

Remsen CSD Accepts Rachel's Challenge to Be Kind

Students, teachers, staff and community members in the Remsen Central School District accepted Rachel's Challenge to create a chain reaction of kindness and compassion.

Rachel's Challenge, named in memory of Rachel Joy Scott, the first victim of the Columbine High School tragedy, is a program designed to inspire, equip and empower people to create a positive culture change in their school and community. While her life was tragically cut short, Rachel's shining example of kindness and compassion carries on.

Students district-wide in grades K-12 were encouraged -- and ultimately challenged -- to choose kindness over prejudice and bullying during several age-appropriate presentations on September 24 and 25.

The presentations marked the introduction of Rachel's Challenge in Remsen schools. Students at each school were invited to sign a large poster accepting the five tenets of Rachel's Challenge, which include using kind words and doing kind things for others. Students at the Jr./Sr. High School also had the opportunity to attend a Friends of Rachel (FOR) Club training session to establish a FOR Club at their school. As part of FOR Club, students will meet to work on the planning and development of activities, projects and events to spread kindness and compassion in their school and community.

Remsen students, parents and staff listened during an evening assembly on September 25 as presenter Mark Higginbottom shared the inspiring true story of Rachel's dream being fulfilled nearly two decades after her death. The acts of kindness Rachel displayed in her short 17 years of life provided a powerful reminder of the little things everyone can do each day to make the world a better place. As Rachel wrote in one of the many essays that Higginbottom shared, "You never know how far a little kindness can go."

During the presentations, Higginbottom also shared excerpts from journals that Rachel had kept which chronicled her thoughts and good deeds, and displayed wisdom beyond her age.

"She knew she was going to die before her time and she knew her life was going to impact millions of people," Higginbottom said.

Rachel's Challenge has been implemented in more than 20,000 schools nationally and internationally combined. It's a message of hope, inspiration and a call to action to change the world for the better.