

# Zeeland Public Schools

## be nice. Newsletter

December 2017

**be nice.**  
www.themhf.org

### Upcoming be nice. Events

#### ZPS be nice. LOGO GEAR DAY!

Wear your be nice. logo gear to school, work or around town the first Wednesday of every month!

3rd Annual Zach Kroll  
Memorial Fundraiser For  
be nice. and Mental Health Awareness  
Culvers Restaurant  
February 2018

2nd Annual Love and Lean Walk for be nice.  
and Mental Health Awareness  
Saturday April 28, 2018

2nd Annual be nice. Community Action  
Month  
May 2018

We are excited to share the third edition of the ZPS be nice. newsletter with you, thank you for reading and being part of the solution!

The Zeeland High Players taught our middle schools about be nice. The Players emphasized N-I-C-E matters and once our words leave our mouths they are like feathers in the wind. Thank you Players!



Front L to R: Megan VanDuinen, Greyesen Tomlinson, Zoe Tanis, Elly Purnell, Derek DeWitt, Maria Veenstra  
Middle L to R: Olivia Gries, Danielle Molengraff, Taily Riddlington, Ariel Collins, Caroline Marino  
Back L to R: Grace Turner, Dalton Knight, Micah Gibson, Brooklyn Arendsen, Kelly Horton  
Not pictured: Mara Schwartz  
A BIG ZEELAND thank you to our very own Robert "Torg" Torgerson for directing the players! Outstanding job by all!

## A 30 second care session we can all learn and use...

### In non-emergency everyday situations parents, teachers and friends notice...

- ◆ A child, student or friend and they are hurting, you know something is wrong.
- ◆ You ask, is there anything you want me to know, is there anything I can do to help, do you want to talk.
- ◆ Invitation is powerful, try it out.
- ◆ If the answer is “no” let it stand, allow them the space and safety to be themselves.
- ◆ Accept their response, let them know you are for them and if they need to talk you will be there for them.
  
- ◆ Here is the kicker, store what they said and come back to it.
- ◆ Let it be for a day or two or even three and then check in with them.
- ◆ Ask them whatever happened with that situation you were dealing with the other day.
  
- ◆ Automatically they know you “cared enough to care” to remember them when they were not at their best.
- ◆ Who do you think they go to next time?
- ◆ People do not care what you know, until they know you care.

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*Our Mental Health is just as important as our physical health!*

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## Local Counseling Resources

TCM Counseling	616-842-9160
Encourage Counseling	616-396-6285
Winning At Home	616-772-1733
Holland Behavioral Health Services	616-355-3926
Pine Rest	1-800-678-5500
Forest View	1-800-949-8439
24 Hour Helpline:	1-866-512-4357

In an emergency call 911 or go to your local emergency room.

# A community like ours needs to know N-I-C-E...

This is an open letter to our youth, parents and adults in our schools and community at large. In an effort to talk more openly about depression and suicide this letter will address behaviors of concern, what to do and how to move toward a suicide safe community.

We need your help!

As a community, the two largest blindspots to be addressed are lack of knowledge and lack of interest. It is the lack of knowledge that fosters a lack of interest. When it comes to depression and suicide we need to understand the worst thing we can do is nothing. Suicide is a preventable death and depression is often times one of our more easily treated mental health issues.

One common myth suggests talking about suicide or asking someone if they are thinking about death by suicide will encourage it. In reality, we know talking about suicide increases communication, understanding and offers a greater opportunity to get help and most importantly hope.

**Untreated depression is the number one cause of death by suicide.**

## **Indicators of depression:**

- ◆ Feeling sad for more than two weeks
- ◆ Feeling lethargic, feeling like you have no energy
- ◆ Unable to concentrate
- ◆ Sleeping too much or sleeping too little
- ◆ Feeling worthless
- ◆ Feeling hopeless
- ◆ Feeling helpless
- ◆ Feeling negative or pessimistic
- ◆ Losing interest in activities that you previously enjoyed
- ◆ Crying frequently
- ◆ Withdrawing from others
- ◆ Neglecting personal appearance
- ◆ Feeling angry
- ◆ Feeling guilty
- ◆ Unable to think clearly
- ◆ Unable to make decisions
- ◆ Physical pain that does not have a diagnosis or explanation

**It can be difficult to separate the psychological from the physical so it is important to understand depression can sometimes have physical symptoms that mask the real issue.**

**Death by suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24.**

## **Warning Signs:**

- ◆ Sadness or down mood
- ◆ Feeling hopeless
- ◆ Talk of suicide or death

**A person who may be thinking or talking about death by suicide may escalate to acting on it if there is not intervention.**

**We need to respond to the hint of a hint of a rumor.**

# A Community like ours needs to know N-I-C-E...

## Verbal warnings:

- ◆ "I wish I were never born"
- ◆ "I wish I were dead"
- ◆ "I won't need this anymore"
- ◆ "My parents wouldn't have to worry about me anymore"

## Behavioral warnings:

- ◆ Change in appetite
- ◆ Giving away prized possessions or throwing things away
- ◆ Sudden change in mood
- ◆ Aggressive behavior
- ◆ Impulsive or risk taking behavior
- ◆ Deterioration of school performance
- ◆ Social isolation or withdraw

**These are some of the many reasons to remove firearms from the home if there is a concern about suicidal ideation or depression. Impulsivity and firearms are a lethal combination for someone who may be depressed or suicidal. Depressed mood, alcohol or other drugs and firearms can be a lethal combination-MEANS RESTRICTION IS KEY!**

## Precipitating issues or events:

- ◆ Alcohol or other drugs
- ◆ Divorce
- ◆ Unemployment
- ◆ Financial problems
- ◆ Isolation from family and friends
- ◆ Breakup with boyfriend or girlfriend
- ◆ Domestic violence
- ◆ School difficulties
- ◆ Depression

## How to help:

- ◆ Be direct-ask the question "are you thinking about death by suicide?", talk matter-of-factly about your concern
- ◆ Be willing to listen
- ◆ Allow for expression of feelings
- ◆ Accept feelings
- ◆ Get involved, be available, show interest and support
- ◆ Offer hope that alternatives are available
- ◆ Take action-get help from persons or agencies that are trained in crisis intervention
- ◆ Contact the emergency room at your local hospital
- ◆ Call 911 to respond to any immediate threat of danger

**Death by suicide has no economic, ethnic, religious, cultural or peer group boundaries. People from all walks of life are affected.**

**You do not need to go it alone, reach out to others and if in need, accept help.**

**Suicide Prevention is everyone's business!**

**A collaborative effort by our community will make Zeeland Public Schools and the surrounding area a suicide safe place to live.**

Learn N-I-C-E by taking the pledge at the following link:

Take the pledge as a family, work together, find a way and do it today!

<https://www.benice.org/take-the-pledge>

## ZEELAND be nice. AND OUR MAGICAL CHRISTMAS PARADE 2017



### Tips for Parents

- ♦ One day at a time
- ♦ Avoid power struggles
- ♦ It's all about relationship
- ♦ Listen
- ♦ Celebrate
- ♦ Invite, it's powerful
- ♦ Anything or anyone you truly care about needs boundaries

### Because N-I-C-E matters...

**N-NOTICE...signs of depression or other changes in someone's behavior.**

**I-INVITE...yourself to initiate a conversation.**

**C-CHALLENGE...the stigma; communicate important resources.**

**E-EMPOWER...yourself with the knowledge that you can have an effect on how someone thinks, acts and feels.**

If you are in crisis & need immediate help call 911 or [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255)