

Schools Put “Kindness” into Action

By Irene Barton, President, East Cobb County Council of PTAs

You may have heard how prevalent bullying and peer pressure is in our schools today. It adds a whole level of issues that teachers, administrators, parents, guidance counselors, and others must address. School communities receive outstanding support in this area (and many others) from the Cobb County School District’s Prevention Intervention Center. This year, PTAs and PTSAs in the East Cobb County Council of PTAs are sponsoring programs and activities for their students that address the issues of tolerance, kindness and anti-bullying.

PTA leaders heard a presentation about “No Place for Hate” last spring at a training for new officers. The No Place for Hate® initiative empowers the whole school community – teachers and students, administrators and parents – to tackle prejudice, bullying and intergroup conflict. A school commits to completing at least three school-wide anti-bullying or diversity education activities throughout the school year. Check out <http://regions.adl.org/southeast/programs/no-place-for-hate.html> for more information. Several of the PTAs from our 35 schools are sponsoring the NPFH program this year.

Rachel’s Challenge is a nation-wide program founded in memory of Rachel Scott, the first person killed at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. Her acts of kindness and compassion coupled with the contents of her six diaries have become the foundation for one of the most life-changing school programs in America. Dickerson and HighTower Trail Middle Schools have implemented the program this year with student-targeted assemblies followed by community-wide presentations. Dickerson’s “Chain of Kindness” is on display at the school and is a tangible reminder to the students of Rachel’s hope that by doing one act of kindness “you may start a chain reaction.” Go to www.rachelschallenge.org for more information.

These are just two programs that local PTAs, with the support of their administrators, have brought to our school communities this year to address the critical issues of bullying, intolerance, and conflict. They represent one more way that PTAs help to “make every child’s potential a reality.” We encourage all stakeholders to embrace these same values! ✂

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