



Garðabær, 2/6 2009

To whom it may concern:

Re: Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Prevention Education provided by Blátt áfram* for teenagers in Gardaskoli Middle School, Gardabæ, Iceland

Gardaskoli middle school has about 430 students from the ages of 13 to 16. Over the last two years all students in 8th and 10th grades have received CSA prevention education from Blátt áfram. Our plans are now that all 8th graders receive this education from Blátt áfram early in the year when attending Gardaskoli.

Blátt áfram, with Svava Brooks and her sister Sigríður Björnsdóttir have opened our eyes, making us truly aware of the issue of child sexual abuse and given us the courage to face and take on difficult cases of abuse.

The prevention education from Blátt áfram has also made our students aware and given all of us tools to discuss and handle the cases in a straightforward manner. It has made it easier for all staff at the school to talk openly about the issue of CSA when we can refer to the education that the students have received from Blátt áfram.

The positive results from the visits and education offered by Svava and Sigríður were immediate. The prevention education has led to increased disclosures and reporting such that further investigation was required. In many cases students that have struggled in school, have come forth and disclosed sexual abuse as the cause for their suffering and discomfort at school, which explains the long term complex problems they have suffered and struggled with - problems that have hindered their normal development through school.

Both Svava Brooks and her sister Sigríður Björnsdóttir have been the providers of the prevention education at our school and our experience working with them has been very good. We have felt confident in looking to them with questions or for consulting to handle these often difficult and sensitive cases. Blátt áfram has been inspiring and has provided the support that we have needed to handle and respond to the issue of child sexual abuse.

We are also left thinking about how few cases have reached us as school counselors some years before we started educating our teens about CSA and prevention. It also makes us uncomfortably aware of the fact that a number of



students may have left our school suffering in silence as victims of CSA without any intervention or support to get help.

We find ourselves now being able provide a better environment and a line of support to facilitate disclosure and, after an initial case review, know where to direct or hand off the case to an appropriate specialist or the authorities.

We realize now how important this prevention tool is, which provides open discussions for teens and emphasizes the importance of finding help if one needs it.

We are very proud to be involved in the education provided by Blátt áfram. It is our goal this year that all our teachers and staff participate in the Darkness to Light, Stewards of Children prevention training.

With that we are promoting that we have made an informed decision and are aware of our responsibility as adults and as educators and support staff at our school to provide the best environment and support for our students. We have chosen to be courageous and to take on cases linked to the issue of CSA and prevention.

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*(Blatt Afram, (pronounced: blout a-from) which translates as “Straight Forward,” is the leading grass roots child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention organization in Iceland. Blatt Afram was formed in 2004 by twin sisters, Svava Brooks and Sigga Bjornsdottir who themselves were sexually abused as young children growing up in Iceland but who sought to turn around their misfortune by helping others.