

# NO ONE EATS ALONE TOOLKIT



**SPREAD THE LOVE**

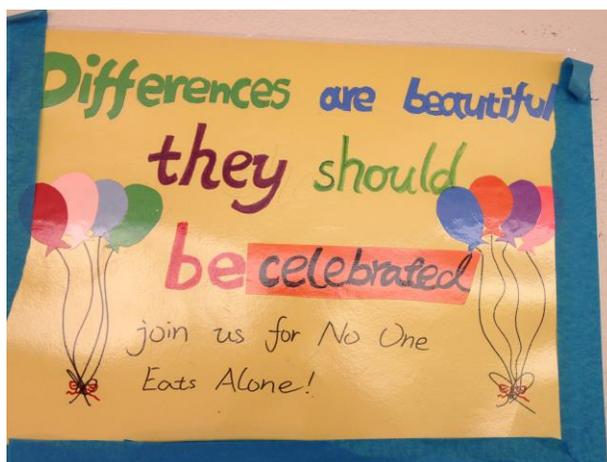
**FEBRUARY 14, 2014**

**NATIONAL NO ONE EATS ALONE DAY**

 [BeyondDifferences.org](http://BeyondDifferences.org)

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### Welcome Letter from Beyond Differences

Dear Friends,

We are excited to share with you No One Eats Alone (NOEA), our student-led lunchtime initiative. Thank you for your interest in bringing this program to your community's middle schools!

NOEA, Beyond Differences' most popular program, is a special event that takes place during one of the most socially challenging times for teens at school: lunch. During an NOEA event, students make a difference on their own middle school campus by making sure that everyone is included at lunch. Organizing an NOEA is a great way for students to be school leaders while encouraging one another to make new friends. We have seen the positive benefits in each school that has organized an NOEA and we are excited about making this initiative national.

In our work, we recognize one thing very clearly: students listen to other students. With adult support, youth can change the culture of their middle school, creating a community of classmates who include and accept one another. Student leaders are discovering that they can be the ones who create a happier and healthier lunch environment with positive change that extends beyond the lunch hour.

We encourage you to take advantage of our materials online and in this toolkit by launching No One Eats Alone in your school. We welcome your questions and feedback at [beyonddifferences@gmail.com](mailto:beyonddifferences@gmail.com).

Thank you,

Beyond Differences Team



# Beyond differences

Inspired by the life and memory  
of Lili Rachel Smith.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT BEYOND DIFFERENCES AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

### 1. What is Beyond Differences?

Beyond Differences ([www.beyonddifferences.org](http://www.beyonddifferences.org)) is a non-profit organization dedicated to ending social isolation in middle schools across the country.

### 2. What is social isolation?

Social isolation is the feeling of being left out, lonely, or invisible.

There are students in schools all over the world who quietly suffer from loneliness and isolation throughout each day. This feeling of loneliness is often highlighted at lunchtime, when kids have no one to join them.

It is our experience that social isolation is oftentimes the precursor to bullying. We believe that school communities with a culture of inclusion will have far less instances of bullying and cruelty.

### 3. Why social isolation? Don't schools have bigger problems like bullying and violence?

We believe bullying and violence are too often the tragic consequences of underlying problems which can be addressed if brought out in the open sooner, especially if students themselves are talking about it.

Social isolation is a problem in every school. Over the past three years, we have talked to over 10,000 students in dozens of schools and afterschool programs, and we have found the problem of social isolation to be universal. We also acknowledge the relationship between social isolation and bullying and violence. By reducing social isolation, we believe we can help end the violence.

#### **4. How are you different from other programs?**

We are a teen-led, grassroots program. We believe meaningful change will only come when it is peer-driven. That's why we are focusing on leadership development among teens with our Teen Board and Leadership Academy Training Program (LATP).



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT NO ONE EATS ALONE



### **1. What is No One Eats Alone?**

No One Eats Alone is an initiative that seeks to reverse the trends of social isolation by asking students to engage in a simple act of kindness at lunch – making sure that no one is eating alone.

### **2. Why do No One Eats Alone?**

The No One Eats Alone initiative is successful because of three simple ideas:

- **Students Can Improve Their Own Communities:** Students can make a difference in their own communities by making sure that everyone is included at lunch.
- **Inclusive Communities are Stronger Communities:** Inclusive school communities create happier and more successful students while also empowering the school community.
- **Stopping Social Isolation Helps to Stop Bullying:** Social isolation is oftentimes the precursor for bullying. School communities with a culture of inclusion have far fewer instances of bullying.

