



## **Start With Hello Week: September 24–28, 2018**

### **A Youth Violence Prevention Program by Sandy Hook Promise**

#### **What is Start With Hello?**

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.

#### **What is Start With Hello Week?**

During the week of September 24–28, hundreds of schools and youth organizations from across the United States will participate in Sandy Hook Promise’s third annual *Start With Hello Week*. *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. *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.

#### **Who Can Participate in Start With Hello Week?**

*Start With Hello* is a no-cost and easy to implement program that is available to all schools and youth organizations serving youth grades 2 - 12. 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.

#### **How Can My School or Youth Organization Participate in Start With Hello Week?**

*Start With Hello Week* can be planned and implemented by youth or a youth club with the help of an adult champion in very little time. Schools and youth organizations participating in *Start With Hello Week* agree to organize easy to implement, no-cost activities that help educate and empower students on how to reduce social isolation and foster community. These activities can take place in as little as an hour, or spread across the entire *Start With Hello Week*. Schools and youth organizations also agree to facilitate a no-cost, easy to implement *Start With Hello* training presentation that can take place within

the classroom, at an assembly, or be led by student ambassadors on a day, time and format of their choosing during *Start With Hello Week*.

If your school or youth organization participated in *Start With Hello* in the past, *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.

Additional ideas on what your school or youth organization can do during *Start With Hello Week* are available in our free, downloadable *Start With Hello Week* planning guide available at

<http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek>

### **How Will Sandy Hook Promise Support My School or Youth Organization?**

Sandy Hook Promise will provide each participating school and youth organization with access to no-cost, digitally downloadable *Start With Hello* presentations, activities, and resource guides, as well as a *Start With Hello Week* planning guide. Following *Start With Hello Week*, participating schools and youth organizations are eligible to apply for *Start With Hello* awards and youth can enter the *Start With Hello* student contest. More information about the *Start With Hello* awards and the award guidelines and application are available at <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek>

Each participating school and youth organization who reports their *Start With Hello Week* participation back to Sandy Hook Promise will also receive 100 free *Start With Hello* wristbands. For additional questions, please email: [startwithhello@sandyhookpromise.org](mailto:startwithhello@sandyhookpromise.org).

### **Who is 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](http://www.sandyhookpromise.org).

**To register your school or youth organization to participate in *Start With Hello Week* September 24–28, 2018, please visit: <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek>**