

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that 2023 is coming to an end. So much has happened this year in our community and across the globe. I'm hoping this holiday season gives us time to slow down and enjoy what is most important to each of us.

The [Mahoney Family Fund](#) (MFF) is deeply grateful to all of our sponsors and generous donors who have made it possible to continue our work in mitigating violence in the home and against children. We have had a productive year with bringing educational programs to Greater Lowell and beyond. The following summary is a quick look at the MFF's accomplishments this past year.

Re-thinking Discipline: a workshop and discussion was held on March 31. It was our first in-person event since the pandemic and it focused on reducing corporal punishment and utilizing positive approaches to correct unwanted behavior. The panel of experts leading the discussion included: Dr. Shahenda Aly, a pediatrician at Lowell General Hospital and Tufts Medical; Stacie LeBlanc, J.D, MS, international speaker on child abuse prevention; and Shirley Pimentel, Director of Youth Programs at the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell. A complimentary buffet-style breakfast kicked off this well-attended workshop. [No Hit Zone](#) signs were distributed free of charge. Lowell Mayor Sokhary Chau and State Senator Ed Kennedy were in attendance.

Backpack Flyers were distributed in August with tips for reducing parental stress. In coordination with Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA), 500 flyers were included in backpacks given to kids for the new school year. Also hosted by CBA, the MFF participated in a Community Health Opportunity Program (CHOP) Dinner, which provides free gourmet meals to the Lowell Community. MFF representative Peg Shanahan demonstrated stress reduction tips.

Re-Think Discipline, an in-person presentation and discussion, was held at the Lowell High School on October 12, where we continued our efforts to help parents and caregivers rethink discipline methods. Stacie LeBlanc was our keynote speaker, highlighting the consequences of physical punishment and the benefits of using positive methods that actually teach and reach kids. As we saw back at our March workshop and discussion event, audiences were shocked to learn about the brain damage that results from being hit. Of the parents who were in attendance, nearly all vowed they would change the way they discipline their children because of what they learned during this dynamic 90 minute, interactive workshop. It was a success!

Re-Think Discipline : A Review was virtual online event held on November 9, which included many who attended the October in-person discussion and workshop. It also included those who have never previously attended our events. Stacie LeBlanc reviewed and discussed key points on the need to rethink discipline methods.

Statistics and Resources: Seventy-five percent of all child abuse cases start with adults trying to change a child's behavior. This is why the MFF is focused on making discipline a positive, teaching experience. Our speakers have highlighted that decades of research could not conclude that there is even ONE positive outcome for hitting or spanking a child. Conversely, there are dozens of negative consequences of harsh physical discipline that last a lifetime. Please check out these valuable resources for more information: [No Hit Zones](#); [The Up Institute](#); [Stop Spanking](#).

The MFF committee is a small but passionate [group of volunteers](#) who recognize that preventing violence in the home, school, and our communities needs a grassroots approach. Please contact [Maureen Mahoney](#) if you would like to get involved or need more information.

2024 Preview: The Mahoney Family Fund will participate in the annual Affiliation of Family and Conciliatory Courts (AFCC) Conference, June 5-7 at the Sheraton Boston. This conference is attended by family law attorneys, judges, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nonprofits, and those who are affiliated with families and individuals dealing with domestic violence, intimate partner violence, divorce, separation, child custody, and more. Stacie LeBlanc and Dr. Catherine Taylor will make presentations at this conference. Their focus will include the harmful effects of parental stress which can lead to kids being abused. The MFF committee will have a booth at the conference with educational materials and other resources.

More about the MFF: Please visit [Mahoney Family Fund](#) website where you will find resources and information on past and upcoming events. All [donations](#) to the MFF are tax deductible and support its mission throughout the year. The [Greater Lawrence Community Action Council](#) (GLCAC) functions as our fiscal partner and processes all donations which are utilized by the MFF.

The Mahoney Family Fund wishes you and yours a peaceful and joyful holiday season. We look forward to seeing you in the new year.

With best wishes,

Maureen Mahoney