



MIDLAND PARK PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Week of Respect Newsletter

October 2-6, 2017



Midland Park Take Action Peer Leaders

Week of Respect Calendar of Events

October 2nd
Student Senate distributing
Orange Ribbons

H.A.P.P.Y. Week
Presentation
Grades 9-12

Godwin/Highland School
"Bully Free: The Way to Be"
Assembly
Grades K-5

October 3rd
H.A.P.P.Y. Week
Presentation
Grades 7-8

October 4th:
Keynote Presentation:
Gian Paul Gonzalez
Grades 6-12

Presentation on the
Children's Therapy Center
Grade 7

October 5th
Holocaust Presentation
Grades 11-12

Godwin/Highland School
"Table to Table" Fundraiser
Grades K-6

October 6th
Midland Park Jr./Sr. High
School 60th Anniversary
Celebration

Harassment, intimidation and bullying are serious offenses that will not be tolerated in the Midland Park Public Schools. To report an incident of alleged harassment, intimidation and/or bullying, please contact the school principal, the school's Anti-Bullying Specialist, and/or the District Anti-Bullying Coordinator. Contact information for these staff members may be found on our district website: www.mpsnj.org

A Message from Mr. Craig R. Rush District Anti-Bullying Coordinator

Seven years ago, the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act was signed into law. Our school district continues its mission to maintain a climate that fosters a caring and inclusive community for all of our students.

In 2011, Midland Park Public Schools set the goal to become a New Jersey school of excellence in the area of Harassment, Intim-

idation and Bullying (HIB) prevention. The district continues to work with Dr. Paula Rodriguez- Rust, Sociologist, Bullying Prevention Specialist. Dr. Rust serves as a consultant on best-practices program implementation when addressing school climate. In the spring of 2017, students (with parental consent) partic-

ipated in a school climate survey for the seventh year in a row. Dr. Rust was able to interpret the data and compare and contrast the results of the 2017 survey with the data from the the previous six surveys. Dr. Rust will be making a presentation to the community on the results of the School Climate Survey on the evening of November 27, as part of our

Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Legislation *Dr. Marie C. Cirasella, Superintendent*

The Anti-Bullying Task Force (ABTF) was established in March 2012 as part of an amendment to the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR) and operated under a four-year tenure requirement, culminating in the provision of a report

and an increase in the programs districts are providing to students and staff to prevent HIB incidents and ensure safe and caring school environments. Among the ABTF recommendations, which remain under consideration and have yet to be adopted, is the inclusion of a statement that bullying incidents may involve a real or perceived power imbalance between the involved actors. Should this change be adopted, the ABTF further recommends that the state issue guidance to assist school-based practitioners in understanding the impact of power imbalances in HIB incidents, a significant change which will require heightened focus. In Midland Park, we continue our vested interest in promoting safe learning environments and creating school and classroom cultures that exemplify the benefits of inclusion and tolerance. For more information on the ABR at the state level, please access: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/>



annual HIB Community presentation. All parents and interested community members will be invited to attend.

As the district Student Assistance Counselor and Anti-Bullying Coordinator, I am proud to say that Midland Park remains committed to expanding its prevention efforts and initiatives. During the 2016 – 2017 school year, our members of the elementary and secondary School Climate Committees created Action Plans for each building. Our high school Take Action Peer Leaders, made prevention-based

presentations to our sixth grade, eighth grade and ninth grade students. Our high school Spectrums Diversity Club, created a safe and caring environment to celebrate the diversity of all students. Our middle school students received an annual “Cyberbullying” assembly provided by the Bergen County Prosecutors Office. Our seventh grade students had an opportunity to work directly with disabled students at the Children’s Therapy Center.

In the classroom, our teachers used curriculum infused lessons to provide “teachable moments” in bullying prevention throughout the academic disciplines. In the spring, Mr. Nicholas Capuano, Principal, chaperoned three of our students on the Holocaust Study Trip to Europe. Our students are exposed to powerful and thought provoking learning opportunities as they formulate their philosophies and prepare to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Students make “social mistakes” during adolescence. These mistakes are

developmental and part of maturing. As educators, we will always dedicate ourselves to addressing these issues as they arise and strive to continue to raise expectations for tolerance, acceptance and kindness towards one another.

The Week of Respect serves to remind our community that kindness does matter as we celebrate our diversity and treat one another with dignity throughout the year.



