

January of Change: Stand for the Silent Inspires Schools Nationwide to Embrace Kindness

The organization provides the tools and motivation to turn school cultures toward kindness.

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The New Year is a chance for schools and communities to be inspired to make changes. If there's one thing we all agree, it needs more kindness.

[Stand for the Silent](#) is one organization on a mission to help schools nationwide embrace kindness and

create an atmosphere that embodies it going forward. They are not only inspiring them to do it, but they are also providing them with the tools, motivation, and insight to help make it happen.

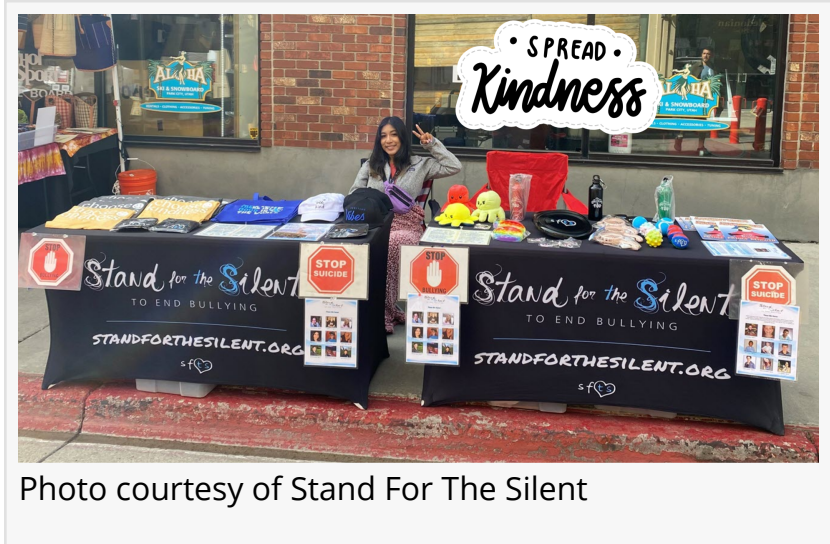


Photo courtesy of Stand For The Silent

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Kirk Smalley, co-founder of Stand for the Silent

“We are happy to play a role in helping communities and schools around the country create kinder atmospheres,” says Kirk Smalley, co-founder of Stand for the Silent.

“When you focus on doing that, there’s no place left for bullying, and everyone feels better.”

Most people want to be happy in life, and one of the best ways to help others achieve happiness is to be kind. Not only does the person on the receiving end of kindness

benefit but so does the person exhibiting the kind behavior. A research study published in The Journal of Social Psychology reports the findings from a seven-day kindness study. They report that performing acts of kindness boosts happiness and well-being. What's more, even those who merely observed the acts of kindness also had a boost in their happiness.

Schools that make a point to create an atmosphere of kindness will help increase happiness among students and staff and decrease bullying, among other benefits. Here are some ways that

schools can help embrace kindness in the New Year:

- Make the announcement. Let the students know that the New Year also brings a new atmosphere, one of kindness. If possible, hold a seminar to kick off the new vibe. By setting intentions, people will be inspired and informed.

- Be the example. It's easy to say, but this is an important one. People need to start modeling the behavior they want to see spread throughout their school.

- Reward the good. Rather than always looking to punish due to unwanted behavior, turn the focus more often to rewarding the good behavior. Catch and reward students showing acts of kindness. Teaching kids to be more generous, for example, will also increase happiness, according to research published in *Nature Communications*. They report that volunteering one's time is a generous act that can increase happiness.

- Hold contests. Throughout the year, hold a few contests that get students involved in sharing what it means to be kind. Students could enter contests that involve drawing, singing, poetry, and even performing. The school could host a kindness talent show or publish artistic entries where visitors can see them.

- Create a kindness club. Most schools have different kinds of clubs, giving students things they can get involved in. Schools can create a kindness club, allowing members to come up with kind things to do monthly around school. Whether it involves volunteering or creating kindness cards to anonymously hand out, all will contribute to a kinder culture.

- Teach kids to be kind to themselves. Many kids consistently speak negatively about themselves. To create a kinder atmosphere, kids need to start first with being kinder to themselves. Talk to them about not being so hard on themselves and treating themselves with compassion.

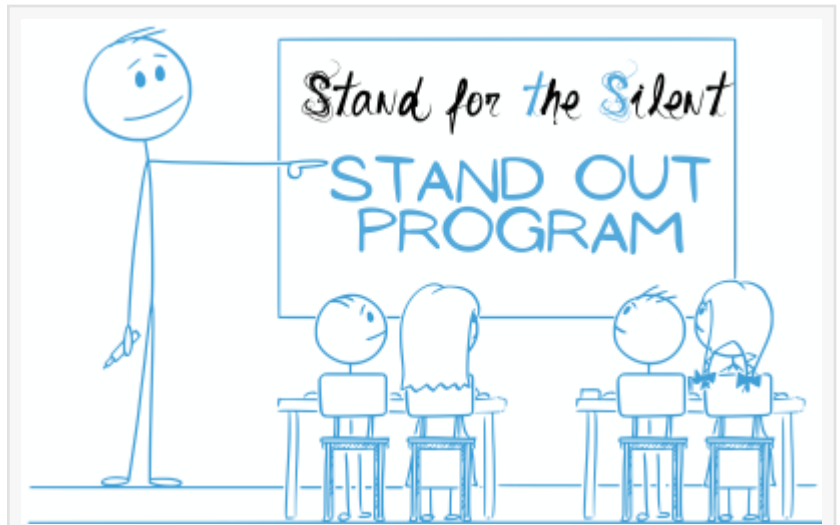


Photo courtesy of Stand For The Silent



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"We have programs in place to help kick off a kindness campaign at the school and to help reward students," added Smalley. "Let's all work together to make this the year that we help our schools become what we want them to be, which is kinder."

Whether at school or in the community, it is wise to work to create a kinder culture. According to the American Psychological Association, being kind is good for our physical and mental health. They report that even small acts of kindness boost the person doing them, the one receiving them, and the bystanders who observe them. Such things as opening a door for others, for example, can go a long way toward boosting happiness in those in the area.

Their Student Stand Out program encourages teachers to nominate students who stand out, display excellent behavior, and lead by example. Every week throughout the school year, Stand for the Silent will choose one of the nominated students to receive a \$50 Visa gift card. At the end of each semester, one student will be selected to win a \$100 Visa gift card. There will be two nomination periods, August 1 to December 1 and then from January 1 to April 1. Teachers can nominate as many students as they feel have earned the recognition. For more information about the Student Stand out program, visit the site at:

<https://standforthesilent.org/schools/standout>

Stand for the Silent travels the country, giving presentations about bullying to schools, providing bullying prevention, giving out scholarships, offering intervention strategies, and more. Those interested in getting involved can start a chapter of the group in their area, obtain a free K-2 bullying prevention curriculum or [cyberbullying handbook for parents](#), host a presentation at their school, introduce the How All Started video, and donate to help support the cause. To get more information, visit the site at: <https://standforthesilent.org/>

About Stand for the Silent

Started in 2010, Stand for the Silent is an organization on a mission to help eliminate bullying nationwide. Kirk and Laura Smalley founded the group after their child took his own life due to bullying. They offer free resources for parents and educators and travel to schools to host presentations. They have been to over 6,025 schools and spoken with more than 4.15 million students. To get more information, visit the site at: <https://standforthesilent.org/>

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