congress, policy makers, law enforcement officials, and industry leaders for solutions to combat online pornography, child pornography, sexual predation, commercial child sexual exploitation, sex trafficking and cyberbullying. She continues to develop national communications, marketing, public relations, media, and social media strategies to support EIE’s programs and initiatives.

In 2007, under her leadership and vision, EIE, in partnership with Congress and the U.S. Department of Justice, developed The Internet Safety 101® Program. It was the first comprehensive curriculum designed to educate, equip, and empower parents, educators, and caregivers to protect youth from

pornography, sexual predators, traffickers and cyberbullies, and to keep them safe on social networking sites, gaming, and mobile devices. The Program was lauded by the PTA as “*a tailor-made response to the Internet child safety crisis facing our nation.*”

Ms. Hughes served as the Executive Producer and Host of the Internet Safety 101® DVD series (winner of 3 Telly Awards). She negotiated with Verizon Foundation and PBS to reformat the DVD series into a three-part television series, which ran on PBS stations, nationally, and Comcast stations, regionally. The program won an Emmy award, and Ms. Hughes was nominated for an Emmy as the show’s host.

For more than two decades, she has worked to get law enforcement and federal and state governments to aggressively enforce existing federal laws designed to protect kids from pornography, child pornography, sexual predators, and traffickers, through vehicles that include the national media, social media, petition campaigns, Congressional testimony, and the Children’s Internet Safety Presidential Pledge.

Ms. Hughes has worked in partnership with multiple Internet industry giants to improve upon corporate best practices, policies, and safety technology. She was instrumental in Google’s decision to change their corporate policies in the spring of 2014 to proactively eliminate all pornography and links to pornography on Google Ads and Apps. Additionally, she persuaded Microsoft to set Bing’s search engine to automatically filter illegal and objectionable content by turning on the safe search feature as the default. EIE’s Internet safety resources are available on industry websites such as Microsoft, Verizon, and Google.

Her pioneering efforts have continued with the launch of multiple campaigns and initiatives in recent years designed to preserve and defend child dignity in the digital world, including:

- **The National Safe WiFi Campaign** calling on Corporate America to filter pornography and child pornography on public WiFi, which resulted in McDonald’s filtering WiFi in the majority of its 14,000 stores, nationwide, Starbuck’s filtering in its 9,000 company-owned locations (and plans to develop a global policy), and Subway filtering in its company-owned stores.
- **The Children’s Internet Safety Presidential Pledge** signed by candidate Donald J. Trump and agreed to by candidate Hillary Clinton to enforce the existing federal obscenity, child pornography, sexual predation, and child trafficking laws and advance public policies to prevent the sexual exploitation of children online. This is the first time in history a U.S. President has pledged to make the safety of children in the digital world a top priority.
- **The Children’s Internet Safety Governor’s Pledge and First Lady’s Initiative** prioritizes the prevention of sexual exploitation and trafficking of children in the digital world. S.C. Gov. Henry McMaster signed the first-ever “Children’s Internet Safety Governor’s Pledge,” developed in partnership with EIE and modeled after the Presidential Pledge. The Pledge was signed at a June 19, 2019 press conference attended by the First Lady, law enforcement, the S.C. AG’s office, and S.C. congressional members. In 2020, Mrs. McMaster launched the First Lady’s Commission on Human Trafficking, a key recommendation by EIE’s President.
- **EIE’s bi-partisan State Attorneys General Pledge** in partnership with AG Wilson (R -S.C.) and AG Racine (D -D.C.) led to a bi-partisan coalition of 14 AG’s pledging their dedication to enforce state laws and advance new policy and federal action to prevent the sexual

exploitation of children.

- **Project Wilberforce Campaigns**, modeled after English social reformer William Wilberforce who devoted his life to abolishing social evils and promoting social good, include initiatives designed to end the Internet-enabled exploitation of children, foster a kinder and safer Internet, and to restore a culture of dignity and respect. • **Public Health Pornography Pandemic Campaign**, in partnership with coalition partners, ignited a national movement to shed light on the social costs and corroding influence of Internet pornography as a public health pandemic. As a result, more than 10 states have since passed or proposed resolutions declaring Internet pornography a public health crisis.
- **The High Road Campaign**, which includes the innovative **Random Posts of Kindness and Sweet Tweets** programs, is designed to confront the global epidemic of hate and cyberbullying by promoting civility, common decency, and kindness. Throughout this effort, Ms. Hughes calls on citizens to “stand together and focus on what unites us and not on what divides us...to build the bridges of reconciliation...take the High Road...and join together to protect children online.” The campaign’s efforts included Ms. Hughes’ C-SPAN hour-long interview and her op-ed on CNN.com in support of Melania Trump’s cyberbullying platform, which had one million readers and 850 comments in the first 24 hours.
- **Recovering Hearts Program** for churches and faith-based communities that incorporates a holistic strategy promoting healthy sexuality and genuine intimacy and to prevent sexual exploitation of children, women, and men by incorporating prevention education, healing/recovery programs and victims’ assistance support.

