



Jewish Federation
OF GREATER NAPLES

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE.
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

"STAND UP FOR JUSTICE"

Sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of the
Jewish Federation of Greater Naples

Application deadline: February 2, 2024

Applicant's name: Lonzo Morgan Applicant's email: MorganLO7collierschools.com

Number of years in education: 32 Grade or subject taught: School Counselor

School: Immolalee Middle School Address: 401 N 9th St. Immolalee, FL 34142

Phone (daytime): 239 377 4206 Phone (evening): 239 628-2040

Principal's name: Jose Hernandez Principal's email address: hernan.joe@collierschools.com Principal's Phone: 377 4204

- Describe the precipitating events that motivated you to initiate these lessons or activities
- Describe the lessons or activities; and if adapted from another source please reference
- Explain how the lessons or activities teach students the importance of respecting others no matter what religious, racial, cultural, or other differences exist
- Explain how it helped them counter bigotry and bullying and prepared them to stand up for Justice
- PROVIDE EVIDENCE/PROOF OF EFFECTIVENESS SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO: A QUESTIONNAIRE, INTERVIEWS, DOCUMENTED ANECDOTAL CONVERSATIONS, AND STUDENT WRITINGS, VIDEO, ETC.

→All 5 bullet points must be completed or applicant will be advised to submit the following year. Please number each page along with your name at the top of each page.

Please complete the following if you have encouraged someone other than yourself to apply:

Your name: _____ Your email: _____

Phone (daytime): _____ Phone (evening): _____

Your relationship to this applicant: _____

Submit the completed form in writing, by email, or video format to:

Via email to: Renee at rbialek@jewishnaples.org

Or mail to

Beth Povlow, Educator Grant Coordinator, C/o JCRC, Jewish Federation of Greater Naples
4720 Pine Ridge Rd., Naples, FL 34119

Stand Up for Justice Application

Introduction

First of all, I would like to thank the Jewish Federation of Greater Naples for the opportunity to apply for this prestigious grant. Hello, my name is Lonzo Morgan and I'm originally from Shreveport, Louisiana. I have worked for the Collier County Public School system for the past 32 years at Pinecrest Elementary, Immokalee High School, and Immokalee Middle School. I have served as a TSA (Teacher on Special Assignment) administering attendance and discipline at the high school. I have also worked as a Migrant Resource teacher supporting students with their academic needs. Most of my time here in Collier County has been as a school counselor. I have served as a guidance counselor for at least 25 years. Not including the two years I served as guidance counselor at Nathaniel Rochester Middle School in Rochester, New York.

Still, the best part is my community service that included Pop Warner Football and serving as president of the league. I have coached boys' and girls' basketball and volleyball at middle school, high school football, and girls' softball. The current organizations that I belong to are both community and service based, and they include the Fort Myers Graduate Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, a member of NAACP, and the 100 Black Men of Southwest Florida. I do believe that everyone has a gift and a duty to serve. My service is to young kids and my duty is to make sure I build bridges for them to cross. The United States Army National Guard gave me the courage to make sure I carry out my duty.

Precipitating Events that Motivated Me

While I was growing up as a young man, I never knew anything about suicide or other mental illnesses. Mental illness was never talked about in my home or neighborhood. You never knew about the people who really needed help. In the black neighborhood nobody went anywhere because of the stigma that was attached to mental issues. In my community misinformed, but well intended statements would be devastating because no one knew about the facts and where to go and get the help that they needed. When I was a student at Southern University in Baton Rouge, La, my roommate began to start having certain episodes during the night and sometimes during the day. I had no clue what was going on and who to talk to about it. Finally, I called his mom and told her about his behavior, and she asked me if I would escort him to the airport and make sure that he would get on a plane. I told her that would be no problem. The next day, I received a phone call from the campus police to come to their office. I then was told that there had been a drowning victim, and a body was at the morgue, and they believed it was my roommate. They wanted me to come and identify his body; it was my roommate, and I will never forget that day. I thought about all the small details and wondered that if I had been informed about mental illness and signs of intent to die by suicide, would my roommate be alive today? Maybe we could have crossed the stage to receive our degrees together. It is important that we learn what we need to today about suicide so that our children and others can have a

tomorrow. You do not have to be a doctor, just a concerned, informed, and caring person. As the saying goes, I rather you talk about your story then hear it at your funeral. I think about my friend's story from time to time and just wonder....We all need to recognize and not wonder about "What If".

Immokalee Middle School Activities

One unfortunate example of a need for more social justice in the aforementioned area has occurred in Collier County Public Schools. The previous school year, Emma Benoit an exemplary speaker, suicide prevention awareness advocate, and suicide attempt survivor herself spoke at Immokalee High School, and three high schools in Naples. Her presentation also included a screening of her movie "My Ascension". This school year she is coming to three more high schools in Naples to share her message. It would be great if she could return to Immokalee in the future.

