

Student health and well-being is No. 1 priority at District 88



Pictured is District 88 Director of Student Services Dr. Raquel Wilson.

At District 88, the safety, health and well-being of students and staff is our No. 1 priority. We know building relationships proceeds learning, and we continue to focus on connecting with all students to foster an inclusive environment and a sense of belonging to support each child on his or her journey to success. For students to achieve academically, we must first meet their needs outside of the classroom – including providing mental health and social-emotional supports. This is even more prevalent and critical as pupils readjust to in-person learning.

Each September, we recognize Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#), “(this is) a time to raise awareness on this stigmatized, and often taboo, topic. In addition to shifting public perception, we use this month to spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide. Our goal is ensuring that individuals, friends and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help.”

As part of this month, we remember Willowbrook alumnus Theodore (Ted) Doyle, class of 2021, who passed away on Dec. 15, 2020. Ted loved working on cars and computers, as well as music and spending time with family and friends. He also had a passion for animals and the outdoors. He was fearless and always up for an adventure, which led him to enlist in the U.S. Army. District 88 regrets that Ted wasn’t recognized in the 2021 yearbook and sincerely apologizes for this oversight. Ted’s positive impact on Willowbrook will be felt for years to come, particularly in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department, where he was a standout student in the school’s automotive courses. To share Ted’s enthusiasm for the auto program with other students

and ensure they can enjoy the auto shop, Ted's family generously donated two cars to Willowbrook. His legacy was evident through the memorial students coordinated near the auto shop in his honor. While we can never fully correct this error, we look forward to working with Ted's family to ensure his memory is never forgotten. Ted is greatly missed by his family, friends and the Willowbrook community and will always be a Warrior.



On Sept. 10, the Willowbrook Blue Crew hosted an event where students and staff wore turquoise and purple in support of World Suicide Prevention Day (see images above). According to the International Association for Suicide Prevention, "World Suicide Prevention Day was established in 2003 in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO) and is a significant advocacy and communication based event. By raising awareness, reducing the stigma around suicide and encouraging well-informed action, we can reduce instances of suicide around the world." For more information, go to <https://www.iasp.info/wspdp2021>.

Providing supports

According to [Mental Health America's Youth Data 2021](#), nearly 15 percent of youth ages 12 to 17 in Illinois reported suffering from at least one major depressive episode in the past year, and 11 percent cope with severe major depression. Yet more than 62 percent of youth in Illinois with major depression do not receive any mental health treatment. We know it's imperative to identify mental health issues early, and below are programs and services we have in place at District 88 to help accomplish that goal.

1. **Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) staff:** The PPS teams at Addison Trail and Willowbrook consist of school counselors, social workers, psychologists, deans and nurses. The PPS teams meet frequently to discuss student concerns and develop or implement student interventions.
 - a. Addison Trail PPS staff: [CLICK HERE](#)
 - b. Willowbrook PPS staff: [CLICK HERE](#)
2. **Process to request support:**

- a. Addison Trail students can contact their counselor or PPS staff members directly and/or schedule an appointment directly through the appointment scheduling link [HERE](#).
 - b. Willowbrook students can contact their counselor directly and/or schedule an appointment directly through the appointment scheduling link [HERE](#).
 - c. Staff and parents/guardians can contact PPS staff to request support for a student (see the staff directories above).
 - d. Addison Trail Emergency Hotline: 630-782-2801 or hotlineAT@dupage88.net
 - e. Willowbrook Emergency Hotline: 630-782-2803 or hotlineWB@dupage88.net
3. **Student groups:** Student groups provide cohesiveness and an environment where students feel safe and can discuss the issues they are facing. A variety of topics are offered each year, including grief/loss, social skills, anger management and anxiety. For more information, contact the Addison Trail School Counseling Department at 630-628-3318 or the Willowbrook School Counseling Department at 630-530-3419.
4. **Connecting to resources:** PPS staff members can connect students and families to a variety of resources at the local, state and national levels.

