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Teen suicide awareness, prevention activities planned at Murrieta schools

Each year across the nation thousands of young lives are cut short by teen suicide, leaving heartbroken family and friends behind to ask what they could have done to prevent such a tragedy. Murrieta school district officials will address the emotional issue as part of National Suicide Prevention Week Sept. 7–13, 2015.

The annual event seeks to draw attention to suicide, how to recognize warning signs and risk factors and where to find help, particularly among teens.

“Thousands of teens commit suicide each year in the United States. Fortunately, there is hope and help for those who are contemplating such drastic action or dealing with feelings of stress, confusion or hopelessness. This is an important message for our students to hear,” said Karen Parris, Murrieta Valley Unified School District (MVUSD) spokeswoman.

Murrieta Valley High School (MVHS) lost one of its students to suicide when Nighthawk junior Diego Villareal took his own life for unknown reasons last month.

“After the loss of Diego, we are looking forward to the opportunity to continue having an open dialogue with our students to make sure they are aware of all the resources and help that is available to them,” said Principal Eric Mooney.

Activities planned for the week in Murrieta schools include:

- **Morning announcements** highlighting the importance of knowing the signs and symptoms associated with suicide, and the available resources.
- **Have-a-Heart Wednesday** asking students to write a compliment on a heart outline and post it around campus or give to another student.
- **Resolution Thursday** calling for students to write positive goals for the school year.

The Teen Suicide Awareness and Prevention Program (TSAPP), operated by the Injury Prevention division of the Department of Public Health, in conjunction with Riverside County Department of Mental Health, Prevention and Early Intervention, plans to recognize National Suicide Prevention Week during September by partnering with schools throughout Riverside County.

TSAPP encourages everyone to join the movement to reach out, save lives and speak with kindness.

For more information, visit <http://www.rivcoips.org/home/index.php/teen-suicide-prevention>.

**Media representatives wishing to attend school activities should contact MVUSD Media and Communications Specialist Karen Parris at kparris@murrieta.k12.ca.us.

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