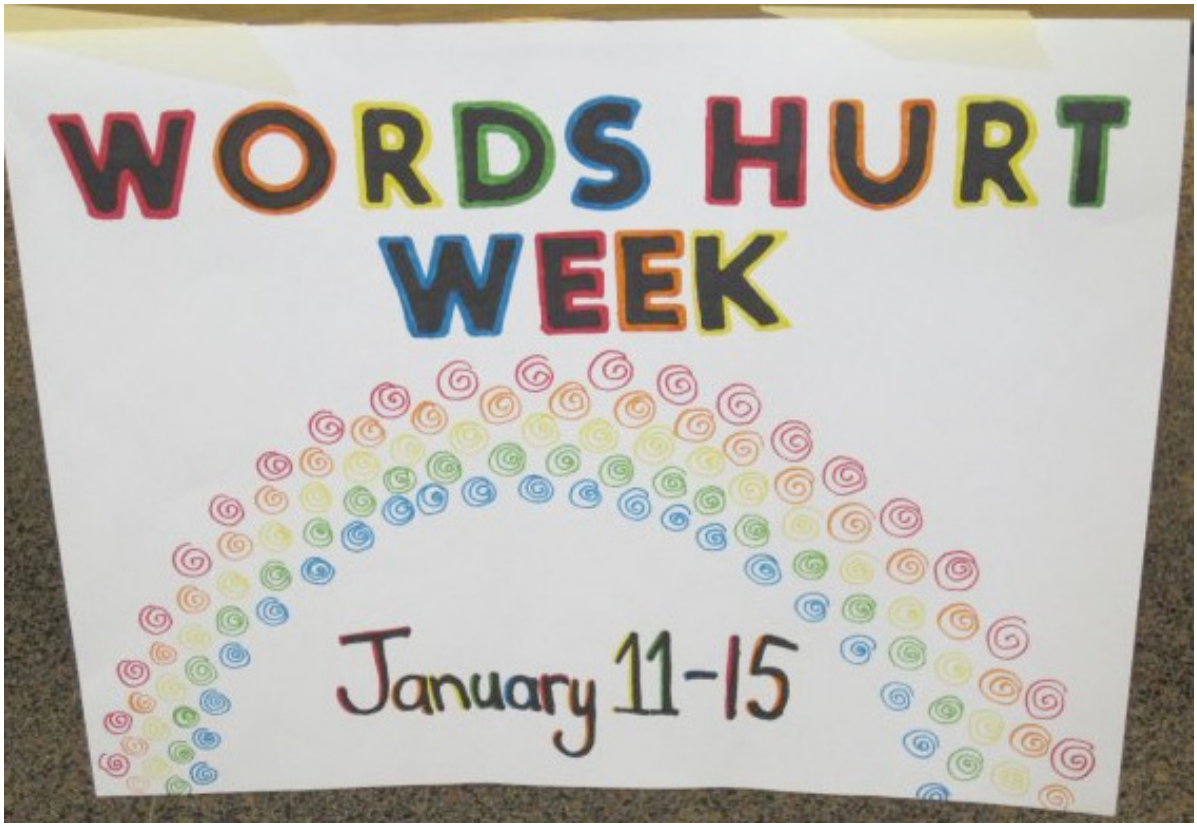
WORDS HURT WEEK

An Anti-Slur High School Educational Program

Created by: Lana Thiel, Maria Peeples, Katie Cronmiller, and Jason Donker

Compiled by Lana Thiel
Appleton East High School



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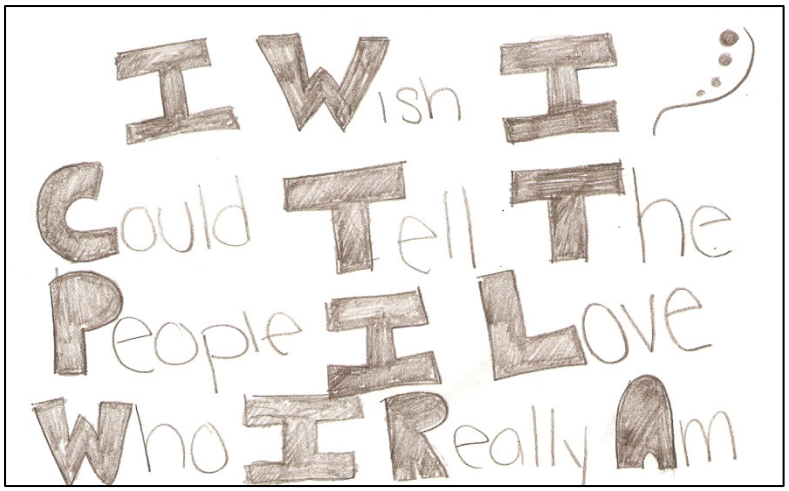
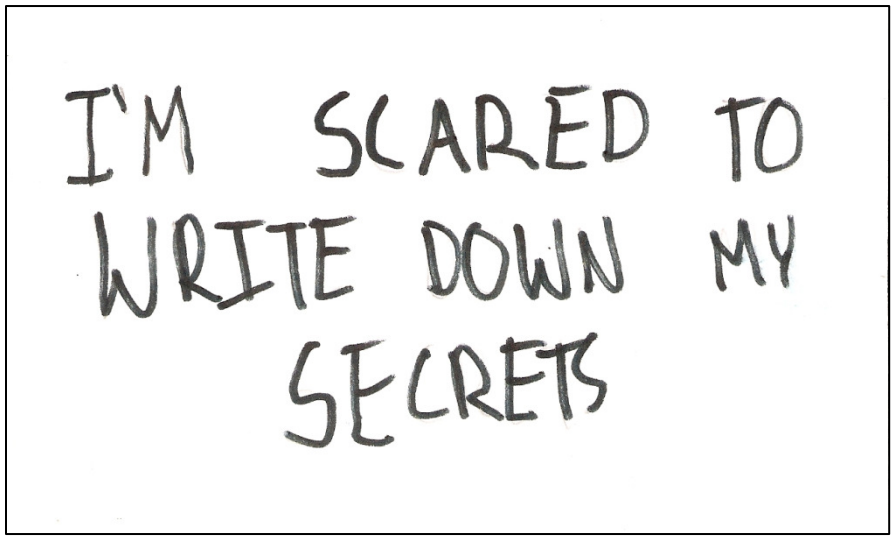
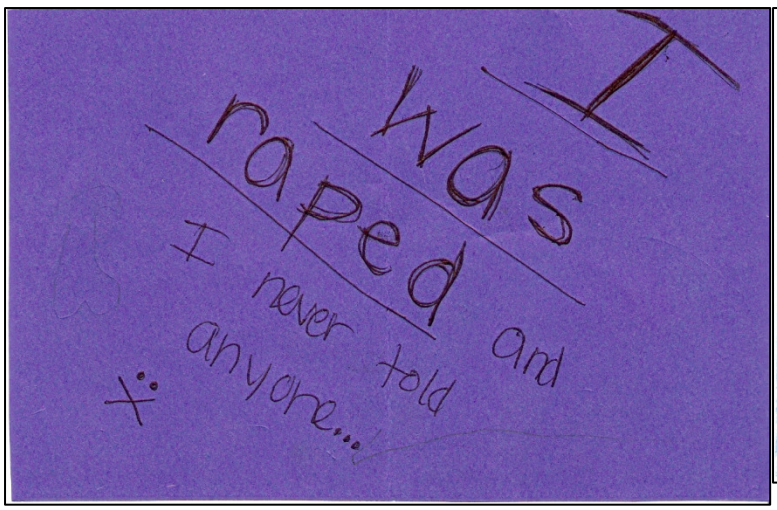
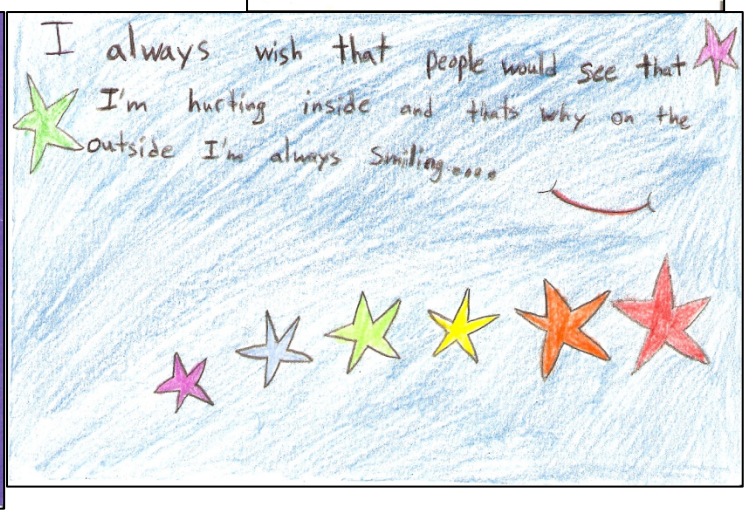
Words Hurt, Words Heal

An Anti-Slur Campaign









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Words Hurt, Words Heal

An Anti-Slur Campaign

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I. Getting Started…

The purpose of Words Hurt week is to create a more positive environment in the high school setting. Words Hurt week is a series of activities that aims at creating student awareness to the slurs that are being used at school and how they are affecting their peers and those around them. By implementing the Words Hurt week program at school, the goal is to empower students' who have been hurt by words and also to combat the slurs with an education piece on why words do hurt. Hopefully, this program will help your students to realize the negative impact they can have on others with the words they choose. The idea is once they realize how badly others are hurting and how they are not alone, they will think before they speak.

