



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Perkins and RFK Children's Action Corps Announce Affiliation,  
Prepare for Full Merger**

**Lancaster, MA** – Two of Massachusetts' leading independent, non-profit human services agencies, The Doctor Franklin Perkins School (Perkins), and Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps (RFK Children's Action Corps), have announced their affiliation.

RFK Children's Action Corps will become an affiliate to the Doctor Franklin Perkins School, with a full merger planned for the near future. Michael W. Ames, Perkins' President and CEO, will lead both organizations.

The Doctor Franklin Perkins School is a 125-year-old multi-service organization providing day and residential education for youth with developmental, learning, behavioral and other challenges, day and residential programming for adults with intellectual and developmental challenges, as well as mental health and other services for children, youth and families.

RFK Children's Action Corps is a leader in child welfare and juvenile justice, providing both residential and community-based programs for youth and families from across the Commonwealth. They also provide training and technical assistance nationally and internationally.

Together, they will serve nearly 2,000 vulnerable children, youth, and adults annually through day, residential, and community based programs. The combined agency will reach and impact thousands more children and youth nationwide through juvenile justice training and technical assistance.

Suzanne Frisch, Chair of the Perkins Board, said, "Together, our strengths can affect an even greater impact. To quote the words of the late Robert F. Kennedy, 'All of us might wish at times that we lived in a more tranquil world, but we don't. And if our times are difficult and perplexing, so are they challenging and filled with opportunity.' Perkins and RFK Children's Action Corps both recognized the challenge and the opportunity in this difficult year and made this happen, and I am so proud and grateful to be a part of it."

RFK Children's Action Corps' board chairman Jim Geraghty added, "At a time when so many human services providers are pursuing strategic alliances and mergers to sharpen their effectiveness, we're delighted that we've found the ideal partner in Perkins to carry forward RFK Children's Action Corps' legacy of unwavering responsibility to some of the most vulnerable children and families and to building a more just society for all."

President and CEO Michael W. Ames said, "Our affiliation and future full merger are all about combining the unique expertise and legacies of Perkins and RFK Children's Action Corps to create an organization that will build on each of our distinctive strengths, enhancing our collective impact for decades to come in promoting meaningful and sustained well-being for the children, youth, and adults we serve."

Philip W. Johnston, who founded RFK Children's Action Corps in 1969 to carry forward the late senator's legacy of social justice and ensure "that every child in this country lives as we would want our own children to live," said: "The values of Doctor Franklin Perkins School and of the RFK Children's Action Corps align perfectly: Caring about young people and running a well-managed child welfare agency as well. This merger will ensure that thousands of the most vulnerable children in Massachusetts and the nation will receive much-needed services for many years to come. Robert Kennedy would be very proud of the legacy of this important agency, and the future looks very bright."

RFK Children's Action Corps operates 10 programs for at-risk youth and families, including community-based initiatives in Boston, Holyoke and Springfield; residential treatment centers in Lancaster, Middleton, South Hadley and South Yarmouth; schools in Lancaster and Springfield; the Bright Futures Adoption Center; the National Youth Project using Minibikes (NYPUM); and the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice.

Perkins' roots date to the 1896 founding of a school for children with special needs in Newton, Massachusetts, that was moved to Lancaster in 1924 by its administrator, the distinguished child psychiatrist Doctor Franklin Perkins, and subsequently renamed in his honor. Perkins has steadily broadened and diversified its services at its Lancaster campus and adult facilities in Lancaster and neighboring Clinton, with a consistent commitment to personalized instruction and therapies that build individuals' strengths and competencies for academic and social success.

Community leaders and families of young people who have been served by both Perkins and RFK Children's Action Corps are praising the alliance and plans for merger:

Tammy Mello, Executive Director of the Children's League of Massachusetts, a statewide non-profit association of over 80 private and public organizations and individuals that collectively advocate for public policies and quality services that are in the best interest of the Commonwealth's children, youth, and families, said, "What really resonates for me is how both organizations are steeped in a legacy of meeting the needs of kids and families who have not had access to the supports all children deserve for their social and emotional well-being and education. That's where I see this as a perfect marriage."

Trix Oakley of Cambridge, a member of Perkins' board whose late son Alex was a resident of Perkins for 39 years, said, "This is a very exciting moment. Perkins and RFK Children's Action Corps have developed so much expertise in serving children and individuals in a wide variety of situations. I see the joining of RFK Children's Action Corps with Perkins as a natural extension for us both and a way to further increase the diversity of the populations we can serve, which only makes us stronger."

Gayle Apkarian of North Andover, whose son, Ulises, attended RFK Children's Action Corps for four years after a traumatic childhood and time in foster care, said, "RFK Children's Action Corps was the place where Ulises finally began to have hope for himself and for his future. I am excited to see what Perkins and RFK Children's Action Corps can do in bringing together the best of their best to expand their proven clinical practice, programs, and supports. This will ensure that more youth, like Ulises, will have a better chance for success."

Kerin Fiore of North Conway, N.H., whose daughter Emma is in her third year at Perkins, said her experience at Perkins "has been amazing and absolutely exceeded my expectations. What I never hear from Perkins is, 'This is what the policy is' or 'This is what the program is.' Instead, it's: What does Emma need right now? I understand RFK Children's Action Corps has the same commitment to individualizing programming for students, and I'm excited to see the new resources that become available through a merger for both."

Jasmin Young, a graduate of RFK Children's Actions Corps and its Youth Leadership Program for Girls who now works as a dental assistant in Boston, said, "The YLPG Program really helped me center myself and focus on the future. I believe this partnership is a mutual benefit for RFK Children's Action Corps and Perkins in expanding connections and services to the community shared through a common vision. They truly are a perfect fit!"

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