



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Del Norte High School Chosen by Sandy Hook Promise to Kick Off Nationwide “Start With Hello” Week

For the 2018-19 school year, Sandy Hook Promise is kicking off its fourth annual *Start With Hello Call-to-Action Week* at just three school districts across the country – one in Broward County, Florida, one in Corpus Christi, Texas, and the third – in the Poway Unified School District. On **Thursday, September 27<sup>th</sup>**, Nicole Hockley, co-founder and managing director of Sandy Hook Promise, and mother of Dylan who was killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary tragedy, will be speaking to Del Norte High School students to teach them how to identify, assess, and intervene if they see someone demonstrating at-risk behaviors.

*Start With Hello Week* enables students to make a difference with their peers in a simple, fun and impactful way by encouraging them to take small, but powerful actions that promote connectedness and inclusion, and to identify and help others who show signs of social isolation.

Social isolation is the overwhelming feeling of being left out, lonely, or treated like you are invisible. It is a growing epidemic in the United States, especially within our schools. Young people who are isolated can become victims of bullying, violence and/or depression. As a result, many pull away from society, struggle with learning and social development, and may choose to hurt themselves or others.

“Every year we receive amazing feedback from schools participating in Start With Hello Week, from how easy and fun it is to implement, to how much the students love it and the positive impacts they are experiencing as a result,” said Hockley. “While Start With Hello and creating inclusive, connected school communities has many social benefits, we also know that chronic social isolation can lead to acts of violence and self-harm. We can take actions to prevent this from happening, including simple actions like reaching out and saying “Hello”.

During the week of September 24 – 28, *Start With Hello* will teach students across the country, the skills they need to reach out to and include those who may be dealing with chronic social isolation. This free and effective program can be taught by SHP trained presenters in the classrooms or assemblies, or it can be self-led by schools downloading the digital curriculum. This event also marks the start of a three-year memorandum of understanding between Poway Unified and Sandy Hook Promise to roll out its programs to all campuses, in the District's ongoing efforts to improve school safety.

In addition to representatives from Sandy Hook Promise, expected attendees include PUSD student leaders, Superintendent Dr. Marian Kim-Phelps, PUSD School Board Members, officials from the San Diego County Office of Education, school administrators, and Poway City Council members.

Media is welcome to attend. Del Norte High School is located at **16601 Nighthawk Ln, San Diego, CA 92127**. The day will consist of two rallies held in the gym: **8:10-9:20am** and **9:25-10:37am**. Please contact Christine Paik, Director of Communications, if you are interested in attending.

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