### **3. How much money will this initiative cost your school?**

The program is provided at no cost. All of the resources needed are both online and in the toolkit. The cost of any additional materials—such as flyers—used by each school will be covered by the participating school.



## **NO ONE EATS ALONE “RECIPE FOR SUCCESS”**

### **7 Steps for Students to Plan and Execute a Successful No One Eats Alone at Your School!**

1) Bring together friends who want to be involved and help plan No One Eats Alone at your school.

2) Ask one or more school leaders—a teacher, principal or vice/assistant principal—to work with you as an advisor for the No One Eats Alone program. When choosing an advisor:

- Work with someone who can help confirm a date to launch NOEA at your school.
- Show them this toolkit! Ask if they can help get the materials ready and get the word out.
- Ask if they can utilize the strategies and curriculum ideas of NOEA in their classrooms.

3) Identify the time and place for your event and the activities you wish to do!

- No One Eats Alone can be done at lunchtime on one day, a couple of days, or a full week. Choose a date when there are no school holidays or exams!
- Decide on the location of your NOEA event. Consider what kind of set-up you want to create. Will all grades eat together?

- Discuss how you will encourage students to sit with new people.
- Choose what activities will occur on this day:
  - games? music? team challenges? raffles?
- Talk to school leaders and staff who can help you prepare the space; make sure to give them advance notice.

4) Start spreading the word! How will you encourage your community to become aware, interested and involved?

- Start advertising what No One Eats Alone means and when it's happening.
- Make posters or flyers, and post them everywhere you can (hallways, lunch area, common spaces).
- Distribute wristbands, bandanas, and stickers!
- Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to advertise your event.
- Create a buzz at your school leading into the event, letting your peers know that this is something BIG and AWESOME!
- Make announcements on the PA. Use this sample or write your own!

**SAMPLE Student Announcement**

Hello and good morning \_\_\_\_\_ Middle School. I have a very important announcement about an event called No One Eats Alone. As you may have heard in your homerooms, the Beyond Differences Leadership Team will be hosting a big event called **No One Eats Alone** at lunch in the gymnasium all week. We are hosting this event because we want to end social isolation and we want all students at \_\_\_\_\_ Middle School to feel included. Come to \_\_\_\_\_ (location) to listen to music, mix it up at lunchtime, and meet new people! Don't be shy, come to the party! See you there!

5) Get ready to launch the event!

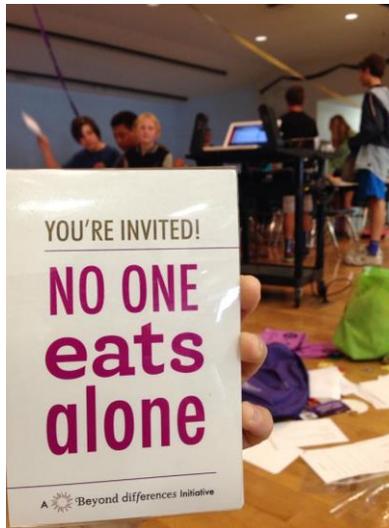
- Hype up the activities that you'll be presenting to them through the menus of activities!
- Place conversation cards around the eating space, whether cafeteria, gymnasium, or courtyard.
- Decide how you want students to sit when they come in.
- You may also choose to pass out conversation cards to people who want to be involved.
- Help get others involved by moving around, using the conversation cards, and breaking down barriers!
- NOEA Leaders are the role models for the event. If you want your peers moving around and meeting new people, then do the same.

6) Be the change you wish to see!

- What do you want your community to look, sound, and feel like?
- Recognize your role in your school, and use No One Eats Alone to bring people together
- Give people the tools they need to get to know one another and break down the barriers around them. Ask why they are at the NOEA event in the first place.

7) Continue to build momentum, and pump people up, throughout the week!

- Continue with announcements, promotions (wristbands, bandanas) and distribution of materials!
- Give teasers about what each day's activity will be.
- Decorate with balloons, banners, etc.
- Play music!
- Continue to reinvest the community in other ways (e.g. different materials each day, raffles, or rewards for those who get up and share at the end of lunchtime).



