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Massachusetts Society
for the Prevention
of Cruelty to Children

FINDING A FOREVER FAMILY

When Bill and Jill Akins first met, they knew they wanted to be parents someday. For the first seven years of their marriage they tried to conceive with no success. "We had given up at that point," said Bill. "We thought our dream would never come true." It was then that they decided to choose a different path to parenting -- adoption. They chose to adopt through the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) and learned they could speed up their process by working with MSPCC. Bill and Jill began with a Massachusetts Approach to Partnership in Parenting (MAPP) training, a 30-hour educational program required of prospective adoptive parents. "The trainings were wonderful," said Jill, "[you] learn to think of the process from the child's perspective."

It was there that Bill and Jill met Sybil Turk, MSPCC's Assistant Director of Adoption Services, who guided them through the process until they finally met their daughter, Lillie. Lillie was placed in their arms at only seven months old and both Bill and Jill knew instantly that they had found their family. Jill remembers, "The minute we looked at her it was like 'This is it, this is my daughter.'"

MSPCC is committed to finding permanent, loving, and stable families for society's most vulnerable children. Children who are in the custody of DCF have been removed from their biological families due to concerns of abuse and/or neglect. These children typically reside in foster homes, group homes, and/or residential treatment settings. MSPCC works with and provides training for families who are interested in adopting children, many of whom may be slightly older; present with special behavioral, emotional, and/or medical needs; or may do best with continued contact with their biological family post adoption.

When children cannot be returned to their biological families, MSPCC's Adoption Services facilitates the adoption process for these foster children by screening and providing training for prospective adoptive parents, conducting home visits, and helping to match children and families. Post-adoption, MSPCC's Adoptive Families Together offers continued training, education, and support for adoptive parents.

Learn more about MSPCC's adoption services here: mspcc.org/adoption-services



Join Us!

TURNING POINTS AN EVENING TO BENEFIT MSPCC

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2019
FAIRMONT COPLEY PLAZA
138 ST. JAMES AVENUE
BOSTON, MA
6:00 P.M. RECEPTION
7:00 P.M. DINNER

Proudly honoring PwC for
their years of commitment to
the children of MSPCC.

Contact Julie Sheflin, jshflin@mspcc.org
for more information or visit
mspcc.org/turningpoints.



From the Desk of

Mary McGeown

Dear Friends:

Each April, MSPCC hosts its annual signature fundraising event Turning Points.

For us, the name Turning Points captures the heart of our agency: MSPCC's history of being a turning point in the lives of thousands of children since 1878. Our goal is to ensure that when the arc of a child's life intersects with MSPCC, we help that child find a path to success, where they are happy, healthy, and thriving.

Each year, as I stand before the evening's attendees, I am reminded that it is not just MSPCC who serves as a turning point for children. We cannot do this work alone. Each of you who read this newsletter, generously support our efforts, answer our legislative calls to action, attend our events – you are all turning points in the lives of some of Massachusetts most vulnerable children.

Your continued support provides us with the ability to be a turning point in the lives of the children we serve, and allows them to thrive over a lifetime. Whether it is providing an issue-specific training for foster parents on the effects of the opioid epidemic on children living in foster care, improving the assessment tools of our staff working with at-risk high school students, more deeply engaging adoptive families in our support network, or using technology to demonstrate the importance of prenatal care to a young mother -- support from our loyal donors continues to change lives.

Mary A. McGeown
Executive Director

Meet Our Young Professionals Group

MSPCC is seeking all young professionals interested in advancing their philanthropic footprint, expanding their networks, and being ambassadors for the children of Massachusetts. We are forming a Young Professionals Group in order to advance our child welfare mission and train the next generation of child advocates.

Members are welcomed to exclusive volunteer opportunities and receive discounted rates to our signature events. As child advocates, they are responsible for sharing MSPCC's work within their networks. Volunteering will allow members to learn more about our programs and meet our participants firsthand. Meetings and events provide the opportunity to connect with other young professionals as well as members of MSPCC's Board of Advisors and other supporters.

We welcome anyone interested in deepening their commitment to MSPCC to join our Young Professionals Group on Thursday, May 9th at Harpoon Brewery for a kickoff event. Network with other like-minded young professionals, learn about MSPCC programs and services, and enjoy complimentary appetizers and Harpoon samples!

RSVP to Deirdre Clifford at dclifford@mspcc.org before May 1st to attend.

JOIN US!



