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Happiness can be the key to stopping bullies

Key Clubs use Project Happiness to turn bullying upside down in schools

Indianapolis, IN, October 7, 2014 — Kiwanis International has teamed with Project Happiness to empower high school students help prevent bullying in their schools and communities.

Project Happiness employs neuroscience, positive psychology and mindfulness to give teens the tools they need to find and identify happiness. “Happier, more fulfilled, and more generous people are the best answer to the bullying problem. Project Happiness can decrease bullying by building a school community fueled by kindness,” said John Shertzer, chief programs officer at Kiwanis International. Shertzer manages Kiwanis’ youth programs, including Key Club for high school students.

As the nation’s leading service organization whose mission is to serve the children of the world, Stan Soderstrom, executive director of Kiwanis International, said “This program offers an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students. We know bullying programs are failing kids and some could even worsen the problem. This initiative uses happiness as a way to erase the need to bully.”

Project Happiness has been endorsed by private institutions and universities across the United States and around the world, with active programs in 87 countries. “The program uses assessments, individual and group exercises and service projects to show students the power of positive thinking and how to apply it in their lives,” Shertzer said. Randy Taran, Project Happiness Founder and Chief Happiness Officer, stated, "We are delighted to partner with Kiwanis, renowned globally for its commitment to community service. By adding the focus of creating happiness from the inside out, kids learn the skills to prevent bullying at the root cause, as well as how to generate happiness within themselves and their communities. It is contagious."

“Kiwanis International selected this program because it empowers kids. It takes reactions like bullying, rage and hate, and helps kids turn them into opportunities to inspire, share, reflect, learn and create happiness,” Shertzer said. “Key Club is a student-led club and this program lets students discover they have control over their own happiness, and that happiness can come from service to others. Research tells us happy people enjoy life, learn easier, are healthier, more productive, as well as being genuinely nicer. It’s a great model for our Key Club members, and something all of us could rely on.”

Key Clubs that opt to participate in Project Happiness receive a workbook that enables members to explore all aspects of happiness. They can discover the obstacles that block it, develop positive ways to respond to life’s challenges and negative emotions, and learn about the connections between thoughts, feelings and actions. They’ll also learn about compassion and humanity and create community service projects that tie to the lessons of Project Happiness, Shertzer said.

Positive feedback is already coming in from Key Clubs who are eager to begin their happiness journey.

About Kiwanis
Founded in 1915, Kiwanis International is a global organization of clubs and members dedicated to serving the children of the world. Kiwanis and its family of clubs, including Circle K International for university students, Key Club for students age 14-18, Builders Club for students age 11-14, Kiwanis Kids for students age 6-12 and Aktion Club for adults living with disabilities, dedicate annually more than 18 million service hours to strengthen communities and serve children. The Kiwanis International family comprises nearly 600,000 adult and youth members in 80 countries and geographic areas. For more information about Kiwanis International, please visit www.kiwanis.org.

About Project Happiness
Project Happiness, a 501(c)(3) pro-purpose organization, specializes in emotional resilience-building programs used by people of any age. The comprehensive programs translate science into practical tools that enhance overall well-
being. Benefits include improved focus, productivity, kindness and emotional resilience. With the epidemic rise of stress, it is increasingly critical that the development of an individual’s inner life be included in education. Project Happiness provides proven techniques to cultivate one’s own authentic happiness and pro-social behavior. For more information about Project Happiness visit www.projecthappiness.org.

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