## **NO ONE EATS ALONE TIP SHEET: HOW DO SCHOOLS DO IT?**

### **Some fun ideas to get you started!**

- Make a playlist, and get it approved by an administrator for playing in your lunch area!
- Invite the jazz band or another group at your school to come play.
- Hand out raffle tickets when people come in and give out small prizes at the end of lunch!
- Number the raffle tickets to assign people the table where they should sit (and mark sitting areas with numbers as well).
- Make posters, or create flyers! Have a poster-making party at lunch and invite friends.
- Give some flyers to teachers who you'd like to get involved, and ask if they can put them up in their classroom and help spread the word.
- Bring food to share.
- Ask if you can order pizza and charge \$1 or \$2 a slice! With the money you make back, you can host more Beyond Differences events
- Make announcements on your P.A.

- Create a mural or community art project.
- Post about the event on social media!
- Spread the word to student groups such as student council or leadership crew.
- Send email reminders through student, teacher, and parent email blasts!
- Have some outdoor games during the lunch period.
- Show Beyond Differences' BE THE ONE video at lunch, or before/after lunch to get others invested: [www.joinbetheone.com](http://www.joinbetheone.com)

### **SAMPLE Student Letter to Teacher**

Dear (Teacher name),

I'm really excited about Beyond Differences and what we're doing to end social isolation. I want to get involved and hope that you do too! We're asking cool and supportive teachers like you to join us at lunch and to partake in the No One Eats Alone event next week. During No One Eats Alone, students work together to make sure that no students are by themselves during lunch. The No One Eats Alone program will last for the week of (month/day) at lunch, and the more people participating the better! If you could please get back to us about this ASAP, that would be awesome. Hope to see you there!

Thanks so much,

(Student name)

## **NO ONE EATS ALONE “MENU OF ACTIVITIES”**

### **ALL MY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS**

One person starts off by saying “All my friends and neighbors \_\_\_\_\_” and finishing the sentence with a piece of information that is true for him/her.

Example: —“All my friends and neighbors love basketball.”|| or “All my friends and neighbors have a pet.”

Everyone who this applies to stands up. The last one standing goes next!

### **WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE? If you had to...**

- Eat a spider or a cockroach?
- Do the chicken dance in front of your whole class or your principal?
- Have hair that was licorice flavored or have toenails made of skittles?
- Lose your arms or your legs?
- Live on land or in the ocean?
- Be stuck on a deserted island or abandoned in a destroyed city?
- Eat nothing but bananas or nothing but oranges for a whole day?
- Wear shorts for your whole life or pants for your whole life?
- Be an animal or a human?

## **NAME GAME!**

1. Tell your partner/your table about how you got your name or about any nicknames you have and why.
2. Share a fun fact about yourself.
3. Tell your partner/your table if you could choose your own name, what it would be.

## **WHAT IF...? Find a new friend and see how much you can learn about them through these questions or add your own!**

1. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
2. If you had one wish, what would it be?
3. If you could live in any other country, where would you live?
4. If you could learn any skill, what would it be?
5. If someone made a movie of your life would it be a drama, comedy, romantic-comedy, action, or science fiction film? Who would play YOU?
6. If you had to eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?

## **CHARADES: Choose something from each category to act out (no words allowed)... have your partner guess what you are!**

- animal
- food
- song
- movie
- book
- game
- sport
- place
- career
- favorite holiday

## ONE WORD STORY

The goal of this activity is for a group to create a story. Participants will form a circle and contribute just one word to the story. Identify one person to start the story with an introductory word. For example:

<b>John</b>	<b>Cheryl</b>	<b>Stephanie</b>	<b>Devan</b>	<b>Pablo</b>
The	stars	shined	with	butter....

Work together to make sentences that lead to a story!



## **NO ONE EATS ALONE MEDIA OUTREACH**

Let your local media know about your school's participation in No One Eats Alone! You can inspire other schools to get involved. Feel free to use this press release template that you can customize with your information.

Date

Contact: Name and phone number

### **NAME OF SCHOOL AND/OR SCHOOL DISTRICT AND**

### **BEYOND DIFFERENCES KICK OFF No One Eats Alone INITIATIVE**

### **Unique Program Designed to Address Social Isolation Before it leads to Bullying, Depression and Violence**

(City in all upper case, Abbrev. State) – Lunch can be the longest hour of the school day for some kids who feel alone and socially isolated at their school.

NAME OF SCHOOL and Beyond Differences today announced the launch of the No One Eats Alone initiative. It is the (first, second, third, etc.) school in the district to introduce this program. With social isolation and bullying now seen as chronic problems in our schools, this initiative is helping reverse these trends by asking students to engage in a simple act of kindness at lunch – making sure that no one is eating alone.

Beyond Differences is a non-profit organization dedicated to ending social isolation in middle schools across the country.