Ms. Hughes served as one of 150 world leaders to participate in the invitation-only World Congress on “Child Dignity in the Digital World” in Rome, which concluded with a Papal audience and the presentation of “The Declaration of Rome” to Pope Francis. She was successful in getting key initiatives included in the World Congress’s Global Strategic Plan to protect children in today’s digital era, and currently serves as a Committee Chairperson of the Congress’s global strategic efforts.

## **MEDIA INTERVIEWS/PUBLISHING/PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Ms. Hughes’ earned media interviews in both the secular and Faith-based media have reached hundreds of millions of households since 1995. (See Donna Rice Hughes’ Press Kit and Enough Is Enough’s Media Center). Positioned as a subject matter expert on issues surrounding the protecting children online, she has been the ‘go to’ expert for national media outlets, having given more than 3,500 media interviews. She has been featured or quoted in most major news outlets for her pioneering work including:

**Secular:** The Today Show, Good Morning America, FOX News shows, CNN, Headline News, CBS News, ABC News, The O’Reilly Factor, Guest on The Oprah Winfrey Show (“Oprah”), Dateline, MSNBC, Associated Press, Reuters, C-SPAN, BBC, The Washingtonian, New York Post, The Washington Post, USA Today, McCalls, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report, People Magazine, Time Magazine, PBS, World Net Daily, Wired Magazine and Parenting Magazine; LA Times, Wall

Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, New York Post, San Francisco Chronicle, Atlanta Constitution, Chicago Tribune, Boston Globe, Politico, Daily Beast, and in local and national radio stations, podcasts, webinars and other Internet-based programming. Donna has been interviewed by Barbara Walters five times, including 20/20, The View and Barbara Walters Presents.

**Faith-Based/Christian:** Focus on the Family, Family Life Today, TBN Praise the Lord, CBN News, 700 Club, EWTN Catholic Television, Christian Post, Baptist Press, and Christian radio stations nationwide.

**Featured Profiles:** People Magazine, McCalls, Washington Times, San Francisco Chronicle, USA Today, World Magazine, Today's Christian Woman, Star Telegram, Oprah, 20/20, Barbara Walters Presents, LA Times, Washingtonian, Washington Post, Life Magazine, Salon Magazine.

**Books and Book chapters chronicling portions of Donna's story:** Ordinary Miracles, Inside People/The Stories Behind the Stories, Don't Shoot the Messenger, AOL.COM: The History of AOL, All The Truth Is Out, What It Takes, Lamp Unto My Feet.

## **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Donna has delivered more than 400 speeches and/or training seminars, including a recent Ted Talk, since 1994. She has spoken extensively on the subject of Internet dangers, safety, and cybersecurity in educational, professional forums to parents, educators, media, churches, technology companies, policy makers, and law enforcement agencies in communities across the country, including:

Keynotes at The White House, University of Houston Law School, MIT, Johns Hopkins University, the Media Institute, The Freedom Forum, Newseum, Department of Justice, Department of Defense, Department of State, Federal Food and Drug Administration, Willow Creek Church, Second Baptist Church of Houston, McLean Bible Church, The National Salvation Army, PTA National Conference, National Set Free Summit, The Call at the Rose Bowl, The National Children's Internet Summit, the Department of Justice's Federal Prosecutors' Obscenity Symposium, Numerous Congressional Briefings and Panels. Donna has served as a featured speaker at numerous press conferences including dozens at the U.S. Supreme Court. Donna has testified numerous times before the United States Congress and Senate.

She continues to share her faith journey at churches and Christian conferences across America including Willow Creek Church, Second Baptist Church of Houston. McLean Bible Church, First Baptist Church, Orlando and The Call at the Rose Bowl. Donna is represented by the Premier Speaker's Bureau.

## **PUBLISHING/WRITING**

Published commentaries and articles in major news publications including USA Today, The LA Times, The Washington Times, Foxnews.com, McCalls Magazine, The Washington Examiner, Politico, The Miami Herald, CNN.com, Lifezette.com, The Christian Post, The Hill, The Daily Caller, and many others. She Authored "Kids Online, Protecting Your Children In Cyberspace"

(Baker Books, 1998, English, Spanish, Korean); Co-Authored the “Internet Safety 101” 250 page Workbook/Resource Guide;

Authored “The Internet Pornography Pandemic: The Largest Unregulated Social Experiment in Human History,” “The Harmful Impact on Youth and a Pathway to Resolution”(Southern Evangelical Seminary, Christian Apologetics Journal, Volume 12, No.1/Spring 2014) which became a “go to” reference source for updated peer-reviewed studies and research on the issue and also provides a roadmap for solutions.

