



Start With Hello Call-to-Action Week: February 8 - 12, 2016 **An initiative of 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 Call-to-Action Week*?

Start With Hello (SWH) Call-to-Action 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* Call-to-Action 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.

Join thousands of schools and youth organizations from across the United States in participating in *Start With Hello* Call-to-Action Week, February 8 - 12, 2016.

Register your school or youth organization to participate in *Start With Hello* Call-to-Action Week at: <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/startwithhelloweek>

Who Can Participate in *Start With Hello Call-to-Action 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 SWH Call-to-Action Week?

Schools and youth organizations participating in *Start With Hello* Call-to-Action Week agree to host a no cost, easy to implement, flexible *Start With Hello* training that can take place within the classroom, at an assembly, or be led by student ambassadors. *Start With Hello* can also be implemented within an existing student club or schools can create a new club around community kindness and safety.

The training can be accomplished in 50 minutes or less and activities can be spread throughout the week. In addition to the initial training, *Start With Hello* offers a wide range of post training activities that can be done throughout the year and serve as reminders. Schools and youth organizations have the option of choosing the day, time and format they would like to deliver the *Start With Hello* training during the week of February 8 - 12.

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 presentations, activities and resource guides. Sandy Hook Promise can also provide media tools and in-person training to educators and/or students at select schools (based on school size and trainer availability).

Following *Start With Hello* Call-to-Action Week, participating schools and youth organizations are eligible to apply for *Start With Hello* awards. **A \$10,000 scholarship will be awarded to one school nationally.** *Contest guidelines and application materials will be sent to all schools registering to participate in Start With Hello Call-to-Action Week.*

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.

Sandy Hook Promise is focused on preventing gun violence (and all violence) before it happens. SHP does this 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. Our intent is to honor all victims of gun violence by turning our tragedy into a moment of transformation. For more information on Sandy Hook Promise, please visit: www.sandyhookpromise.org

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