

NEWS RELEASE

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For
Children's Cove
The Cape & Islands Child Advocacy Center



Children's Cove Partners with Mashpee High School for Teen TASK Force *Cape Teens Volunteer to Raise Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse*

Mashpee, MA – Children's Cove, The Cape & Islands Child Advocacy Center, has partnered with Mashpee High School to recruit sophomore students to be a part of the third Children's Cove Teen TASK (Taking a Stand for Kids) Force. The mission of the Teen TASK Force is to engage in dialogue with teens about child sexual abuse issues, educate them about the services Children's Cove provides, and to empower them to raise awareness to their peers on child abuse issues. Teen TASK Force members will meet throughout the school year, learn about issues facing the Cape & Island community, and complete a group project to raise awareness in their school and community.

The Teen TASK Force program debuted in the 2016-2017 school year with a partnership with Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District and continued into the 2017-2018 school year at Monomoy Regional High School. Each year more than a dozen sophomore students volunteered to participate in the TASK Force to learn how to support their peers and community. Stacy Gallagher, Director of Children's Cove stated "We recognized a number of years ago the best way for teens to hear the message about child sexual abuse would be from their peers. We knew the best way to spread that message was to give the right information to students who are leaders in their own communities amongst their peers, and the past two years have been an example for all of us to learn and grow."

Throughout the month of October, Children's Cove staff and the Mashpee High School will be presenting information about the TASK Force to sophomores to build interest and recruit volunteers. From December through the end of the school year, the teens will meet monthly with Children's Cove staff and representatives of law enforcement, social services and other related fields. They will gain a detailed awareness of child abuse, learn about the services Children's Cove provides, resources available to them and their peers, and hear how various agencies in the community are responding to the problem. TASK Force members will also create a public awareness project to be released in April - designated as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

"We believe this will benefit everyone involved in the Teen Task Force, as well as their peers in the Mashpee Community," stated Mark Balestracci, Principal of Mashpee Middle High School. "We really want students to understand the resources that are available to them, and to have a network of peers who can help them navigate sometimes difficult situations. It is an absolute benefit to our school."

Children's Cove, a department of Barnstable County, has been the Cape and the Island's Children's Advocacy Center since 1997. Children's Cove provides coordinated and comprehensive multidisciplinary services to child victims of sexual abuse, physical abuse, witness to domestic violence and child sexual exploitation and trafficking. To learn more visit www.ChildrensCove.org

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