



# START WITH HELLO WEEK PLANNING GUIDE

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September 23-27, 2019

A Youth Violence Prevention Program  
[www.sandyhookpromise.org](http://www.sandyhookpromise.org)

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# WELCOME

Thank you for joining the thousands of schools and youth organizations from across the country who are bringing *Start With Hello* Week to their communities!

Your leadership and action will have far-reaching effects, benefitting your entire community: students, educators, administrators, community-based organizations, parents and residents. This kind of community-wide effort has already made measurable differences for organizations around the country, and we're so glad you're bringing *Start With Hello* Week to yours.

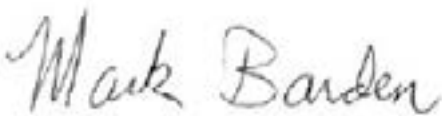
We began *Start With Hello* Week because, in every school and in every community, there are young people who suffer silently because they feel left out, alone or invisible. We want to help students start the back-to-school season and immediately feel seen, accepted and safe.

Social isolation is a growing epidemic in the United States and within our schools, and it can be associated with violent and suicidal behavior. One study found that chronic loneliness increases the risk of an early death by 14%. Young people who are isolated can become victims of bullying, violence and/or depression, and as a result, many pull further away from society, struggle with learning and social development and/or choose to hurt themselves or others.

*Start With Hello* Week activities raise awareness and educate students and the community through trainings, advertising, activities, public proclamations, media events, student contests and school awards. You'll be part of a nationwide movement to empower young people to create a culture of inclusion and connectedness!

This *Start With Hello* Week Planning Guide provides no-cost and easy-to-implement ideas for your *Start With Hello* Week activities. We have compiled ideas and best practices – many of which come from schools and youth organizations like yours – to make your planning and implementation feel even more seamless.

Whether you can dedicate an hour or two over the course of the week, or can engage in *Start With Hello* activities each day, you can make a difference. Along with samples and templates, we have included ideas on how your school or youth organization can continue to carry *Start With Hello* forward through a SAVE Promise Club in order to create a real and lasting culture of kindness and inclusion. We believe that the best way to implement sustained change is to let young people lead the charge!



**MARK BARDEN**

Sandy Hook Promise Managing Director  
Daniel's Dad



**NICOLE HOCKLEY**

Sandy Hook Promise Managing Director  
Dylan's Mom

# START WITH HELLO OVERVIEW

*Start With Hello* is a free program offered by Sandy Hook Promise that trains elementary, middle and high school students how to combat social isolation by showing students how to be more socially inclusive and connected to each other. The objectives of *Start With Hello* are to teach students how to:

- See Someone Alone
- Reach Out and Help
- *Start With Hello*

Each year, Sandy Hook Promise encourages schools to organize a *Start With Hello* Call to Action Week. This year it is September 23-27, 2019 and thousands of schools and youth organizations from across the United States will be participating in *Start With Hello* events and activities. The following are three primary components:



## STUDENT TRAINING

Either before or during the September 23-27 Call to Action Week, students attend the *Start With Hello* training, which is delivered in-person by a teacher or staff member who has completed the *Start With Hello* Train the Trainer Video (grades 6-12) or is using the digital *Start With Hello* Elementary program (K-5).



