



WEST WINDSOR-PLAINSBORO HIGH SCHOOL NORTH

"Home of the Northern Knights"

*People won't care what we believe...
until they believe we care.*

July 2012

To Those Concerned,

This letter is in support of Kurt, Tricia and Katelyn Baker's outstanding program, Attitudes in Reverse (AIR). As a high school principal, I have seen firsthand the influence this program has had on our students. The efforts of the Baker family to remove the stigma from the recognition and treatment of mental health issues among our youth is one that should be supported at every opportunity.

We are West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North, located in Plainsboro, New Jersey, and one of two high schools in the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District. It is a tribute to the talents of our students and teachers that we continue to have a graduation rate of almost 100 percent, with student achievement indicators revealing that our students continue to perform at high levels.

We currently have 1675 students enrolled in our school. The population of our school community reflects the growing trend toward pluralism in American society. Students represent major racial and ethnic groups (51 percent Asian, 38 percent White, 6 percent African American, and 5 percent Hispanic). Our students speak 33 languages. This diversity affords students excellent opportunities for inter-cultural understanding and provides them with a global view of the world. In order to fulfill the needs of our multicultural communities, we have made every effort to create an awareness of the many ethnic and cultural distinctions represented here.

In May of 2012, the Bakers and their support team of community volunteers met with WWPB students in grades 9, 10 and 11 through their study hall periods. In all, the program was seen by 1200+ students. The program focused on helping all members of the school community better understand the early warning signs of mental illnesses in young people and how best to be an advocate for those in need so that they can get help. The message was made more powerful by using recent graduates of our school as presenters.

The effect of the program was that students in need became a topic of conversation around the school. As you went through our halls, students were talking about how the program encouraged them to see their peers who were struggling in a new light...and more importantly...how they as students could help. Our peer leader group worked with the Bakers while the program was being given in school, and will continue their efforts in the future. It is our hope that the AIR program will be a regular part of our school calendar for our freshman class each year and that an AIR chapter will continue to keep the message begun by the in-service program fresh in the minds of our students.

This program has been a positive influence on our school population.

Sincerely,

Michael Zapicchi
Principal