



***Start With Hello* Week Planning Guide**
February 5 - 9, 2018



A Youth Violence Prevention Program from Sandy Hook Promise
www.sandyhookpromise.org

For questions, please email:
startwithhello@sandyhookpromise.org

Start With Hello Week
Planning Guide
February 5 - 9, 2018

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Welcome Letter and Purpose of *Start With Hello* Week Planning Guide

In every school and in every community, there are young people who suffer silently because they feel left out, alone or invisible. Social isolation 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 (SWH) Week raises awareness and educates students and the community through *Start With Hello* trainings, advertising, activities, public proclamations, media events, student contests, and school awards. **By participating in *Start With Hello* Week this February 5 - 9, you will join hundreds of schools and youth organizations from across the United States 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 have come from schools and youth organizations like yours – to make your planning and implementation easier.

Whether you are able to dedicate an hour or two during *Start With Hello* Week or implement *Start With Hello* activities every day throughout the week, this Planning Guide offers easy to implement and no-cost ideas that can help you reach students and community members alike, as well as incorporate the energy, creativity, and ownership of young people. 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!

Thank you for joining hundreds of schools and youth organizations from across the country to bring *Start With Hello* Week and the power of inclusion, connectedness and belonging to more young people. In addition to young people, your efforts will benefit educators, administrators, community based organizations, community members 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.

Sincerely,
Mark Barden (Daniel's Dad) & Nicole Hockley (Dylan's Mom)
Managing Directors, Sandy Hook Promise

Start With Hello Week Planning Guide

Step 1: Getting Started

The first step to planning your *Start With Hello* Week is making sure your school or youth organization is officially signed up and registered for *Start With Hello* Week with Sandy Hook Promise.

Even if you've participated in *Start With Hello* in the past, officially registering for *Start With Hello* Week assures you get timely *Start With Hello* Week updates and have access to important and newly developed resources and tools, including the no-cost, downloadable *Start With Hello* program. If you haven't yet, please register at: <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek>

Once you are officially registered, you will receive an email that will include a link to our *Start With Hello* program and resources. These resources are available at no cost to help you teach young people how to *Start With Hello*.

- **Start With Hello PowerPoint Presentation:** Sandy Hook Promise offers two versions of the *Start With Hello* PowerPoint presentation – one for elementary school age students and one for middle and high school students. The *Start With Hello* presentation can be delivered in as little as 20-minutes or extended to 40-minutes or more to allow more time for practice and discussion.
- **Start With Hello Discussion and Activity Guide for Educators and Classrooms:** This quick and easy-to-use guide is designed to assist adult educators in facilitating discussions and ongoing activities to reduce social isolation and create a connected and inclusive classroom, school and community. It includes ideas, activities and resources for supporting young people in carrying out *Start With Hello* both during *Start With Hello* Week and throughout the year.
- **Start With Hello Student Resource Guide:** This quick and easy-to-use guide is designed to assist students, youth ambassadors and peer leaders in implementing *Start With Hello*. It includes ideas, activities and resources that young people can do during *Start With Hello* Week and throughout the year.
- **Start With Hello Parent Brochure:** The *Start With Hello* Parent Brochure is a quick and easy-to-implement guide that parents and caretakers can use – and that schools and youth organizations can give to parents – to help continue *Start With Hello* at home.

Start With Hello Week Planning Guide

Step 2: Ideas for Student Participation

Young people have the power to see someone isolated, reach out and *Start With Hello* in order to reduce social isolation and foster a more connected and inclusive classroom, school and community. As such it's important that *Start With Hello* reaches every young person in your school or youth organization, as each young person has the power to make a difference, make a new friend or save a life.

The following ideas can help you incorporate student participation as an integral and vital part of your *Start With Hello Week* planning and implementation. If you and the young people you work with have additional ideas, we'd love to hear them and share them with others! Please email us at: startwithhello@sandyhookpromise.org

Events

- Host big and small events throughout the week, this could include classroom discussions, lunch conversations, all school assemblies or daily morning announcements about the importance of *Start With Hello*
- Organize theme days as part of *Start With Hello Week* that reflect the *Start With Hello* icebreakers. See page 18 for sample *Start With Hello* theme day planning template.
- Encourage language classes, such as Spanish, French, Chinese or Sign Language to teach other students how to say "hello" in different languages.
- Ask art classes to create *Start With Hello* posters that can be displayed around the school. Encourage students to submit their art work as part of the [Start With Hello student contest](#).
- Ask the music or drama classes to perform a song, rap or skit during *Start With Hello* that incorporates the lessons of *Start With Hello*. Make a video of the performance and include it in your *Start With Hello* school award application. More information on the *Start With Hello* school awards can be found at: <https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloaward>
- Involve and encourage staff and youth leaders to incorporate and model *Start With Hello* key messages, stories and activities into extracurricular activities during *Start With Hello Week*, such as messages from coaches, band instructors, drama teachers, student council, national honor society and other student clubs.
- Consider changing seating charts in the classroom or during lunch to give students a chance to meet and talk to someone new.
- Look for ways to pair students together, such as group projects or learning or homework assignments.
- Set up informational tables at already scheduled school activities, programs and events that promote and incorporate the icebreaker ideas from the *Start With Hello* presentation.

- Participate in No One Eats Alone Day on February 9^h. **No One Eats Alone Day is a program from Beyond Differences. No One Eats Alone Day will be held nationally this year on February 9, during Sandy Hook Promise's Start With Hello Week. More about No One Eats Alone Day© and Beyond Differences, an organizational friend to Sandy Hook Promise, can be found at: <http://www.nooneeatsalone.org>*
- Host a *Start With Hello* dance party.

