

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**



**Office of the Director**

March 17, 2015

Dear Head of School:

The Department of Behavioral Health each year in May participates in Children's Mental Health Awareness Day to raise awareness about the importance of paying attention to children's mental health and to emphasize that positive mental health is essential to a child's healthy development.

We rely on our strong partnership with public and public charter schools to commemorate Children's Mental Health Awareness Day through a public awareness campaign that helps normalize discussions of mental health and mental illness among children. Research shows that early identification and intervention can prevent a lifetime of mental health disorders. Last year, nearly 1,000 students through their schools participated in an on-line scavenger hunt to learn more about mental health issues commonly faced by young people.

This year, for Children's Mental Health Awareness Day on May 7, we would like to work with you to hold a poster making exercise in Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grades to promote discussion among the students about mental health. "Caring for Every Child's Mental Health" is a project where students work together in their home rooms or advisory classes to create one class poster that represents their views of mental well-being. Through a process that you develop, you would then select a poster to represent your school. We will display the school posters from May 4 through May 8 in the atrium of the Wilson Building for the public to enjoy.

The poster making activity will start on April 6<sup>th</sup> and end on April 24<sup>th</sup>. We will provide basic poster making materials such as poster board and crayons/colored pencils but we also welcome creative use of other materials.

We hope you agree this project is supportive of your ongoing work in this area. Because of limited resources, we will work with the first twenty schools that respond. If you are ready to sign up now, please email Kendra Fitzgordon, project manager, at [Kendra.fitzgordon@dc.gov](mailto:Kendra.fitzgordon@dc.gov) or call her on (202) 654-6175. She will deliver poster making materials to your school and stay in touch during the project.

Please let us know by March 25<sup>th</sup> if we are able to include your school in 2015 Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. I can be reached at (202) 671-2900 to discuss this with you. We look forward to partnering with you to raise awareness of the importance of children's mental health.

Kindest regards,

  
Barbara J. Bazron, Ph.D.  
Interim Director