Materials

Poster board

Markers/Crayons/Colored Pencils

Masking Tape

8.5 X 11 Cardstock paper (for post cards)

Decoration materials for posters

Safety pins

Ribbon

Silicone Bracelets

Video equipment (for video commercials)

Video editing software

Access to a computer

A lot of people to help!

Support of school staff, students, and administration

Time and energy

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Organizational Planning Sheet

Date Range for Words Hurt Week: _____

Goals/Objectives:

Ideas for Activities:

People/Groups to Get Involved:

Ideas for Presentations:

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A. Involving Administration

The first thing you want to do before starting an anti-slur campaign is to inform the administration and get their support and permission. Be organized with a set plan, a time frame, and list of activities you would like to do throughout the specified time frame. You should also be clear on the reasons why you are initiating a words hurt week.

The following example can be used when approaching administration:

Dear _____:

The Gay-Straight Alliance would like to organize an anti-slur campaign at _____ school because we feel that there is much that can be done to combat bullying and create a safer environment for our students. We would like to involve other staff members and as many co-curricular clubs who choose to participate. We feel that our anti-slur campaign, which we are calling "Words Hurt," will positively affect our school environment and bring awareness to the student body and staff about students that are hurting. We also feel that students will feel more connected to each other once they see that they are not alone and others are hurting as well. We would like the "Words Hurt" project to last for a week and we propose the following activities throughout the week:

1. **Post Secret Writing Prompt – Words Hurt:** This writing prompt will begin the homeroom prior to the week. During homeroom, a short video will be shown explaining the writing prompt. Then, students will be handed a post card and asked to voluntarily participate. They will anonymously write their secret about a time when words have hurt them. Their secrets will be place in a taped shoebox so that they will not be read aloud. Afterwards, the homeroom teachers will bring the secrets to the office to be hung on the wall by the members of the GSA in the commons so students can view others secrets throughout the week.

2. **Follow-Up – Words Heal writing prompt:** This writing prompt will begin during the middle of Words Hurt week. Each homeroom will be given a typed list of postcards from the wall with a corresponding number next to it. Students will respond to one of the postcards with words that may heal someone who is going through a difficult time. They will be turned in with the same process as above. Members from GSA will sort the post cards and hang them next to the correct post card. People are able to do more than one.

3. **Presentations on the final day of the week.** There will be 8 presenters scheduled and approved by you. The presentations will vary in topic but will center around the message that words hurt. We are proposing the following presenters and topics: Beth Detienne – speaking about her cognitive disability and experiences in school; Debra Cronmiller – from the Fox Valley Homeless Shelter; Richard Bauer – from NAMI; Carla Hales – from Harbor House; Dottie Matthews and Sarah Garb – speaking about religious tolerance; Kathy Flores – LGBT issues; Special Education department – speaking about the offensiveness in the word "retard"; and the Hmong Club – speaking about their ethnicity and words that hurt their group of people.

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Teachers will be given the opportunity to sign up for the presentations a few weeks prior to when they take place and guaranteed a spot, as well as given a seating chart in the auditorium for their class.

4. **Marketing and Promotion:** We will be selling "Words Hurt" bracelets all week that are designed with our school colors. We will also be selling t-shirts that say, "That's so _____!" Each club will be given the opportunity to choose a word to fill in the blank. Students can also choose their own word. There will be iron-on letters used to personalize the t-shirts. There will also be posters put up around school and videos shown during announcement to encourage participation.

Thank you for considering this important project.

Sincerely,

_____

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B. Involving Advisors and Co-Curricular Clubs

After receiving approval from administration, it is time to move on to involving the rest of the faculty at your school. To create the most meaning, support, and the largest campaign for your school, it is important to involve as many staff members, advisors, and co-curricular club members as possible. The best way to do this would be to have your advisor write an email to staff detailing what you plan on doing for "Words Hurt Week" as well as how you would like them to be involved.

Here is a sample of an email you can send to staff:

Subject: Involvement in Words Hurt Week

Hi _____,
I know you are the advisor of the club _____. I am the GSA advisor and we are organizing a "Words Hurt" campaign for the week of January 11-15 _____ school. We are focusing on words that hurt other people and educating people on what to say. We are getting as many clubs involved as we can and I would like to involve your club in the week's events. So far the clubs that are involved are: _____ (*Names of clubs that are involved)*. We're hoping to include _____(*Names of clubs not involved yet*) as well. If you are willing to participate, this is what I am asking you to do.

1. Set up a meeting with your club to tell them about "Words Hurt" week. The week is going to be focused on getting the word out about it. On January 15 (Friday) there will be speakers in the auditorium each hour that teachers will be able to take their classes down to listen to. The speakers include people from the community speaking about poverty/class issues, multiculturalism, GLBT issues, ability issues, etc.

2. Create a poster on poster board with your club that says, (The name of your club) supports "Words Hurt" week because _____(your own message). You can decorate it however you'd like. We will hang them up around the school during the week of January 11-15.

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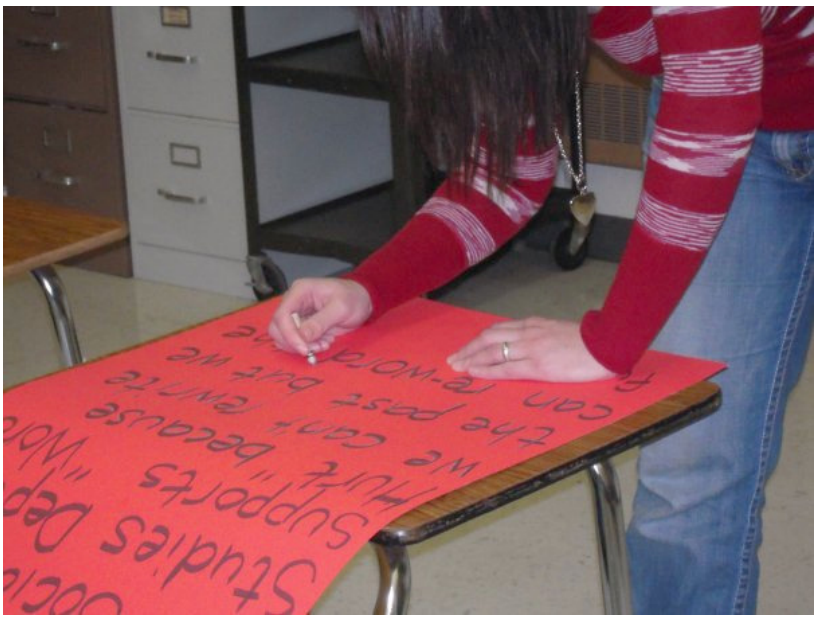
3. Choose 2-4 representatives from your club to hold the poster in the video that will be played during Words Hurt week. We will be filming the video after school on _____ (*date and time*). Have those people meet in room 209 to film the video.

4. There will be shirts during "Words Hurt" week for sale. They will say, "That's so _____!" Each club that participates is asked to think of a nice word for your club to fill in the blank. The GSA is using the word "wacky", another club is using the word, "ludicrous" and for the staff the word will be "yesterday." The shirts will be for sale for between $5-7. We will be purchasing iron on letters so each club can personalize their t-shirt.

Please let me know if your club is interested. We would love to get as many people and clubs involved as possible. Administration is also really excited about this week.

Thanks for your time,
_____ (*Name of advisor)*



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C. Involving Staff Members

A general email should be sent by your advisor to all staff members to alert them of the coming week. Your advisor may want to have this approved by administration before moving forward. The email to staff should be sent out well in advance of Words Hurt week and before they have heard any announcements so that they are informed and can explain the purpose of it to students if they are asked.

An example email:

Subject: Words Hurt Week (Anti-Slur Campaign)

_____(*Name of School)* is dedicated to creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for its students. In order to promote the standard of tolerance and acceptance within our school, we will be uniting our staff and students in a weeklong anti-slur campaign called "Words Hurt" from_____ (*Range of dates)*. A slur involves any offensive remark that hurts someone based on his or her gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical abilities, class, religion, etc. During this week, _____ *(Name of School)* will remind its staff and students about the powerful impact that words can have on others. We will advocate for safety and tolerance within our school behind this "Words Hurt" campaign.

What's happening?

· **Tuesday, January 5 – Thursday, January 7: T-shirts during lunch periods**
Lovely Ladies of Literature will be selling t-shirts in the commons. The front of the t-shirts will say, "That's so _____!" The back of the t-shirts will say, "Words Hurt. Fill in the blank with: (and many non-hurtful word options will be listed)."

