

**Statement from County Executive
Marcus J. Molinaro**

following the school shooting tragedy
at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who lost their lives in this awful crime committed in Newtown, Connecticut. We pray especially for the families of those fallen angels - young children who deserved to be safe, to be loved and to live out all the days of their lives. Like so many Americans, we feel grief, immense sadness and an inherent need to do something. There will be a place and time to do more - and we will. For now, Dutchess County flags will remain at half staff until, as President Obama requested, sunset on December 18. Today, we mourn, we pray and we extend our love.

We also remind our own residents that there are services and assistance available to help them and their families. I encourage any resident feeling overwhelmed by sadness, grief and confusion to call our Department of Mental Hygiene's 24 hour/7 day HELPLINE at 485-9700 ([Toll-Free: 877-485-9700](tel:877-485-9700)). Trained, understanding mental health professionals are available to provide help and support in dealing with this tragedy.

May we all find comfort in the company of friends and family. Let us remind our own children of our love and care for them. I will hold Abigail and Jack closer and hug them tighter. I encourage us all to do the same with our own children.

May they and the families of Newtown know we too are with them."

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Visit the Dutchess County Department of Mental Hygiene's webpage at www.dutchessny.gov. For information on how to get started seeking help:

<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/MentalHygiene/MHgethelp.htm>

Additional resources for residents trying to cope with this tragedy:

American Psychological Association

<http://www.apa.org/topics/violence/school-shooting.aspx>

Resources for parents on how to talk to children about this tragedy.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/>

Information on how to cope with a traumatic event.

National Education Association Health Information Network

<http://crisisguide.neahin.org/crisisguide/after/mentalhealth.html>

Resource for schools including a guide for school crisis.

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