

August 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian:

A key component to the healthy development of your child is the conscious allowance for social and emotional exploration and learning. To grow in a well-rounded and responsible way, we all need to learn how to recognize and manage difficult emotions with coping and problem-solving skills. But, even more importantly, we need to understand when it is vital to reach out for support when those skills aren't enough to bring us back to a state of emotional balance.

For this reason, certain areas of our mental health deserve special attention. After careful research, we have chosen to implement a depression and suicide awareness program, *The Erika's Lighthouse Program: Depression and Suicide Awareness for High School Students*. This program was developed by a highly respected mental health education and advocacy organization, Erika's Lighthouse: A Beacon of Hope for Adolescent Depression.

The program goals include:

- Raising awareness of depression and its symptoms.
- Reducing the stigma surrounding mental health issues.
- Encouraging the utilization of support services if necessary.

Depression is a very common, yet widely overlooked mood disorder that will impact 15–20% of young people before they reach adulthood. It is also a risk factor to suicide. Fact-based, teen friendly and hopeful programs like *The Erika's Lighthouse Program: Depression and Suicide Awareness for High School Students* promote the messages we need our students to hear. Depression is common and can be serious, but there is hope and help. You are not alone.

We look forward to working together to better inform students of important issues, like depression, and provide the tools students need to navigate challenging times.

For more information on this program, please visit <https://www.erikaslighthouse.org/>.

Sincerely,

Fremd High School Wellness Department
Fremd High School Student Services Department