

A chain of positivity started by one

Rachel Scott was one of the first victims in the Columbine High School shooting massacre, but her legacy has continued to inspire high school students and staff members, even well into 2018

By Haylee Hedrick & Emma Ellis

 @TheHyphenNews

Loud pops rung throughout the halls of Columbine High School in Colorado on April 20, 1999.

At first, students thought the sounds were firecrackers being lit on the lawn outside.

The reality: shots were being fired from semi-automatic handguns at students outside eating lunch.

The shooting, which would later be known as the Columbine

shooting massacre, lasted 49 minutes and spanned most of the school. Senior Rachel Scott, a 17-year-old who was known around the school for always spreading kindness, was the first victim shot and killed.

April 20 of this year will mark 19 years since the first mass school shooting occurred. Since Scott's death, her legacy of positivity lives on within JHS through the Friends of Rachel club, which has been actively working to make sure that her and her legacy never fade.

"It's definitely become more prevalent, as the presidents, to continue a positive movement throughout the school," Friend's of Rachel co-president Keith Asplund said. "We need to use her story to prevent bullying and stop escalation of violent situations."

On that fateful day, 13 lives were lost -- 12 students and one teacher -- and 21 more were injured. But through all

of the despair, a legacy of gold was launched.

Following the shooting, Rachel's father, Darrell, created the "Rachel's Challenge" program to honor his late daughter. His hope was to carry out her goals by showing the impact that minimal acts of kindness can have in a high school setting.

Eventually, the club would reach millions of high school students nationwide every year, encouraging safety and positivity in schools.

"The club gives students an outlet to share and discuss things they might be embarrassed about or going through," said one of the club sponsors, Taylor Troncin. "And (we) respond (with) something to combat the negativity going on."

At the beginning of each school year, the JHS club encouraged members of the student body to sign an "anti-bullying banner" to pledge their agreement to keep the school from being a place of violence, bullying and discrimination.

"There's a sense of unity that comes with the student body being against bullying, knowing that it's a dangerous thing within any school environment," said Friend's of Rachel co-president Neh Thaker.

Scott paved the way for a positive movement that has grown to a larger scale and can continue to grow by each person affected.

"It's really a simple message that she (Scott) was trying to spread," Asplund said. "It isn't big -- it just starts with some students in school, day-to-day, hour-to-hour, spreading positivity."

Advice Column:

By Emily Tully

 @TheHyphenNews

Q: Living in a state of fear is becoming excruciating and tiring. What can I do to make a change in our society, or make people feel more safe?

A: First things first, I just want to make it known how disappointed I am that our youth feels this way. I do too, don't get me wrong; but I am frustrated and feel stuck at the state of our society.

Don't let adults tell you that your voice doesn't matter. That is a common recurrence within adults that feel threatened by the voices of our youth. We will have to live in this society, and we must make of it what we can. The future is within our hands.

As for getting involved, I recommend joining clubs and groups that are politically active. For example, the Jeffersonville Young Democrats are a group that discuss issues, campaign for politicians who hold similar values, and empower young people to make their voices heard. This is one of the most influential and important groups I have ever

been a part of, and if you are bothered by what is going on in society, get involved with others who feel the same way. You can contact Mr. Felix at mfelix@gccschools.com

or Hazel Dickey at 331548@mygccs.com if you're interested.

If this club isn't for you, try Friends of Rachel. Not necessarily political, Friends of Rachel was

formed as a response to the Columbine, Colo. shooting that killed Rachel Scott, whom the club is named after. She was an advocate for kindness and was focused on making people's lives better.

If you are inspired by her story and want to do things similar, join Friends of Rachel. You can contact Keith Asplund at 530630@mygccs.com or Neh Thaker at 602445@mygccs.com if you're interested in this group, too.

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Rachel Scott



At the beginning of the school year, every student at Jeffersonville High School was asked to sign an anti-bullying sign, sponsored by the Friends of Rachel. 'Band Against Bullying' were also handed out to some students, all in an attempt to decrease bullying in high schools. *photo by Dylan Shupe-Logsdon*