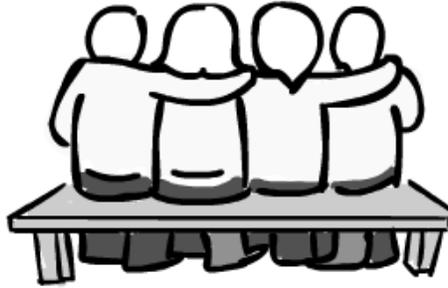


The Power Behind Positivity



Nearly eight billion people coexist in a world organized by an economic and social hierarchy, infatuated largely with themselves and their plans to reach the top. High schools justly train students to take over the world and make it their own — to be the smartest and most successful people they can be. As this method proves victorious in creating competitive young adults, it also fosters tension and unease in an already delicate environment. When friendly competition blooms into enemy rivalries and silly banter becomes emotionally abusive, one feels the need to step back and say, “DUDE. be nice.”

The high school environment is a minimalized example, simply mirroring the rest of the world. Even as competition can often cross the line, it is not the only dilemma; people also commonly face unexpected bullying and harassment. Brent Camalich saw the issue and chose to take a stand, founding the program, “DUDE. be nice” (DBN). “We don’t want to be anti-something,” Camalich stated in an episode of “The Harbor”. Continuing, he said, “We want to be for something. We want to be for being nice.”

“DUDE. be nice” is a clothing company that advocates for positive communities. The company creates videos meant to be shared with one and all in hopes of raising happiness and spreading benevolence throughout the world. Not simply a one and done campaign, DBN is a movement meant to bring longlasting kindness, inclusiveness, and gratitude.

From March 19th to March 23rd, and forever after, Westosha Central High School will bring this movement closer to home. Westosha will host a “DUDE. be nice” week focused exclusively on appreciating others, spreading good vibes and positive energy, along with, well, the sometimes necessary reminder to be kind to others. According to Camalich, “the idea that you [need to] put people down to really build yourself up is just a silly habit that starts in high school.” Central will be facing the issue head-on, reversing all of the energy that is put into negative behavior and sending it in a positive direction.

At Central, some activities are planned simply to excite and engage the students. During Homecoming Week, themes are assigned to the days and points are awarded to the classes with the most participants. Central plans to create a spinoff of this tradition during DBN week with days such as *Dude Be Bright*, where students will dress in neon colors. Classes will also have the chance to earn points by making videos and decorating classroom doors advertising “DUDE. be nice.” Finally, a food and clothing drive will be held throughout the week as a last factor in each classes overall points. An assembly will wrap up the week, celebrating the power of positivity, and a motivational speaker, former student Shane Lee, will talk with the student

body. During this assembly, the final points will be counted and one class will emerge victorious. By taking the competitive drive many schools are consumed with and adding a positive twist, Central hopes to empower students to live a happier life.

Hopefully, students will become more conscientious of their actions and realize how they affect others. Gratitude for the unsung heroes — those who do so much but rarely receive praise — will be celebrated. By reaching an awareness of their own actions and those of the people around them, students will not only create a much more comfortable and healthier environment to grow in, they will blossom into more empathetic, positive adults. While the DBN platform is used for the high school, we hope that it catches and spreads beyond, to the lives and people outside of the brick walls of Central.

This acts an informative message, bringing attention to the “DUDE. be nice” movement and the actions Central takes to encourage the message. However, it also acts as an urgent plea for change. These issues are not found only in high schools. Too often, people find themselves so consumed with their economic or social standing that they forget to be kind. Degrading or hurting others often goes unchecked because of the constant spotlight shining on the negative aspects of the world. Through differing opinions and perspectives, we are all here together on this glorious planet we call Earth. Celebrate life. Celebrate smiling. Kindness is underrated; it deserves the spotlight. So, dude. Be nice.