· **Thursday, January 7th: Presentation for Teachers EMERALD ROOM, 3:20P.M.**
In preparation for the "Words Hurt" week, all school personnel are invited to attend this presentation about the upcoming anti-slur campaign. Learn more about the mission, the events, and the potential impact behind this campaign! Plus, learn how you can best contribute to maintaining our safe learning environment both during and beyond this "Words Hurt" week. Sign a pledge to demonstrate your commitment and receive a "Safe Zone" sign for your classroom.

· **Monday, January 11th: Student Anti-Slur Training Room 201**
Students _____ and _____ will conduct an Anti-Slur Task Force training for all students who wish to attend.

· **Monday, January 11th-Friday, January 15th: Student Pledge during lunch periods**
During the lunch periods, students will be invited to sign a pledge showing their commitment to maintaining a safe learning environment at _____ *(Name of School)*. Once students sign the pledge, they will be given a red, white, and blue ribbon

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(*school colors)* to wear in order to demonstrate their commitment.

· **Monday, January 11th-Friday, January 15th: Words Hurt Bracelet during lunch Periods**
The _____ (*Name of School)* GSA will be selling red, white, and blue *(school colors)* silicone bracelets in the commons for $2. The bracelets will say "Words Hurt."

· **Thursday, January 14th: _____ *(Name of School)* Writes**
In honor of our "Words Hurt" week, homeroom will become _____ (*Name of School)* Writes. The theme for the all school writing activity will be **Post Secret**. Post Secret encourages people to tell their secrets, and our students will be focusing on telling their secrets surrounding words that have hurt them. The students' responses will be anonymous, and they will not be read in class. In preparation, we're asking teachers to donate any shoeboxes. We are in **DESPERATE** need of shoeboxes in order to assure confidentiality. Please bring them to room 209.

· **Friday, January 15th: Auditorium Speakers**
We have arranged a variety of speakers to present throughout our final day of the "Words Hurt" campaign. Speakers will try to build students' tolerance and sensitivity toward diversity. Topics will include racism, multiculturalism, disabilities, GLBT issues, and poverty and class issues. We will have a sign-up coming soon with the list of speakers, and you are welcome to sign up to bring your classes to the presentations. This will be on a first come, first served basis. Stay tuned for more information!

During our "Words Hurt" week, we would love to get as many school clubs involved as possible. If you would like to involve your club in any way, please email _____ (*Name of advisor)*.

We are making posters for each department at school that say,
"_____(Name of department) supports "Words Hurt" week because _____(Your department's personalized message).
Please speak with your department and come up with a phrase that relates to your department about why you support "Words Hurt" week. Create a poster for your department. On _____*(date/time/location of video filming),* choose 2-4 representatives from your department to hold the poster for the video that will be on the announcements.

Thank you for participating!

_____ *(Name of advisor)*

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D. Involving Students

After staff and administration are on board, you need to find a team of students willing to do the work for "Words Hurt" week. These students can be comprised of members of the Gay-Straight Alliance, other involved clubs, or students from the school that are interested in volunteering. Then, with the following students, you need to divide them into committees based on their interests and place one of the students in each team as the leader. Use the sign up sheet below to organize the groups. The descriptions of the clubs are on pages 17-20.

Words Hurt Group Planning Sheet: Committees

1. **Post Secret Video: Words Hurt**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

2. **Post Secret Video: Words Heal**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

3. **Words Hurt Promotional Video**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

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4. **Post Secret Prompt: Words Hurt**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

5. **Post Secret Prompt: Words Heal**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

6. **Post Secret Shoeboxes (Wrapping)**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

7. **Homeroom Delivery**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

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8. **Words Hurt Advertising**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

9. **Safe Zone Signs**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

10. **Anti-Slur Task Force**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

11. **Presenter Organizers**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

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12. **Bracelets, Pledges, and Ribbons**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

13. **Words Hurt T-shirts**

Leader:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

Member:

_____

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II. Activities and Opportunities

Words Hurt week should be a week packed with as many activities as your school can organize so that students recognize it is different than any other normal week at school. The week's activities should be aimed at raising awareness to the offensive slurs that are being used each day. Words Hurt week should also focus on uniting students and staff to change the environment of the school by raising awareness, educating others, and being accepting of all people.

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A. Committee Descriptions and Duties

1. Post Secret Video: Words Hurt
1. Create a video that explains and inspires students to write a Post Secret card.
2. You can see an example here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HXROBRFjnc (or on DVD pg. 28).
3. Tell your advisor when the video is finished. The video should be done weeks before the due date so it can be approved by your advisor and administration.
4. Your advisor needs to get the video on announcements.

2. Post Secret Video: Words Heal
1. Create a video that inspires students to "heal" others' post cards with their own healing words.
2. Tell your advisor when the video is finished. The video should be done weeks before the due date so it can be approved by you advisor and administration.
3.Tell your advisor to get the video on announcements.

3. Words Hurt Promotional Video
1. Set a date to film the video.
2. Organize all of the clubs and staff departments to meet at specified times to film them with their posters.
3. Put together a video that promotes the week. You can see an example here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paE2pw8da2s (or on DVD on pg. 28).
4. Tell your advisor when the video is finished. The video should be done weeks before the due date so it can be approved by your advisor and administration.
5. Your advisor needs to get the video on announcements.

4. Post Secret Writing Prompt: Words Hurt
1. Design post card and have it approved by advisor. (See examples pg. 29-30).
2. Print off and make copies of post cards
3. Cut out post cards
4. When the post cards are delivered, help hang them in the commons.
4. With the words heal committee, type up and number the post cards. Give them to the Delivery Committee to deliver to the homerooms immediately after you finish. They will split them up to go to different homerooms.

5. Post Secret Writing Prompt: Words Heal
1. Design post card and have it approved by advisor. (See examples pg. 30).
2. Print off and make copies of post cards
3. Cut out post cards
4. When the post cards are delivered, help hang them in the commons by the appropriate post card.

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6. Post Secret: Shoeboxes (Wrapping and Gathering)
1. Collect shoeboxes
2. Cut slits in shoeboxes
3. Wrap them in wrapping paper
4. Give them to the Post Secret Homeroom Delivery Committee

**Repeat for "Words Heal" post card but use manila envelopes instead of shoeboxes

7. Post Secret Homeroom Delivery Duty
1. Create an email to send out to homeroom teachers for the Post secret prompt. It should state the prompt, give a timeline (see the Post Secret Writing prompt Instructions pg. 21).
2. Get a list of homeroom teachers, homeroom classroom numbers, and number of students
3. Split up post cards and count out the correct number for each homeroom
4. Tell your advisor to send out an email to staff that you will deliver the boxes to their homerooms and they should email if they do not receive one.
5. Deliver the post cards with a shoebox the day prior to the Post Secret event.
(Do this for both Words Hurt post secret and Words Heal post secret)
**You will be getting typed up sheets of the post cards from the Post Secret: Words Hurt Committee to deliver to the homerooms as well for the Words Heal prompt. Split them up so that each room has different post cards to respond to.

8. Words Hurt Advertising (Poster Committee)
1. Get poster board from your advisor.
2. Design posters that inspire and also advertise for Words Hurt Week.
3. Have them approved by your advisor and hang the posters a few days prior to the beginning of Words Hurt week.

9. Safe Zone Signs Committee
1. Design a poster that is all-inclusive and that teachers can hang in their classrooms. (See example on pg. 31).
2. Have your advisor send out an email about the upcoming Teacher training.
3. Create a contract for teachers to sign that says they will create a safe space in their classroom. (See example on pg. 32)
4. Organize a short PowerPoint presentation to explain Words Hurt week for teachers who show up for the meeting.

10. Anti-Slur Task Force
1. Create a contract for students to sign that says they will work to stop hurtful words and will not use them. (See example on pg. 33).
2. Organize a short presentation to explain Words Hurt week for students who show up for the meeting.
3. You may want to get poster board and have students get into groups and write out the words they hear in the hallways. Then, you can talk about why they are offensive and why the school organized "Words Hurt" week.

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11. Presenter Organizers

1. Find presenters in the community and in your school to speak on a variety of topics but center around the theme of "Words Hurt." Generate a list of important topics. (See ideas on pg. 34). Use the organizational sheet on pg. 35-36.
2. Have your presenters approved by your advisor and administration.
3. Tell your advisor to send out an email to staff about the upcoming presentations and have the advisor organize who will be seeing which presenters, how many people (including the teacher will be attending), and make a seating chart in the auditorium. (Keep a master copy to refer to).
4. The seating chart needs to be put in the teachers' mailboxes a few days prior to the event. Also, the advisor should send out an email telling the teachers there is a seating chart in their mailbox.
5. Meet with each presenter before Words Hurt week and give them guidelines that you have worked out with your administration. (See example on pg. 37).
6. Call and confirm with your presenters the week of Words Hurt week to make sure they are still coming. Arrange a meeting place and time for you to meet them.
7. Create posters that have the presenter's name and what they will be speaking on for the day of the presentations.
8. Organize a gift for the presenters. An idea might be a "Words Hurt" t-shirt and a "Words Hurt" bracelet. Also, don't forget to buy water for your presenters!!!
9. Speak with the person in charge of setting up the auditorium a few weeks in advance (as well as the presenters – find out if they're using PowerPoint or need a microphone or podium, etc.). Let them know what you need for that day.
10. Following the week of the presentations, send out personalized thank you letters to the presenters.

