



Madeira Board of Education
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Changing Their Culture Through Hope

A group of Madeira High School (MHS) students recently joined over 500 young people to promote mental health wellness and prevention in their school and community. The 22 MHS students attended the Ohio Hope Squad Fall Conference hosted by Grant Us Hope - a school-based, peer-to-peer, suicide prevention program with a three-year curriculum that emphasizes suicide prevention fundamentals, self-care and anti-bullying.

Students are nominated to be members of the Hope Squad by their peers and must attend a presentation through Hope Squad. Their parents must also attend an informational session. As students often feel more comfortable discussing mental health issues with people their own age, Hope Squad members are trained to recognize the warning signs of suicide, know how to offer hope and get help by letting an adult know if they hear or see something that concerns them. They are instructed in how to spot students in trouble, and give peer guidance through questioning, persuading and referring (QPR).

At the fall conference hosted by Lakota East High School, Hope Squad members and advisors heard from a wide-range of professionals who shared their knowledge of youth mental health and suicide prevention. One speaker, Nick Jackson, challenged attendees to say "I can" and be the lighthouse for their peers.

"Training students to be Hope Squad members is part of our district counseling plan," stated MHS counselor and Hope Squad advisor Kim Homer. "We chose Hope Squad as an outstanding mental health component of that plan."

Close to 100 local schools are, or will become, Hope Squad schools by January of 2020. In schools where Hope Squads have been formed, data shows that over 25 percent of all referrals to counselors have been from Hope Squad members.

Madeira's group advisors are Kelli Candella, Kim Homer, Kelly Wing, and Jill Dulgeroff. They are now planning a kick off to be held in January with the first annual MHS Hope Squad Week.

Pictured with advisor Kelly Wing are Madeira Hope Squad members Isaac Arredondo, Katie Zack, Jessie Miller, Ethan Henry, Benjamin Ramos, Madeleine Luther, Gabby DeMarco, Lindsey Dickess, Mattie Waltz, Grace Rindels, Claire LeRoy, Sophia Gugino, Isabella Gutierrez, Luke Browning, Ben Parker, Samuel Bernicke, Johnathan Thiele, and Gabi Hugentobler.

