Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you know, Robinson Secondary School has been working on helping students understand the negative impact of bullying in our community. We are committed to taking serious, proactive steps to curb a problem that is found in every community. Our efforts this year include: raising awareness about bullying and cyber bullying through classroom lessons and individual counseling, having 7th grade students participate in the Depression Awareness and Suicide Prevention ACT lesson, and the Robinson Pyramid Initiative – Be Aware Be Kind Be You/ Dude Be Nice.

In addition to these great programs, we have also recruited Mr. John Halligan to conduct a presentation on Thursday, April 14th for students during Learning Seminar. He will relay his own tragic experience as a dad whose 13-year-old son died by suicide in 2003, after incessant bullying by peers since the 5th grade, both in school and online. Mr. Halligan further shares that Ryan wrestled with underlying mental health issues and depression and that these factors contributed to Ryan’s vulnerability and ultimate suicide. His story is riveting and powerful, and reminds students that there is a face, a person, a heart, on the other end of the computer screen.

His presentation will begin with a short video collection of home movie clips and still pictures of Ryan. Mr. Halligan will then begin to tell the story of Ryan and the factors that led up to his son’s suicide. The students will gain a perspective from inside a family of a child who is a victim of bullying and cyber bullying. They will also gain awareness about the signs and risk of teenage suicide and how best to help a friend. As part of Mr. Halligan’s presentation, students will have the chance to ask him questions. We encourage you to visit a website named for his son: www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org for more information. This website is a great tool to discuss the content of this presentation with your child.

Because of the sensitive nature of the topic, we wanted to inform you about this in advance. While we encourage all students to attend the presentation, if for any reason, you would prefer that your child not attend this presentation, please contact your school counselor prior to Friday, April 8th. Should you have further questions, please feel free to contact me or your child’s school counselor.

As a part of our Be Aware Be Kind Be You/Dude Be Nice Initiative, all parents/guardians in the Robinson Pyramid are invited to attend a parent only program where Mr. Halligan will discuss the lessons he learned from this tragedy. He will also discuss how to deal with bullying, cyberbullying, and teen depression. This parent only program will take place on Thursday, April 14th at 7pm in the Robinson Secondary School Russell Theatre. More detailed information is available in the attached flyer.

Respectfully,

James W. Robinson Secondary School
Department of Student Services

5035 Sideburn Rd
Fairfax, VA 22015
Phone 703-262-100

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James W. Robinson
Secondary
School
Department of Student Services
5035 Sideburn Rd
Fairfax, VA 22015
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