

“A Chain Reaction of Kindness and Compassion”

In the cafeteria, a banner is hanging that states “I accept Rachel’s Challenge”; it has been signed by all the students and entire staff of Morningside Elementary. This banner signifies that each person in our Morningside community has accepted the challenge to be kind and compassionate to others. Our school is committed to promoting kindness and compassion so our school can remain a safe place to learn and live.

A program titled “Rachel’s Challenge” has been implemented at the elementary and secondary levels in school districts across Texas and the United States and here, at Morningside Elementary. Rachel Joy Scott was the first victim at Columbine High School. Her father and over twenty other certified presenters travel all over the nation delivering the message of kindness and compassion, two traits that characterized Rachel Scott.

We will not focus on, or discuss, the nature of Rachel Scott’s death, but will focus on how she lived her life and the challenges she set forth for us all: influence, goal setting, journaling, acceptance and kindness. If you choose to discuss how Rachel died with your children; we respectfully request that you also tell your children that it is up to individual families to determine when and how much information is shared with their families and to not discuss it at school. This, in itself, is a great opportunity to help our children learn acceptance of others by respecting the values that other families choose to adhere to around this topic.

Students will continue to experience lessons on influence, goal setting, journaling, acceptance and kindness during guidance lessons. They will also be learning some of the sign language to songs of kindness, friendship and compassion; we have learned “True Colors” by Phil Collins, parts of “My Wish” by Raschal Flatts and will begin learning “Let There Be Peace On Earth” this week. Sign Language is taught during the last few minutes they are in the gym just before the 7:50 AM bell rings to go to class.

As a symbol of the “Chain Reaction of Kindness and Compassion” the students and staff fill out paper chains with statements of kind and compassionate actions they have witnessed from others. The links are chained together in each classroom. The goal at the end of the year will be to host a campus wide event celebrating all the acts of kindness and compassion by joining all the chains together creating a “Chain Reaction of Kindness and Compassion”. Some students have already shared Rachel’s Challenge with their families and parents have started the chains at home. If you and your family are interested in joining our community in this endeavor, please feel free to contact me or go to the website (below) to get more information.

It is our hope and wish that this will spark a change in how everyone treats one another. Please encourage your children to show kindness and compassion toward others, especially those who are new students, special needs students or isolated students. This was the wish of Rachel Joy Scott.

“We have to reach their hearts before we can teach their minds” – Pricilla Vail

Rachel’s Challenge www.rachelschallenge.org

Debbi Plemons, Morningside Counselor