

# BREAK THE SILENCE

## Club aims to send a message of positivity and respect

### Treat others with respect, confront bullying

By Katherine Lacaze  
For Seaside Signal

The members of Seaside High School's latest club, established this fall, are focused on disseminating a message of positivity and exhibiting respect for their peers, teachers and other acquaintances to improve the social climate of their school.

"It's going to be a process, but we hope by the end of the school year, there will be a noticeable change," said advisor Shirley Yates, the school's attendance assistant.

Break the Silence, which was approved as an official

club in November, was born from a movement that started last school year. A group of students organized a Happiness Sprinkling march in May, during which they took to the streets of Seaside with positive messages, yellow attire and uplifting music — an idea borrowed from the Anacortes Center for Happiness, which put on a similar demonstration in Anacortes, Washington, in May 2012.

In conjunction with the project, then senior Gage Cain, who graduated in May, wrote a rap song with lyrics that included the phrase "Break the Silence" and emphasized the importance of treating others with respect and confronting bullying.

That phrase, Break the Silence, naturally fit as the club's title, Yates said.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Break the Silence club president Celeste Kerr, vice president Lola Paser-Johnson and communications director Garret Kiser of Break the Silence. The club recently achieved official status at Seaside High School.**

"We thought, 'that's what we want to call our group, because that's what we want to be about,'" she added. "It's not anti-bullying, it's pro-hon-

or; we want it to be a positive thing, not an 'anti-' thing."

As an official club, they elected officers to serve during the school year that include

president Celeste Kerr, vice president Lola Paser-Johnson, treasurer Dalton Smith, secretary Angel Dowell, fundraising director Jaedyn Bligh, and communications director Garret Kiser.

The club meets on Wednesdays after class in the school library.

### Positivity, goodwill and honor

In large part, the club was started as a response to the rampant bullying and violence — which can manifest in various ways — that pervades not only schools nationwide but other social spheres, as well. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services' StopBullying.gov website, between one in four and

one in three U.S. students say they've been bullied at school on a basis of disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and/or gender. Most bullying happens in middle school, and the most common types are verbal and social. Different demographics of students are affected at different rates.

To address the issue, however, Yates and the students hoped to provide a group that stressed a positive behavior in lieu of focusing on the negative one. Members of Break the Silence are seeking ways to show others they are valued and honored, despite differences. Their means of spreading that message include putting happiness magnets on the lockers, and each month, they will distribute cards with an affirming message to all students with a birthday in that month.



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## Good Luck GULLS!