



Kids First Wellness
Advocates Series
Passing Kindness
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Lincoln - Alexandria Roque is encouraging her fellow students at Lincoln High School to practice not-so-random acts of kindness. As the elected junior class liaison for the School Improvement Team (SIT), Alexandria has been on a mission to help create a more positive mental atmosphere in the hallways and classrooms of her high school. She spearheaded a project to display colorful posters throughout the school, hoping to inspire the entire Lincoln community into kindness. The laminated posters offer surprisingly simple suggestions on how to be kind - from "Listen With Your Heart" to "Smile at Someone New" to "Share a Snack".

But Alexandria's efforts go beyond just offering kindness tips. With school administration and staff fully behind her, the dynamic and engaging Co-Chair of the Committee for Kindness has a promising agenda to set forward. Starting this spring, teachers will begin awarding Lincoln students STAR - Student Tolerance Acceptance and Respect - certificates to anyone caught performing a kind act or helping foster a healthier spirit of acceptance and respect in the school. As part of the STAR award program, an emblem contest is being held in the Art Department so that STAR, and what it emphasizes, will have a clear visual symbol to the student body. STAR recipients will have their names and photos displayed on a bulletin board for everyone to see so that acts of kindness might prompt others to behave in a positive way and "pass it on".

According to several studies, acts of kindness result in significant health benefits, both physical and mental. Helping others not only enhances one's feelings of vigor and resilience, but has a significant affect on stress-related health problems like depression, ulcers and eating disorders. In

the teenage world of uncertain futures, academic tensions and nearly unavoidable peer pressures, anything that addresses the stress and strife of high school makes a difference.

"Good student health is not just a 'cupcake' issue," says Kevin McNamara, Principal of Lincoln High. "Student wellness is addressed when you take a broad look at your school climate and try to find ways to improve student well-being from air quality to nutrition to mental health. Alexandria's efforts really go a long way towards supporting overall student wellness."



Besides the Kindness and STAR program, Alexandria is working improve school meals at Lincoln. As part of her health class unit on nutrition, she developed a survey asking students about school lunches. With the results of the survey, Alexandria hopes to work with ARAMARK, Lincoln High School's food service provider, to improve student participation and enthusiasm for healthy food choices in the meal program.

For Alexandria, improving health and wellness at her school improves school spirit and gives her the opportunity to be a voice for students.

"When I got the chance to serve on the School Improvement Team, I jumped on it", she says.

“Students come to me and ask me to help change something. Then I can give a student spin to issues that affect us every day we are in school.”

Healthier foods, kinder students, and a high school community encouraging student input on student health and well being. With students like Alexandria Roque involved, Lincoln High School is an inspiring model for “passing it on” - educating and involving the next generation to actively engage in the health and wellness of the community at large.

