

HORACE MANN SCHOOL

Bronx, New York 10471

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HEAD OF SCHOOL

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Dear Alumni/ae,

It has been a most troubling week for so many of us. While we cannot change the past, we can take action today that will influence our future together for the better. Over the course of the past several days, I have done what a Head of School should do before taking any action: I have listened. Through email messages, telephone conversations, and in-person exchanges, members of our alumni community have graciously and courageously shared their hurt and frustration with a portion of our School's past. Words cannot describe how sad and upset I am at the thought of any harm coming to any member of our community while attending Horace Mann School. And yet, for me to advance an explanation given my limited time at the helm and in the face of so many conversations pertaining to matters twenty to thirty years old would be irresponsible. However, please do not mistake the time we all need to process what has been written in the *New York Times Magazine* and online as indifference or a lack of concern.

For those of you not directly involved with the School today, it may be hard to understand why I'm struggling to reconcile the content of the *New York Times Magazine* article and the subsequent conversations and internet postings with the community that I know as both Head of School and parent. The School's current policies, procedures and daily practices, as well as the instruction we provide our students, make allegations of such behavior impossible to ignore. In fact, an employee in today's environment would be immediately removed for a range of behaviors far less severe than those represented in the article. Add to this reality aggressive background and reference checks, formal faculty contracts that give the Head of School the right to remove a teacher when needed, whistleblower protection, a comprehensive new employee orientation program, mentoring, classroom observations, and streamlined procedures for evaluating faculty, and you begin to see a picture of Horace Mann School as it lives and breathes in 2012.

It is clear to me, as *your* Head of School, that many among our alumni need access to a level of support indicative of how our School would react to any current student coming forward with a concern about his or her personal well-being. In fact, as some of you know from your own experience, this ethic of care *has* extended to those alumni who have reached out to me over the past seven years for assistance. It is also clear that there are two schools to tend to: one facing forward with a lifetime of wonderful memories

taking shape, and one with students well past college-age seeking support and leadership beyond what a traditional alumni office offers.

Moving forward, we need your help. We will develop and implement a thoughtful process that places the first priority on those alumni most in need. In addition, there is much to be done within the larger alumni community. Conversations need to continue with candor. And yes, there is a need for a portion of these conversations to take place in person, and perhaps on campus. Ultimately, we need to work together to understand what may have happened and why, while at the same time, recommitting ourselves to the healthy relationships that did evolve during your time at Horace Mann School. To allow the egregious behavior of some as described in the article and online to turn members of our community against one another would marginalize the most important portion of our past and present: the friendships that connect us.

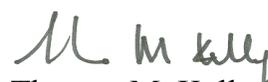
Bottom line: we not only need your support and patience, we are respectfully asking you to give the School the time to research and discuss a well thought out process, one that is in keeping with how we care for Horace Mann School today. In addition, this process needs to afford so many involved a voice and a level of privacy that is not currently in place if we are to reach everyone. The Board of Trustees of Horace Mann School will again be meeting to discuss the matters at hand and many of the suggestions put forth by both the School's alumni and administration. This work is a top priority.

With the support of the Board, the School *is* prepared to take the leadership role that so many of you are asking for. Please keep talking and please allow Horace Mann School to be a part of the conversations.

I look forward to communicating with all of you as often as necessary to demonstrate our resolve. Please don't forget that my door is always open.

With great respect, I am

Sincerely yours,



Thomas M. Kelly, P' 18
Head of School

cc: Horace Mann School Board of Trustees
Horace Mann School Administration, Faculty & Staff
Horace Mann School Families