12. Words Hurt Bracelets, the Pledge, and Ribbons

1. Organize a sign up sheet for people to sit in the commons the week of "Words Hurt" to sell bracelets. (See example on pg. 38).
2. Talk to the person in charge a week ahead of time to make sure you have a table ready for you. Also, talk to the person in charge of getting you a cashbox to have on that day as well to make change for people.
3. Write a pledge for students to sign. (See example on pg. 33).
4. Talk to your advisor about getting ribbon and safety pins for "Words Hurt" week.
5. Make a pin with the ribbon and safety pin (make sure your burn the edges of the ribbon so it doesn't fray). (See example of bracelet and ribbon on pg. 39).

13. Words Hurt T-shirt

1. Design a t-shirt to sell in the commons during Words Hurt Week and get it approved by your advisor and administration. (See example on pg. 40-41).
2. Find a place to make the shirt.
2. Organize a sign up sheet for people to sell t-shirts the week *prior* to the event. (See example on pg. 42).
3. Talk to the person in charge a week ahead of time to make sure you have a table ready for you. Also, talk to the person in charge of getting you a cashbox to have on that day as well

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to make change for people. People should pay ahead of time before they receive the t-shirt.
4. Tell them a pick-up date (on the Thursday of Words Hurt week – to wear them on Friday during the presentations).
5. Send in the order for the t-shirts to the company you chose along with the money.
6. Pick up the t-shirts and organize them.
7. Pass out t-shirts with your committee on the pick up date. Find others if you need more to help.

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B. Post Secret Writing Prompt Instructions

Dear Homeroom teachers:
This week's normally scheduled homeroom time will become an _____*(Name of School)* Writes-in honor of our "Words Hurt" anti-slur campaign week. The theme for our all school writing activity is **Post Secret**. Post Secret encourages people to tell their secrets, and our students will be focusing on telling their secrets surrounding words that have hurt them. The students' responses will be anonymous, and they will not be read in class. You will find in your mailboxes class sets of pre-cut sheets that your students can use to write their Post Secrets as well as a shoebox. Students will deposit their Post Secrets into a shoebox, and we will display the Post Secrets in the commons. Please bring your filled shoebox to **the Main Office** once homeroom is over. Do not have a student bring down the secrets.

The schedule for the 30 minutes of writing is as follows:
9:30-9:35 Five minute video introduction after the announcements (channel **73**)

9:35-9:45 Ten minutes of free writing about the ways that others' words have impacted them. Discuss what slurs are with your students. Tell students to think about their experiences with positive words (compliments, praise, kind words) and negative words (slurs, hurtful words). What hurtful words will they never forget?

9:45-9:55 Ten minutes to compose their Post Secret. Students should focus on the hurtful keywords from their free writing activity. Write a "Post Secret" involving words that have hurt in the past. Students can write more than one. Students can use this time to make a final copy of the Post Secret on the sheets provided. They may decorate them any way they'd like and can write on the post card side or blank side.

9:55-10:00 Collecting final copies in the shoeboxes. (Reminder: Students will NOT share their Post Secrets with the class nor will the teacher read them aloud; we need to ensure confidentiality. They will be displayed around school during the day)

Thank you for participating!

_____ *(Name of Advisor)*

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C. Follow-Up: Words Heal Writing Instructions

Dear Homeroom teachers:

This week's normally scheduled homeroom time will become an _____*(Name of School)* Writes-in honor of our "Words Hurt" anti-slur campaign week. The theme for our all school writing activity is **Words Heal**. You will be given a set of typed up, numbered post card responses. Have your students choose one to respond to with words that may *heal* a person. For example, if someone wrote: "My mother tells me I'm fat every day" a response that may *heal* the person could be: "You're beautiful the way you are." The students' responses will be anonymous, and they will not be read in class. You will find in your mailboxes class sets of pre-cut sheets that your students can use to write their Words Heal responses, as well as a manila envelope. Students will deposit their post cards into the manila envelope and we will display the post cards in the commons next to the post card they responded to. <u>This is very important – in the star on the post card, make sure your homeroom students write down the post card number so we know which post card they were responding to</u>.
For example:
76. My mother tells me I'm fat every day.
They should write #76 in the star.

Please bring your filled manila envelope to **the Main Office** once homeroom is over. Do not have a student bring down the responses.

The schedule for the 30 minutes of writing is as follows:
9:30-9:35 Five minute video introduction after the announcements (channel **73**)

9:35-9:45 Pass out the copies of the numbered responses so students can choose which ones they would like to respond to. They can respond to more than one, just tell them to do so on separate post cards for each.

9:45-9:55 Ten minutes to respond to the post cards. They may decorate them any way they'd like and can write on the post card side or blank side.

9:55-10:00 Collecting final copies in the manila envelopes. They will be displayed around school during the day once they have all been collected.

Thank you for participating!

_____ *(Name of Advisor)*

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D. Presentations

It would be helpful to make a list of the presenters and hang up posters around your school to raise interest for the upcoming presentations. It would also be a good idea for your advisor to send out an email with a list of presenters so that teachers can determine if they would like to use class time to see the presentations. This is an example of Appleton East's presenter list.

1st Hour: Beth Detienne
Beth Detienne will be speaking about cognitive disabilities and how they affect her life. She will speak about the ups and downs and what high school was like for her.

2nd Hour: Hmong Club
The Hmong Club will be speaking about words that negatively affect Hmong Americans as well as sharing a piece of their culture. They will have a fashion show and dance.

3rd Hour: Special Education Department
Beth Schneider, Carla Roberts, and Andrew Ciske (along with a few of their students) will be speaking about the Special Ed. Department and what it means to be in special education. They will be educating people on words that hurt and specific experiences they have had.

4th Hour: Debra Cronmiller
Debra Cronmiller is the executive director of the Emergency Shelter of the Fox Valley. She will be speaking about poverty and its effects on the Fox Valley especially the student population.

5th Hour: Richard Bauer
Richard Bauer is a volunteer from the National Alliance on Mental Illness in the Fox Valley. He will be speaking about what NAMI is, how mental illness affects the Fox Valley, and how negative slurs about people with mental illnesses hurt.

6th Hour: Kathy Flores
Kathy Flores works as an Intercultural Relations Coordinator for the City of Appleton. She will be speaking about gender roles, LGBT issues, and how name calling and verbal abuse affects people.

7th Hour: Dottie Mathews
Dottie Mathews is a minister at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Appleton. She will be speaking about the importance of religious tolerance for all religions and how being intolerant of others' beliefs affects us all.

8th Hour: Carla Hales
Carla Hales works at Harbor House and does a lot of work in schools dealing with relationship violence. She will be talking about words and relationships and how words from people close to you can hurt and lead to physical violence.

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E. Involving the Press

Once you have finished organizing "Words Hurt" week and it is underway, it is time to involve the press. The reason for involving the press is for others to see the positive impact you are having on your community and hopefully, to encourage other schools to organize their own anti-slur week. There are many ways to inform the media but a press release is the most common form. There is an example on pg. 24 of how to write a press release.

You may want to contact many different media forms. Here is an organizational sheet that may help you:

Local Newspaper: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email: _____

Fax Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

Local Radio Station: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email: _____

Fax Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

Local Television Station: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email: _____

Fax Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

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Press Release Example

Contact: Lana Thiel
Fax. 920-832-4880
Tel.920-475-9631
Email: thiellana@aaasd.k12.wi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APPLETON EAST TO HOLD "WORDS HURT" CAMPAIGN

Appleton East High School is holding a week long campaign (January 11-15) against slurs. The week's focus is to make students aware of the words they use that may be harmful to others. Although the campaign has been organized by the Gay-Straight Alliance and their advisor, Lana Thiel, the participation in the week has grown to include a multitude of clubs. It is well-supported by staff and administration.

The week will consist of different events and activities geared toward creating awareness about the effects of harmful language. Different clubs have taken charge of organizing ways to spread the word including "Words Hurt" bracelets, posters, ribbons, and t-shirts. Teachers and students will take a pledge to be more mindful of words that are used by themselves and others.

The GSA held an informational meeting for teachers on Thursday, January 7. They were given the opportunity to sign a pledge and offered a "Safe Zone" poster to hang in their classroom symbolizing a zero tolerance policy for negative language. Students will have the chance to participate in a training seminar after school on Monday, January 11. It will be an open forum on the issues facing Appleton East and how we can address them.

Every Thursday, Appleton East participates in "East Reads," a period dedicated to silent reading. Thursday, January 15 we will be participating in our second "East Writes" which will ask students to anonymously write about a time that words have hurt them. They will decorate the walls of East to send the message that words really do hurt even if someone doesn't intend to do so.

