

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mayor Segarra Reads to Preschoolers for Child Abuse Prevention Month *Guest Readers Help Spread Awareness in 72 CRT Preschool Classrooms*

HARTFORD – Mayor Pedro Segarra gave an animated and well-received reading to an audience that sat cross-legged at his feet on Friday, April 19. He stopped by the preschool classrooms of Community Renewal Team’s (CRT) Heritage Child Development Center to take part in CRT’s Child Abuse Prevention Month “Reader Day.”

State representatives, police chiefs, officials and other volunteers fanned out to all 19 CRT classroom locations and read “My Body Belongs to Me,” an age-appropriate book that educators and caregivers use as a tool to help children understand inappropriate vs. appropriate touching. The readers also offered the children tips and lessons about what to do when uncomfortable situations arise.

CRT has observed April as Child Abuse Prevention Month since 2009 and incorporates activities and lessons for whole families throughout the month to help root out abuse in local communities. The effort this year also occurred during *The Week of the Young Child* which is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This year’s featured book “My Body Belongs to Me,” written by Jill Starishevsky, reinforces the idea that a child’s body is his or her own and not anyone else’s.

“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 dialogues 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.

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CRT enrolls more than 1,400 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.

More information about the CRT Child Abuse Prevention Month efforts, please visit:

<http://www.crtct.org/en/get-involved/child-abuse-prevention>.

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.