

Contact:  
Rebecca Porter  
Phone: 508.655.6400 ext. 252  
Email: rporter@brandonschool.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth helping Youth:  
Brandon School awarded grant by Make-the-Dash-Count MetroWest Youth Board

(Brandon School, Natick, MA) – After a month of anticipation, Brandon School & Residential Treatment Center, Inc. in Natick learned it would be awarded a \$10,000 grant for its “Together We Can Achieve: Healthy Choices” program by the Make The Dash Count Foundation’s Wayland Youth Board.

“Healthy Choices,” a program developed by Brandon and its student council, will afford activities that focus on vocational, learning and creative opportunities to help Brandon clients express themselves through healthy outlets. Funds received through this grant will go to purchasing new playground equipment, educational books & software and new art supplies. Healthy Choices initiatives will include the building of a new playground by Brandon’s own students as part of a work/study project, the painting of colorful murals in the residences by staff and students, and the installation of a small library with books, periodicals and computer programs selected by teachers and kids. This program will help give Brandon clients the ability to make appropriate choices regarding their behaviors and reactions to difficult situations. It will assist them in realizing their ability to control outcomes and to construct more healthy interests. “Healthy Choices” will enrich students’ experiences at Brandon in the therapeutic, educational and residential areas by making them feel cared for, empowered and part of the greater community.

The partnership between Brandon and Make-The-Dash-Count is partnership of youth helping their peers. Make-The-Dash-Count is a unique organization that raises money through the sale of wines under its “Heaven’s Cave” label. The organization then empowers grant-giving boards of high school students to distribute the money to organizations helping at-risk youth. The MetroWest Youth Board, which meets at Wayland High School, distributes grants in the name of “The Andrea Fund.” Brandon is a school and treatment center serving boys, often victims of abuse and neglect

Brandon is a non-profit school and treatment center serving boys whose emotional and behavior problems prevent them from being in public schools, homes and communities. Brandon's continuous effort to help kids, often with histories of abuse and neglect, to lead improved, enriched and more empowered lives. We commend Make the Dash Count's commitment to youth and share your vision for local kids at-risk. Every day we strive to help kids, who may not otherwise be safe and supported, get the care they need and the normalcy that they deserve.

"Healthy Choices" is driven by Brandon's commitment to providing at-risk clients with opportunities to lead healthier, happier lives with the ability to make the right choices for themselves. The Brandon community will feel a sense of pride in the construction and installation of the new playground. Students and staff will participate in the planning and completion of vibrant murals in the residences. These will be friendly and welcoming sights in homes that clients live in during their often difficult stay at Brandon. New books, periodicals and computer stations will enrich the student learning experience outside the classroom. Learning, recreation and creative activities will be available during school, evening and weekend hours. This will help teachers, counselors and therapists provide more encompassing care to our clients. New spaces will be created and old spaces will be enlivened making Brandon a more therapeutic place for clients and families. "Healthy Choices" will provide many options for healthy behaviors and help students internalize a pattern of making the right decisions that will shape a healthy path to continue on after they leave Brandon.

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