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Information from: Children's Cove



Children's Cove Celebrates Mashpee TASK Force Success

Cape Teens Raise Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse

May 12th, 2025 (Mashpee, MA) – Children's Cove: The Cape and Islands Child Advocacy Center, a department of Barnstable County, held its sixth and final session with the Mashpee Middle-High School Teen TASK (Taking A Stand for Kids) Force last week. The group of 13 sophomores worked together to learn about and raise awareness of child sexual abuse issues on Cape Cod, as well as the programs and services Children's Cove provides to victims.

The Teen TASK Force met throughout the school year to provide information and training on how to advocate for peers seeking help and completed project to raise awareness in their school and community. Students started six monthly sessions in December and met with Children's Cove staff as well as partners and collaborators, including the Falmouth Police Department, Cape & Islands District Attorney's Office, Sharing Kindness, and the Massachusetts State Police.

Throughout the sessions, the TASK Force was divided into three teams to develop their own child abuse awareness project, designing their own professional awareness materials by working with team members from Pierce-Coté Marketing & Creative. Each team had a week to implement their public awareness project in observance of National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.

Teen TASK Force projects brought awareness to the community by engaging shoppers at Mashpee Commons, hosting a trivia and educational game at the middle-high school

regarding issues of child abuse, as well as presentations to 3rd through 6th grade students at Quashnet Elementary School. Projects were also combined with a presentation to 3rd through 8th grade students from Richard Guerry, Executive Director of the Institute for Responsible Online and Cell-Phone Communication.

“This program has been fantastic,” stated Bonnie Brady, Principal at Mashpee Middle-High School. “Student leaders engaging with our younger community members about these critical issues - it’s incredibly important and will mean a lot coming from them. I couldn’t be prouder of these students.”

Last September, the Teen TASK Force program was one of the beneficiaries of the annual Dewitt-Davenport Seaside Le Mans event. “A key goal of Seaside Le Mans funding is to help make a direct impact on the community,” said Matt Pitta of Dewitt-Davenport. “The Children’s Cove Teen TASK Force is clearly doing that. We can’t wait to see what’s next.”

With the supportive funding from the Seaside Le Mans, Children’s Cove is working with Mashpee Middle-High School and other schools to coordinate a Teen TASK Force program for the next school year. “We recognized the fact that the best way for teens to hear the message about child sexual abuse would be from their peers,” said Stacy Gallagher, Director of Children’s Cove. “This is a unique program where we always learn as much from the students as they learn from us.”

Members of the 2024–2025 Mashpee Teen TASK Force included: Jackson Carlson, James Dean, Alex Longman, Aarian Brown, Emily Curtin, Aryana Cuzzo, Fernanda Lima, Mia Fougere, Anna Blackburn, Aryanna Lee, Lillian Olivia-Lewis, Julianna Heather-Ware, and Sophia Saviano.

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ABOUT CHILDREN’S COVE

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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