Promote & Recognize

- Ask teachers, administrators or other students to write quick thank-you notes or kindness messages to students in recognition of their efforts to *Start With Hello*. Consider asking your youth club or [SAVE Promise Club](#) to come to school early and leave a positive message, such as "You Matter" on post it notes on every student's locker.
- Create a *Start With Hello* wall where every student can sign their name or write "Hello" to indicate their commitment to reach out and connect with someone they see isolated. Ask students to take "selfies" of them standing by the wall and use the tags #StartWithHello
- Organize a "Wear Green Day" (Sandy Hook Promise's colors) to further promote awareness and call attention to Sandy Hook Promise's *Start With Hello* Week.
- Encourage students to share *Start With Hello* or organize *Start With Hello* activities via their social media, this could include reaching out and connecting with peers via social media or sharing messages of inclusion.
- Ask students to come up with their own ideas and activities of how to *Start With Hello* or to reflect on how it might feel to be isolated, lonely or treated as if you were invisible as a classroom or homework assignment.
- Place *Start With Hello* ads, posts and articles in the school newspaper or on your social media sites or web page.

***Start With Hello* Week Student Participation Success Story**
Howard High School, Ellicott City, Maryland

At Howard High School in Ellicott City, Maryland, student leaders hosted the morning TV announcements each day to talk about *Start With Hello*. Student leaders presented the *Start With Hello* training presentation and made *Start With Hello* bracelets to sell at lunch shifts. The bracelets combined Howard High School's school colors of blue and white with Sandy Hook Promise's colors green and white. Students worked with their second period classes to create *Start With Hello* doors for a door decorating contest. Students also decorated the sidewalk near the buses with *Start With Hello* greetings and signs using sidewalk chalk. The students also made *Start With Hello* posters and posted them around the school. The posters remained in the school throughout the end of the year.

***Start With Hello* Week Student Participation Success Story**
North Broward Preparatory School, Coconut Creek, Florida

Three 7th graders from North Broward Preparatory School in Florida brought *Start With Hello* Week to their school. The students initially began by creating a video as part of a school project. Their research led them to Sandy Hook Promise and *Start With Hello* Week.

With the support of their student advisor and administrator, the three 7th graders organized a *Start With Hello* training presentation, "wear green day", and enlisted the help of the student art department to create "hello" signs in the many languages represented within their student population. They also recruited the yearbook classes to photograph the *Start With Hello* events.

Originally, the three students planned for only the 7th grade to participate in *Start With Hello* Week, but after being inspired by the activities, the students expanded *Start With Hello* to their entire Middle School.

Start With Hello Week Planning Guide

Step 3: Ideas for Student Leadership, Spirit, Creativity and Ownership

One of the best ways to empower young people to *Start With Hello* and to be the catalyst of change in their schools, youth organizations and community is to let them lead the charge. Encourage young people to take the lead and add their own unique voice, stories and perspective to *Start With Hello* Week.

The following ideas are here to help you encourage youth leadership, creativity and ownership into your *Start With Hello* Week planning and implementation. If you and the young people you work with have additional ideas, we'd love to hear them and share them with others! Please email us at: startwithhello@sandyhookpromise.org

Events

- Reach out to existing student groups, such as student civic groups, student leadership groups and student art, music, AV or journalist clubs to get their ideas and identify ways they want to use their talents to promote *Start With Hello* Week. Review the activity ideas in this guide with your student club and ask them what activities they would like to organize or if they have additional ideas.
- Host a meeting with your [SAVE Promise Club](#) or student club before *Start With Hello* Week to get ideas from students on how your school can support young people in their *Start With Hello* activities.
- Ask students to present portions of the *Start With Hello* training presentation, lead, demonstrate and practice the *Start With Hello* icebreakers or *Start With Hello* discussions in the classroom or at an assembly or extracurricular event.
- Ask your [SAVE Promise Club](#) to recruit their peers to participate in the [Start With Hello student contest](#) or help you with the [Start With Hello school award application](#).
- Ask your [SAVE Promise Club](#) to arrive to school early or stay after school one day during *Start With Hello* Week. Give each student a sticky note and ask them to write encouraging or kind words to others and put them on others lockers, desks or books.
- Ask your [SAVE Promise Club](#) or other student club to arrive to school early during *Start With Hello* Week and greet students and staff with a "hello" as they enter the building. Consider handing out nametags so students can write their names and the entire student body can address each other by their names.
- Print out happy face emoticons and give to students. Encourage them to pass them on to other students they feel could use a smile.
- Ask the student club if they'd be interested in signing up as an official SAVE Promise Club to help them more fully integrate *Start With Hello* and Sandy Hook Promise's mission into their club activities. You can learn more and sign up at <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/savepromiseclub>

Incentives & Contests

- Organize contests for students, including posters, videos, rap songs, poems, skits or other creative writing or expression contests that let young people express why it's important to recognize social isolation and *Start With Hello*. Encourage students to enter their creations in the [Start With Hello student contest](#) or use their videos for the [Start With Hello school award application](#).
- Assign students writing assignments as part of English classes. Ask them to write about how they can play a role in reducing social isolation and creating a culture of inclusiveness within their classroom, school or community. Give extra credit. Encourage students to submit their essays to the Start With Hello Student Contest at <https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/studentcontest>

