



Start With Hello Week Planning Guide February 8 - 12, 2016



An Initiative from Sandy Hook Promise
www.sandyhookpromise.org

For questions, please email: startwithhello@sandyhookpromise.org

**Start With Hello Week
Planning Guide
February 8 – 12, 2016**

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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, contests and awards. **By participating in *Start With Hello* Week this February 8 – 12, 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 from across the country – 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 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. Officially registering for Start With Hello Week assures you get timely Start With Hello Week updates and have access to important 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. Please note that these resources will be available and emailed to you in early January 2016.

- **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 SWH presentation can be delivered in as little as 20-minutes or extended to 40-minutes 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 Resource Guide:** The Start With Hello Parent Resource Guide 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
- Participate in No One Eats Alone Day on February 12th. **No One Eats Alone Day is a program from Beyond Differences. No One Eats Alone Day will be held nationally this year on February 12, 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>*
- 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.
- Organize a "random acts of kindness day" as part of Start With Hello Week and encourage all young people and adults within your school or youth organization to go out of their way to do something nice for someone else.
- Set up informational tables at already scheduled school activities, programs and events that promote and incorporate the icebreaker ideas from Start With Hello presentation.
- Encourage language classes, such as Spanish, French, Chinese or Sign Language to teach other students how to say "hello" in different languages.
- 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.
- Host a Start With Hello dance party.

Promote & Recognize

- Ask teachers, administrators or other students to write quick thank-you notes to students in recognition of their efforts to Start With Hello.
- 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.
- Organize a “Wear Green Day” to further promote awareness and call attention to Sandy Hook Promise’s Start With Hello Week.
- Hang Start With Hello posters around the school/youth organization or encourage students to create their own Start With Hello posters. You can download and print Start With Hello posters from Sandy Hook Promise at: <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek>.
- Order Start With Hello stickers or wristbands for students to wear. You can order these materials online from Sandy Hook Promise at no-cost while supplies last when you sign up for Start With Hello Week.
- 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.

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Step 3: Ideas for 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 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

- Host a meeting before Start With Hello Week to get ideas from students and staff alike on how your school can support young people in their Start With Hello activities.
- 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.
- Ask students to present portions of the Start With Hello program, demonstrate or practice the Start With Hello icebreakers or lead Start With Hello discussions in the classroom or at an assembly or extracurricular event.
- Ask student ambassadors or student leaders to organize a scavenger hunt or contest by encouraging their peers to learn new things about others within their school or youth organization.
- Organize a "Get to Know Me" or "Start With Hello Super Hero" day where students can dress up and express what makes them unique.
- Give each student sticky notes and ask them to write encouraging or kind words to others – especially those that they don't yet know – and put them on others lockers, desks or books.
- Print out happy face emoticons and give to students. Encourage them to pass them on to other students they feel could use a smile.

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.
- 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.

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.
- Ask students to create their own name tags 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 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 at #SandyHookPromise and track and promote how many students, teachers and administrators participate.

Start With Hello Week Planning Guide

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 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 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.

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.
- 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.
- Send a press release and ask local media to come to your school or youth organization to cover a Start With Hello event.
- Send letters/emails to parents and caretakers and share what is happening in your school or youth organization during 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, Lion's Clubs, City Council, School Board, 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 at #SandyHookPromise and track and promote how many parents and community members join you.

Start With Hello Week Planning Guide

Step 5: Ideas for Sustainability

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.

The following are ideas and best practices to help you support young people in planning and leading their Start With Hello sustainability plan after Start With Hello Week has come and gone. 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

Student Club:

- Create Start With Hello clubs or Start With Hello Youth Ambassadors who take a leadership role in fostering connection and reducing isolation within their classrooms and schools.
- Add a Start With Hello initiative or charter into an existing club, perhaps one related to mentoring or civic responsibility.
- Ask older students to mentor and pass down Start With Hello responsibilities to younger students and carry Start With Hello from year to year.
- Recruit or become a Start With Hello adult champion within your school or youth organization and support youth in organizing Start With Hello activities throughout the 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.

Events:

- Create a Start With Hello event or informational table during parent conferences, sports, music and theater events throughout the year.
- Host regular "Mix Your Clique" days – or better yet – ask your Start With Hello Student Leaders or Club to organize and lead these days where students intentionally hang out with others they don't yet know.
- Take advantage of holidays or special events your school might already be participating in – such as Valentine's Day or Homecoming – and use it as a time to reinforce acts of kindness towards one another.
- Designate Start With Hello days or weeks throughout the year. Tie in with fun activities, such as dress like a Start With Hello superhero or practice the themes

from the Start With Hello icebreakers throughout the year. Look for ways to share these within the school, such as social media and morning announcements, as well as within the larger community, such as community newspapers.