Highland and Godwin Schools recognize Respect Week

Peter Galasso, Highland Principal & Danielle Bache, Godwin Principal

Highland School Principal: Peter Galasso

I believe life is more complicated today for children than at any other era in our history. Unfortunately, I only see it getting more hectic and complicated as society progresses. Students today participate in more activities than ever before, take more classes, practice more



choice, meet higher benchmarks, juggle their time, and through it all are exposed to technology like social media that is embedded with certain pressures and demands in itself; all the while they are still figuring out how to be a teenager. It is not easy being a kid. That is why schools and parents have to mold and reinforce the most important life principal; be a good person. We, as a society, will never go wrong if we can just raise good people. That is why the Highland School puts great effort into character education; teaching it, modeling it, and celebrating it. We have school wide assemblies promoting positive student behavior in the hopes of making great character contagious. We set up opportunities for community outreach, not only through donations, but also through service to others, which instills empathy in our students. And yes, we do the best we can to hold students accountable for their actions and though it is not glamorous, this too, is how we teach our students to be good people. The community and parents have continued to be supportive and work with us in this most important of endeavors and I can assure you we

will continue to make this a priority in the Highland School.

Godwin Principal: Danielle Bache

Kindness Changes Everything



It is that simple. Kindness Changes Everything. Kindness doesn’t take a lot of effort or cost a penny. Everyone can do it and it makes an enormous difference. Kindness comes in many forms: a smile, compliments, helpfulness or gestures. A little kindness can brighten the day of

someone feeling down or add a little pep to your step. At Godwin School, I keep the message simple with the students, **Kindness and Respect**. Throughout the years, we've coined different phrases to deliver our message. We "Locked Ourselves in Kindness" and symbolized it by creating keys; and we became "Bucket Fillers" to remind students that everyone can use a boost once in awhile. With the younger students, I'm going back to my roots and fostering the simplicity of the two words, Kindness and Respect

At the start of the school year, the School Climate Committee will develop an Action Plan to meet the goals identified in our School Climate Survey. We tailor the activities to address specific concerns and always try to make a home connection. Through stories, plays, and craft projects we reinforce kindness and respect; and we value the class discussions that ensue as a direct result of these activities. We learn a great deal from our students when we really listen to their thoughts and feelings. That becomes the foundation for future lessons and learning opportunities. Thank you for partnering with us on this endeavor to spread Kindness and Respect in our community.

Message From The Jr/Sr High School Principal *Nicholas Capuano, Principal*

This school year, as you drive up the circle to the front of the Jr/Sr High School, you will notice the new banners on our new light posts. You will see words such as: "tradition" "respect", "integrity", "character", "citizenship" and "acceptance". These are the values we want the children of Midland Park to instill and embrace.

We continue to focus on school climate. Our student body and school are heading in a positive direction. As I walk through the halls, I witness more kindness and respect for others. We are a positive welcoming school culture. Our students have more awareness as to what is appropriate and not appropriate when communicating with one another.

There is always room for improvement and continued growth. This school year we look forward to building on the foundation set forth last year. The Senate will be distributing orange ribbons to all students and staff to symbolize the common purpose of treating everyone with respect and dignity.

Last spring, three Midland Park students and myself participated in the Holocaust Study Tour and traveled to Germany, Czech Republic and Poland. This was an experiential learning opportunity that provides students with first-hand understanding of respect for differences. These experiences were shared with the student body and people of Midland Park.

The "Week of Respect" serves as a reminder for the entire community to focus on kindness and tolerance for others every day. Together we can continue to make Midland Park High School an ever improving learning environment.

Parent Resources on Bullying:

www.stopbullying.gov

www.netsmartz.org

District Anti-Bullying Coordinator: Mr. Craig Rush, Ph: (201) 444-7400, ext. 206
Email: crush@mpsny.org

Godwin & Highland Anti-Bullying Specialist: Ms. Kelly Scala, Ph: (201) 445-3880, ext. 319,
Email: kscala@mpsny.org

MPHS Anti-Bullying Specialist: Ms. Theresa. Soda & Ms. Elizabeth Wall Ph: (201) 444-7400, ext. 212, Email: tsoda@mpsny.org
ewall@mpsny.org



Respect

Jason Cata, Assistant Principal

Midland Park Junior Senior High School is a great place because of the tremendous levels of respect which are eminent in the halls and classrooms. Administration, staff and students all carry a certain expectation of how we should be treated. Because of the respect, there are other wonderful traits that are carried out as well. Our school is one of the most accepting and empathetic places I have ever worked. The members of our school are always looking to make others feel appreciated for who they are.

Rather than hiding behind the shadows of others, we celebrate our differences and use our talents to continue to make our school a better place. The Junior/Senior High School is a remarkable academic institution. A main reason for this is because our students are respected and feel comfortable enough to take the educational risks necessary to add rigor and grow as learners.

In conjunction with the Week of Respect, I would also like to share some advice. Within my role as an administrator, I am involved in many conversations surrounding social media. While I am not on any social media platform, I know that a large majority of the students are. I ask all students to consider something. As electronic communication becomes more prevalent in our schools and society, please remember that you cannot expect others to respond or reply the way you may hope. Because we have such a large base of friends on these platforms, there are endless posts and pictures to view. Therefore, it becomes almost impossible to comment, or “like” every post. Thus, we cannot get upset when a friend does not “like” something you posted or shared. Don’t allow the small things like a missed thumbs up or double tap ruin your expectations of what a friendship really is. Also, never forget the power of actual conversation mixed with laughter when we hang out with our friends.

