



# NORWICH FREE ACADEMY

Superintendent/Head of School

November 8, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Greetings from the campus of Norwich Free Academy. The leaves are changing, and mornings present us with a briskness that speaks of colder temperatures ahead.

At NFA, our focus upon the physical health and welfare of our students, their personal and social development, and their knowledge of and ability to make healthy choices is central to fulfilling our mission. NFA's faculty and student services personnel have worked together to present special programming in the coming weeks to promote student health.

I am writing to tell you about the exciting and informative opportunities we have planned for our students, and about one evening opportunity for parents, hosted at NFA.

1. **November 14**, a half-day with dismissal at 11:55 a.m. for all students, is **Grade 9 Health Awareness Day**. In place of academic classes, ninth-grade students will attend sessions, listen to presentations, and receive resources to promote awareness of healthy choices presented by community agencies. Students will be grouped based upon their gender identity for these presentations:
  - a. **Safe Futures:** An informative educator-guided presentation will provide a comprehensive overview to students about dating, healthy choices in relationships, and the importance of setting boundaries.
  - b. **Hartford Healthcare:** A community Health Education Nurse will provide a comprehensive overview of healthy living choices including nutrition, sleep, and the importance of exercise, from a medical perspective. The presentation addresses how physiological responses to healthy/unhealthy choices affect school performance.
  - c. **Looking In Theater:** Highly trained student-actors from the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts will perform dramatic scenes dealing with important social, family, and personal issues. Presentations encourage healthy decision-making in adolescence and include a discussion with the actors answering questions as their characters.
  - d. **Natchaug Hospital:** A licensed mental health clinician will present information about the dangers and effects of and provide resources about alcohol/drug abuse, including illegal use of prescription drugs and steroid use.
2. **November 20 & 21: Motivational/Inspirational Speaker David Flood** will present about dignity, respect, and compassion in grade level assemblies (grades 9, 10, and 11 on November 20 and grade 12 and Sachem Campus students on November 21). Flood's message focuses upon creating a close and caring school community to which everyone belongs. With humor and energy, he talks about character, making choices, responsibility, integrity, respect, hard work, and compassion.

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Flood, a nationally known youth speaker, has addressed over 200,000 students in 20 states and Canada about reframing the way they look at others, their lives, and themselves.

**3. November 28 – December 1: Kindness Changes Everything: NFA Mental Health Awareness Week** sponsored by the NFA Student Services Team. The week will focus upon ways of showing kindness. Students will receive and have the opportunity to complete a “Kindness Passport” to document their acts of kindness. Students who complete it will receive a bracelet with a kindness slogan for their efforts. Also, supportive messages will be displayed in common spaces throughout campus with “kindness” words to use. The initiative will continue through the winter break.

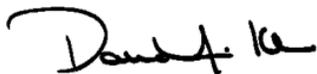
**4. November 29: What’s wrong (and right) with “13 Reasons Why”: An Evening Program for Parents and Students** sponsored by Hartford HealthCare, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Slater Auditorium.

The Netflix series “13 Reasons Why” tells the story of a teenager who takes her own life and leaves behind tapes chronicling the reasons why. Hartford HealthCare's Behavioral Health Network will generate dialogue about the series' graphic themes, including suicide, sexual assault, substance abuse, and bullying. Participating are Hank Schwartz, MD, Psychiatrist-in-Chief, Institute of Living, Vice-President of Behavioral Health, Hartford HealthCare, Paul Weigle, MD, Associate Medical Director and Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Natchaug Hospital, and Laura Saunders, Child and Adolescent Psychologist, Institute of Living.

This event is suitable for parents, teens, and school employees.

For further information about any of the above programs, please contact Director of Student Affairs, John Iovino at 860-425-5510 or [iovinoj@nfaschool.org](mailto:iovinoj@nfaschool.org).

Regards,



David J. Klein  
Head of School

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