



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

Making the Wellness of Students a Priority

*The Franciscan Children's Hospital will present to families about children mental health and wellbeing on
Wednesday, January 23*

MEDFORD, MA: St. Raphael Parish School in Medford is hosting a presentation from Franciscan Children's Hospital Mental Health Education Program on children's mental health wellness on Wednesday, January 23, and invites parents and guardians from the public and Metro North Region Catholic Schools to attend. This program is part of the *Kids Healthy Minds Initiative*, which is a robust mental health awareness and community education program that is held in partnership with the Archdiocese of Boston.

This partnership was developed to help children who are showing early signs of mental illness. The *Kids Healthy Minds Initiative* goals are threefold: Increase community awareness about the youth mental health crisis; teach people about the early warning signs of pediatric mental illness; and decrease the stigma and misconceptions surrounding mental illness and its treatment.

Early action is essential. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 1 in 5 youth living in the U.S. have a mental health diagnosis; 50 percent of psychiatric disorders begin by age 14; and 50 percent of those 14 and older living with a mental illness drop out of high school.

Mark Bedrosian, principal of St. Raphael School, is hosting the event for the Archdiocese of Boston Catholic schools in the Metro North Region. He said, "The Kids Healthy Minds Initiative collaboration is an amazing opportunity for families in our school communities to understand the importance of mental health and wellness, know that there are services available that are aligned with Catholic Mission and Identity, and remove the stigma associated with mental health maintenance and wellness. We appreciate the support made available through this collaboration and will make sure all of our families are aware that the wellness of our students is our priority."

The partnership between the Archdiocese of Boston and Franciscan Children's Hospital officially began October 2018. At the time, Cardinal Seán O'Malley said, "We are at a crossroads as a society in addressing the mental health crisis gripping our communities here and across our nation."

He continued, "The Archdiocese of Boston is pleased to have the opportunity to work with Franciscan's Children's in this initiative. Working with our parishes and schools, we are going to reach as many young people and families as possible to educate them with the information and support to save lives and provide hope."

Franciscan Children's Hospital Mental Health Education Program Manager Patricia Coffey will present services available for children through their partnership with the Archdiocese of Boston. The free event is Wednesday, January 23, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Center 1st Floor Conference Room, at 514 High Street in Medford. All are welcome.

If your parish or school is interested in hosting a presentation of the *Kids Healthy Minds Initiative*, contact Mental Health Education Program Manager Patricia Coffey, MSW, LICSW, at 617-779-1296.

About Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Boston

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Boston educate more than 34,000 students in 112 schools. The schools offer a high-quality, rigorous education that is rooted in Catholic faith and values for students age 2.9 through grade 12.

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