

For immediate release

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February 12, 2020

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### **Mayor O'Connell donates to the Taunton High School Access Center**

Today... Mayor Shaunna O'Connell donated \$10,000 from her Inaugural account to the Taunton High School Access Center. The Access Center provides support services and counseling to students including information on topics relevant to teens, grief counseling, crisis intervention, and ongoing therapeutic services.

"As a mother of two teenagers, I understand the importance of providing a strong support system to help kids overcome challenges. I am extremely pleased that we can make this generous donation to help our children," O'Connell said.

O'Connell visited Taunton High to meet with students and listen to their concerns and needs. She was joined by Superintendent John Cabral, Headmaster Matt Mattos, and Access Center Coordinator Stephanie Littlefield. "When we have open dialogue, we begin to remove the stigma associated with accessing help for social-emotional needs. Today I met with some extraordinary students who are leaders in paving the way for their peers to seek assistance," said O'Connell.

"We are honored to receive this generous donation to our Access Center from Mayor O'Connell. Florence Canavan and Stephanie Littlefield already do an amazing job with our students. This donation will assist with elevating our student support services program. We are proud that Mayor O'Connell met with our students today and listened to their social and emotional concerns. She recognizes the importance of this program. We are truly grateful for her donation to the THS Access Center," THS Headmaster Matthew Mattos said.

"Thank you to Mayor O'Connell for your commitment in taking a leadership role in meeting the need for mental health services at Taunton High School. Your financial donation to the Access Center will help students at THS who might not otherwise be able to access the support they need. This generous donation will provide our students with emotional, behavioral and mental health support through therapeutic assistance, support and training. It is our hope that all students at Taunton High School in need of services receive assistance without stigma or barriers to access," said Littlefield.

Students are encouraged to contact the Access Center for more information about services offered.

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