

Dear [insert the name of your local school principal or youth organization director],

**I am [a parent/community member/neighbor] and I am asking you to help empower our young people to create a culture of inclusion and connectedness by participating in Start With Hello Week this February 6 – 10, 2017.**

Social isolation is the overwhelming feeling of being left out, lonely or treated like you are invisible. It is a growing epidemic in the United States and within our schools. Excessive feelings of isolation can be associated with violent and suicidal behavior. In fact, one study reports that chronic loneliness increases our risk of an early death by 14%. Furthermore, young people who are isolated can become victims of bullying, violence and/or depression. As a result, many further pull away from society, struggle with learning and social development and/or choose to hurt themselves or others.

Start with Hello teaches students, grades 2-12, the skills they need to reach out to and include those who may be dealing with chronic social isolation and create a culture of inclusion and connectedness within their school or youth organization. In addition to young people, Start With Hello will benefit educators, administrators, community-based organization leaders and parents. By building a culture of inclusion and connectedness, schools and communities can better support their young people and reduce their risk of bullying, violence and depression.

Start With Hello Week raises awareness and educates students and the community through Start With Hello trainings, advertising, activities, public proclamations, media events, contests and awards. **Participation in Start With Hello Week is completely free and easy to implement!**

National Start With Hello Week is organized by Sandy Hook Promise, a nonprofit organization led by several family members who lost loved ones at the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on December 14, 2012. Based in Newtown, Connecticut, SHP's mission is to prevent gun violence BEFORE it happens by teaching youth and adults how to recognize the signs, intervene and get help for individuals who may be at-risk of hurting themselves or others. For more about Sandy Hook Promise, please visit: [www.sandyhookpromise.org](http://www.sandyhookpromise.org).

Sandy Hook Promise will provide each participating school and youth organization with access to no-cost, digitally downloadable presentations, activities and resource guides. Sandy Hook Promise can also provide media tools and in-person training to educators and/or students at select schools (based on school size and trainer availability). The training can be accomplished in 50 minutes or less, and activities can be spread throughout the week of February 6 - 10, 2017.

Please help us empower our young people to create a culture of inclusiveness and prevent violence before it takes place. **Please sign up to participate in Start With Hello Week today at: <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek>.**

Thank you,

[Insert full name, email and phone number]