Ms. Hughes co-wrote the story for the season finale episode of Touched By an Angel TV Series which brought the message of online pornography and sexual predators to primetime television and won Neilson ratings in its time slot during May sweeps.

### **RECENT AWARDS**

Founders Award (2015), National Center on Sexual Exploitation; The Professional Women in Advocacy 2014 Excellence In Advocacy Award for “Veteran Practitioner”; The Women in Technology (WIT) 2013 Leadership Award for “Social Impact”; Emmy Award as Executive Producer/Producer of The PBS/EIE Internet Safety 101® Television Series (2012); Emmy nomination in the Program Host/Moderator category.

### **CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY/GOVERNMENT TASK FORCES/BOARDS**

Ms. Hughes has served on the Enough Is Enough Board of Directors (2002-Present) (Board Chairman 2013-Present); the MySpace Advisory Board (2006-2009), Internet Safety Technical Task Force in cooperation with the U.S. Attorneys General (2008); Virginia Attorneys General Youth Internet Safety Task Force (2006); the National House of Hope Board of Directors (1998-99). She was appointed by Senator Trent Lott to serve as a Commissioner on the Child Online Protection Commission (1998-2000).

She has testified numerous times before various committees of the United States House of Representatives and Senate. She is the founder and President of DRH Enterprises, which was established as a vehicle for her commercial speaking, media, publishing and consulting endeavors. DRH Enterprises has partnered with Friendly WiFi and RDI to bring the Friendly WiFi certification program to the United States.

### **EDUCATION**

B.S. Biology (Pre-med) with a minor focus in Business Administration. Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, Mortar Board, Outstanding Senior Award, University of South Carolina (USC), 1980. USC Varsity cheerleader captain 1978-80. Midlands Tech University (1978) - Certified Emergency Medical Technician

## PROFESSIONAL ENDORSEMENTS

- *“Donna is one of the leaders in the fight against pornography aimed at children on the Internet.” — Oprah Winfrey “*
- *“Donna continues to fight for the cause.... Speaking out for new laws and diligent enforcement of them.” — Barbara Walters, 20/20*
- *“Donna Rice Hughes has been warning about the dangers for years. Dateline first spoke with her 11 years ago. But now, she says the problem has grown with the Internet giving predators accessibility, affordability, and the anonymity to feed their criminal acts.” — Dateline NBC*
- *“By continuing to speak out and partner with the rest of the Internet, Donna Rice Hughes is helping all of us build a medium we can be proud of.”— Steve Case, former Chairman, American Online, Inc.*
- *“We feel strongly that the Internet Safety 101 program is a tailored-made response to the Internet child safety crisis facing our state and the nation” — President, Virginia PTA*
- *“Donna Rice Hughes is a strong and effective advocate for children’s online safety.” — John Ashcroft, U.S. Attorney General (2001-2005)*
- *"The Enough is Enough curriculum for parents, teachers, and caring adults is the most thorough information and training of its type available to those who want to protect their families from predators and pornographers. Donna Rice Hughes, Enough is Enough President, takes the viewer on a necessary trip that covers not only computer risks, but the dangers that a young person can encounter from cyber bullying, cell phones, and social networking. It might be called Internet Safety 101, but it's really a graduate course for those who don't want to watch their child heal after abuse, but keep them safe in the first place."— Robert J. Flores, Esq., Former Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice*
- *“As parents, we have the responsibility to monitor our children’s use of the Internet. Ms. Hughes has presented us with a resource to ensure that our children’s experience using the Internet is a safe one.” — The Honorable Senator John McCain (AZ)*
- *“Through years of work empowering parents nationwide, EIE has developed highly effective resources and techniques for educating, motivating, and empowering parents to be the first line of defense in their children’s online lives. EIE, headed by Donna Rice Hughes, has been a leading force in raising national recognition of the critically serious problem of Internet child pornography and sexual predation.” — Andrew G. Oosterbaan, Chief, U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, C.E.O.S.*
- *"Thank you so much for your powerful presentation at the Set Free Summit in Greensboro, NC. You left a significant impression on every one of the 900 participants and volunteers. Please continue speaking out ... we need you!"-- Josh D. McDowell, Author, Speaker and Founder of Josh McDowell Ministries*
- *“Enough Is Enough<sup>SM</sup> (EIE) has developed a unique approach to reach parents and adult childcare providers with the best resources and information on Internet safety, and we are aligned with EIE through our partnership for the Internet Safety 101: Empowering Parents program, which will ensure that parents receive the best information available about Internet safety concerns, resources and information.” — Brent M. Olson, Director of Public Policy, AT&T*