

School Services Spotlight: CORA Counselors Creating a Culture of Caring

High School Teens Sponsor a “Day of Random Kindness”

Archbishop Ryan High School students are taking action to support their fellow classmates through the “No Place for Hate” Club. This club meets monthly to discuss topics related to bullying and discrimination. The goal of the club, according to their leader, CORA Counselor, Jessica MacKay, is to host a school-wide activity each month that focuses on building respect and cohesion in our school. Jessica considers the “No Place for Hate” Club activities some of the best parts of her counseling position.

“My students are so passionate about spreading kindness and acceptance, it’s truly inspiring! Some of them have experienced some form of bullying in the past, so we do activities to educate them on ways to handle difficult situations in the future. Our meetings are always open for new members to join and they do...we usually have 1-2 new walk-ins each month, and the way they are embraced and welcomed by the other students is heartwarming.”

This fall, twenty three students ran a “Day of Random Kindness” campaign. The students prepared posters with positive messages of love, encouragement, and affirmation.

These posters were placed in the hallways of Ryan for all to see the week leading up to national Random Acts of Kindness Day, November 21. The student body stopped and made their marks of “Kindness” by tracing their hands and sharing a random act of kindness that they performed for someone else. Some examples included “gave a hug to a friend who was upset”, “shared my lunch money” and “Helped around my house without being asked”.

Students' responses to CORA's Counseling Club, “No Place for Hate” have been very positive:

“This club makes me feel like I have people to turn to for advice. I make new friends every meeting. No Place for Hate is my second family.”

“My favorite part of No Place for Hate was the field trip to the Holocaust Symposium and taking part in Challenge Day (a day-long counseling workshop on building empathy promoting friendship).”

There are 11 high school counselors in CORA’s Nonpublic School Services Division, providing counseling in 10 Philadelphia schools. Among services offered are individual counseling/parent consultation, group counseling and classroom or school-wide guidance programming. Common problems that addressed include: situational adjustment difficulties, school behavioral problems, learning issues, adolescent adjustment difficulties, and both peer and family issues.