Here at IMS, we use several activities and lessons to inform our students about bullying, mental health, and suicide:

- There is an Anti-Bullying Kindness Development Team here at IMS that consists of students and teachers to address bullying.
- They can log into Canvas and learn about Resiliency and Mental Health which is provided through the district website for students.
- PowerPoint presentations can be done by school counselors in the classrooms upon teachers request.
- Licensed Mental Health Professionals are provided for students.
- PowerPoint presentations are created from various sites on the internet.

Two other awareness projects that we do here at Immokalee Middle School are Kindness Day and Anti Bullying Month. Both are very important in creating an environment of safeness, caring and concern. Being kind to others promotes the sense that you are not alone, and someone cares about you as a person, which is very important to young people. Bracelets were worn by the staff to help promote that day. Anti-Bullying is a subject that should be talked about throughout the school year and not just a month. The good thing here at Immokalee Middle School is that we do. We discuss all forms of bullying to make sure the students understand what can and will happen. The students and I created a video to give a better understanding to other students about bullying.

There are so many articles that talk about bullying. In the article "Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Suicide" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010), it is stated that nearly 2,000 middle schoolers were surveyed and that youth who experienced suicidal ideation or youth who attempted suicide were more likely to experience bullying whether traditional or via the Internet. Importantly, that same survey of nearly 2,000 middle schoolers found that Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians had higher levels of suicidal ideation than White Students. The authors of this article also stated that any anti-bullying program should include a component of suicide awareness. The aforementioned is pertinent to social justice. "Social justice is the view that everyone

deserves equal economic, political, and social rights, and opportunities (San Diego Foundation), and thus one piece of social justice is that people of color need more opportunities to be exposed to suicide prevention awareness programs.

Importance of Our Activities

Mental health, bullying and suicide have no racial preference. Students know this and when they work together is not done because of race it's because of love and wanting to learn to help their friends and others. It was fortuitous that I initiated successful suicide prevention activities at Immokalee Middle School during this school year (September 2023) with support from the entire school staff. For suicide prevention awareness month, I bought T-shirts for the administration, faculty, and staff to wear, had staff decorate their doors, gave each teacher teal and purple stickers of ribbons for them to wear, had the counselors and the school psychologist on the morning announcements, had balloon decorations and teal and purple cupcakes for students in the morning, and passed out suicide prevention stickers to the students. There was a tremendous response.

Soon after the activities, many students came forward and reported that they were having suicidal ideation. Unfortunately, one or more of these students had to be hospitalized; however, lives were potentially saved. Students have shared, "Because of the Suicide Day I had the courage to tell you how I feel" and "It is okay to talk about it." The Suicide Prevention Awareness Day has increased the discussion of suicidal thoughts/self-harm thoughts which has enabled staff to help students process and de-escalate the thoughts and for staff to intervene and prevent further harm. Students were able to share with other students the importance of suicide prevention and encourage others to speak to an adult if they are experiencing significant distress. Thus, in some way, the stigma about revealing emotional distress was reduced. In fact, the License Mental Health Professional asked me if she could spearhead the program when I retire this school year. Here is a more detailed list of some of the events and activities we do here at IMS.

How This Helped Students Stand Up for Themselves

My motivations began in my college days when my roommate begin to have mental health issues and eventually died that semester. Me not recognizing the signs. Many students were sent down to my office by teachers and other staff members with notes from students and from student friends also calls from parents seeking help for their children who talked about suicide and two of the main reasons were depression and bullying.

Witnessing your friend experience bullying firsthand gives you a better insight on how others felt when there was some type of injustice done to that individual or a group of individuals. You gain courage not only for your friend but for others as well. No matter the gender or race. Martin L. King, Jr. stated injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Knowledge and understanding are and always has been the key to solving issues and problems.


It is my hope that Immokalee Middle School continues to be the frontrunner for showing other schools how important it is to implement and continue to develop any program that involves suicide awareness. There are great traditions here in Immokalee that every culture celebrates; however, the misunderstandings of various mental illnesses and community stigma about suicide cause me to have a great concern about the welfare of our students and people of this community. Knowledge is power and the more knowledgeable a community is, the better it will be. Marcus Garvey stated a tree cannot grow or prosper if its roots are not strong. Our young people need to be fed and given the knowledge that they need to succeed and survive in life. We, the Collier County Schools, can and must be a part of the root that feeds the children, our trees of the future. It's time to educate. Indian Pride!

