

MAPLE AVENUE MIDDLE SCHOOL

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October 7, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you know, Maple Avenue Middle School has implemented a comprehensive bullying prevention program. We are committed to taking serious, proactive steps to curb a problem that is found in schools everywhere. Our efforts this year have focused on raising awareness about bullying and cyber bullying with students and parents.

We have recruited Mr. John Halligan to conduct a presentation on October 16, 2009 for the students. He will relay his own tragic experience as a Dad whose 13 year old son took his own life in 2003, after incessant bullying by peers since the 5th grade, both in school and online. His story is riveting and powerful, and reminds students that there is a face, a person, a heart, on the other end of the computer screen.

His presentation will begin with a short video collection of home movie clips and still pictures of Ryan. John will then begin to tell the story of Ryan and the factors that led up to his son's suicide. The students will gain a perspective from inside a family of a child who is a victim of bullying and cyber bullying. They will also gain awareness about the signs and risk of teenage suicide and how best to help a friend. As part of Mr. Halligan's presentation, students will have the chance to ask him questions. We encourage you to visit a website named for his son: www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org for more information.

Because of the sensitive nature of the topic, we wanted to inform you about it in advance. We encourage you to ask your child about the presentation and discuss it together. If for any reason, you would prefer that your child not attend this presentation, please send a written note to your child's house principal prior to October 15, 2009. Those students who do not attend the presentation will be assigned an alternate character education activity to complete in the library.

Our presentation schedule is as follows:

Grade 7	Period 2 through mid-Period 4	8:39 – 10:15 a.m.
Grade 8	Mid-Period 4 through Period 6	10:30 – 12:10 a.m.
Grade 6	Period 7 through mid-Period 9	12:20 – 1:50 p.m.

If you would like to attend this program, please contact the Main Office for more information.

Should you have further questions, please feel free to contact us at 587-4551 or s_byrne@saratogaschools.org.

Sincerely,



Stuart F. Byrne
Principal