



**HORACE MANN SCHOOL**  
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May 24, 2013

Dear Friends:

On June 6, 2012, with the publication of "Prep-School Predators" in *The New York Times Magazine*, Horace Mann School was confronted with reports of sexual abuse at our school from the 1960s to the 1990s. Alumni and others, via social media and elsewhere, shared reactions concerning what was alleged to have transpired, offered suggestions regarding how the School should respond, and made additional reports of abuse. The School's Board of Trustees and Head of School have listened to what was said and read what was shared with great empathy, and carefully considered how best to proceed.

We promised our community that we would develop and implement a thoughtful process, a process that placed a priority on the needs both of our students and of the alumni who reported that they were abused, while safeguarding today's Horace Mann School. We endeavored to work together to understand what happened. We stressed that the privacy of the victims was paramount, and that we would not communicate with our community through the media. With this commitment, the Board of Trustees and Head of School began the process of working deliberately to establish the facts as best we could, given the passage of time, and to determine the appropriate course of action moving forward.

Much has happened since our last letter. With a focus on the students of today, and in collaboration with the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC) and the assistance of the Office of the Bronx County District Attorney (Bronx DA), the School has put in place revised and new policies specific to child abuse prevention and reporting. These policies include reporting suspected child abuse when an employee is involved. In addition, the School has worked successfully with the professionals at the NYSPCC to institute developmentally appropriate, school-wide training for all students and employees in this critical area of student safety. We are confident that all members of the community in daily contact with the School—students, parents, employees and Trustees—have the information necessary to handle allegations of child abuse, bullying, and/or harassment of any kind. Furthermore, any allegation of sexual abuse, past or present, must be reported to the Bronx DA and the Board of Trustees for review and immediate action.

After meeting with the Survivors Group and members of the Alumni Council last summer, the Board of Trustees and Head of School agreed to pursue a mediation process, although the survivors' legal claims for financial compensation were barred by New York State's civil statute of limitations. This decision to engage with the survivors, despite the legal defenses available to the school, should remind everyone involved that these were students at Horace

Mann School—students who are entitled to be embraced by the warmth and ethic of care characteristic of Horace Mann School.

While cooperating fully with the Bronx DA's review, the School, based on the recommendations of counsel for the Survivors, joined with the Survivors to engage Commonwealth Mediation and Conciliation, Inc. (Commonwealth Mediation). During that mediation process, subject to confidentiality agreements, members of the Board of Trustees and the Head of School reviewed and listened to impact statements presented by thirty-one individuals who came forward and described their abuse.

As a result of this process, settlements have been reached with the great majority of these individuals without resort to litigation. Moreover, the mediation was critical to the School's understanding of what had occurred during the decades in question. Based on what was reported by the Bronx DA's office in its public statement of April 26<sup>th</sup> and what was learned through the mediation process, it is clear that between 1962 and 1996, former teachers and administrators in fact did abuse, in various degrees, students at Horace Mann School.

We sincerely apologize for the harm that was caused by the teachers and administrators who abused anyone during their years at Horace Mann School. These unconscionable betrayals of trust never should have happened. But they did, and now we, as a school, must fully accept this reality. Members of the Horace Mann School community who are survivors deserve our gratitude for having the courage to come forward, and our deep appreciation for demanding that Horace Mann School become a model for child abuse prevention and reporting programs. Beyond *their* pain, generations of alumni/ae have had their memories of Horace Mann School tarnished by these abusers. For this, too, we apologize.

Looking to the future and out of respect for the wishes of the survivors, the Board of Trustees has voted to eliminate the title and position of Trustee Emeritus effective June 30, 2013. In addition, members of the Board of Trustees will be working with the Head of School to create an advisory board on student safety to review all School policies relating to student safety and the ongoing training of students and employees, and to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees relating to these important subjects. The Board of Trustees and Head of School will invite representatives of the School community to serve on this advisory board, including one or more of the survivors, a representative of the Bronx DA, a representative from the NYSPCC, and a representative from Commonwealth Mediation.

Additionally, a survivor will be appointed to the Head of School Committee (HOSC). This Committee, created on Dr. Kelly's arrival in 2005, serves as an advisory entity to both the Head of School and the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Committee members are representative of parents, alumni/ae, employees, current and former trustees, and community members.

Finally, the Board of Trustees has accepted the proposal of Commonwealth Mediation that Commonwealth Mediation prepare an independent summary of the reported abuses, without identifying the survivors. The mediators involved have heard from thirty-one alumni/ae who described in painful detail the inexcusable conduct of their teachers and administrators that occurred between seventeen and fifty-one years ago. Given the passage of time, most of the abusers are either dead or mentally infirm; the remainder, we understand, are unwilling to

respond to the allegations, and the School does not have the authority to compel these individuals to do so. It is these reports heard by the mediators—shared privately and in person by survivors—that provide us the greatest insight into what happened. The Board of Trustees and Head of School have agreed to make the summary report available as soon as practicable.

The events of the past year remind us why we refer to Horace Mann School as our alma mater. Our “nourishing mother” provides the resources and guidance we need to flourish academically, socially, physically and emotionally. We also count on her to care for us in times of personal need, institutional tragedy or crisis. For those of you among her alumni/ae in need of care as a result of what occurred in the 1960s, ’70s, ’80s and ’90s, please reach out to the Head of School’s Office.

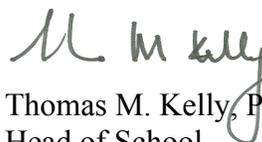
While nothing we can say or do will erase the painful memories shared by the survivors, we hope our actions demonstrate our resolve never to forget this portion of our past and reiterate our commitment to the safety of today's students.

With great respect we remain,

Sincerely yours,



Steven M. Friedman '72, P '03, '04, '08  
Chair, Board of Trustees



Thomas M. Kelly, P '18  
Head of School