Our biggest event will take place on Friday, January 15. The GSA leaders, Maria Peeples, Katie Cronmiller, and Jason Donker have organized presentations that will take place in the auditorium. There is one speaker for each class period focusing on a variety of issues including, religious tolerance, racial equality, cognitive disabilities, domestic violence, mental illness, GLBT youth, and issues of class.

After already seeing the amount of support our school has shown we are hoping that "Words Hurt" week will encourage other surrounding schools and the community to take part in similar efforts. We believe this week will have a large impact on the way kids speak to each other at Appleton East.

# # #
End

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III. Appendices

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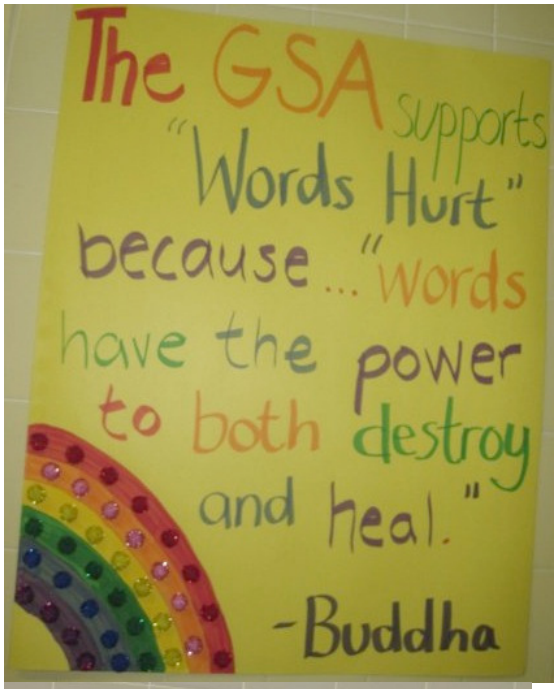
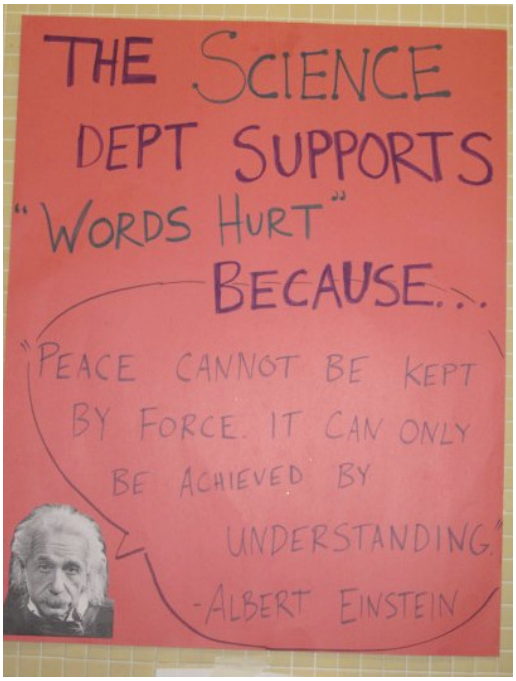
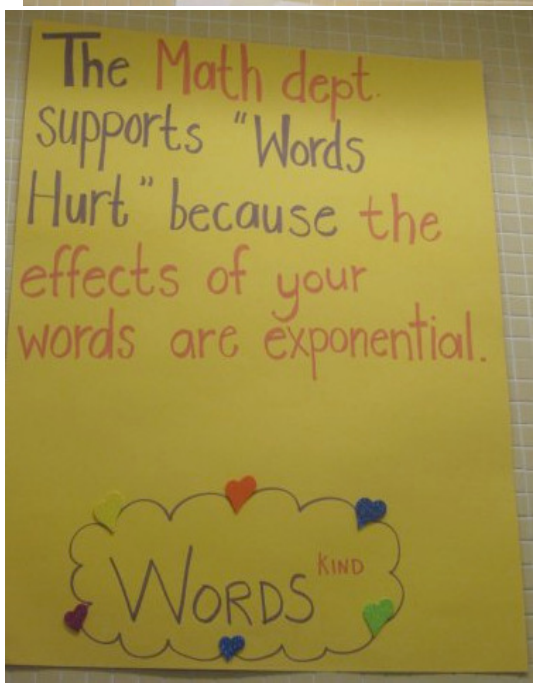
A. Handouts and Forms

The following handouts and forms may be helpful to you when you are preparing for Words Hurt Week. Some of the forms are generic, while others are more specific to Appleton East High School. You are welcome to use them as you please and change them to fit your needs. Many of the handouts and forms are referenced throughout the Committee Descriptions and Duties section.







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Words Hurt and East Post Secret Videos

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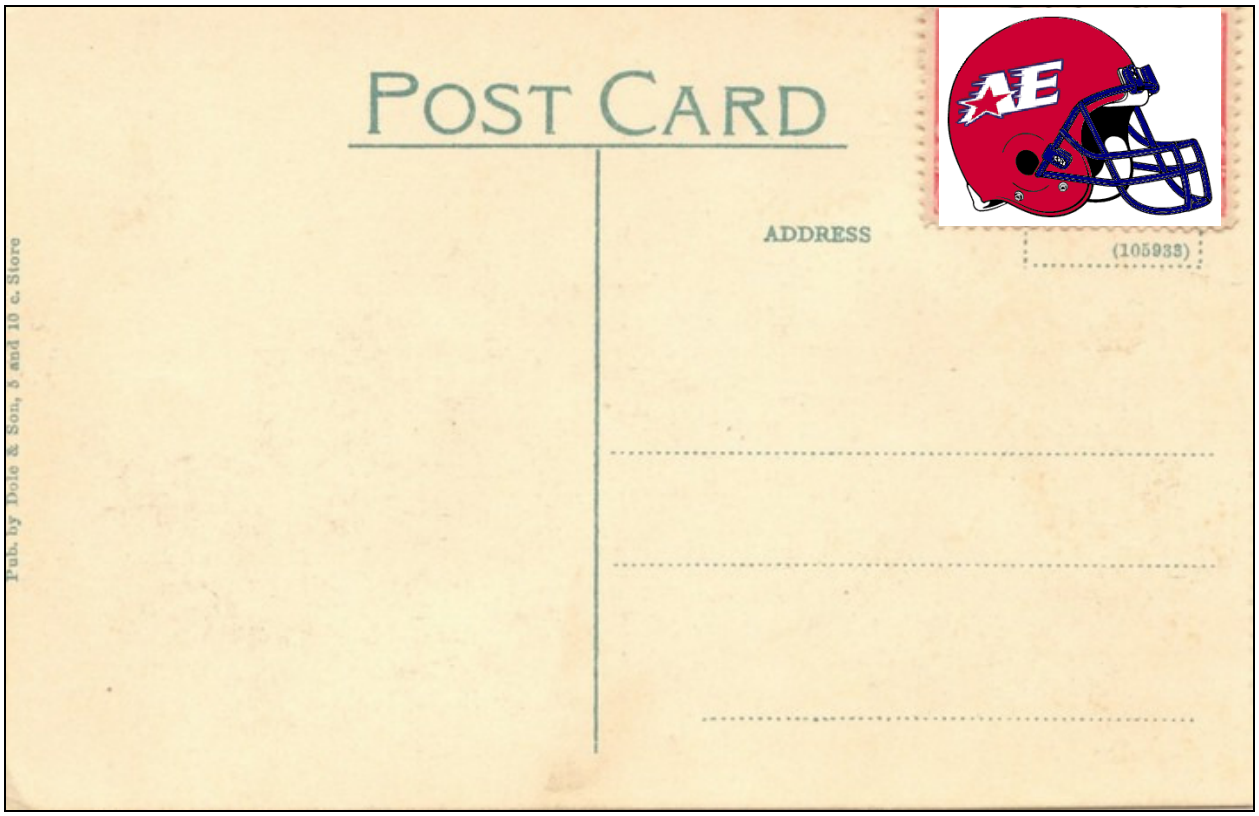
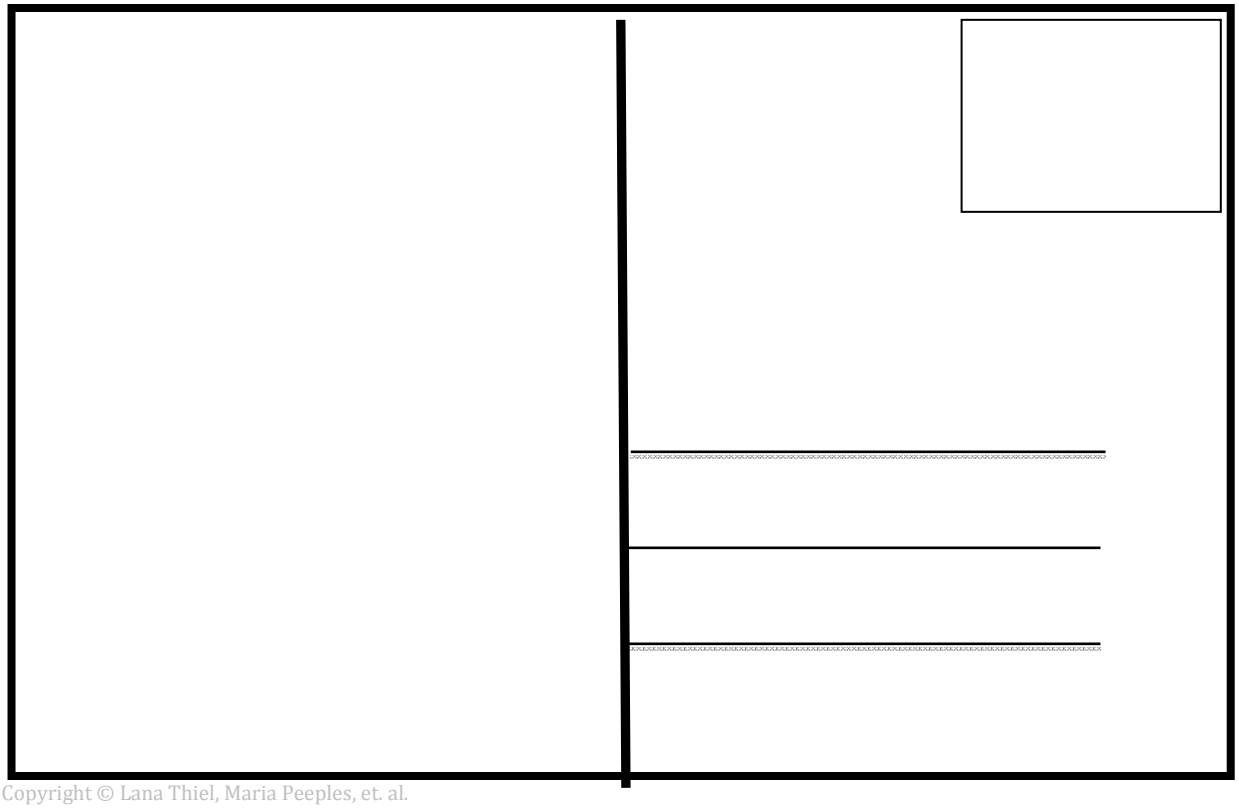
Post Secret Post Card Examples