## CALL TO ACTION WEEK ACTIVITIES

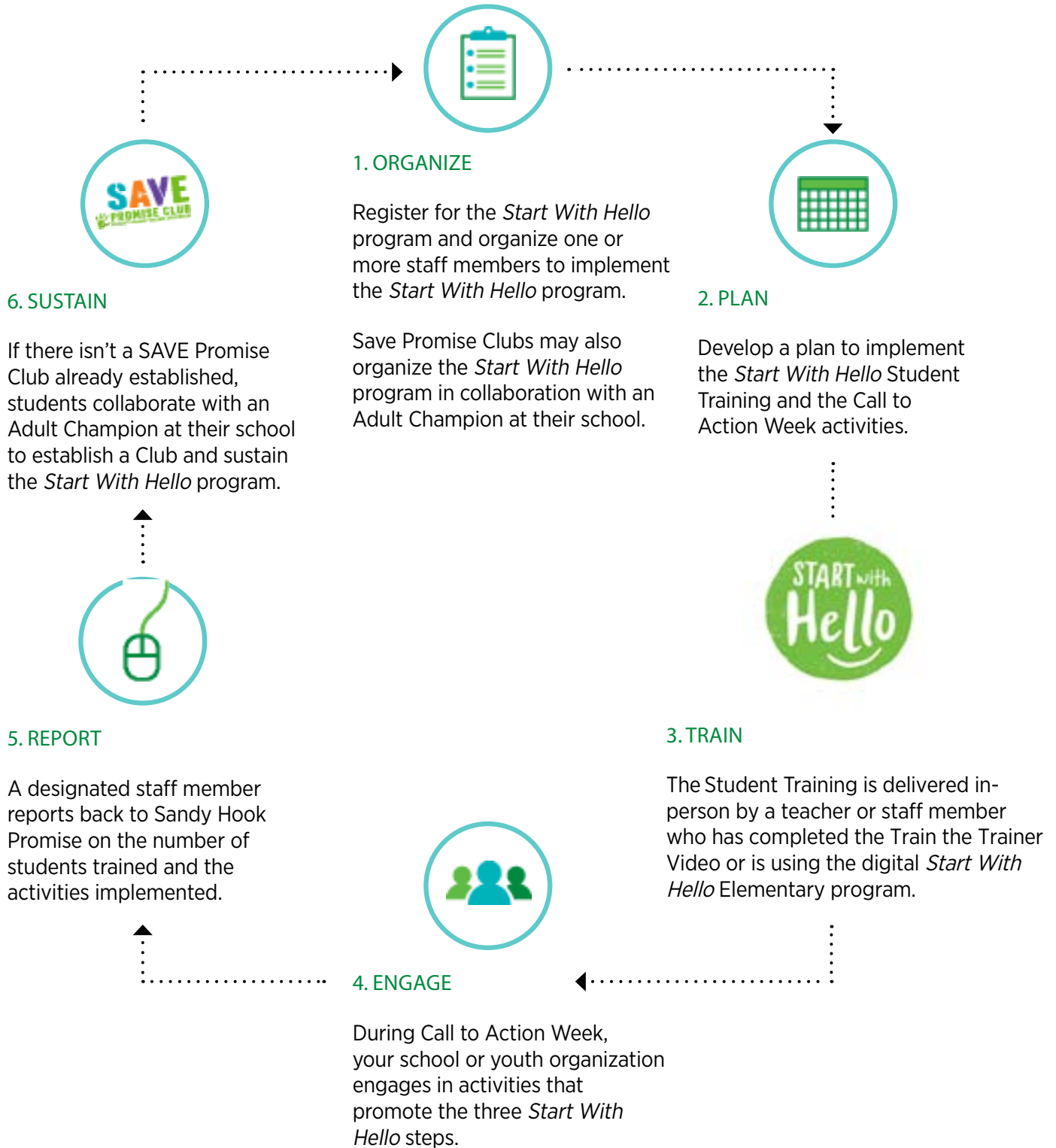
During the Call the Action Week, schools or youth organizations implement activities that promote the *Start With Hello* message and its primary objectives. Read the *Start With Hello* Toolkit for examples of activities.



## SAVE PROMISE CLUBS

Schools and youth organizations establish a SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) Promise Club to sustain the *Start With Hello* message throughout the year. SAVE Promise Clubs are student-led and work to protect their communities by preventing violence before it happens. As part of their work, SAVE Promise Clubs lead activities that promote the *Start With Hello* program (as well as other Sandy Hook Promise *Know the Signs* programs). Click [here](#) for more details on SAVE Promise Clubs.

# THE START WITH HELLO SIX STEP PROCESS



# START WITH HELLO CHECKLIST



## ORGANIZE

Register your school or youth organization for *Start With Hello* [here](#).

Organize one or more staff members to implement the *Start With Hello* Student Training and Call to Action Week activities; or Save Promise Club members organize a team to collaborate with school staff to implement the *Start With Hello* Student Training and Call to Action Week activities.



## PLAN

Students and/or staff members collaborate to plan:

**WHEN** the *Start With Hello* Student Training will occur.

**WHO** will deliver the *Start With Hello* training.

**WHICH** students will attend the *Start With Hello* Student Training.

**WHERE** the *Start With Hello* Student Training will occur.

**WHAT** Call to Action Week activities will be implemented throughout the week. Read the *Start With Hello* Toolkit for examples of activities.



## TRAIN

Deliver the *Start With Hello* Student Training.



## ENGAGE

Throughout September 23-27, students and staff engage in Call to Action Week activities.

Implement activities that raise awareness throughout your school about the *Start With Hello* program. Read the *Start With Hello* Toolkit for examples of activities.



## SUSTAIN

To help make *Start With Hello* an integral part of a school's culture, Sandy Hook Promise supports the establishment and implementation of SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) Clubs. SAVE Promise Clubs are student-led and committed to stopping violence before it happens. SAVE Promise Clubs organize events and activities that help to sustain the messages and practices of *Start With Hello* within their schools. Click [here](#) for more information.



## REPORT

After Call to Action Week, a staff member will receive a text asking if your school or youth organization has implemented the *Start With Hello* program. Please respond. "Yes" or "No".

The text will also include a link to an optional survey where schools can provide additional information.



## CALL TO ACTION WEEK

The *Start With Hello* Call to Action Week—September 23-27, 2019— is an opportunity for schools across the United States to engage their students in the *Start With Hello* Student Training as well as engage their school community in activities that promote the *Start With Hello* objectives.

While this *Start With Hello* Guide provides many examples of activities for schools to engage in, the quantity and scope of these activities are entirely up to each school. As a result, Call to Action Week activities will look different from school to school.

