



Madeira Board of Education  
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## Madeira High Schoolers' Message of Hope

Madeira High School (MHS) students are sending a message of hope they want every one of their classmates to hear, "We're a group of people who will listen, who believe in the power of kindness, and who knows that your life matters." The students are working to promote mental health wellness and suicide prevention in Madeira High School and the Madeira community. Nominated by their peers, they comprise the school's Hope (Hold On Persuade Empower) Squad - a group of Grade 9-12 students who are nominated by their peers for being empathetic listeners that peers feel they can go to in a time of crisis.

Training students to be Hope Squad members is part of the mental health component of the Madeira City School District's counseling plan. The 18 student members attend weekly meetings where they are trained by MHS Hope Squad advisors. Members also had the chance to attend the National Hope Squad Conference virtually in October. Members are the eyes and ears of their school as they watch out for fellow students in any kind of distress. By recognizing the warning signs of suicide and how to offer hope and understanding to find troubled classmates help, they will let an adult know if they hear or see something that concerns them.

Planning for this year's Hope Week started in November. "This year was an added challenge because we had to have back-up plans for all of our activities in case we weren't learning in-person," stated advisor Kelli Candela. "We also had to think about how we could do our best to include in-person and remote learners so as many people as possible could participate and feel included. It took a lot of preparation and creativity, but the students did an amazing job executing their plans." Each display, activity, and communication was planned to send the same message, 'You are Brave. You are Strong. You are Not Alone.'

The second annual MHS Hope Squad Week started on January 19. Students painted approximately 150-yard signs they put up around the school and community. Messages like 'Choose Joy' and 'You are Loved' greeted students as they arrived at school or walked the halls to class. During the week there was also a scavenger hunt via a QR code with a mental health resource and a new clue at each spot. Kindness Cards were given to every MHS student, stickers and suicide prevention business cards were handed out by Hope Squad morning greeters, and daily challenges and self-care tips were heard on morning announcements. The MHS Hope Squad also reaches out through social media with messages to their peers. Luke Browning wrote, "You may be in a dark place right now but I promise that there is a light at the end of the tunnel." Lindsey Dickess told her peers, "You are important and loved. Remember that you are never alone, and we are here to support you."

Madeira's 2021 Hope Squad members are Izzy Gutierrez, Ethan Henry, Gabi Hugentobler (Seniors); Isaac Arredondo, Lindsey Dickess, Maddie Luther, Mattie Waltz (Juniors); Luke Browning, Gabby DeMarco, Ben Parker, Claire LeRoy (Sophomores); Kennedy Cunningham, Drew Davis, Emma Flanagan, Ella Garza, Cindy Lu, Eric Luther, and Annie Meyer (Freshmen). Advisors are Kelli Candella, Kim Homer, Kelly Wing, and Jill Dulgeroff



*Pictured at the Hope Squad's "What Lifts You?" photo op (l to r) MHS seniors Campbell Masys, Hunter Smith, Sarah Hicks, and Gabi Hugentobler.*