

**For Immediate Release: NEW AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP SERVICES LAUNCHES AT TWO PORTLAND HIGH SCHOOLS**

**Portland, Ore. May 2, 2018– Raphael House of Portland, The Oregon School-Based Health Alliance, Volunteers of America Home Free, and Portland Public Schools are delighted to announce the launch of a collaborative program providing Healthy Relationship Advocacy services at Cleveland and Franklin High Schools.**

There is growing recognition of the prevalence of teen relationship violence and its impact on the social, emotional, and educational well-being of students. In an effort to provide comprehensive resources to students seeking support in developing healthy relationships, Raphael House of Portland has partnered with the Oregon School-Based Health Alliance, Volunteers of America (VOA) Home Free, Portland Public Schools, and the Student Health Centers at Cleveland and Franklin High Schools on the Healthy Teen Relationship Act Implementation Project. This pilot is unprecedented in the United States, and is currently the only public school-approved program offering on-site confidential advocacy services to youth. The E.C. Brown Foundation funds this project.

The Healthy Teen Relationship Act (HTRA) was passed in January of 2013 (Oregon House Bill 4077), and mandates that Oregon school districts adopt policies and programs addressing teen dating violence. However, there was no funding attached to this bill, and no Oregon schools currently meet the full HTRA requirements. The Healthy Teen Relationship Act Implementation Project aims to create a pilot model for implementation of HTRA, which could be replicated at other schools in the future.

Healthy relationship advocacy services are provided by experienced advocates from Raphael House of Portland and VOA Home Free, two Portland-based nonprofit organizations that have been teaching healthy relationship curriculums in Portland Public Schools classrooms for over 12 years. Building on their strong existing relationships with students, teachers, and administrators at both schools, Healthy Relationship Advocates will assist youth individually, and provide school-wide support in creating a culture that promotes safe, equitable, and healthy relationships.

Beginning on April 16, 2018, students at Cleveland and Franklin High Schools will be able to access Healthy Relationship Advocates two days each week within their Student Health Centers. One in three adolescents will experience some form of abuse, and Healthy Relationship Advocates provide necessary and trauma-informed services to youth needing support in the wake of dating and sexual violence. As requested by students, Advocates offer confidential and ongoing one-on-one support, safety assessment and planning, and referrals for community, health, and educational resources. Advocates from Raphael House and VOA Home Free will also facilitate workshops and trainings for students, teachers, and parents; and work closely with administrators to develop policies and procedures to support a culture of healthy relationships.

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