Promote & Recognize

- Publish, display and share youth contest entries and/or creating writing assignments around the school grounds, school newspaper, social media or website, at events and in morning announcements. Share the winning entries with parents or within the larger community. Encourage students to enter their creations in the [Start With Hello student contest](#) or use their videos for the [Start With Hello school award application](#).
- Ask students to create their own nametags that they wear throughout the week. Ask them – and staff – to greet each other by their first names.
- Ask students to share their videos, rap songs, poems and other creative expressions about the importance of *Start With Hello* on their social media by using #StartWithHello and #SandyHookPromise or to perform or show their videos, poems or rap songs over lunch or during announcements. Encourage students to enter their creations in the [Start With Hello student contest](#) or use their videos for the [Start With Hello school award application](#).
- Encourage students and staff to take a picture of them self with a tweet, Instagram or post telling everyone, “I will #Start With Hello.” Ask them to tag your school and Sandy Hook Promise using the hashtag #StartWithHello and track and promote how many students, teachers and administrators participate.

Start With Hello Week Student Ownership Success Story

John A. Ferguson High School, Miami, Florida

The [SAVE Promise Club](#) at John A. Ferguson High School in Miami, Florida came together to develop activities to involve the entire student body of 4,000 students in *Start With Hello Week*.

On Monday of *Start With Hello Week*, the group of 15 SAVE Promise Club members organized a "Hey Day" by arriving to school by 6:30 AM and distributing "Hello, my name is:" stickers to students so that all 4,000 students could greet each other by their first names.

On Tuesday, the Club built a "Wall of Positivity" where students could write encouraging words to others.

On Wednesday, the Club engaged in conversations with anyone sitting alone during lunch and recruited other students to join them in their efforts to reduce social isolation, using the six different ice breaker ideas provided in the "*Start with Hello*" presentation.

On Thursday, the Club organized a mixed grade social with a scavenger hunt. This event took place after school in the cafeteria. SAVE Promise Club members and other students from the school came to this social to meet new people.

Finally, on Friday, the Club organized a "Speed Friend-ing" activity where students got to engage in conversation with a total stranger for two minutes in order to encourage peer interaction and meet new friends. During this day, students were encouraged to wear a green in support of Sandy Hook Promise.

***Start With Hello* Week Student Ownership Success Story**
North Arlington High School, North Arlington, New Jersey

The students at North Arlington High School in New Jersey took the lead in organizing their *Start With Hello* Week. The student club thought outside of the box and put their own personal spin on many of the activities suggested in the *Start With Hello Week* planning guide.

North Arlington High School's *Start With Hello* activities included organizing a poetry contest where all students were invited to write a poem about a topic associated with *Start With Hello*. The winner's poem was published in the school newspaper. The student club also created a *Start With Hello* Wall where students wrote "hello" in many different languages. A student dressed up as the school mascot and encouraged students to sign the wall.

The student club also organized a scavenger hunt in which student teams tracked down as many *Start With Hello* logos as they could find around the school. The winning team received a gift card. Following the scavenger hunt, the student club led the school through the *Start With Hello* training presentation and connected the message of *Start With Hello* with the use of the scavenger hunt by saying that, "just as we have to go out of our way to say hello to others to ensure they feel included, we must go out of our way to track down the logos."

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Step 4: Ideas for Community Reach

Young people aren't the only ones who can create more connected and inclusive communities... and they aren't the only ones who can *Start With Hello*! In fact, the more that young people see positive acts of inclusion and kindness from others in the community, the more it reinforces them to do the same!

Expanding *Start With Hello* within your community, and especially to the school and youth organization staff and parents and caretakers of young people, is a critical component of a successful *Start With Hello* Week. The following ideas can help you reach parents, caretakers and others from the community who can support and encourage young people to *Start With Hello*. If you and the young people you work with have additional ideas, we'd love to hear them and share them with others! Please email us at: startwithhello@sandyhookpromise.org

Events

- Invite speakers, or VIPs from the community who can share first-hand about the importance of *Start With Hello* to come and talk with students. This could include physicians or mental health providers, law enforcement, local elected officials, business owners or civic leaders.
- Have city leaders, school board members or civic clubs, such as the Rotary or Chamber of Commerce, present certificates or plaques to students at an assembly or event in recognition of their efforts to *Start With Hello*.
- Encourage students to write letters or make *Start With Hello* presentations at other schools or youth or civic events in the community about the need to *Start With Hello*. For example, encourage your high school students to recruit a Middle School in your district to participate and have the high schoolers join the Middle School students for an activity during the week.

Promote & Recognize

- Change your school or youth organization's social media avatar to the *Start With Hello* logo during *Start With Hello* Week and include a link to how parents, caretakers or others from the community can learn how to *Start With Hello*.
- Encourage local businesses and organizations to also change their marquee to *Start With Hello* or post *Start With Hello* posters or "Positivity Walls" in their place of business. (See the Positivity Wall idea in the John A. Ferguson Success Story on page 9 of this planning guide).
- Ask your school board, city council/mayor, chief of police or student council to sign a *Start With Hello* proclamation and share with local media. A sample *Start With Hello* proclamation is available on page 27 of this planning guide.
- Send a press release and ask local media to come to your school or youth organization to cover a *Start With Hello* event. A sample press release is available

on page 21 of this planning guide. Have a student follow-up after the release is sent and personally invite a reporter to attend an event.