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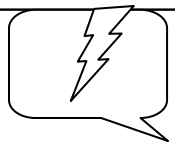
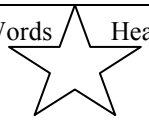


Words Hurt

Words Heal



Safe Zone

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Safe Zone Poster

S A F E

Z O N E

The "Safe Zone" is a message to all students that bullying, harassment, and defamatory language will not be tolerated. A person displaying this symbol is one who will be understanding, supportive, and trustworthy if any youth needs help, advice, or someone to talk to.

*Poster example is included after this version

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Safe Zone Contract for Teachers

Until slurs have been eradicated from the student body vocabulary, our school will never be the ideal place we want for students. It should be a place where all students are safe and comfortable. “Words Hurt” Week is designed to bring awareness back to slurs and attempt to make students think more carefully about what they say, how they say it, and how it will be heard by their peers and teachers.

If you do choose to sign the pledge, you will receive a Safe Zone Poster to display in your room as a reminder to students that slurs will not be accepted but also to ensure students that they are in a safe classroom where they will not be attacked or offended without consequences for the offender.

Address all of your classes: don’t assume every student understands what you are now expecting of them. Please talk to each individual class about what kind of slurs, phrases, jokes, and stereotypes will not be accepted and why. This may be a simple thirty-second speech saying, “I am telling you all that from now on, any sort of slur, degrading joke, or remark will not be tolerated in this classroom. While I know that many times these slurs are not used to purposefully offend your classmates, they are still offensive no matter why the comment was made.”

Also by signing the pledge, you will receive a free ribbon to show your support of “Words Hurt” Week.

By signing this pledge,

I pledge to work towards creating and supporting a safe environment in my classroom for all of my students. I will try to be more attentive to what is said in my classes in order to better ensure that every student feels comfortable and secure inside my room. I will not allow slurs or hateful words, phrases, jokes, or stereotypes in my class, even if they are not said in a purposefully cruel or insensitive manner. I will address all of my classes about what will not be allowed in an attempt to make students aware of how their words affect and wound their peers.

Signed: _____ Date:_____

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Safe Zone Contract for Students

By signing this pledge,

I pledge to be more cognizant of how my words inadvertently affect my fellow classmates. I will try to not use any slurs that are offensive to others.

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Presenter Ideas

African American culture
Class discrimination
Cognitive disabilities
Dating violence
Depression
Domestic violence
Drug/Alcohol abuse
Eating Disorders
Gender Expression/Expectations
Hate Crimes
Hmong Culture
Homelessness
Latino American culture
LGBT issues
Mental illness
Native American culture
Poverty
Racism
Religious tolerance
Self-esteem
Self-harm
Sexism
Societal Expectations
Special Education department
Suicide awareness
Teen pregnancy
Transgender

Other ideas?

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Presenter Organization Sheet

Presenter One:

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Topic: _____

Time/Hour of Presentation: _____

Presenter Two:

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Topic: _____

Time/Hour of Presentation: _____

Presenter Three:

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Topic: _____

Time/Hour of Presentation: _____

Presenter Four:

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Topic: _____

Time/Hour of Presentation: _____

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Presenter Five:

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Topic: _____

Time/Hour of Presentation: _____

Presenter Six:

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Topic: _____

Time/Hour of Presentation: _____

Presenter Seven:

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Topic: _____

Time/Hour of Presentation: _____

Presenter Eight:

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Topic: _____

Time/Hour of Presentation: _____

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Presenter Guidelines

1. **Be positive.** Focus on how to make the school a more positive place instead of telling students what they are doing wrong.

2. **Educate.** Tell students what words hurt the population you are speaking about and why they hurt this population.

3. **Keep it PG-rated.** Make sure you use terms appropriate to high-school aged students and also keep in mind using ideas that they can grasp and understand.

4. **Connect with your audience.** Try to keep the students involved and interested in your presentation. The more kids we reach in the presentations, the more beneficial it will be to them and to our school.

5. **Personalize your message.** We cannot make people care, if we don't change their hearts. Be sincere in your message and show people how words can truly hurt.

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Bracelet Sale Sign Up Sheet

Words Hurt Week _____(dates)
Bracelet Sales, Pledge and Ribbon give-out
$1 per bracelet – if a student signs the pledge, they get a free ribbon

Monday, _____
4th:

5th:

6th:

Tuesday, _____
4th:

5th:

6th:

Wednesday, _____
4th:

5th:

6th:

Thursday, _____
4th:

5th:

6th:

Friday, _____
4th:

5th:

6th:

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Words Hurt Bracelet and Ribbon Examples

The ribbon is fastened together with a safety pin and the edges are burned so that they do not fray. We chose to use our school colors of red, white, and blue. You could, however, choose your colors based on your own criteria. The ribbon symbolizes support of the week and a pledge to watch the words you use.

The bracelet was ordered from www.wrist-band.com. It is also in the school colors of red, white, and blue. We sold them for $1. They symbolized support for Words Hurt Week as well.

