



Promoting Prevention

For more than 35 years, April has been National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Much has happened in thirty-five years. No longer society's unspoken secret or a "private family matter," child abuse has been brought to everyone's attention and public policy now focuses on the safety of children and the strengthening of families. As MSPCC celebrates its 140th anniversary on April 23rd, we look back on a history of strong advocacy and legislative victories, innovative programs to advance the cause of children's well-being, and preventing child abuse.

Deb and Bill Sweet have been ambassadors in the mission to prevent child abuse for the past 11 years as foster and adoptive parents. With three biological children, and two adoptive children, it seems overwhelming to some that they continue fostering children, many of whom have serious medical conditions, but Deb says that is part of why they foster: "We are just being parents, that's 90 percent of the job...We aren't exceptional people, we are just a family who decided to do this." Fostering as a family may be one of the reasons the Sweet family has been so successful.

Deb and Bill say that their children are essential in making foster children feel at home. The Sweet children help their foster brothers and sisters, reflecting the generosity and kindness of their parents. Deb and Bill are raising the next generation of ambassadors to continue the work of promoting child abuse prevention.

Children in foster care have experienced loss and so often some form of trauma. Research tells us that these types of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in the early years can be harmful to developing brains and have lasting effects on physical health, cognitive and academic functioning, and social and emotional well-being into adulthood. Placement stability and access to services and supports are critical for children's positive development and well-being. Deb Sweet says it best: "Fostering helps one whole child...and there is nothing small about that."

At any given time, there are 6,000-9,000 children in foster care. To find out more about fostering, call (800) KIDS -508.

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**Massachusetts Society
for the Prevention
of Cruelty to Children**

MSPCC NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018



From the Desk of

Mary McGeown

Dear Friends:

Each morning, as I open the doors to our office, I come face to face with 140 years of MSPCC history displayed on the walls and bookshelves for all to see.

The agency's first recorded case, dated May 1, 1878, describing alleged cruelty and starvation of a nursing infant at a home in Boston.

Posters from the early 1900s asking for the public's help to prevent broken homes, neglect, and delinquency.

Honors and citations recognizing the agency's advocacy to advance the causes of child welfare.



As it should be, the hallway leads to the heart of our office where MSPCC staff are busy preparing for a full day of home visits to young parents struggling with poverty but eager to be the best mother or father to their child; a team of clinicians is meeting to learn new strategies for reaching a 12-year-old boy overcome with grief at the violent death of his older brother; and the beloved “grannies” are gathering to share a cup of coffee and take a well-deserved break from raising their grandchildren. At the same time, our advocacy team is already at the State House to underscore the needs of children as the Commonwealth outlines upcoming budget priorities.

I am reminded that our work is as relevant today as it was 140 years ago when MSPCC was established for:

“...the purpose of awakening interest in the abuses to which children are exposed... and to help the enforcement of existing laws on the subject, procure needed legislation and for kindred work.”

Throughout our long and proud history, great strides have been made in child welfare, but there remains much to be done. Our increasing knowledge of the impact of adverse childhood experiences — abuse, neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse -- on the developing brain and their lasting physical effects underscores the importance of investing in prevention services. We will champion this cause in April at our annual dinner, Turning Points, when we honor and celebrate 140 years of keeping children safe and healthy by strengthening families. It will be a special evening to honor our legacy and to shape our future.

My deep appreciation for your support of our work. It makes a difference to the families we serve.

Mary A. McGeown
Executive Director

Thank you Rich McCarthy

MSPCC would like to thank Richard McCarthy for 11 years of dedicated service as a member of



Board of Directors and Board of Advisors. Rich joined the MSPCC Board of Directors in 2006 and has contributed to our work in many ways, most notably as the longstanding co-chair of MSPCC's annual Drive Fore Kids golf tournament.

“I am so grateful to Rich for his commitment to MSPCC's mission of preventing child abuse. Through his steadfast determination to increase awareness among colleagues, community, and friends, Rich supported our work with his successful fundraising,” said Mary McGeown. “He even involved his children! I will always remember his little girls having lemonade stands on our behalf, and eventually his daughter, Kelly, sharing his spirit of giving back and volunteering for MSPCC. We will miss him.”

Rich is Chief Financial Officer at Nixon Peabody. Previously, he has held roles as CFO for Racepoint Group and Ropes and Gray, LLP. Rich received a BBA from the University of Massachusetts, and an MBA from Babson College.

Thank you to Rich and the McCarthy family for your many years of commitment and leadership at MSPCC.

Holiday Giving

Generous and determined MSPCC supporters far exceeded our expectations this past holiday season! Thank you to everyone who gave a gift, held a toy or clothing drive, wrapped presents, or volunteered their time at the MSPCC Winter Wonderland throughout December. Your thoughtfulness gave more than 500 children a happy holiday season.

500+ kids received at least 4 gifts each (toys/clothing/winter gear)

26 different gift drives

2 companies have each been hosting drives for MSPCC for 25+ years!

3 in-office corporate gift wrapping parties



Support MSPCC all year!

We are always awestruck by the generosity of our donors during the holiday giving season and the joy of providing gifts to the children we serve and advocate for; but in less festive months, MSPCC sees our donations decrease while the needs of our families remain constant.