On the following pages are examples of Call to Action Week activities, which are divided into three categories:

1. Classroom activities that educators can implement during one class or multiple classes.
2. Student activities that students can lead on their own.
3. School-wide activities that students, school leadership, and community members can implement collaboratively.



# 1. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

## START WITH HELLO WITH A TWIST

Mix-up the students in your class into new groupings and give them the challenge of designing a real-world solution for promoting inclusivity and community building and/or reducing social isolation.

## MULTICULTURAL GREETINGS

Teach students how to say “Hello” and greet others in different languages. Teachers can use articles such as: [Beyond the Handshake: How People Greet Each Other Around the World](#).

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

After saying “Hello” to someone you don’t know, it’s customary to ask what their name is. Make sure students know each other’s names and organize quick activities for students to dig deeper into the meaning of names. A Math teacher shares a great way to create Tree Name Tag Glyphs: [Name Glyphs](#)

## SMILE WALLS

Encourage each teacher to make space on their bulletin boards, walls, or ceilings to allow students to share notes of kindness and actions that made them smile throughout the week in school.

## MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Raise awareness about the different cultures represented in your community by hosting a

multicultural celebration during the school day with stations set-up to represent the diversity of your school community. Give students a Multicultural Bingo card so that they are encouraged to visit different stations, start with a “Hello”, and learn about the culture.

## CREATIVE WRITING

Assign different journal prompts to motivate students to reflect on personal experiences and engage in deeper thinking around the importance of saying “Hello” and initiating conversations with students who may be feeling left out or isolated. Sample prompts include: “Think about a time when you felt left out. What was that experience like?” “What helped stop that feeling?” or “Why is starting with ‘Hello’ important for our school community?”





## 2. STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### MEET AND GREETINGS

Reach out to clubs and sports teams in your school and schedule each club or team to arrive at school early one day during *Start With Hello* week to meet, greet, and say “Hello” to each student who enters the school building or campus. Set-up a make-your-own nametag station in the lobby where students make creative name tags using construction paper, stickers, markers, and string to make a name-tag necklace.

### EXPRESS YOURSELF CONTEST

Organize a school-wide contest that solicits spoken word, rap songs, poetry, paintings, and other creative products that speak to the theme *Start With Hello*. Display entries or hold a final performance at a poetry slam or culminating assembly at the end of *Start With Hello* week. Publish winning entries in the school newspaper or announce on morning broadcasts. Don’t forget to submit entries to the *Start With Hello* Student Voices contest.

### STUDENT DISPLAYS

Students collaborate with school leaders to display artwork, posters, short stories or poems throughout the school that describes the importance of *Start With Hello*.

### GET CAUGHT SAYING HELLO

Throughout the week, have SAVE Promise Clubs

observing interactions amongst classmates and give small prizes or notes of gratitude from the SAVE Promise Club to students who are caught saying “hello”.

### TABLING EVENT

Students collaborate with school leaders to set up a *Start With Hello* table before school, during lunch or after school. The table has *Start With Hello* literature as well as student-created messages that promote the *Start With Hello* program.

### EDITORIALS

Students write an editorial to their student newspaper describing the *Start With Hello* program as well as how to reach out to help students who may be socially isolated.

### LAUNCH A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Encourage students and staff to take a picture of themselves with a tweet, Instagram, or post stating “I will #*Start With Hello*” and tag their school and Sandy Hook Promise using #StartWithHello.

### MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Students collaborate with school leaders to give school-wide [morning announcements](#) to promote the *Start With Hello* program and remind students to say Hello to their classmates and teachers.



## 3. SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

### ORGANIZE THEME DAYS

Ask student leaders to create a calendar of themes for each day of *Start With Hello* Week: Hey Day, Wear Green Day, Random Acts of Kindness Day, Be a ‘Lifesaver’ Day, and Superhero Day are just a few examples of themes used by schools across the country.

### WEBSITE AND MEDIA SITES

School leadership posts the *Start With Hello* video as well as *Start With Hello* key messages on their school’s website and social media sites.

### AVATAR

School leadership changes its social media avatar to the *Start With Hello* logo during *Start With Hello* Call to Action week as well as provides a link to a webpage with more information about *Start With Hello*.

### PARENT OUTREACH

School leadership sends letters and/or emails to parents and caregivers describing the *Start With Hello* program, the activities occurring during *Start With Hello* Call to Action Week, and guidance on how to continue the *Start With Hello* conversation at home.

### MIX-N-MINGLE

Organize a *Start With Hello* initiative this week. Similar to *Beyond Differences No One Eats Alone* Day or *Teaching Tolerance Mix It Up Day*, encourage all students to sit with someone new at lunch, on the bus, and in class. Celebrate connecting to new students by designating a space where students can post pictures or write messages about the new students they met, conversations they had, and friendships that were ignited due to starting with “Hello.”

### PROCLAMATION

School leadership invites their city or town’s school board, city council, mayor, or police chief to sign a proclamation that promotes the *Start With Hello* program. The proclamation is then shared with the local media (see Toolkit for Proclamation template).