- 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

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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.

You will receive an electronic survey to complete following Start With Hello Week. We ask that you please complete this survey. In addition to the online survey, Sandy Hook Promise will offer participating Start With Hello schools and youth groups an invitation to apply for a Start With Hello award. One school or youth organization will be chosen for a \$10,000 Start With Hello Award. Sandy Hook Promise will also give honorary mention and publicly acknowledge schools and youth organizations that exceed in the best practice areas of creativity and ownership, community reach and sustainability.

For more information on the Start With Hello Award, including a timeline for submitting Start With Hello entries, complete rules and award criteria, a timeline and the award application, please visit:

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

Start With Hello Week Resources

Sample Start With Hello in a Day

This sample Start With Hello in a Day template provides an example of how your school or youth organization can organize and implement Start With Hello over the course of one day. Many of the activities can be implemented in just a few minutes and at no-cost as part of regularly scheduled activities. While taking very little time to implement, these activities still incorporate the best practices of student participation, creativity and ownership, community reach, and sustainability.

- Ask students and staff to wear green or have them dress like a “Start With Hello” superhero to bring greater awareness to Start With Hello Week.
- Hang Start With Hello posters around the school/youth organization. Students can create their own Start With Hello posters or you can download and print Start With Hello posters from Sandy Hook Promise at: <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek>.
- Change your school’s avatar to the Start With Hello logo and post information about Start With Hello on your website and social media sites. You can download the Start With Hello logo at: <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek>.
- Ask a small group of young people to share a Start With Hello message or lead a Start With Hello icebreaker during the morning announcement.
- Depending on the time available, present a 20-minute to 40-minute Start With Hello program during an all school assembly or within the classroom.
- Put Start With Hello icebreakers or conversation starters on lunchroom tables and host a No One Eats Alone Day on February 12th. Recruit youth ambassadors to help lead conversations over lunch. More information on No One Eats Alone Day, an initiative of Beyond Differences, is available <http://www.nooneeatsalone.org/>.
- Encourage students and staff to take a selfie with a tweet, Instagram or post telling everyone, “I will #StartWithHello”. Ask them to tag your school and #SandyHookPromise and track and promote how many people participate.
- Send a letter or email home to parents and caretakers and ask them to continue the conversation and reinforce Start With Hello at home. Encourage parents/caretakers to ask their child what they learned about Start With Hello.
- Send a press release or a letter to the editor to your local newspaper or news station sharing what your school or youth organization is doing to empower young people to reduce social isolation and Start With Hello.
- Assign a Start With Hello homework assignment, such as a creative writing assignment, or ask young people to try out the different Start With Hello icebreakers during class or the school day.
- Schedule dates on the school calendar to incorporate other Start With Hello activities throughout the year. Tie it with your curriculum.

Start With Hello Week Resources

Sample Start With Hello in a Week

This sample Start With Hello Week-long template provides an example of how your school or youth organization can implement Start With Hello activities throughout the entire week. While taking very little time to implement, these activities incorporate the best practices of student participation, creativity and ownership, community reach and sustainability.

Monday:

- Kick off Start With Hello Week by using a Start With Hello icebreaker each morning or at the start of class.
- Depending on time available, present a 20-minute to 40-minute Start With Hello program during an all school assembly or within the classroom. Consider having an existing Student Club or Student Leaders deliver portions of the program.
- Distribute Start With Hello stickers or wristbands to young people. Ask them to wear them throughout the week... perhaps passing them on to share with others they see reaching out or connecting. You can order Start With Hello stickers and wristbands online from Sandy Hook Promise at no-cost while supplies last when you sign up your school or youth organization to participate in Start With Hello Week.
- Change your schools avatar to the Start With Hello logo and post information about Start With Hello on your website and social media sites each day throughout Start With Hello Week.

Tuesday

- Host a Start With Hello poster making contest, or other contest over the lunch hours, study halls, or after school.
- Set up a Start With Hello table at school activities, such as athletic events and school concerts.
- Encourage students to write positive and encouraging notes to each other using sticky notes and put on lockers or a Start With Hello wall.
- Highlight a different Start With Hello icebreaker or theme each day during the week, such as a Random Acts of Kindness Day or Get to Know Me Scavenger Hunt.

Wednesday

- Create a Start With Hello homework assignment, such as a creative writing assignment or poem. Ask students to work on it with their parents or caretakers.
- Send home a letter to parents/caretakers or email parents/caretakers about the Start With Hello activities happening in your school or youth organization this week. Encourage parents to read the Start With Hello parent resource guide and continue the conversation about inclusion within the home.

- Consider implementing a “Hey Day” Start With Hello icebreaker. Give each student a nametag to wear and encourage them to greet others by their first name in the hallway, lunchroom or classroom.

