

Project Heal

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January 11, 2017

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo

Governor of New York State

NYS State Capitol Building

Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Project Heal is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization which raises money for people with eating disorders who are not able to afford treatment and provides them with scholarship funds so that they can get the help they need. As well, Project HEAL advocates a healthy and realistic body image in the hopes of preventing future eating disorders and inspires current eating disorder sufferers to believe that recovery is possible.

Currently, Project HEAL has raised over a million dollars through fundraisers, grants, private donations and merchandise sales. All funds raised go directly to funding inpatient and residential treatment for eating disorders. Through a rigorous application and interview process, co-founders Kristina and Liana and the HEAL Clinical Advisory Board, comprised of eight eating disorder specialists, select motivated and deserving applicants to receive the scholarship funding.

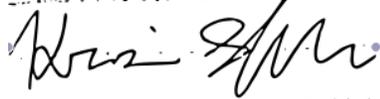
We are well aware of how child sexual abuse triggers eating disorders because we deal directly with patients who have been negatively affected by both – patients who are literally on the brink of dying by the time they come into treatment. Eating disorders are serious, fatal mental illnesses, with anorexia nervosa having the highest mortality rate of any mental illness. And although eating disorders are physical manifestations, at their core, they are often related to something much deeper, such as trauma set in during childhood. It has been proven through scrupulous research that many sufferers of eating disorders have been sexually abused as children, and we feel that if laws were set in place to protect them and prevent such occurrences, then this would have a significant impact on the well-being of youth everywhere.

The current research shows that an estimated 30,000,000 people in the US suffer from an eating disorder, and 45,000,000 people in the US have been affected by child sexual abuse. The cost of treatment for a daily outpatient facility is \$500 a day; inpatient is around \$30,000 a month. Typically, survivors are put at an extreme economic disadvantage and cannot afford such treatment. Do you see how utterly unbalanced and unjust this is? We need to prevent such things from happening in the first place and take care of our children, because they are our future.

We at Project HEAL greatly support S809, which seeks to eliminate New York's Statute of Limitations for child sexual abuse in criminal court and civil court, and gives adult victims a year in which they can sue their abusers and the institutions that facilitated

their abuse. What the bill lays out is the very least that children deserve; right now, there are children being sexually abused, with the physical, mental, and emotional repercussions lasting a lifetime, even with therapy. We thank you for joining in the fight to protect kids in the state of New York from sexual abuse; by doing so, you are positively impacting their mental and emotional health in more ways than you can ever understand.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristina Saffran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a blue dot at the end of the final stroke.

Kristina Saffran, Co-Founder and Executive Director  
Project HEAL