By giving monthly, you join the community of the **Brighter Future Fund** and ensure that our children receive the care and supplies they need throughout the year!

One year of monthly giving can support...

\$5 a month (\$60 per year): A skill-enhancing activity with a Therapeutic Mentor.

\$10 a month (\$120 per year): One hour of service for young parents to learn about their baby's healthy development.

\$25 a month (\$300 per year): A week of summer camp for a foster child.

\$50 a month (\$600 per year): Specialized training for one clinician to better assist the children we serve.

\$100 a month (\$1,200 per year): Therapeutic resources for effective individual or family therapy.

Want to give to the Brighter Futures Fund? Sign up for monthly gifts here: mspcc.org/monthlygiving

Advocacy Update - CARE Act

MSPCC Executive Director Mary McGeown, on behalf of the Children's Mental Health Campaign (CMHC), had the opportunity to offer testimony on An Act Relative to Combating Addiction, Accessing Treatment, Reducing Prescriptions, and Enhancing Prevention (CARE Act). The goal of the act is to mitigate the addiction crisis in Massachusetts. Ms. McGeown was speaking in an effort to promote prevention of youth substance use and addiction: "Though not often thought of this way, addiction is a pediatric disease."

Because of this, MSPCC through the CMHC urged the committee to support the creation of the Safe and Supportive Schools Trust Fund proposed in the CARE Act, which would invest in school-based prevention, education, and intervention programs.

The CMHC supports:

- **Funding for Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) in all public school districts.** This would allow school nurses or other appropriate health or support staff to screen students for substance abuse and provide positive reinforcement, brief interventions or referrals to treatment, as appropriate.
- **Support for continued research, evaluation, and validation of evidence-informed practices.** In recognizing that resources are tight, we must resist the urge to fund promising unproven initiatives.
- **Urge the legislature to take action to ensure revenues from the sale of recreational marijuana are allocated to support research and implementation of substance use prevention programs and services.**



Foster Parent Survey

MSPCC's Kid's Net program provides support and resources to foster families across Massachusetts. In an effort to better understand their needs and challenges, MSPCC conducted a survey to give foster parents an opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives. The findings from the survey will inform and direct foster family advocacy on policy and practice, including securing adequate resources to meet the needs of children in care. The survey was anonymous and covered a range of topics from general demographic data, such as the age of the foster parents and number of children in the household, to more open-ended questions, including, "What is the most challenging thing about being a foster parent?"

Nearly 1,000 foster parents have participated and the results are currently being analyzed by MSPCC.

As the voice of the child, MSPCC works to advocate for foster children and the caring adults who are so critical to their development and healing. **To learn more about our advocacy for foster children and foster parents visit mspcc.org/issues-fostercare.**

Family Resource Center

In February, Eliot Community Human Services, with which MSPCC merged in 2016, celebrated the opening of the new Family Resource Center in Everett. Close to 60 members of the community gathered to hear speakers Senator Sal DiDomenico, Representative Joe McGonagle, Chief of Staff for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Paola Ferrer, and the Director of the Family Resource Center Liliana Patino. Each praised the new resource center and the help it will bring to the community. **“It was a true pleasure taking part in the Open House and learning more about the many community partners that came together to make this FRC a reality”** said Senator DiDomenico. **“I have no doubt that the Eliot FRC will provide a critical sense of community and support for people throughout the Everett, Chelsea, Malden, and Medford area and will be a vital source that our families can rely on to help them reach their goals and succeed in life.”**

Supported through funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services in collaboration with DCF, the Eliot FRC welcomes people of all ages, incomes, and abilities. Staff offer solutions to families seeking health, safety, educational, and employment services in Everett, Malden, Chelsea, Medford and surrounding communities. The Eliot FRC helps parents, children, and families find emotional support and practical assistance to succeed in life. **“We know that the information, the advice, and the time we spend with FRC participants can change not only their future, but the future of their children and grandchildren”** said Liliana Patino.



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Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID
No. Reading, MA
Permit No. 7500

Locations

Boston

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617.983.5800

Holyoke

9 Sullivan Road
Holyoke, MA 01040
413.532.9446

Lawrence

439 South Union Street
Lawrence, MA 01843
978.682.9222

Lowell

151 Warren Street
Lowell, MA 01852
978.937.3087

Worcester

335 Chandler Street
Worcester, MA 01602
508.753.2967

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Invest in MSPCC Through the Mary Ellen Society

The Mary Ellen Society honors supporters whose generosity via bequests or life income gifts ensures MSPCC's work will continue for years to come. Mary Ellen Society members receive invitations to all MSPCC events and donor appreciation gatherings.

If you have included MSPCC in your estate plans, or would like to learn more, please contact Melanie Lima, Director of Development, at 617-587-1587, or via email at mlima@mspcc.org.

Turning Points

April 4, 2018

Join us on Wednesday, April 4th, 2018, for Turning Points: An Evening to Benefit MSPCC at the Fairmont Copley Plaza. This year MSPCC celebrates 140 years of being the voice of the child by honoring our esteemed Board of Directors and Board of Advisors, past and present, for their dedication, service, and commitment to children throughout Massachusetts.

Prevention Event

April, 2018

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. To recognize the importance of this month, MSPCC will honor a different person each day who has been a champion for child abuse prevention. Support us by following MSPCC on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and using #PromotePrevention in your posts.