

Seen and Supported

Providing direct services to families in crisis is an integral part of Turning Points Network's mission.

Domestic violence and sexual abuse remain common in the United States, and often affect children, with about 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 20 boys experiencing child sexual abuse before their 18th birthday. Turning Points Network (TPN) works with hundreds of survivors and their families each year. Some of the survivors are children who report the abuse to a teacher, a librarian, or the family doctor. Once an incident with a child has been reported, a team of professionals will work to gather information and explore next steps. They meet at the Child Advocacy Center (CAC), in downtown Claremont. The CAC coordinates support to children (and their families) who report sexual or physical abuse or have witnessed a violent crime. As the Family Violence Prevention Specialist at Turning Point Network, Cat Philbrook serves as liaison for children's families.



Each child is invited to contribute to the artwork at the Child Advocacy Center in downtown Claremont. Courtesy of TPN.

Typical Day at the CAC

On a typical morning, after Cat receives a message that a child in Sullivan County has reported being abused by a family member or friend, she blocks out her calendar for the hour or two in question. She puts together a packet of resources for the family she will meet, takes a few calming breaths and heads for the CAC. At the CAC, Cat meets with a multidisciplinary team (MDT) that includes a member of law enforcement and a forensic interviewer and may also include a child protective social worker from the Department of Children and Families, the

County Attorney, Victim Witness advocate or Trafficking Specialist. By law, Cat is given only minimal information about the child's situation. Cat will then meet with and offer her support to the non-offending parent or caregiver while the forensic interviewer talks with the child. "My role is to give the non-offending parent or caregiver whatever support they need," Cat explains, "whether it's emotional support, logistics, a safe place to go—you name it. But all the services we offer are totally voluntary. And they drive the conversation, I'm there to listen without judgment or pressure."

Bringing Comfort and Calm

Cat has been doing this work at TPN for just over two years but has worked with families and children and in the legal enforcement world for two decades. She brings comfort and calm to situations that are anything but. The reward is seeing families heal and move forward, and children believed and protected from future harm. "We've seen that outcomes are better when families are supported from the beginning," says Jody Thompson, forensic investigator, and MDT leader for CAC in Sullivan County. "They know they are here for them and it is a safe person they can talk to."

"I chose this work because too often in the past child victims have been ignored or neglected," Cat says, "and their non-offending parents left with little direction or support. This process, working with the CAC, provides a way for survivors to be seen and supported, and I'm grateful to be part of that."

Steppin' Up 2024: A Community-Spirited Event

During the 18th annual Steppin' Up to End Violence 5K Walk/Run, more than 500 walkers/runners from 45 teams headed off jubilantly down South Street under a light drizzle on May 4th. They were boosted by the overwhelming enthusiasm of more than 750 donors, including 50+ corporate and civic sponsors, faith communities, and neighborhood groups. Together they raised more than \$103,000 in critically needed funds for TPN's crisis and support services for those affected by abuse, as well as for our healthy relationships education and abuse prevention programs for local schools.



“Positive Bystander Journey”

Fostering a Healthier Community in Stevens High School

For most high school students, PB&J brings up thoughts of bag lunches or a snack between late-night video-game sessions. But for students at Stevens High School in Claremont, PB&J has a totally different meaning: Positive Bystander Journey.

At Stevens, PB&J is a student-driven leadership group that focuses on respect and improving school culture and climate. It's an outgrowth of a prevention education program, Bringing in the Bystander, which TPN educators initiated back in 2017 and restarted following the COVID shutdown in 2021.

Working through guidance/advisory staff, TPN educators introduced 10th graders to the concept of intervening safely with peers when faced with unhealthy behavior in different kinds of relationships: among classmates, teammates, friends, and dating partners. Those students who showed a particular interest and commitment to the training were invited as 11th graders to create a leadership group that goes beyond learning about bystander techniques.

What it Takes to Get Involved

"We surveyed students about why they don't get involved when disrespect occurs," noted Jen Gallagher, TPN educator. "The number one reason was because they were afraid of saying something that would make it worse. PB&J students push back against that assumption and have become the first public high school in Sullivan County to



TPN Educator Kerry Rochford Hague meets with students who are working to create a culture of respect and support at Stevens High School in Claremont.

use this program to actively work to end bullying in their school."

This winter a group of 15 interested students met with educators Kerry Rochford Hague and Jen Gallagher PB&J. The PB&J group meets every other week in "Jam" sessions between homeroom and first period in the cafeteria. Those who committed to the program actively engaged in challenging narratives regarding gender stereotypes and in exercises to gain leadership skills. They also helped lead Granite State Respect Week initiatives that month and plan to continue this fall by hosting awareness-raising activities.