BULLYING IS NOT WELCOME AT IMMOKALEE MIDDLE SCHOOL



The end of Bullying is in Your Power. Stand Up for Others.
Bullying isn't Bullying. It's Vicious, Vile Attacks on Other Human Beings.
Bullies Ruin Everything for Everyone.
Be Kind. Be Gentle. Be Caring.
Think Before You Speak.



STOP BULLYING

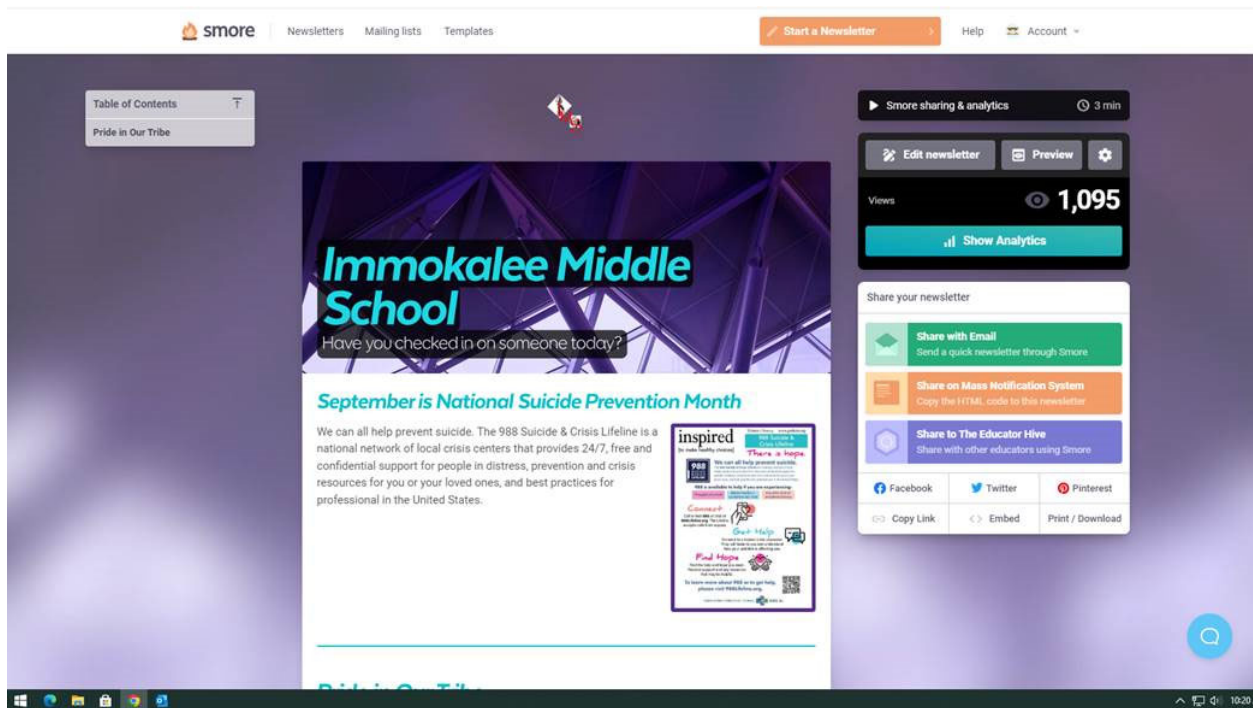


Bullying is emotional violence.
A bully is a coward. A friend is a hero.
Bully Free Zone. Immokalee Middle School
Bullies are insecure about themselves.
When you grow up, bullying at school will be your biggest regret.



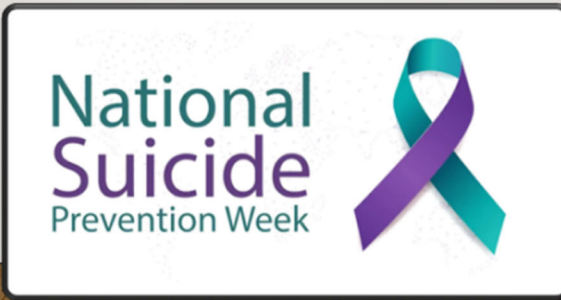
Evidence of Effectiveness

Our schoolwide activities are communicated to our school parents using an email newsletter. By doing this, we reached over 1,000 parents and guardians. In fact, we had 1,095 views on our newsletter that shared information about National Suicide Prevention Month. IMS encourages students to talk to their parents about issues that may be concerning to them. Because of our proactive approach there have been an increase of the number of kids requesting conference with counselors that can lead to helpful conversations with the School Psychologist and Licensed Mental Health Professional.



SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK SEPTEMBER 10TH - 16TH

**SUICIDE DOESN'T END THE CHANCES OF LIFE GETTING WORSE,
IT ELIMINATES THE POSSIBILITY OF IT EVER GETTING BETTER.**



Immokalee Middle Event September 2023