- Send letters/emails to parents and caretakers and share what is happening in your school or youth organization during *Start With Hello* Week with the *Start With Hello* parent guide provided to you upon signing up for *Start With Hello* Week. Ask them to continue to reinforce *Start With Hello* at home.
- Ask city leaders or notable people in your community to write thank you notes to students in recognition of their efforts to end social isolation and build a connected and inclusive community.
- Ask popular student hangout places, such as the local coffee shop, community library, rec center or pizza place, to hang *Start With Hello* posters or display poems, short stories or artwork created by the students about *Start With Hello*.
- Ask city and civic groups, such as Police Departments, Fire Departments, area hospitals, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, City Council, School Board or Women's groups, to share or display the student's *Start With Hello* videos, rap songs, poems or creative writing assignments at meetings or on their social media or websites in order to continue to celebrate the youth and further spread the *Start With Hello* message to their community. You can also invite youth leaders to make brief *Start With Hello* presentations to these groups.
- Ask members of the community and parents and caretakers to join the students in their social media campaign by posting a photo of them with a message, "I will #StartWithHello". Ask them to tag your school and Sandy Hook Promise using the hashtag #StartWithHello and track and promote how many parents and community members join you. Additional sample social media posts are available on page 25 of this planning guide.

***Start With Hello* Week Community Reach Success Story** **Madison Youth Group, Rexburg, Idaho**

Madison Youth Group in Rexburg, Idaho asked their City leaders for help getting the word out about their *Start With Hello* Week. City leaders, including the Mayor, business owners and civic leaders helped get local businesses to participate and hang *Start With Hello* materials over town, including changing the marquees of businesses into *Start With Hello* messages, even the McDonald's sign said, "Hello, Rexburg!"

Over 40 city personnel, including police, water, garbage, city council and firefighters joined the school for *Start With Hello* activities. The local elected officials also signed a *Start With Hello* Week proclamation in Rexburg that was covered in the local media.

One of the students commented: "The whole city of Rexburg was uniting and saying to the people who felt unheard and alone that they were noticed and that they mattered." The more that people were involved in the planning and implementation, the more excited they were to see *Start With Hello* Week happen.

Start With Hello Week Community Reach Success Story **Pickerington High School, Central Ohio**

Student leaders at Pickerington High School made sure their entire community in Central Ohio knew about *Start With Hello Week*.

Student leaders from the High School formed a SAVE Promise Club and facilitated roundtable lunch discussions at the neighboring Junior High School about *Start With Hello*. They used *Start With Hello Week* as an opportunity to welcome next year's freshman to the high school, as *Start With Hello Week* coincided with the 9th grade registration week.

The club also approached the local Dairy Queen. The Dairy Queen helped sponsor *Start With Hello Week* and provide green, mint chocolate chip *Start With Hello* blizzards during *Start With Hello Week*. Additional area businesses posted *Start With Hello* signs and messages on their marquees.

The club also enlisted help from their fellow students. For example, they asked students in the language classes to present *Start With Hello* in American Sign Language and Spanish.

Students at Pickerington High School created five *Start With Hello* videos that were disseminated to the community throughout the week. These five videos, each lasting about 2 -3 minutes and incorporating messages from the *Start With Hello* training presentation, received over 1,500 views on YouTube and were distributed throughout the entire school district to over 10,000 students and their parents and caretakers.

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Step 5: Sustainability a Culture of *Start With Hello*

While *Start With Hello* Week serves to raise awareness and generate energy and excitement among young people, the actions of inclusion and kindness must be sustained in order to create effective change and reduce social isolation in classrooms, schools and communities across the United States. One of the best ways to implement sustained activity is to let young people lead the charge, looking to an adult champion for occasional support and guidance.

Sandy Hook Promise’s SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) Promise Clubs provide an opportune place for young people across the country to show their leadership, creativity and passion for sustaining *Start With Hello* and creating a culture of looking out for one another, reducing social isolation and building connected and inclusive classrooms, schools and communities.

[SAVE Promise Clubs](#) are established and led by students and are a powerful approach to preventing violence because they recognize the unique role that young people play in making their schools and communities safer.

A SAVE Promise Club can be a stand-alone club or embedded into an existing club, such as SADD, Student Council, FCCLA, or another student leadership, civic or kindness club. Many SAVE Promise Clubs are successful meeting only once or twice a month and organizing 4 activities throughout the year.

To officially register your school or youth organization as a SAVE Promise Club, visit:
<http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/savepromiseclub>

The benefits of registering as an official SAVE Promise Club include:

- No-cost access to Sandy Hook Promise’s no-cost Know the Signs Programs, including *Say Something*, *Start With Hello*, *Signs of Suicide* and *Safety Assessment & Intervention*. More information is available at http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/prevention_programs
- Eligibility to have your students and club apply for special SAVE Promise Club awards and recognition and attend the annual [SAVE Promise Club Summit](#).
- A certificate recognizing your school or youth organization as an official SAVE Promise Club and recognition as an official SAVE Promise Club on the Sandy Hook Promise SAVE Promise Club website.
- Informative monthly [newsletters](#) and communications with tips, ideas and best practices for organizing SAVE Promise Club activities within your school or youth organization.
- A chance to have your SAVE Promise Club featured in Sandy Hook Promise and SAVE Promise Clubs communications, social media and media events.

- Access to one-on-one support from Sandy Hook Promise.