Trailblazers in the Making

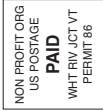
"The students in this program participate because they care about the school," says Stephen Pascucci, Stevens High School Restorative Justice Coordinator, who collaborates with TPN by advising the PB&J members. "We tell them, 'Your voice is important. You can help guide what kind of culture you want to have here.'"

Stevens High is poised to become a trailblazer in Sullivan County by becoming the first public high school to offer student-led programs that address unhealthy relationships and encourage their peers to be more actively engaged in the school community. They know TPN will be there with them, every other week, and provide the tips and tools they need to build healthy relationships.

Positive Bystander Journey, the new student-led program developed by TPN prevention educators, has received national recognition as the focus of a case study by the developers of the Bringing in the Bystander curriculum, Soteria Solutions.

You can read the case study here: <https://www.soteriasolutions.org/case-study/turning-points-network>





Connecting Pieces of the Prevention Puzzle in Sunapee

Prevention education is a team effort; a process that requires persistence, patience and allies in schools and communities to help TPN build connections. In the 2023-24 school year, TPN prevention educators had a special opportunity to increase our presence in Sunapee.

Volunteer Connections

TPN education volunteer Christine Messenger is a Sunapee resident whose two sons were recently enrolled in the town's school system. Christine has been trained by TPN to help deliver Healthy Relationship Program classes. Having experienced first-hand how students respond to our classes and content, she has been invaluable in bringing other Sunapee community members and school personnel into the conversation. Together they have discussed why prevention education is important and how TPN can support communities in strengthening safety nets for youth.

In-house Allies

This school year TPN educators had the good fortune to work with Shawna Otis, adjustment counselor for the Sunapee School District. Shawna has been a devoted supporter of healthy relationships education. She helped create staff interest by having TPN educators present at lunch time during prevention awareness weeks.

Another connection with a high school health teacher, Alyssa Krause, led TPN educators to provide a two-session workshop for her students: first on signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships, and second on consent and sexual violence prevention. Alyssa has requested TPN educators return to meet with her students for both semesters next year.



“Thanks to TPN, we are creating collaborative programs with parents and grown-ups that are helping to open the door for conversations at home and arming caregivers with the knowledge they need to further keep our youth safe in the ever-evolving community.”

—Shawna Otis, MS, LCIMHC Adjustment Counselor Sunapee School District, SAU 85

Additionally, foundational meetings with key administration and guidance staff at both schools offered TPN educators the chance to discuss all our programs and how we can collaborate with the district. The upshot: One elementary school counselor now plans to attend TPN's fall 2024 workshop to become a trained facilitator of the Healthy Relationships Program.

The Big Picture

Along with programs in the school, TPN offered two workshops for the Sunapee community: “Ten Signs of Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships” last fall and “Project SELFIE: Digital Boundaries and Online Safety” this spring. These workshops help adults converse with youth on concepts TPN teaches in the classroom and foster more trusted adults in young people's lives. “We are grateful to the community partners who support prevention education programs,” said Kerry Rochford, senior TPN educator, “and we look forward to the 2024-25 school year with the town and Sunapee School District.”

To learn more about TPN prevention education, go to: <https://turningpointsnetwork.org/education-community-outreach/>

(L-R) TPN Prevention Educators Jen Gallagher and Kerry Rochford Hagle meet with Adjustment Counselor Shawna Otis and TPN Volunteer Christine Messenger at Sunapee School District SAU 85 Offices.



Broad Street: One Year Later

In the year-plus since TPN relocated to Broad Street, the new headquarters have been warmly embraced by staff, survivors, partners, and the community. The new space is heralded as “welcoming and serene,” and it serves as a much more private and secure place for survivors to access services and support.

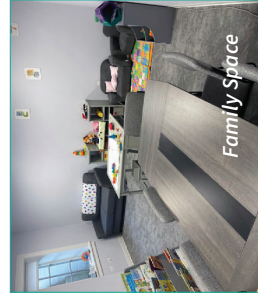
The newly outfitted conference room now features new tables and chairs, as well as a touch-control large-screen display which has allowed TPN to

have collaborative meetings with partners and hybrid trainings with staff and volunteers. The family space in the basement is also configured with meeting space and kid-friendly furnishings, which the families we serve thoroughly enjoy. Staff members also greatly appreciate having individual offices to work with survivors as well as a kitchen and lunch space.

Thank you again to the donors and grantors who made the 231 Broad Street project possible!



Conference Room



Family Space

In Memorium



TPN was saddened to hear of the recent passing of **Arthur Springsteen** of Sunapee. An accomplished inventor and entrepreneur, Art had recently retired as the

President and Chief Technical Officer of Avian Technologies, LLC, where he developed more than 30 commercial products. Art was also the holder of 9 U.S. and 3 European patents on materials and instrument design.

Art and his wife Kathy have been gracious supporters of TPN and other area nonprofits. TPN sends condolences to Kathy as well as Art's other family members.