



May 23, 2023

Matthew Ehrenworth, Superintendent of Schools
Athol-Royalston Regional School District
1062 Pleasant Street
Athol, MA01331

Dear Superintendent Ehrensworth,

As you may be aware, a growing number of Franklin County and North Quabbin schools and youth serving organizations are dealing with sexual abuse of children and youth in their organizations. Although the vast majority of employees in these settings strive to create a safe place where children can learn and grow, we know that 1 in 10 children experience some form of direct or indirect sexual misconduct or abuse before they are 18, and in 90% of cases, the abuser is someone the child and family knows and trusts. In one-third of cases, the abuser is a family member or relative, and in 60% or more of cases, the abuser is an adult who has access to the child through a school, YSO or other community connection.

We are pleased to tell you that the Children's Advocacy Center of Franklin County and North Quabbin, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and the Communities that Care Coalition is partnering with MassKids to host a **Community Forum to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse on Thursday, June 1st from 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM at Greenfield Middle School.** MassKids, a private child abuse prevention organization, directs the Enough Abuse Campaign, a citizen education and community engagement program to prevent child sexual abuse developed under a 5-year grant from the federal CDC.

Parents, caregivers and school and YSO employees can serve as critical lifelines for children, so this community forum will allow us to help them gain knowledge about the issue and provide them with the training and policy tools they need to effectively prevent it from happening in the first place.

Northwestern District Attorney David E. Sullivan has agreed to join us briefly to explain how prevention is key, as communities in Franklin County and the North Quabbin are experiencing some of the highest rates of child sexual abuse in the state.

Using the research-informed and highly evaluated Enough Abuse Campaign curricula, MassKids will provide an overview of child sexual abuse and specific policies and practices that can be implemented to keep children and youth safe.

We invite you to join us for the Forum, invite your staff, and ask you to consider sending the attached flyer about the event home with students so that their parents can be alerted to this opportunity to learn more about this major safety risk for their children.

Thank you for all your efforts to keep our children safe!

Sincerely,



Jeffrey J. Trant, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Children's Advocacy Center of Franklin
County & North Quabbin



Jetta Bernier
Executive Director
MassKids and the Enough Abuse
Campaign



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