STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Sarah Landry



Like many high school teenagers across the United States, Sarah Landry has struggled with her mental health. The Centers for Disease Controls reported in February that nearly 3 in 5 U.S. teen girls felt persistently sad or hopeless in 2021 – double that of boys and representing a nearly 60% increase over the past decade.

With a goal of making sure other students in her school who might also be struggling with loneliness or sadness know they are not alone, Sarah focused her Senior Project on mental health advocacy. She proactively reached out to KyleCares in October '22, and over a six-month period she led the way in coordinating a young adult speaker assembly for the student body, initiating a new Active Minds chapter that has grown to nearly twenty student members, and establishing a collaborative relationship for KyleCares and the MMHS administration leadership.

"Before my mental health assembly and the creation of our Active Minds Chapter, I had never really heard students voicing their opinion on mental health. I thought by bringing in a Minding Your Mind guest speaker to talk about his own struggles, we would be able to open up the conversation around mental health within our school", noted Sarah. "Afterwards I noticed students from all backgrounds – the jocks, the musicians, the shy students – were all staying after to talk to our guest speaker Wes on how impactful his story was and how much they all could relate to it". A post-assembly survey of 100+ students highlighted Sarah's theory, with 86% reporting the presentation was impactful, and 84% connected with the speaker's experiences. One student noted, "I started to feel like I wasn't as alone as I thought", while another commented "It made me feel like I wasn't the only one going through stuff".

The ultimate goal is to end the stigma around mental health, and ensure students are unafraid to speak up and advocate for themselves without fear of being judged. Sarah's efforts have planted the seeds to foster a more open environment at MMHS that values mental health, and after attending the KyleCares Conference at Gillette Stadium in April, several Mashpee students who are devoted to mental health awareness came away with amazing ideas to continue the great work this fall that Sarah started over the past six month.

Sarah will be attending Merrimack College with a major in Social Work this fall, where she strives to continue bringing awareness to the topic of mental health through her personal life and career endeavors.

Congratulations Sarah, and best of luck!