Parent Appreciation Celebration

ON FEBRUARY 27TH, MSPCC hosted twenty-five participants of our Healthy Families program for its first Parent Appreciation Celebration! The Healthy Families program provides support to young, first-time parents from pregnancy until their child's third birthday. Many of the participants struggle with basic needs that other parents take for granted. MSPCC wanted to provide our Boston-based participants with some much needed pampering and baby supplies.

Parents gathered in our Boston office to find the space transformed into a self-care sanctuary. Parents were treated to relaxing pampering, received tips on topics such as proper nutrition and child milestones, and had the opportunity to engage with community resources. The infants and toddlers were carefully supervised by Healthy Families staff. Participants took family photos, and shopped our Baby Boutique, which was stocked with everything from toys, to diapers, to clothes, to groceries.

When asked what she was most thankful for, Healthy Families Participant Tatiana said, "Everything! All the items and great people who help me...all I want to say is thank you so much for your help."

Healthy Families is a voluntary and free home-based family coaching program that supports young, first-time parents and helps them create stable, nurturing environments for their children. The program matches parents with trained professionals who visit families' homes to provide support during pregnancy and the child's first three years of life.

Home visitors teach parents about proper baby care, promote nurturing and effective parenting skills, and ensure parents have a solid understanding of healthy child development. They also counsel parents on achieving personal goals related to schooling, work, and housing.

Healthy Families Massachusetts is a statewide home visiting program available for first-time parents age 20 and under, supported by the Children's Trust. Funding through the Massachusetts Home Visiting Initiative provides important service enhancements and supports to our proven home-visiting programming.

You can learn more about the Healthy Families Program at mspcc.org/pregnancy-parenting-support



The State of the Child

Child
Disorder



MSPCC targets its children's mental health public policy goals to support proven efforts, improving capacity for early identification and treatment, and reforming practices that inhibit school success. MSPCC is a founding member and the coordinating agency of the Children's Mental Health Campaign, whose leadership includes Boston Children's Hospital, Parent Professional Advocacy League (PPAL), Health Care For All (HCFA) and Health Law Advocates (HLA). Through this coalition of more than 165 organizations, we champion children's mental health. Learn more about CMHC's 2019-2020 Legislative priorities:



An Act Relative to the Promotion of Mental Health Education

Research finds that approximately one in five children and adolescents experience the signs and symptoms of diagnosable mental health disorders each year. Even though there are treatments for behavioral and substance use disorders, only 20 percent of children who need services receive them. This bill would update the current physical education mandate to make mental health education a required subject in all Massachusetts schools for grades K-12.



An Act Supporting Healthy Development Among Preschoolers

Rates of suspension and expulsion among preschoolers are unacceptably high in Massachusetts. In particular, black and Hispanic boys are expelled and suspended at significantly higher rates than other children. This type of disciplinary action has a lasting, negative impact on children later in life. This bill would require the Department of Early Education and Care to issue performance-based specifications aimed at restricting the use of suspension and expulsion, ensuring that when suspension or expulsion is necessary, it is free from discrimination. This bill would also encourage the use of mental health supports for children and families as an alternative to suspension or expulsion.



An Act Relative to Mental Health Parity Implementation

Mental health parity is intended to require that insurance coverage for behavioral health care is offered on the same terms and conditions as physical health care. Despite past legislative efforts, there are still barriers to behavioral health care. This bill would help to create more equitable access to behavioral health care for children and families.



An Act Increasing Consumer Transparency about Insurance Provider Networks

Families seeking care for behavioral health conditions are often hindered by out-of-date provider directories that often include providers who are no longer available. This bill would require improvements to these directories, ensuring that they are accurate and regularly updated.



An Act to Protect Children's Mental Health Services

Massachusetts is planning on terminating the court oversight of the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative, which has been resolving barriers to mental health care access. This bill would mandate the establishment of an ombuds position within the Office of the Child Advocate to ensure compliance with child mental health regulations and resolve complaints of behalf of children.



Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

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U.S. POSTAGE

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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.

ARE YOU UP-TO-DATE ON THE STATE OF THE CHILD?

Sign up for MSPCC's e-newsletter to hear the latest news. Stay informed on advocacy efforts affecting children and ways you can help, learn how your support has changed the lives of our clients in various programs, and stay updated on what is happening with children in Massachusetts with news and coverage from MSPCC. Sign up at: mspcc.org/news

BECOME OUR BFF!

Since 1878, MSPCC has been protecting and promoting the rights and well-being of children in Massachusetts through the help of our supporters. By giving monthly, you give to the Brighter Future Fund and ensure that our work can continue for centuries to come! Want to give to the Brighter Futures Fund? Sign up for monthly gifts here:

mspcc.org/monthlygiving

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