Carrying *Start With Hello* Forward:

The following are ideas and best practices to help you support young people in sustaining *Start With Hello* throughout the year and creating a culture of *Start With Hello* within your school or youth organization from year to year. If you and the young people you work with have additional ideas, we'd love to hear them and share them with others! Please email us at: startwithhello@sandyhookpromise.org

- Create a SAVE Promise Club within your school or youth organization by signing up at: <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/savepromiseclub>
- Make *Start With Hello* Week an annual event within your school or youth organization. *Start With Hello* Week is the perfect opportunity to remind students about the importance of reducing social isolation and building connected classrooms, schools and communities and help your school continue to build and sustain a culture of inclusiveness and connectedness year after year. It's also a great time to train new students who may not have been in your school or youth organization last year.
- Ask other schools in your school district to join you for *Start With Hello* Week. Consider making *Start With Hello* Week a district wide annual event.
- Ask older students to mentor and pass down *Start With Hello* responsibilities to younger students and carry *Start With Hello* from year to year.
- Invite youth serving organizations that your school has existing relationships with, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the YMCA, YWCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, after school programs, little leagues or Boys and Girls Club to join your efforts and continue the *Start With Hello* conversation within their programs.
- Tie in with other organization's no-cost events and resources, including Beyond Differences 'No One Eats Alone Day' © or the Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance 'Mix It Up' Day ©. More information on both of these events can be found at: <http://www.nooneeatsalone.org/> or <http://www.tolerance.org/mix-it-up/get-started>.
- Assign a *Start With Hello* homework assignment 1-2 times throughout the year. Tie it with your curriculum.
- Check in with students so you know how you can help and support them. Consider trying this idea from a Math Teacher: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/glennon-melton/this-brilliant-math-teacher-has-a-formula-to-save-kids-lives_b_4899349.html

***Start With Hello* Week Community Reach Success Story**
Lopez Public School, Fort Collins, Colorado

Lopez Public School has a student ambassador program. Following *Start With Hello* Week, the school made a commitment with their student ambassador group to do one *Start With Hello* activity a month throughout the rest of the school year.

The student ambassadors meet bi-weekly and the Student Ambassador Team Facilitator uses these meetings to plan activities with the student ambassadors. The activities include incorporating *Start With Hello* icebreaker activities into school events and lunchtime activities and encouraging students to practice *Start With Hello* at home and in the community. Lopez Public School uses their school webpage and Facebook page to publicize the activities.

***Start With Hello* Week Community Reach Success Story**
Burnet Middle School, Burnet, Texas

Burnet Middle School hosted their first *Start With Hello* Week in 2016. As part of their *Start With Hello* Week, students organized an all school assembly to present the *Start With Hello* training presentation and invited parents and members of the community to attend.

The local Rotary Club sponsored *Start With Hello* t-shirts for all students to wear to the assembly and celebrate their efforts. Over 20 local businesses changed their marquees to celebrate *Start With Hello* Week and the local paper interviewed students about their *Start With Hello* experiences.

Bolstered by the positive ripple *Start With Hello* Week created within Burnet Middle School and throughout the community of Burnet, student leaders, with the support of an adult advisor, signed up as an official [SAVE Promise Club](#). Since *Start With Hello* Week in 2016, Burnet Middle School and their SAVE Promise Club has been able to get their entire school district to come on board. This year, every school in the district will participate in *Start With Hello* Week, as well as Sandy Hook Promise's *Say Something* program. Burnet Consolidated ISD, led by their SAVE Promise Club youth leaders and with the support of their adult champion, are building towards a long-term cultural shift of looking out for one another, practicing inclusion and building community.

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Step 6: Reporting Back and *Start With Hello* Contests and Awards

Lastly, an important part of your school or youth organization's *Start With Hello* Week is that it is taking place in concert with hundreds of other schools across the country. The collective energy, reach and learning that happens during *Start With Hello* Week builds upon each school and youth organization's efforts to reach and empower more young people to reduce social isolation, build connected and inclusive communities and save lives! To fully capture the reach of *Start With Hello* Week, we must be able to collect data, information and stories to share back and celebrate.

Receive 100 Free *Start With Hello* Wristbands!

You will receive a brief electronic survey to complete following *Start With Hello* Week. We ask that you please complete this survey. **Upon sharing your *Start With Hello* Week participation with Sandy Hook Promise, you will receive 100 free *Start With Hello* wristbands and a certificate for your school or youth organization!**

Apply for the *Start With Hello* School Awards and Student Contest!

All participating *Start With Hello* schools and youth organizations are eligible to apply for the *Start With Hello* school awards and student contest.

- ***Start With Hello* Student Contest:** Students in grades 2-12 are eligible to apply for the *Start With Hello* student contest. Students may submit creative works in the following categories:
 - **Written:** Essay – Please limit to less than 600 words
 - **Spoken:** Spoken word/poetry/rap/song/skit – Please limit video to less than 5 minutes and upload to a youtube link.
 - **Visual:** Poster art (limit artwork to 10" X 10" or less) or sidewalk chalk art (Submit photo)

For more information on the *Start With Hello* Student Contest, including the timeline, rules and how to apply, please visit:

<https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/studentcontest>

- ***Start With Hello* School Awards:** All participating schools and youth organizations are eligible to apply for the *Start With Hello* School Awards. For more information on the *Start With Hello* School Awards, including a timeline for submitting *Start With Hello* entries, complete rules and award criteria, and the *Start With Hello* School Award application, please visit:
<http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloaward>.

***Start With Hello* Week Resources**

Sample *Start With Hello* Week Template

This sample *Start With Hello* Week template provides an example on how you can organize your *Start With Hello* Week, along with ideas on themes for each day.

