

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **MIDDLE SCHOOL KINDNESS CHALLENGE ANNOUNCES 10 NATIONAL FINALISTS**

*Schools selected Among Nearly 600 schools from 50 States for their Innovative Efforts to Create A More Positive School Culture and Fostering Kindness.*

(NEW HAVEN, IN)— (Wednesday, February 13, 2019)— Today, Stand for Children announced that 10 schools from across the country are National Finalists of the Middle School Kindness Challenge (MSKC). The schools are:

- Crispell Middle School- Pine Bush, New York
- General John Stricker Middle School- Baltimore, Maryland
- Hampton Bays Middle School-Hampton Bays, New York
- Kernodle Middle School- Greensboro, North Carolina
- Lassen- Antelope Volcanic Academy- Sacramento, California
- McNicol Middle School- Hollywood, Florida
- Milliken Middle School- Milliken, Colorado
- **New Haven Middle School- New Haven, Indiana**
- Roosevelt School – Bridgeport, Connecticut
- **Southwick Elementary- Fort Wayne, Indiana**

These schools were selected among nearly 600 schools nationally that registered in the 2018 Fall Cycle of the MSKC.

The finalist schools announced today are distinguished for their commitment to improving school climate and fostering a safe and supportive environment for all students at their school. Their efforts and commitment to fostering kindness are not only inspiring but also incredibly timely. With their efforts and dedication to fostering kindness they are paving the way towards commonplace kindness for all students across the nation. The Middle School Kindness Challenge is a program of Stand for Children, a national non-profit education advocacy organization and is supported by Hasbro, Inc.'s BE FEARLESS BE KIND philanthropic initiative.

“It’s becoming more and more apparent that we need to teach children to manage their emotions and actions and to regularly demonstrate kindness in their day to day lives,” said Jonah Edelman, co-founder and chief executive officer of Stand for Children. “The students at these 10 schools demonstrated that young people are hungry for kindness-centered activities and that they genuinely want to learn in an environment where respect, caring and support are common-place. We honor their efforts and invite schools nationwide to join this movement.”

As part of the MSKC, students from the 10 finalist schools took part in four weeks of activities and lessons that generated dialogue around the importance of demonstrating kindness in their school and in their day-to-day life.

The goal of the Middle School Kindness Challenge is to make kindness commonplace in middle schools and improve school climate by providing a no-cost, user-friendly platform for teachers to access high-

quality, easy-to-implement lessons that help students strengthen peer relationships, build empathy and develop a positive mindset. The content on kindness-building comes from leading providers including Harvard's Making Caring Common Initiative, Facing History and Ourselves, InspirED, the Greater Good Science Center and Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence. All contributed their best-in-class lessons at no charge.

"Fostering kindness is critical for developing a school climate that is positive. Students need to feel safe in their learning environment. By teaching kindness, students can develop close relationships with their peers and feel confident in their learning. Students learn more when they feel safe and comfortable in their environment and this is done when developing students' understanding of kindness.," said Crispell Middle School's Kindness Captain Melissa Meere.

Today's finalists receive \$1,000 in Donors Choose Credits made possible by the support of the Hasbro Children's Fund. With this, the school can acquire valuable materials to continue their commitment to kindness work.

The Middle School Kindness Champion for the Spring Cycle will be announced later this month. The Champion school is selected based on which school excelled in their participation from reflection exercises to kindness rituals with a strong emphasis on impacting change and making the school, overall, a true environment that fosters kindness. The Spring Cycle's Champion will receive an additional \$4,000 in Donors Choose credit bringing their total reward to \$5,000.

The current MSKC Cycle is currently open, and the last day to register is May 6, 2019. Educators are encouraged to learn more and register today at [www.middle-school-kindness-challenge.org](http://www.middle-school-kindness-challenge.org) or email the program's Director, Daniel O'Donnell, at [dodonnell@stand.org](mailto:dodonnell@stand.org).

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### **More About the Middle School Kindness Challenge**

The Middle School Kindness Challenge, a program of Stand for Children, is an easy and no-cost way to foster kindness and improve school climate in the critical middle school years. Open to any school with a combination of grades 5-8, the Challenge offers best-in-class resources to teach and foster kindness, free of charge, over a four-week period of the school's choosing. This is a powerful, common sense solution to some of schools' and society's biggest challenges. By teaching kids to practice kindness on a regular basis and manage their emotions, actions, and statements, they become better equipped to navigate our complex world.

### **About Stand for Children**

Stand for Children is a non-profit education advocacy organization focused on ensuring all students receive a high quality, relevant education, especially those whose boundless potential is overlooked and under-tapped because of their skin color, zip code, first language, or disability. We make an impact by:

- Partnering with parents to support their children's education journey and to become strong advocates.



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- Advocating, mainly at the state and local level, for proven policies and funding primarily focused on helping students reach make-or-break milestones:
  - Reading well by the end of third grade
  - Graduating high school ready for college, career training, or a career
- Ensuring the changes we fight for reach classrooms and directly support students.