

## Gillette Road Middle School

Grades 5–7, Public/Suburban • Cicero, New York • North Syracuse Central School District

### Encouraging Students to Live, Love, and Learn

“We all feel safer here than we did in our elementary school.”

“The No Bullying program is really good. I don’t feel I have to worry about bullies when I’m at school.” “The Peer-to-Peer program makes you feel like you’re going to someone’s big house, not a school.”

The fifth graders at Gillette Road Middle School in Cicero, New York, do not suffer from the traditional pre-adolescent anxiety associated with entering middle school. Despite its burgeoning population of over 1,300 students and its gigantic building that boasts of a new gym, new media center, and multiple cafeterias, Gillette Road Middle School retains

bullied or getting lost seem to recede, and new friendships begin to blossom. The House Plan Model, in which Gillette is broken down into three houses, with each student remaining in the same house for three years, also creates a small-school atmosphere.

Gillette Road believes strongly in students assuming leadership roles in its character education initiative. Begun in 2000 and greatly enhanced by staff members attending the Summer Institute on Character Education in Cortland, the program has moved from being administration driven to one which is propelled by staff and students. Currently, the I Make a Difference Committee (IMAD), consisting of 72 students, serves as a creative and energetic force that drives many of the character-related programs. Not only do committee members plan and implement school events, such as Spirit Week, Diversity Day, and the Student of the Month program, but they also conduct many community-service initiatives, such as a walk for Alzheimer’s or diabetes, a project for Make-a-Wish, and a fund drive for Children’s Hospital. Jackie, a student in IMAD, points to the significant role of the student body: “Our school is a good influence. We are a big school that cares; there are lots of activities, and everyone has a say in what the school can be.” Clearly, students are seeing school as the place to begin building a better world.

The No Bullying program, initiated approximately five years ago, offers a violence prevention curriculum developed by Beverly Title for the Hazelden Foundation/Johnson Institute. Complementing the student and staff component is a session for bus drivers and students entitled “Not on Our Bus,” which has proved to be highly effective



in combating a recognized problem. Moreover, since over 50 percent of the teachers of grades five and six have been trained in Responsive Classroom, with most teachers regularly holding morning meetings, opportunities abound for successful mediation of problems.

The community is justly proud of its middle school that is committed to developing responsible citizens. An *Eagle* newspaper editorial sums up its approval: “In a world that has been overcome with terror, hostility, and rage, Gillette is making the world better—one step at a time—by encouraging its students to live, love, and learn.”

#### REFERENCES

Center for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Rs. Cortland, NY: SUNY Cortland School of Education. Web site: [www.cortland.edu/character](http://www.cortland.edu/character).

Hazelden Foundation. Minneapolis, MN. Web site: [www.hazelden.org](http://www.hazelden.org).

*Responsive Classroom*. Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children. Web site: [www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org).

#### CHARACTER EDUCATION WORKS AT Gillette Road

- Attendance has continued to increase each year.
- The number of students attaining Honor Roll status has increased each year, and new students continue to be recognized as Merit Roll achievers.
- The suspension rate has decreased and remains well under 6 percent.

**Audrey Gangloff**, Principal

a friendly, caring atmosphere, thanks to its highly successful Peer-to-Peer and No Bullying programs.

This caring middle school provides an innovative way to help its fifth graders feel at home even before they start their three-year cycle at the school. Each fourth grader from the four elementary feeder schools is matched up with a fifth-grade helper. During February and March, the fourth graders write letters to their peer helpers, who send a response by late April. When students meet with their peer helpers in late May, fears of being

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Audrey Gangloff**, Principal  
Gillette Road Middle School  
6150 South Bay Road  
Cicero, NY 13039

Telephone: (315) 218-3002

E-mail: [aganglof@nscsd.org](mailto:aganglof@nscsd.org)

Web site: [www.nscsd.org/gillette.cfm](http://www.nscsd.org/gillette.cfm)