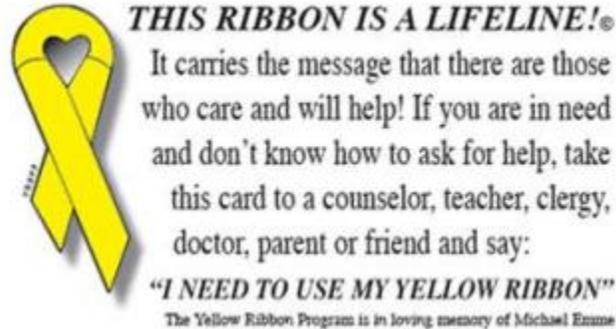


Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Parent Connection

During the month of November, Fenton's SEL program will focus on "How to Help a Friend in Need." More specifically, we will focus on developing the skill of empathy and providing information on suicide prevention. Students will be given information on how to find help for themselves or their friends if they are feeling depressed or suicidal. Students will be given a card that they can give to a friend or adult if they need help (see below).



However, those who know their children best and can offer early intervention in these unfortunate situations are parents. Tragically, suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth between 10 and 19 years of age. These heartbreaking deaths can be prevented if parents, educators, and students know the warning signs of suicide and intervene early. According to the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP), these risk factors and warning signs include:

- Mental illness including depression, conduct disorders, and substance abuse.
- Family stress/dysfunction.
- Environmental risks, including presence of a firearm in the home.
- Situational crises (i.e., traumatic death of a loved one, physical or sexual abuse, family violence, etc.).
- Suicidal threats in the form of direct and indirect statements.
- Suicide notes and plans.
- Prior suicidal behavior.
- Making final arrangements (e.g., making funeral arrangements, writing a will, giving away prized possessions).
- Preoccupation with death.
- Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts and/or feelings.

The NASP recommends that parents take the following steps if they suspect their child is contemplating suicide:

- Remain calm.
- Ask the youth directly if he or she is thinking about suicide.
- Focus on your concern for their wellbeing and avoid being accusatory.
- Listen.
- Reassure them that there is help and they will not feel like this forever.
- Do not judge.
- Provide constant supervision. Do not leave the youth alone.
- Remove means for self-harm.
- Get help: Parents should seek help from school or community mental health resources as soon as possible.

A helpful resource for parents dealing with these issues is the Jason Foundation's Parent Resource Program (jasonfoundation.com/prp). Please contact a guidance counselor at Fenton if you would like to discuss concerns specific to your son or daughter. Until next month, stay healthy!