Initiatives for the 2021-22 school year and beyond

1. **House Bill 1778:** Amends the School Code and the Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act. Provides that if a school district issues an identification card to pupils in any of grades 7 through 12, the district shall provide contact information for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Crisis Text Line and a local suicide prevention hotline on the identification card. This bill will go into effect on July 1, 2022. [CLICK HERE](#) to read more.
2. **Senate Bill 1577:** Amends the Compulsory Attendance Article of the School Code. With respect to the exceptions to the compulsory attendance requirement, provides that absence for cause by illness shall include the mental or behavioral health of a student for up to 5 days for which the child need not provide a medical note, in which case the child shall be given the opportunity to make up any school work missed during the mental or behavioral health absence. After the second mental health day used, the child may be referred to the appropriate school support personnel. This bill will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2022. [CLICK HERE](#) to read more.
3. **Universal screener:** As we continue to focus on enhancing the mental health of each student, we are looking to implement a universal screener to monitor pupils. More details will be shared as they become available.
4. **Professional development for staff:** We continue to provide staff members with a variety of trauma-informed training opportunities, including from topic experts Melissa Sadin and Ingrid Cockhren.

5. **CARE Team:** In 2020, District 88 formed a team to concentrate on the social-emotional well-being of students and staff. The purpose of the CARE (Committed to Academics, Resiliency and Equity) Team is to implement intentional social-emotional supports, using inclusive, culturally responsive, restorative and trauma-informed practices.
6. **Future recommendations:** We are in the process of analyzing our current mental health supports at District 88. Recommendations for expansions will be shared during the October Board of Education meetings.

Resources to help

For anyone experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, there are various resources available, including:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** The Lifeline is available 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255 for free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.
- **Crisis Text Line:** The Crisis Text Line is available 24/7 for free crisis support by text message. Anyone in a crisis can connect with a Crisis Counselor by texting “Reach” to 741741.
- **Call4Calm:** A free text line is available for anyone seeking emotional support. Text TALK to 552020 for English or HABLAR for Spanish, 24/7. Callers seeking assistance remain anonymous and will provide only their first name and zip code, which enables the service to link them to a counselor in their area who is knowledgeable about available local resources.
- **Veterans Crisis Line:** Provides access to caring, qualified responders within the Department of Veterans Affairs. This free support is confidential, available 24/7 and serves all veterans, service members, their families and friends. Call 1-800-273-8255, or text 838255. Support is available for the hearing impaired at 1-800-799-4889.
- **DuPage County Health Department’s Crisis Services:** The DuPage County Crisis Hotline is available 24/7 at 630-627-1700. Callers can expect staff members to provide support and guidance to manage the crisis, explore options and provide resources to further assist them in resolving the crisis.

- Source: DuPage County Health Department (see the full press release at <https://www.dupage88.net/site/public/files/?item=6038>)

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) DuPage:** Focuses on providing support, advocacy and education to improve the quality of life of individuals with mental illnesses and their families. Call the resource line at 630-752-0066.

- **Center for Childhood Resilience (CCR):** The CCR, housed at Lurie Children's, is dedicated to promoting access to high-quality mental health services for children and adolescents throughout Illinois and nationwide. Call 1-800-543-7362.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Through Northwestern Medicine, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in the Chicago area (including northwest Indiana and southeast Wisconsin) offers a positive, proactive, customized and integrated approach to helping individuals and organizations find the balance between the competing demands of work and personal life. The EAP provides free and confidential short-term assistance to employees and their immediate family members, who are experiencing personal or work-related issues. The EAP is available 24/7 for emergencies. Master's degree, licensed professional counselors provide assessment, solution-focused short-term counseling and referral to community resources for assistance with the following concerns:
 - Personal and workplace stress
 - Marital, family or relationship issues
 - Anxiety and depression
 - Substance abuse
 - Financial and legal consultation
 - Work-life balance
 - Grief and loss

If you have any questions regarding the above information, please feel free to contact me at rwilson@dupage88.net or 630-782-3005. Thank you for your continued support of District 88.

With District 88 Pride,
Dr. Raquel Wilson
District 88 Director of Student Services