While taking very little time to implement, these activities incorporate and build upon the best practices of student participation, student leadership, spirit, creativity and ownership, community reach and sustainability – all key factors for a successful *Start With Hello* Week and the *Start With Hello* Week awards. We encourage you to come up with your own ideas and share them back with us at saysomething@sandyhookpromise.org.

Monday, February 5: *Start With Hello* Week Kick-off

- Kick off *Start With Hello* Week by asking your [SAVE Promise Club](#) to come to school early 30-minutes early and greet everyone as they enter the building with a “hello”. Give student club members name tags that say “Hello, my name is...” to hand out to students and staff as they enter the building. Encourage students to write their names on the name tags and wear them throughout the day.
- Change your school’s avatar or marquee to the *Start With Hello* logo or to include a *Start With Hello* message.
- Ask you student club members or staff to use the morning announcement to introduce *Start With Hello* Week and show case the activities you have planned.
- Depending on time available, present a 20-minute to 40-minute *Start With Hello* training presentation during an all school assembly or within the classroom. If timing is a concern, break up the training presentation over the course of the week. Consider having your [SAVE Promise Club](#) deliver portions of the program.

Tuesday, February 6: Student Creativity and Leadership

- Introduce the *Start With Hello* student contest and encourage your students to take part in the contest, whether through written, spoken or visual art.
 - Encourage students to create *Start With Hello* posters or art work that they can submit to the [Start With Hello Week student contest](#). Organize a poster making contest over the lunch hours, study halls, or after school. Supply markers, paper and other art supplies. Display the art work within your school or youth organization throughout the week and then submit entries to the [Start With Hello Week student contest](#).
 - Assign a *Start With Hello* essay. Give students time to develop a *Start With Hello* essay during class or bring it home as a homework assignment. Encourage them to submit their essay (600 words or less) to the [Start With Hello student contest](#). Encourage students to read or share their essays with one another or as part of a public speaking assignment.

- Ask students to create spoken word, poetry, raps, songs or a skit that incorporates the message of *Start With Hello*. These creative expressions can be performed over lunch or in an assembly and turned into videos that students can use to submit to the [Start With Hello student contest](#) or that your school or youth organization can use as part of their application to the [Start With Hello school awards](#).

Wednesday, February 7: Reach Out and Connect!

- Organize a “human bingo” or “human scavenger hunt” around your school or youth organization. Use the ideas from the *Start With Hello* training presentation and guides to encourage students to learn about each other and find things they have in common with one another.
- Encourage students to reach out to other schools or grade levels and share *Start With Hello*.
- Ask your language classes – such as Spanish, Chinese, French or American Sign Language classes – to teach their peers how to say hello in another language. Encourage students to practice saying hello in other languages in the hallways and over lunch.

Thursday, February 8: Sharing *Start With Hello*

- Build a Positivity Wall or *Start With Hello* pledge wall in your main entry way or lunch room and encourage students to write positive and encouraging messages.
- Encourage students to take “selfies” of themselves in front of the pledge wall or positivity wall and share their *Start With Hello* messages on social media using the hashtag #StartWithHello. Consider turning it into a contest and see how many students, teachers and administrators participate.
- Ask your [SAVE Promise Club](#) to show up to school early and write positive greetings or messages on post-it notes. Post the post-it notes on each student’s locker. Encourage students to share or pass on their *Start With Hello* post-it message to another student that they don’t know yet during the day.

Friday, February 9: Carrying *Start With Hello* Forward

- Convene your students and ask them how they would like to carry *Start With Hello* forward into the rest of the school year or how they would like to create a culture of *Start With Hello* within their school or youth organization for years to come. If you haven’t yet already, sign up your students as an official [SAVE Promise Club](#). **Each SAVE Promise Club officially registered by Friday, February 9th will be entered into a special *Start With Hello* raffle.**
- Host a special *Start With Hello* event over lunch periods or as part of an assembly or consider participating in [No One Eats Alone Day](#) © on February 9. *No One Eats Alone Day*© is a program from *Beyond Differences*. This year, *No One Eats Alone Day* will be held nationally on February 9, during Sandy Hook Promise’s *Start With Hello Week*. More about *No One Eats Alone Day* and *Beyond*

Differences, an organizational friend to Sandy Hook Promise, can be found at:
<http://www.nooneeatsalone.org>

- Invite the school board, local elected officials, parents and caregivers, police chief or other community leaders to attend and participate in your No One Eats Alone Day or be part of a *Start With Hello* presentation, activity or conversation in your school or classroom.
- Ask the school board, local elected officials, law enforcement or other community leaders, including the student council, to present a *Start With Hello* proclamation. A sample proclamation is available on page 27 of this planning guide.
- Invite the local media to attend and cover the event and your activities. A sample press release is available on page 21 of this planning guide.
- Send home the *Start With Hello* parent brochure to parents/caretakers. Encourage them to support the message of *Start With Hello* at home.

***Start With Hello* Week Resources**

Video Best Practices

Use these tips and best practices to create your *Start With Hello* video(s).

1. You don't need fancy equipment to make your *Start With Hello* video. In fact, your cell phone will work just fine. However, if your school has audio and video equipment or a media class or club, take advantage and ask for help.
2. When creating your video, be sure to keep the phone or camera still, prop it up against a still object or use a tripod.
3. Stay close to the camera when making your video, especially if you're using a smart phone, so that the microphone can pick up your voices and your message comes across clear and audible.
4. Have notes or a script nearby in case you need a little hint.
5. Use AirDrop to email yourself the video if it's long, then you can download it to your computer or a USB drive like any normal file.
6. Be sure to include your *Start With Hello* video in your *Start With Hello* Award application. You can also share your video with us during *Start With Hello* Week. We'd love to share it on our social media! Email it to startwithhello@sandyhookpromise.org, tweet us at @SandyHook, or tag us on Instagram @SandyHookPromise.