“We are excited about bringing No One Eats Alone here to NAME OF SCHOOL,” said (County) Superintendent (Name). “I want to thank Beyond Differences for their tireless efforts to tackle social isolation, an issue which has been ignored for too long.”

“We believe that No One Eats Alone is a game changer for children,” said Beyond Differences President Laura Talmus. “A teenager being isolated at lunch signals the beginning of many problems which have come to plague our schools, with the most shocking examples being bullying and violence. We are excited that our young people are joining together to reverse these frightening trends by promoting a culture of inclusion.” ||

**The No One Eats Alone initiative embraces three simple ideas:**

- Students Can Improve Their Own Communities: Students can make a difference in their school communities by making sure that everyone is included at lunch.
- Inclusive Communities are Stronger Communities: Inclusive schools make students happier and more successful and strengthen the larger school community.
- Stopping Social Isolation Helps to Stop Bullying: Social isolation is oftentimes the precursor for bullying. School communities with a culture of inclusion have far less bullying.

**Beyond Differences supports No One Eats Alone in a variety of ways, offering:**

- An easy step-by-step guide to get No One Eats Alone started, including who to enlist for support in your community and at your school.
- Ideas for organizing a No One Eats Alone week at your school
- Templates for press materials to distribute to local media
- Templates for printed materials such as lunch napkins, lunch tray liners, reusable lunch boxes, etc.
- Talking points should a reporter want to cover a story on your event
- A menu of activities students can use to engage in conversation with students they don't know
- Curriculum ideas for teachers to address social isolation and keep the issue top of mind

**About Beyond Differences**

Beyond Differences is a non-profit organization based in Marin County, Calif. whose mission is to end social isolation among students in middle school. Ace Smith and Laura Talmus, the parents of Lili Rachel Smith, a 15-year old high school freshman who died unexpectedly in her sleep in October 2009, founded the organization. Beyond Differences is led by a Teen Board, which conducts upper elementary, middle school and high school assembly programs about social isolation. Beyond Differences also recruits and trains 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade student leaders to introduce "No One Eats Alone," establish Beyond Differences Clubs and run school-wide special events. For more information, visit [beyonddifferences.org](http://beyonddifferences.org)

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## TEACHER RESOURCES: GUIDED ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

### Activity #1: Create Community Agreements

*Foster an inclusive environment, and provide students the language to prevent or interrupt bullying and isolating others.*

As a community, it is always important to support our members. Sharing agreements helps us to do this.

When we hear hurtful language:

We'll speak up if we see someone being mean to someone else:

"We'll say \_\_\_\_\_."

When we see hurtful acts:

We'll volunteer solutions - for example: invite another student to sit with our group at lunch or invite another student to walk with our group:

"We'll do \_\_\_\_\_ (invite, include, etc.) so that \_\_\_\_\_."

When we speak:

We will use positive and supportive words to show that we care about our community:

I \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_! That's \_\_\_\_\_ (great, fabulous, awesome, etc.)! (For example, I like when you play guitar. That's awesome!)

Overall, we will always strive to show:

What if it were you? How do you want to be treated?

"We'll be \_\_\_\_\_ (kind, generous, polite, etc.)."

## **Activity #2: Scenarios**

Teacher reviews a scenario or incident where a student is excluded (Students can role play).

This can also include a video clip from popular teen shows like “Gossip Girl” or “Glee,” showing students being excluded.

Teacher breaks students into pairs or trios and asks students to talk about the following questions. The students note responses on butcher paper, so that all students can see and respond. Students should be prepared to share with the larger their partner’s responses.

### **Guided prompts:**

- 1) What happened?
- 2) What were you thinking?
- 3) What do you think needs to happen to make the situation right?
- 4) How do you think \_\_\_\_\_ felt isolating \_\_\_\_\_?
- 5) If an agreement or action could be made, so that the student isn’t isolated again, what should it contain? (Example: I’ll make a point of inviting everyone to participate; next time I pick a partner, I’ll pick \_\_\_\_\_).
- 6) Is there anyone else (a teacher, other students, or parents) who needs to help support the agreement or action?

## **Activity #3: Reading Cards**

*Teacher provides a reading related to social isolation.*

Students are asked to read the article in teacher-assigned groups. Teacher does “numbered heads,” counting off students (1-6) so that students are prepared to answer questions as teacher randomly calls on a number, 1-6 by group.

For each group, teacher provides reading cards face down. Students pull a card, read the question, and share their response with their team. Students may work with a partner to

review the question and connect it back to the reading. The levels of questions are varied so that the teacher may assign questions to specific students, based on ability.

