

PRESSRELEASE

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Raise Your Standards, Not Your Fists

Michigan City, IN (September 26, 2003) – Nancy Widelski announced a new Human Rights program, “Raise Your Standards, Not Your Fists.”

Widelski said, “This is a year-long program that includes an essay and poster contest for Martin Luther King Day, presentations made to students, an online bi-monthly newsletter and cultural knowledge ‘test,’ and a youth walk which will take place next spring. We will work to help students and young adults who are from diverse backgrounds and who are willing to lead and to become peace makers instead of trouble makers.”

Widelski said, “While it's impossible to classify students into a single group, there is one topic to which every student can relate - violence. Most of them have witnessed or participated in a fight during lunch, an argument in the locker room, or an uncomfortable debate during class. Violence in school isn't just confined to being physical; it also deals with verbal conflict. Every student and teacher has the right to come to a school with a comfortable atmosphere where ideas can be freely expressed, and fortunately this is the mentality of the majority of the school.”

”You could blame the current trend on widespread violence on TV, the media's obsession with the profane, the breakdown of moral standards, or the unconventional manner in which more and more teenagers are being raised,” Widelski continued. “In a perfect setting, conflict resolution skills would be a standard part of our lives, but too many conflicts are being resolved violently. Raging hormonal tendencies can account for some actions, but there is a time when each of us must assess situations and deal with them peacefully.”

Widelski said, “A major reason for fights is the inability to accept the opinions and lifestyles of others. If you don't agree, you have more choices than having a harassing and abusive argument. While acceptance of differing opinions can be difficult for many of us, genuine empathy and understanding is indeed possible. Compromise is equally important. These are basic human principles and rights that would ideally influence our interpersonal actions which are often forgotten in the heat of a dispute. Nonviolent protests or objections and rationally handled confrontations are much more effective than turbulent actions. The only thing shown in violent situations is a gross example of how human respect is mistreated. ‘Raise Your Standards, Not Your Fists’ is a program which will teach our youth about these human principles and rights and help them adopt these concepts into their daily lives.”

For more information about the “Raise Your Standards, Not Your Fists” campaign, contact Nancy Widelski at 219/873-1429 or via e-mail at nancyw@emichigancity.com.

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