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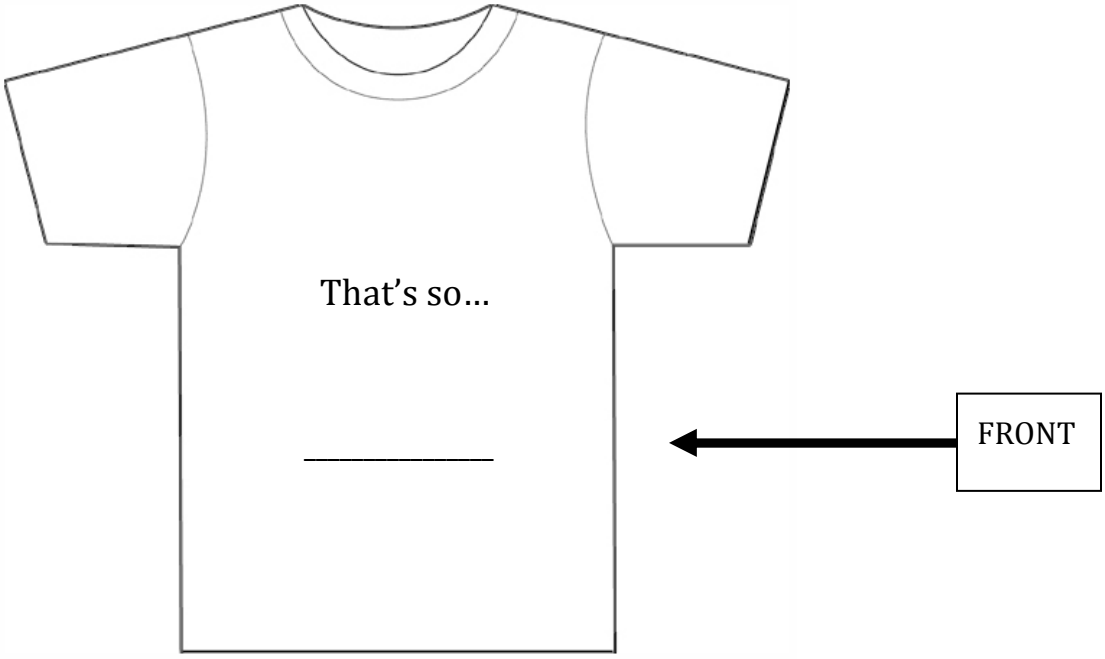
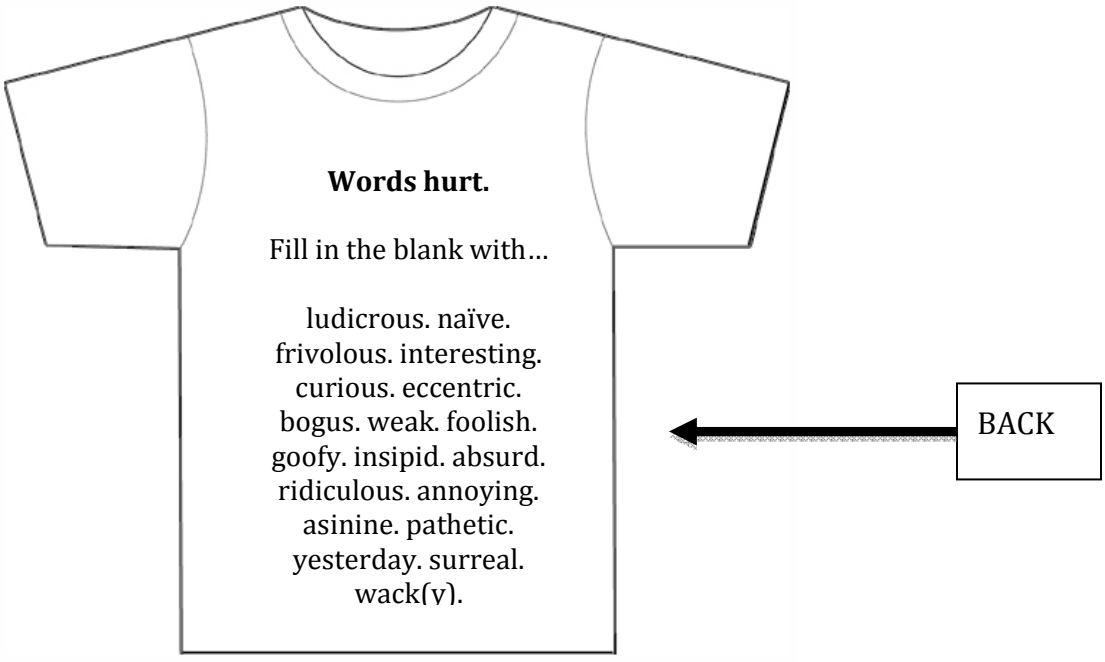
T-Shirt Design and Order Form Example

East's G.S.A. and *Ladies of Literature* have partnered to bring you:

Anti-Slur Week (Jan. 11-15) T-shirts





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ORDER FORM – Please fill out and return to ERIN MARTIN'S MAILBOX by Thursday, January 7th with payment

Choose one option:

I WANT A BLANK T-SHIRT _____ $5

I WANT A CUSTOMIZED SHIRT ($7) _____ (indicate word below)

_ _

Name: _____

Group word: _____

Size: Circle one

Small Medium Large XL XXL XXXL

CUSTOMIZED SHIRTS

Each school group will be assigned a word. Each person that wishes to show his/her group identity will have his/her t-shirt customized with iron-on letters. You can also choose an individual appropriate word.

For example, all Ladies of Literature members' t-shirts will say:

That's so **LUDICROUS!**

GROUP	WORD
The Courier	Absurd
Student Council	Sketch
Manly Men of Literature	Weak
Lovely Ladies of Literature	Ludicrous
Gay-Straight Alliance	Wacky
Love Alliance	Eccentric
Staff Members	Yesterday
Link Crew	Bogus
Special Education	Unique
Spanish Club	Loco
LMC staff	Overdue

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T-Shirt Sales Sign Up Sheet

That's So... T-shirt Sales

T-shirts are $5 if plain, $7 if customized
Order Forms and Money are due by Thursday!!!

Monday, _____

4th Hour:

5th Hour:

6th Hour:

Tuesday, _____
4th Hour:

5th Hour:

6th Hour:

Wednesday, _____
4th:

5th:

6th:

Thursday, _____
4th:

5th:

6th:

***Money and order forms are due by the end of the day on Thursday.**

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B. Evaluations

There are many ways to evaluate Words Hurt Week. One way might be to have the students in their homerooms fill out a short survey *before* Words Hurt Week begins about how they feel in their school environment. Then, once Words Hurt Week has concluded, the next week in homeroom, they could be given another survey to assess how they are feeling afterwards. This may also be followed up a few months later, instead of right after the week is over.

The survey could be as simple as:

1.) In the hallways at school, I feel…
- A. Safe most of the time
- B. Moderately safe
- C. Not very safe
- D. Not safe at all.

2.) During a typical week, I hear…
- A. Many people being made fun of
- B. Some people being made fun of
- C. Only a few people being made fun of
- D. I don't hear people being made fun of at all.

3.) During a typical week for me…
- A. Many of my peers make fun of me
- B. Some of my peers make fun of me
- C. Only a few of my peers make fun of me
- D. People don't usually make fun of me.

4.) During a typical week for me…
- A. I make fun of many people
- B. I make fun of some people
- C. I make fun of a few people
- D. I don't make fun of anyone.

5.) I think that school bullying…
- A. Is constant at our school
- B. Happens once in a while
- C. Happens to a few people
- D. Doesn't happen much at all.

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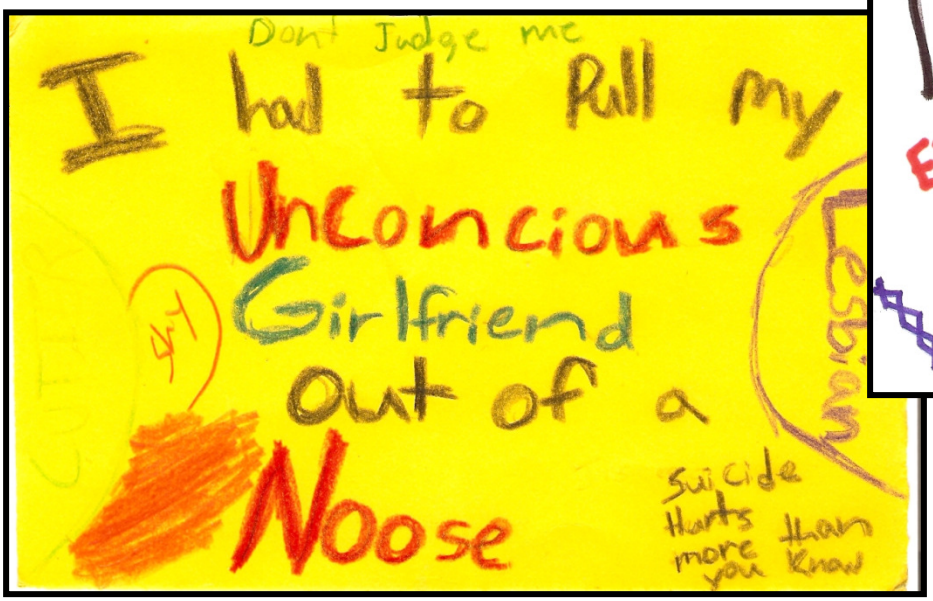
IV. Supplementary Materials



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A. How to Write A Press Release

How to Write A Great Press Release: A Sample Press Release Template

What is a press release? A press release is pseudo-news story, written in third person, that seeks to demonstrate to an editor or reporter the newsworthiness of a particular person, event, service or product.

How is a press release used? Press releases are often sent alone, by e-mail, fax or snail mail. They can also be part of a full press kit, or may be accompanied by a pitch letter.

What is the proper press release format? Here's a sample press release template you can use to format your press release correctly:

[COMPANY LOGO]

Contact: John Smith
Tel. 555/555-2222
Cell Phone: 555/555-2222
Email: johnsmith@anywhere.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAIN TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE GOES HERE IN ALL UPPER CASE
Subtitle Goes Here in Title Case (Upper and Lower)

body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release.

body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of release body of press release.

body of press release body of press release.

body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release body of press release.

boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate boilerplate.

# # #

If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with John Smith, please call Pat Brown at 555/555-2222 or e-mail Pat at pr@theplace4vitamins.com

Source: http://www.publicityinsider.com/release.asp

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B. How to Write A Thank You Note

HOW TO

How to Write a Thank-You Note

'Sincerely, Help?' Having trouble finding the right words to thank your Cousin Sal for that mango slicer? Should you even bother? Oh yes you should. **LESLIE HARPOLD** tells why and demostrates how to write the perfect, honest thank-you note every time.

Question: I have a crushing inability to write proper thank-you notes. Can you offer me some guidelines? –Helen

Answer: I was wondering when you were going to ask that question, and frankly, I'm a little disappointed it took you so long. Somewhere in between your mom making you sit down with your Peanuts® stationery and you shooting off an email, you completely lost touch with the concept of simple thank-you notes. Now that you're a grown-up, an email just won't do, and more is expected of you than scratching out 'Thanks for the present, you rock!'

