

PRESS RELEASE

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[Date]
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Name of School] students experience RESPECT educational theatre

[LOCATION] – RESPECT, a non-profit educational theatre company based in Omaha, will be presenting *Stop & Think* at **[LOCATION]** on **[DATE]**. School administration and staff continually work to empower elementary school students to find as many strategies and resources as possible to prevent bullying and dating violence, to be safer in social media and find multiple ways to help themselves and their peers when faced with challenging relationships, negative peer pressure and to become better equipped with resources to manage the strong emotional responses that often accompany difficult relationships in their lives. RESPECT works collaboratively to reinforce the social and emotional learning needs that youth serving organizations have for the students they care about.

“Theatre is a great way to help students learn about healthy versus unhealthy relationships and behavioral choices as well as to better understand the impact that their choices can have on the resulting consequences for themselves and their fellow students,” explains Dr. Patricia Newman, a child psychologist and RESPECT’s Founder/Clinical Director. “Students at all age levels can identify with the characters in various plays and what they experience. There is the potential to develop empathy and more fully recognize the impact of bullying and other abusive and hurtful behaviors directed towards others. Just as importantly, students can learn different problem solving ideas and potential strategies to help themselves and others. They learn from each other and from their community, as they are involved within the role play and discussion sessions that follow each play.”

RESPECT is presenting *Stop & Think* for students on **[DATE]**. This program focuses on identification of many bullying behaviors and prevention techniques. Participants will learn about the importance of positive bystanders and how a person can become empowered if they “stop and think” before acting impulsively. *Stop & Think* includes interactive scenes, and students are encouraged to participate in role-play activities, respond respectfully to bullying behaviors as

the target or bystander, and realize what is “fun and games” for one person may be painful for another. The program is accompanied by materials and resources for students, parents and teachers.

“I think there will always be a need to provide emotional and social support and learning in schools, we cannot fully eliminate bullying and other types of unhealthy behaviors. However, teaching students that they have a right to keep their own physical and emotional boundaries safe, helping them learn to respect those boundaries in others or reach out for help, helping them learn how to appropriately manage “big emotions” and getting other kids to take a stand and say, ‘that’s not right,’ or ‘please stop I don’t like it when you do that’ can be a big step in solving the problem,” indicates Newman. “We are proud to be part of the effort that the [location] team has implemented to give students the support and resources that they need to live safer, happier and healthier lives. We know that the skills they learn now can help them have safer and healthier relationship skills as they get older.”

Since 2000, RESPECT has presented anti-bullying and relationship empowerment productions to nearly 600,000 students in preschool through college age in communities across Nebraska and Iowa. Programs for adults are also available. Primary organization sponsors include the Lozier Foundation, Sherwood Foundation, Hawks Foundation, Mammel Family Foundation, Heider Family Foundation, Fred & Eve Simon Foundation, and Omaha Steaks. [Additional funding for the programs in “location” was provided by “fund”.] For more information on the organization and resources to help students develop healthy relationship skills and to meet the challenges of bullying and dating violence, visit www.respect2all.org.

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