

# Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

In this area, October is all about Pumpkin Show. When your city is the host of an event that brings more than 10,000 people to town each day, it gets a lot of attention.

But the month also has a number of school-related events that can be observed in the classroom or around a school.

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. This observance was created by PACER in 2006. PACER, founded in 1977, is an advocacy group for children with disabilities.

Statistics on the [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov) Web site report that between 1 in 4 and 1 in 3 U.S. students say they have been bullied at school. Because there is a growing awareness of bullying, a perception may exist that bullying is increasing. However, rates of bullying may actually be declining.

The Web site has a page with tips to empower kids with what they can do: [www.stopbullying.gov/kids/what-you-can-do/index.html](http://www.stopbullying.gov/kids/what-you-can-do/index.html).

Resources for educators can be found at [www.pacer.org/bullying/classroom/](http://www.pacer.org/bullying/classroom/).

Other observances this month include National Character Counts Week (Oct. 21-27) and Make a Difference Day (Oct. 27).

I find it interesting that these observances can be grouped together under the umbrella of kindness.

This week, a former classmate stopped me in a store and told me she wished that society would focus a little more on being kind and a little less on being divisive.

I agree with her.

Apparently so does the Harvard Graduate School of Education. It created the Making Caring Common Project in 2014 to help "educators, parents and communities raise children who are caring, responsible to their communities and committed to justice" (<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu>).



---

Sept. 28, 2018

---

Among its many avenues is the Caring Schools #CommonGood Campaign that seeks to advance the following goals among middle and high school students:

- deepen students' care for others and their communities;
- increase equity and access for all students in the college admissions process; and
- reduce excessive achievement pressure.

According to the campaign's page (<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/high-school-campaign>), "the campaign is based on the assumption that during these divisive, troubling times, we all need to do more and do better."

The Web site also has a link to resources in the areas of bullying prevention, raising ethical, caring children (for parents), promoting caring and respect (for educators) and social and emotional learning, among others.

In a 2017 *Psychology Today* blog, Karyn Hall writes, "Science has now shown that devoting resources to others, rather than having more and more for yourself, brings about lasting well-being. Kindness has been found by researchers to be the most important predictor of satisfaction and stability in a marriage. Many colleges, including Harvard, are now emphasizing kindness on applications for admission" ([www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/pieces-mind/201712/the-importance-kindness](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/pieces-mind/201712/the-importance-kindness)).

According to the Random Acts of Kindness Web site, kindness is teachable and contagious. Knowing that, it seems that Harvard's project is on the right track to encourage young people to adopt kindness as a lifelong trait.

---

*Ty Ankrom is the superintendent of the Pickaway County Educational Service Center. He can be reached at [ty.ankrom@pickawayesc.org](mailto:ty.ankrom@pickawayesc.org).*