Start With Hello Week Resources

Sample *Start With Hello* Press Release

[Insert Your School/Youth Organization and Start With Hello Logo Here]

MEDIA ADVISORY

[Insert Date]

PRESS CONTACT

[Insert Contact name, phone number and email here]

[Insert Name of School/Youth Organization] Empowers Young People to *Start With Hello* and Build a Connected and Inclusive Community

Name of School/Youth Organizations Promotes Start With Hello Week

WHAT: [Insert name of school/youth organization] in partnership with Sandy Hook Promise, a national, nonprofit organization led by several family members whose loved ones were killed in the tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School is taking part in *Start With Hello* Week, February 5 – 9, 2018.

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.

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 Week raises awareness and educates students and the community through *Start With Hello* trainings, advertising, activities, public proclamations, media events, student contests and school awards. *Start With Hello* Week brings attention to the growing epidemic of social isolation in our schools and communities and empowers young people to create a culture of inclusion and connectedness within their school or youth organization.

[Insert name of your school or youth organization] is joining hundreds of other schools from across the United States in participating in *Start With Hello* Week, February 5 - 9, 2018.

The weeklong series of events includes [insert the *Start With Hello* training presentation, events and activities your school/youth organization is planning].

[Insert name of school/youth organization] and Sandy Hook Promise is asking schools, student clubs, parents and community leaders to visit www.sandyhookpromise.org/bringStartWithHello to learn how to begin using the *Start With Hello* program resources in their classrooms, schools, communities and homes.

WHEN: [Insert the date and time of your school/youth organization’s *Start With Hello* event(s)]

WHERE: [Insert your school/youth organization’s address]

WHO: [Insert the names of those participating in your school/youth organization *Start With Hello* events, such as “student leaders”, administrators, Mayor or other notable people attending.]

Visual and Interview Opportunities Include:

- **Interview** – [Insert the names of those available to participate in an interview, such as student leaders or SAVE Promise Club members, youth members of the *Start With Hello* planning group or club, teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, school board members, or other leaders from the community participating in your school or youth organization’s *Start With Hello* Week.]
- **Capture** – [insert a description of the visual activity(ies) taking place, such as students, teachers/administrators discussing *Start With Hello* and asking questions, a student assembly or a *Start With Hello* pledge wall or poster making contest.]

About [Your School/Youth Organization]

Include your school or youth organization’s description or mission statement here.

About Sandy Hook Promise

Sandy Hook Promise (SHP) is a national, nonprofit organization based in Newtown, Connecticut. We are led by several family members whose loved ones were killed in the tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012 that claimed the lives of 20 first-graders and 6 educators. SHP is focused on preventing gun violence (and other forms of violence and victimization) BEFORE it happens by educating and mobilizing youth and adults on mental health and wellness programs that identify, intervene and help at-risk individuals. SHP is a moderate, above-the-politics organization that supports sensible non-policy and policy solutions that protect children and prevent gun violence. Our intent is to honor all victims of gun violence by turning our tragedy

into a moment of transformation. For more information, visit www.sandyhookpromise.org

Start With Hello Week Resources

Sample *Start With Hello* Week Email/Letter to Parents/Caretakers

Dear Parents/Caretakers,

This February 5 - 9, your child will be taking part in *Start With Hello* Week at [insert the name of your school or youth organization].

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 classroom, school or youth organization.

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.

We encourage you to talk to your child about the *Start With Hello* program and ask them to share what they have learned. Not only will that help you learn how to support your child to see isolation, reach out and connect, and *Start With Hello*, it also demonstrates to your child that you take this subject seriously and can support them in their actions to create a more connected and inclusive home, classroom, school and community.

Finally, we encourage you to support your child in sharing their *Start With Hello* story by submitting their creative expressions to the Start With Hello Student Voices Contest at <https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/studentcontest>.

For more information on *Start With Hello* and to sign up to receive the *Start With Hello* Parent Brochure, please visit: <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/bringstartwithhello>.

Thank you,

[Insert name of your school or youth organization]

Start With Hello Week Resources

Sample Social Media Sample Posts

Sample Facebook Posts:

1. Students: #StartWithHello Week will take place from February 5 - 9! Join us for a week of activities aimed at easing social isolation and promoting kindness and inclusion! <http://bit.ly/1OTbkcb>
2. Students, express your #StartWithHello creativity by entering your submission into the Start With Hello Student Voices Contest at <https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/studentcontest>
3. [Name of School] will be participating in this year's #StartWithHello week from February 5 – 9! There will be many activities throughout the week to increase social inclusion in our school community to make sure no one is left out and everyone has a friend. <http://bit.ly/1OTbkcb>
4. This Monday [Name of School] will begin #StartWithHello Week! This week will focus on including peers who may be isolated or left out of day-to-day school activities. It's as easy as starting with "hello"! <http://bit.ly/1OTbkcb>
5. This [Day of Week], we're going to make sure No One Eats Alone! Young people who are chronically isolated can become victims of bullying, violence and/or depression. Let's do our part to ease social isolation by sitting and eating with someone new today! <http://bit.ly/1OTbkcb>
6. Here's what we have planned at [Name of School] for #StartWithHello Week! [List Activities by day]. Please join us for a week of fun and making new friends!
7. Monday is the start of #StartWithHello Week! Visit <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/bringstartwithhello> to find out more about this great, student-led social inclusion Call to Action week!
8. Did you meet someone amazing or learn something new about someone you've known for a while? Post your #HelloSelfie with your friends from #StartWithHello week to show us!
9. Have you used #StartWithHello to make a new friend this week? Share your #HelloSelfie to show us what you've been up to!
10. We signed up for #StartWithHello Week to encourage students to be more inclusive & kind to help create a safer & happier school community for us all. <http://bit.ly/1OTbkcb>
11. DID YOU KNOW? Studies suggest that chronic loneliness increases our risk of an early death by 14%. #StartWithHello to make a difference today! <http://bit.ly/215VRKk>

