

The Sunday Hour

SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2009

Organization that helps abused children recognized for efforts

To the Editor:

Let's take a moment to recognize an amazing team of individuals who work in our community to raise awareness in combating child abuse as well as support the hundreds of children and families living with this devastating issue. These individuals are working tirelessly to help the 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys who are sexually assaulted before turning 16; not to mention the 8,554 cases of abuse and neglect reported by the Department of Children and Families in 2008.

The Multidisciplinary Investigative Team of Greater Norwalk (MDT), a program of the Children's Connection, is a public and private collaborative of professionals who investigate, intervene and support children and

families involved in cases of child physical/sexual abuse and neglect throughout the communities of New Canaan, Norwalk, Westport, Weston and Wilton. The MDT is comprised of representatives from the Department of Children and Families, the five Police Departments, Norwalk Hospital, the Center for Sexual Assault Crisis Counseling and Education, the State's Attorney's Office, Adult Probation, the Dr. Robert E. Appleby School Based Health Centers, Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance and Family and Children's Agency.

The MDT provides specialized interviewing, which not only reduces the trauma to children through the investigation process, but also increases the likelihood of ensuring that prompt and appropriate actions are taken to assure

the safety of the child victim; reducing the trauma of victimization for the child; minimize the number of required interviews for the child victim; facilitating recommended medical and mental health services; coordinating efforts in order to eliminate duplication of services; increasing the likelihood of successful prosecution of offenders; providing support for non-offending parents/caregivers in order to enhance their ability to protect and care for their children; and promoting policies, practices and procedures that are culturally sensitive.

Together we can create a world where no child is harmed and no family is left without guidance.

*Marissa B. Mangone
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