A Message about our District School Safety Teams

*Midland Park Jr./Sr. High School Anti-Bullying Specialists
Theresa Soda and Elizabeth Wall*

The School Climate & Safety Team has been hard at work helping to make MPHS as safe and as inviting as it can be for our students. This past year, the committee created and modified action plans to increase positive school climate. Based on the School Climate Survey and student input, the School Climate and Safety Team created action plans. The action plans were geared towards enhancing empathy of the student body and diminishing “hot spots” where conflicts had the potential to occur.

Seventh grade students traveled to The Children’s Therapy Center (now known as CTC Academy) in Oakland, NJ, where they were introduced to students with disabilities. Our students readily helped the teaching staff, engaged in activities, such a birthday celebration, and socialized with the students.

Last year, the gymnasium, as well as our newly renovated Media Center, were open for middle school students to utilize during their period 4 lunch period. This was a great way for students to let out excess energy that they had and to enhance their study habits.

We will continue to work with students, as well as the School Climate & Safety Team members, to keep our school the welcoming and accepting place it is. Keep an eye out for The School Climate & Safety Team’s future initiatives!

This committee is comprised of teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, case managers and parents.

MS/HS School Safety Team

Nick Capuano, *Principal*

Craig Rush, *Anti-Bullying Coordinator*

Liz Wall, *Anti-Bullying Specialist*

Theresa Soda, *Anti-Bullying Specialist*

Debbi Kochajki, *SHIP Case Manager*

Ethan Grubman, *HS Teacher*

Emily Walker, *MS/HS Teacher*

Lisa McNerney, *MS/HS Teacher*

Karen Corcoran, *MS/HS Nurse*

Mary Hosier, *Parent* and Trish Olson, *Parent*

Holocaust Study Tour 2017



Highland and Godwin Kelly Scala , Anti-Bullying Specialist

The Climate/Safety Teams at Highland/ Godwin have been busy working with the staff, parents and students over the last few years to improve the school climate.

The Godwin team consists of Ms. Bache (Principal), Mrs. Scala (Anti-Bullying Specialist), Ann Baker (CST HIP Representative), Craig Rush (Anti-Bullying Coordinator), Mike Winters (Teacher), Megan Martinez (Teacher), Mrs. McCarthy (Parent), and Mrs. Tarleton (Parent). Over the course of the year, the team has implemented several positive changes after reviewing the School Climate Survey. This survey assisted the team in creating several action plans that promote a safe climate in schools. Throughout the year, assemblies, read-alouds, and direct lessons are taught to emphasize the ideals of good character. Mrs. Scala further enhances the character education program through the Second Step Program. Direct lessons are taught in first and second grades to help children understand how to interact and deal with conflict. The team participated in a play called, "Chrysanthemum" based on the book written by Keith Henkes, to highlight

the important theme the power of kindness. The Highland /Godwin mentoring program began its second year with the 5th grade working with the 2nd grade. This mentoring program enables the 2nd graders to have an easier transition into Highland the following year and gives the 5th graders a stronger sense of responsibility.

At Highland, the team consists of Mr. Galasso (Principal), Mrs. Scala (Anti-Bullying Specialist), Ann Baker (CST HIP Representative), Craig Rush (Anti-Bullying Coordinator), Mrs. Chase (Teacher), Mrs. Mullady (Teacher), Mrs. Dhalwani (Parent), Mrs. Tuosto (Parent). Mr. Galasso continued presenting "Do the Right Thing" assemblies with the students, rewarding those students who were positive role models and were recommended by their teachers. A mentoring program was also implemented at Highland with the 3rd and 6th grades to foster positive "role model" relationships.

A Message from the Athletic Director, Mike Gaccione

Midland Park has always been very prideful in their athletic programs. Our student-athletes have won league, county, and state championships, set league and state records, and have continued their careers into college.

However, many times athletics go beyond the mere score of a game. There are a number of attributes that are used to describe an outstanding student-athlete, most of which describe their character. Some of those characteristics include sportsmanship, leadership, and respect.

At Midland Park, these characteristics can be used to describe most, if not all of our student-athletes. However, as Mr. Capuano mentioned in his letter, there is always room for improvement and continued growth. Therefore, we would like to see this positive behavior and attitude to continue off of the field, and into the classrooms, locker rooms, at home, and in social settings.

While the "Week of Respect" is a great time to reflect on one's social behavior, it does not end there. Being a leader and showing respect for others are life-long characteristics. So, let's work together to continue to keep Midland Park a safe and caring place for all of our students.

