

# **'CONVERSATION TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE': Venice Middle School's 'Making Venice a Brighter Place' project**

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*The following article is presented as part of the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities' "Conversations Toward A Brighter Future" discussion series.*

*The articles are prepared by the participants of the discussion in their own words.*

VENICE - The Venice Middle School project “Making Venice a Brighter Place”, is in its second year, and is off to a positive start.

Our goal is to focus on making Venice Middle School a place where all students feel welcome and safe

We pledge to have students and staff show respect, dignity, understanding, and forgiveness through their actions and words.

- Posters are in all classrooms and hallways containing the four pillars of Respect, Dignity, Understanding, and Forgiveness; student rights, and responsibilities are also posted.
- Suggestion boxes for students and staff to make recommendations on ways to make our school a better place.
- Social media including Facebook with positive videos promoting respect, dignity, understanding, and forgiveness will be developed.
- Student ambassadors will be trained in peer mediation in order to assist students in problem solving.
- SIUE students from Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. and the NACWC provide boys and girls their own mentor to help promote the four pillars.



We will evaluate this project by tracking the peer mediation forms collected during each session. Over time, with successful mediation, student's communication should

improve, and they should be able to solve problems and communicate respectfully without the help of a mediator.

At the beginning of each school year, teachers will be given a survey to acknowledge the kinds of behaviors occurring in their classrooms. We will survey teachers quarterly to get their input as to whether they have noticed a decrease in negative behavior. This will be another way to evaluate the effectiveness of our plan.

Making Venice School a Brighter Place's goal is to have students and staff show respect, dignity, understanding, and forgiveness through their actions and words.

### **Peer Ambassadors**

Ambassadors will be trained in peer mediation. Peer mediation will be used to help students resolve conflicts.

### **SIUE Men & Women Mentors**

SIUE students from Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. and the NACWC provide boys and girls their own mentor to help promote the four pillars.

### **Posters & Facebook Positive Messages**

Positive posters and videos are posted in each classroom and hallway containing the four pillars, student rights and responsibilities, and Facebook.

### **Suggestion Boxes**

Suggestion boxes for students and staff to offer suggestions on how to make the school a better place.

### **Teacher and School Administration Support**

Staff shows support in the project by wearing their "Making Venice a Brighter Place" t-shirts with the four pillars on the back.

