

NEBRASKA TAKES STRONG STAND TO CURB SCHOOL VIOLENCE

In light of the most recent high school shooting in Chardon, Ohio, many are asking what is being done in Nebraska to protect our students. Considering that bullying is one of the most identified factors in school violence, our schools, youth groups and individuals have the opportunity to take swift action.

The signature event for Global Youth Service day in Nebraska is an anti-bullying initiative, "Nebraska Stand for the Silent." On April 20, 2012, schools and groups have the opportunity to get involved by taking a pledge to combat bullying and participating in a state-wide balloon release ([Nebraska Stand for the Silent](#) psa).

Reflecting the statistic that every 7 seconds someone is bullied, participating youth will stand in silence for 7 seconds, and then release a balloon and recite an anti-bullying pledge. Participating schools and youth service organizations will receive balloons and pledge cards from the sponsoring organizations, AmeriCorps and ServeNebraska. So far, over 11,000 balloons are set to be released.

That number is sure to grow. Oriental Trading Company has pledged another 350,000 balloons and there is still time for groups to get involved by logging on to www.serve.nebraska.gov and clicking the Stand for the Silent tab. The initiative has already been endorsed by more than a dozen groups, including Nebraska Teachers Association, SCIP (a program for school and community safety), and Nebraska State Probation. Additionally, Husker student-athletes Rex Burkhead (football) Kaitlyn Burke (basketball) and Chris Phipps (Track & Field) volunteered for an anti-bullying public service announcement to be aired on local stations throughout the region ([Nebraska Stand for the Silent-Husker PSA](#)).

National Anti-bullying activist Jodee Blanco says that bullying damages you for life. "Being laughed at hurts," Blanco said, "Bullying isn't just the mean things that you do, it's all the nice things you never do."

Governor Heineman is expected to issue a proclamation officially recognizing April 20, 2012, as Nebraska Stand for the Silent Day in Nebraska at a ceremony in the Warner Chamber at the Capitol on April 11, at 10:30 a.m. Nebraska Stand for the Silent organizers will be a part of the event.

Organizers of the event are hopeful their message that respect and compassion is the best defense against cruelty will stand strongly in Nebraska on April 20, so youth across the state will think about the consequences of words and actions and feel empowered to end the cycle of harassment.

For additional information about Nebraska Stand for the Silent, please contact Heather Millard at 712-203-1852 or email heather.millard@nebraska.gov