Tweets (can also be used for Instagram captions):

1. It's almost #StartWithHello Week! Get ready to make new friends and have a lot of fun with us at [Name of School].
2. #StartWithHello Week is almost here! What are you looking forward to learning this week? [Attach SWH logo]

3. Students, share your #StartWithHello story by applying for the Start With Hello Student Voices Contest at <https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/studentcontest>
4. Monday is the start of #StartWithHello Week! Visit www.sandyhookpromise.org/bringstartwithhello to find out more!
5. [On whatever day works] Today we are making sure No One Eats Alone! Use #StartWithHello to meet someone new to sit with at lunch today!
6. Social isolation can happen anywhere in our school. How will you meet someone new today? #StartWithHello
7. Did you make a new connection during #StartWithHello Week? Tweet us a #HelloSelfie to show us!
8. Tweet us a #HelloSelfie or #StartWithHello to show us some of the activities you've been a part of during #StartWithHello Week!
9. DID YOU KNOW? Studies suggest that chronic loneliness increases our risk of early death by 14%. #StartWithHello to make a difference today!
10. I Promise: This week I will #StartWithHello to create a more inclusive, happy, and safe school community & help ease social isolation. <http://bit.ly/215VRKk>
11. We'll use #StartWithHello to encourage students to be more inclusive & help create a safer & happier community. <http://bit.ly/1OTbkcb>
12. Play The "Kindness Game" from @Edutopia <http://edut.to/1Nk4XhQ> #bullyfree #StartWithHello
13. "Loneliness is a risk factor for many mental and physical health problems. Yet, it is sometimes not taken seriously." #StartWithHello <http://strib.mn/1Lguuw>
14. "Be that person who notices someone is alone. Be that person who reaches out." #StartWithHello <http://bit.ly/2d9D13V>
15. A hello might have no significant meaning, but it opens the door for making others feel significant: <http://bit.ly/2gJYXk9> #startwithhello
16. A young student realized a new classmate didn't speak much English, but that didn't stop her. #StartWithHello <http://huff.to/2eflhVt>
17. Catch of the Day encourages students to perform acts of #kindness. <http://trib.in/2dZ4lDa> #StartWithHello
18. A new study says engaging in small talk could make you feel happier & more positive! Today, vow to #StartWithHello! <http://abcn.ws/2dxGkQY>
19. "This program is all about creating connections and reducing social isolation." - @NicoleHockley #StartWithHello <http://bit.ly/1T3scxS>
20. "Friends are part of the glue that holds life and faith together. Powerful stuff." – Jon Katz #StartWithHello
21. "The only way to have a friend is to be one." – Ralph Waldo Emerson #StartWithHello
22. Social isolation is the overwhelming feeling of being left out, lonely, or treated like you are invisible. <http://bit.ly/1PCJhKp>

Start With Hello Week Resources

Sample *Start With Hello* Proclamation for Community Leaders

This sample Start With Hello proclamation can be used with Mayors/City Councils, Police Chiefs/Sheriffs, County Government, School Board, Student Councils, Governors or other elected officials.

Whereas, social isolation is the overwhelming feeling of being left out, lonely, or treated like you are invisible, and

Whereas, social isolation is a growing epidemic in the United States and within our schools, and

Whereas, excessive feelings of isolation can be associated with violent and suicidal behavior, and

Whereas, young people who are isolated can become victims of bullying, violence and/or depression and as a result, many further pull away from society, struggle with learning and social development and/or choose to hurt themselves or others, and

Whereas, 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, and

Whereas, in addition to young people, *Start With Hello* will benefit educators, administrators, community based organization leaders and parents, and

Whereas, 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, and

Whereas, Sandy Hook Promise (SHP) is a national, nonprofit organization based in Newtown, Connecticut and is led by several family members whose loved ones were killed in the tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012 that claimed the lives of 20 first-graders and 6 educators; SHP is focused on preventing gun violence (and other forms of violence and victimization) BEFORE it happens by educating and mobilizing youth and adults on mental health and wellness programs that identify, intervene and help at-risk individuals, and

Whereas, one of Sandy Hook Promise's core violence prevention programs, *Start With Hello*, is being celebrated as part of *Start With Hello* Week, February 5 - 9 2018 at [insert the name of your school or youth organization]; and

Whereas, through *Start With Hello*, young people will build a more connected and inclusive classroom, school and community,

Therefore, I, [Insert name and title of Elected Official] of [insert name of City and State], do recognize and commemorate the importance of this program and hereby proclaim [Insert Date] to be

Start With Hello Week

In the City/State/School of [Insert City Name] and encourage all our citizens to recognize the significance of *Start With Hello*.