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Safe School Ambassadors



(L-R) JM Safe School Ambassadors Daniel Zur, Hannah Grubbs, Toni Finnane (in front with flowered top), Sarah Sweeney, Lauren Burns, Nicholas Obrand, Emily Nichols and Joseph Zacharin Photo Heidi Felt

flow of information from the SSAs about what they are noticing and how they are addressing these issues.

Safe School Ambassadors are not limited to addressing negative acts. "Random acts of kindness" are also noticed, said SSA Daniel Zur, and students observed doing kind acts might receive a note from an SSA.

In a recent poll, 90% of JM's Safe School Ambassadors reported that they believe they have had a positive impact on the school's climate and have been able to reduce the number of acts of mistreatment on campus. L.Borrowman

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A handful of Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School(JM)students traveled to UC Berkeley on March 23. JM counselor Heidi Felt explains, "I was asked to represent JM's Safe School Ambassador program at an 'at risk' conference. In an effort to make our presentation more interesting, I invited my most tenured Safe School Ambassadors (SSAs)." The group gave a presentation to over 150 people about what these students represent on the JM campus.

According to the organization Community Matters, the Safe School Ambassadors Program has been implemented in over 650 schools across North America. The program empowers leaders from the diverse groups and cliques on campus and equips them with nonviolent communication and intervention skills to stop bullying and violence among their peers.

At JM, SSAs are nominated by their teachers because they have a sense of social justice, are influential within their social circles, and are highly verbal.

SSAs Nick Obrand and Emily Nichols explained to the audience that the job of an SSA is to notice acts of mistreatment, consider and implement the best course of action to address the mistreatment, and then follow-up with the students involved in a conflict. SSAs go through extensive and on-going training and work closely with staff members who, according to SSA Sarah Sweeney, receive a regular