

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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5th Anniversary Child Abuse Prevention ‘Reader Day’ Needs Volunteers April 19

Join Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra in Effort to Help Children Remain Safe

HARTFORD – April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and Community Renewal Team (CRT) is inviting the community to get involved by reading age-appropriate materials to children in CRT’s Early Care and Education classrooms throughout Central CT.

On April 19 at 10:00am adults with a little free time can make a huge impact by reading to children at any of the 72 ECE classrooms in the towns of Hartford, Middletown, Bloomfield, Windsor, Portland and Clinton. This is the fifth anniversary year of CRT observing Child Abuse Prevention month, and a large part of the effort involves the teachers and staff engaging entire families and communities around this issue to raise awareness and facilitate an open dialog to root out abuse.

The main book to be used for the reading is an age-appropriate picture book written by Jill Starishevsky entitled, “My Body Belongs to Me.” This story reinforces the idea that a child’s body is his or her own.

“Spending a little time with these children reading really helps share important messages with them about ways to future child abuse, and this can have a lasting impact on their lives,” said CRT’s Director of Early Care and Education Emilie Montgomery. “This event is just one day, but getting these dialogs going in our classrooms and communities leads to real progress on tough issues like child abuse.”

Starishevsky is an assistant district attorney in New York City, where she has prosecuted hundreds of sex offenders and dedicated a large portion of her career to seeking justice for victims of child abuse and sex crimes. According to her Website, Starishevsky’s mission to protect children, along with her penchant for poetry, inspired the book.

Mayor Segarra will read to children at the CRT Heritage Child Development Center, 175 Enfield St. at 10 a.m. on April 19.

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To sign up to be a volunteer, please contact Bethanne Vergean at (860) 761-7948 or email at vergeanb@crtct.org.

CRT enrolls more than 1,600 preschool-aged children in Head Start and Early Care and Education classrooms throughout Central Connecticut. CRT education programs go beyond traditional curricula to encompass parent outreach, nutrition programming, family case management and health screenings.

President Barack Obama proclaimed April as National Child Abuse Prevention month in 2009, and CRT has held events and coordinated appropriate curriculum to reflect the observance each year since.

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In its 50th anniversary year, Community Renewal Team, Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency's mission is Preparing Our Community to Meet Life's Challenges. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families change their lives and create their own opportunities in becoming self-reliant while making sure basic needs are met. CRT's programs include Head Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut. Visit the NEW www.crtct.org. CRT invites the community to celebrate 50 years of changing lives at the Hartford Marriott Downtown on May 15, 2013. Details on sponsorships and tickets available on the CRT website.