Once students have read and answered their questions with their small group, the teacher calls out a number and that student shares their partner's response to the question. The teacher is intentional about calling on all groups so that a variety of students are heard.

**Reading Card Prompts:**

- 1) What is the author's message to the reader?
- 2) How would you summarize the reading?
- 3) Is there anything that you found confusing?
- 4) What is the main point described?
- 5) How will you apply what you learned to your life?
- 6) What emotions did you feel? Why?
- 7) List facts that you recall from the reading.
- 8) What do you believe is important to the success of creating an inclusive community?
- 9) What events led to \_\_\_\_\_feeling isolated?
- 10) How does this story help us learn about being empathetic?
- 11) What would you tell \_\_\_\_\_to do differently? Why?



## **NO ONE EATS ALONE TESTIMONIALS**

### **From 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Who Have Made it Happen at Their Schools!**

No One Eats Alone isn't just a one-week chance to be nice; it is a way to change how students interact with one another.

-- *Chloe Mowbray (Beyond Differences Teen Board)*

No One Eats Alone was a big success at Davidson Middle School when it launched this past October. I was especially excited for the press conference with some of the local news stations, during which we explained No One Eats Alone and the purple backpacks, with all the materials you need to make it happen. Mike Watenpaugh, Superintendent of San Rafael City Schools, made a short speech showing his support for our programs. With the main part of the press conference over, the rest of the Davidson Leadership Academy Training Program team members and I started walking through the lunch area helping the sixth graders with icebreaker questions. The most rewarding moment was overhearing two girls walking by and saying "Hey look! Isn't she sitting by herself?" and strolling over to say, "Hi!" and possibly make a new friend.

-- *Sonali Langlois (Davidson Middle School)*

The first day, groups of kids gathered in our school gym to eat at the lunch tables. Some of our leadership team members advertised with our activity placemats at the lunch line, while others sat with kids at different tables and facilitated activities. Every day the numbers of students at our tables got bigger, and soon, we were could barely fit everyone at the lunch tables. No One Eats Alone was a huge success, not only for the Hall Leadership Academy Training Program members, but I think for many students at our school looking for some new friends.

*--Kyra Mowbray (Hall Middle School)*

On the last day, Friday, we played music, and people had a great time. People who I don't know that well have approached me since, and told me that No One Eats Alone was a fun thing and that they want us to do it again.

*-- Emma Wall (Brandeis Hillel Day School)*

I was sitting out at lunch and happened to see a kid that was at his own table. After I started talking to him, I realized that we had common interests. We quickly became friends. Many people think that social isolation doesn't happen at our school because there aren't that many people in our school, but I know that there is, and Beyond Differences has helped us to prevent it through No One Eats Alone.

*--Daniel Hoffner*

I was the DJ at Hall's NOEA week. Even though I wasn't on stage overseeing the event, from the DJ stand I noticed quite a bit more about people than I normally do. I saw many faces that I didn't see often, and I saw people going out of their cliques to socialize with others. I was really happy to see that we ARE making a difference.

*--Carl Simpson-Heil*

During NOEA, a 5<sup>th</sup> grader was being very quiet and shy. I started trying to bring him into the conversation. He ended up telling me how he always ate alone and preferred to “hide in the shadows.” Now I see he is coming out of the shadows; he is happier and more people talk to him. It is an indescribably good feeling to know you made an impact on someone’s life.

-- *Caitlin Donnelly*

When we were all creating wonderful posters for No One Eats Alone, everybody came together. People who didn’t even know each other made posters together. I thought this was wonderful. Everybody came together because they cared about no one eating alone.

-- *Amelia Shunk*



## BEYOND DIFFERENCES RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

Beyond Differences: [www.beyonddifferences.org](http://www.beyonddifferences.org)

Christine Hight (Director of Programs): [christine.hight@gmail.com](mailto:christine.hight@gmail.com)

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Laura Talmus (President and Co-founder): [lauratalmus@gmail.com](mailto:lauratalmus@gmail.com)

Dr. Ruth Bissell, Marin County Superintendent of Schools (Teacher Curriculum Consultant):  
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## LINKS FOR ADDITIONAL NO ONE EATS ALONE MATERIALS

There are lots of No One Eats Alone materials available on our website -

<http://www.beyonddifferences.org/#!nooneeatsalone/c1y49>

You can download PDFs of NOEA Conversation Cards, flyers and other materials. You can take them to your local printer and get as many as you need for your school printed!