Grandma might not say anything to you, but trust me: She and her friends are probably at this very moment sighing over how young people today just don't have manners.

As extra motivation, I will also grudgingly tell you the hidden secret of thank-you notes: They improve the frequency and quality of the gifts you receive. People like being appreciated, and if they feel you actually notice the nice things they do for

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you, they're more likely to give an encore performance. Do not, however, use this as a strategy to avoid writing thank-yous to those who regularly give gifts you do not like. Every gift deserves a thank-you. Even the 'Keep On Truckin" blacklight poster your crazy Uncle Alvarez gave you when you moved into the dorms.

I assure you, writing thank-yous is easier than you remember. Get yourself some stationery, plain note cards or a selection of attractive postcards (yes, postcards are perfectly acceptable!), and proper postage. Avoid the pre-inscribed 'Thank you!' cards in loopy script, as there are times you'll want to write notes where that aesthetic feels all wrong. Better to choose paper you like. Stay away from full-size sheets—note cards are best, as your message will be brief, and would look silly swimming around on a page that large. Store all of these items somewhere easily accessible and preferably in plain sight so you won't hesitate too long or forget too easily. Say, the top drawer of your desk or on a bookshelf at eye level or below.

If you want to know when you get a genuine pass on writing a note, the litmus test is simple: Do I live under the same roof as the giver? If the answer is 'yes,' you need not write a thank-you note (although a thank-you Post-It might be a nice touch).

I'm not going to go all Miss Manners on your ass and get into the social intricacies and delicate situations that surround thank-you note writing, as I was taught that a solid thank-you note will transcend all complicated situations—and I have seen no evidence to the contrary.

There is a six-point formula to the proper thank-you: Learn it, know it, memorize it—and it will never fail you.

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1. Greet the Giver

Dear Aunt Sally,

That's the easy part, but you'd be surprised how many people forget it. Dale Carnegie taught us people love to hear their own names and Direct Marketing is sure we also love to read them in ink. That's right, ink. Blue-black is always the number-one choice, but black will suffice in a pinch. Don't let a whimsical marker color be the most stunning part of your note: instead let the words sing without the amplification of rainbow hues. Even if your handwriting is poor, you must still hand-write your notes. Do not type them or, worse, use a word processor. No excuses.

2. Express Your Gratitude

Thank you so much for the slippers.

This first paragraph seems like it would be the easiest, but it is actually the most complicated. Beware the *just writing* trap. You are not 'just writing to say' as in *I am just writing to say;* that's stating the obvious. If the giver is reading, clearly you have already written. Therefore use the present-perfect tense, which essentially means write as if whatever you say is happening in the moment.

Also—and this is important—never directly mention money. 'Thank you for the hundred bucks' could instead be 'Thank you for your generosity.' All cash denominations become 'your generosity' or 'your kindness.' If you feel the giver overspent, the farthest you can go is *appreciated:* 'Your generosity is appreciated,' or 'It is such an extravagant gift—your kindness is appreciated.'

If you're writing to thank someone for an intangible (such as them putting

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you up at their place while you were in town for the weekend), first define what the intangible thing is, and then make the gift sound as attractive as possible. In other words, don't say: 'Thanks for letting us crash at your place.' Instead say: 'Thank you for your hospitality.' Don't worry if it sounds too simple; the point of writing the note is to create a simple expression of a heartfelt sentiment.

3. Discuss Use

It gets very chilly here in the winter, so they will get a lot of use when winter comes. Say something nice about the item and how you will use it. Let's say it's something you actually love and use incessantly—then say so: 'Ever since I got the slippers I have only taken them off to shower and go to work. I'd wear them to the office if I thought I could get away with it.'

But don't lie, even though some etiquette books may tell you it's okay. After all, there's always a truth that can be extracted. Let's say you hate the slippers. How to say thanks? Find the one thing about them that's nice and discuss it—but don't get carried away. 'They are such a lovely shade of blue' works, and is more honest than 'These slippers make my heart sing like a choir of angels,' which is overkill. If it was a gesture, like letting you stay at their place, you can follow the lines of 'It's so nice to make a personal connection while traveling. I really appreciated my time with your family.'

If the gift was cash, allude to how you will use the money, but do not itemize your planned purchases line by line, instead simply say: 'It will be a great help when we purchase our new home/toaster/lava lamp/whatever.'

You can get arty here, but not flowery. It's a fine line. Small, realistic

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statements like 'I put the flowers on the kitchen table and they are still looking fresh and beautiful after a week,' or 'I don't know which is more fun, actually using the Cuisinart, or reading recipes and thinking *I could do that in the Cuisinart!*' Having fun is alright, so have at it.

4. Mention the Past, Allude to the Future

It was great to see you at my birthday party, and I hope to see you at Dad's retirement in February.

Why did they give you the gift? What does it mean to your relationship with the giver? Let the giver know how they fit into the fabric of your life. If it's someone you see infrequently, say whatever you know: 'Mom tells me you're doing great at Stanford, and I hope we cross paths soon.' If it's someone you're in regular contact with: 'I'll call you soon, but I wanted to take time to say thanks.' If it's some errant family member you have little or no contact with, simply go with 'You are in my thoughts and I hope you are well.' Nice, right?

5. Grace

Thanks again for your gift.

It's not overkill to say thanks again. So say it.

6. Regards

Love,
Leslie

Simply wrap it up. Use whatever works for you: *Love, Yours Truly, With Love*. Then sign your name and you're done.

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What's Not There

Any news about your life. This isn't the time to brag about your new job, a hot girlfriend, or number of surgeries. The thank-you is exclusively about thanking somebody for their kindness. While you may want more than anything to show them once and for all you amounted to something, this is not the forum. Save that for your annual Christmas letter.

Now get it in the mail. Even if your friends and relatives aren't of the note-writing variety, be the one who sets the precedent. Thank-you-note writing is one of the loveliest traditions to have been utterly compromised by the information age. Let's start a movement to revive a little gracious living.

—Published October 1, 2003

Source:
http://www.themorningnews.org/archives/how_to/how_to_write_a_thankyou_note.php

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C. Ordering Silicone Bracelets

This is a good website to order silicone bracelets. http://www.wrist-band.com. They usually have great deals for schools and ordering in bulk.

This is their description on their website:

Custom Rubber Bracelets & Wristbands

Wrist-band.com has been providing customized silicone wristbands worldwide for over 4 years. Our wristbands are made from 100% silicone and are the same quality as the famous LiveStong wristbands. Wrist-band.com is the leader in producing rubber bracelets that are catered exactly to the customers needs. We have produced wristbands for birthday parties, family reunions, school events, local business promotions, presidential conventions and many other occasions.

We can assure you that our prices and special offers on all of our styles including debossed wristbands, embossed wristbands, color filled wristbands and printed wristbands cannot be matched by any competitor in the market.

Due to our expertise and proprietary machinery we have been able to faster streamline the process of producing silicone wristbands. We ensure customer loyalty by offering exceptional customer service and providing the finest quality of custom wristbands at the lowest cost and fastest turnaround.

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Their Prices:

Order Now

Order now and receive
100 FREE Wristbands

Quantity	Free	Price	Sale Price
1-19	na	~~$3.90~~	$2.45
20-49	na	~~$3.85~~	$1.35
50-74	na	~~$2.25~~	$0.69
75-99	na	~~$1.62~~	$0.65
100-199	+ 100 Free	~~$1.00~~	$0.33
200-299	+ 100 Free	~~$0.81~~	$0.26
300-499	+ 100 Free	~~$0.75~~	$0.24
500-999	+ 100 Free	~~$0.45~~	$0.18
1000-1999	+ 100 Free	~~$0.26~~	$0.13
2000-2999	+ 100 Free	~~$0.21~~	$0.13
3000-4999	+ 100 Free	~~$0.20~~	$0.13
5000-9999	+ 100 Free	~~$0.19~~	$0.13
10000-19999	+ 100 Free	~~$0.18~~	$0.13
20000+	+ 100 Free	~~$0.17~~	$0.10

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E. Helpful Websites

http://gsanetwork.org/get-involved/change-your-school/campaigns/take-it-back-anti-slur-campaign
This website is helpful in finding further information on creating your own anti-slur campaign.

http://gsanetwork.org/files/getinvolved/TakeItBack-CampaignGuide.pdf
They have also created a campaign guide and helpful information about what a slur is and how to combat bullying.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paE2pw8da2s
This is the link for Appleton East's Words Hurt Video Project.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HXROBRFjnc
This is the link for Appleton East's Post Secret Video Project.

http://www.postsecret.com
This is the website to explain what Post Secret is and why we used this as our writing prompt. This website is very inspirational.

http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=239645016027
This is a group on facebook for Appleton East. If you go on facebook, type in "I support "Words Hurt" week". There are many students who have posted pictures from the event as well as commented on how it has touched them.

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V. Bibliography

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Stoller, B. (2009). *Publicity secrets for savvy businesses & entrepreneurs.* Retrieved from http://www.publicityinsider.com/release.asp.

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