Thursday

- Create a Start With Hello pledge wall. Encourage students and staff alike to take a picture of them in front of the pledge wall with a tweet, Instagram or post telling everyone, “I will #Start With Hello”. Ask them to tag your school and #SandyHookPromise and track and promote how many students, teachers and administrators participate.
- Organize a “Mix Your Clique” day with the help of youth leaders.
- Ask students to dress up like Start With Hello Super Heroes.

Friday

- End the week’s activities by organizing a wear Green day.
- Participate in No One Eats Alone Day on February 12th. No One Eats Alone Day is a program from Beyond Differences. This year, No One Eats Alone Day will be held nationally on February 12, 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, 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 or conversation in your school or classroom. Consider inviting parents to attend.
- Have the school board, local elected officials, law enforcement or other community leaders, including the student council, present a Start With Hello proclamation.
- Invite the local media to attend and cover the No One Eats Alone day and Start With Hello proclamation event.
- Identify an adult champion within your school or youth organization (it could be you!) to serve as a point person for starting a Start With Hello Club within your school or youth organization. Ask youth leaders interested in joining the Club to determine how your school or youth organization will carry Start With Hello forward and sketch out a calendar that could include small, yet meaningful Start With Hello activities on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis.

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 National 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 National Start With Hello Week, February 8 – 12, 2016.

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 (SWH) Week raises awareness and educates students and the community through *Start With Hello* trainings, advertising, activities, public proclamations, media events, contests and school scholarship 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 8 - 12, 2016.

The weeklong series of events includes [insert the Start With Hello program, 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, 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.]

About [Your School/Youth Organization]

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

About Sandy Hook Promise

Sandy Hook Promise, a national, nonprofit organization based in Newtown, Connecticut, is led by several families who lost loved ones 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. The organization is focused on preventing gun violence (and all violence) *BEFORE* it happens by educating and mobilizing parents, schools and communities 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. Learn how to get involved at www.sandyhookpromise.org.

Start With Hello Week Resources

Sample Start With Hello Week Letter to the Editor

Have you ever felt lonely, invisible or alone? Now imagine feeling that way every day. In every school and in every community, including in [insert the name of your city or town] there are young people who suffer silently because they feel left out, alone or isolated.

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.

The good news is that we can do something about this. We can encourage and support the young people in [insert name of your school, youth organization, city, town or state] to end social isolation and create more connected and inclusive classrooms, schools and communities – and it doesn't cost a cent!

[Insert the name of your school or youth organization] is joining Sandy Hook Promise and hundreds of other schools and youth organizations across the United States in participating in *Start With Hello* Week this February 8 - 12. Start With Hello is an easy-to-implement and no-cost program that 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. 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.

To learn more about how you can bring Start With Hello to your school, organization or community – or how to support our young people to Start With Hello, please visit Sandy Hook Promise at: www.sandyhookpromise.org

Start With Hello Week Resources

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

Dear Parents/Caretakers,

This February 8 – 12, 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.

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

Thank you,

[Insert name of your school or youth organization]

Start With Hello Week Resources

Sample Facebook Posts

1. Students! #StartWithHello Week will take place from February 8th-12th! Join us for a week of activities aimed at easing social isolation and promoting kindness and inclusion! <http://bit.ly/1OTbkcb>
2. [Name of School] will be participating in this year's #StartWithHello week from February 8th-12th! 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>
3. Starting 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>
4. 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>
5. 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!
6. 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!
7. 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!
8. Have you used #StartWithHello to make a new friend this week? Share your #HelloSelfie to show us what you've been up to!
9. 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>
10. 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): Please keep in mind character limit on Tweets: some of these fit to the exact 140 mark, others can be customized.

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. Monday is the start of #StartWithHello Week! Visit www.sandyhookpromise.org/bringstartwithhello to find out more!
4. [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!
5. Social isolation can happen anywhere in our school. How will you meet someone new today? #StartWithHello
6. Did you make a new connection during #StartWithHello Week? Tweet us a #HelloSelfie to show us!
7. Tweet us a #HelloSelfie or #StartWithHello to show us some of the activities you've been a part of during #StartWithHello Week!
8. DID YOU KNOW? Studies suggest that chronic loneliness increases our risk of early death by 14%. #StartWithHello to make a difference today!
9. 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>
10. We'll use #StartWithHello to encourage students to be more inclusive & help create a safer & happier community. <http://bit.ly/1OTbkcb>

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, a national, non-profit organization led by family members whose loved ones were killed in the tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012 supports sensible solutions that protect children and prevent gun violence by bringing individuals and communities together to look out for and care for one another; and

Whereas, one of Sandy Hook Promise's core violence prevention programs, Start With Hello, is being celebrated as part of national Start With Hello Week, February 8 - 12, 2016 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 Day

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