



## MOUNT HOREB AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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District Office | 1304 E. Lincoln Street, Mount Horeb, WI 53572

August 18, 2018

Mr. and Mrs. Terry Cullen  
Platteville, WI

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Cullen,

On behalf of the Mount Horeb Area School District, I offer my deepest gratitude for sharing with our faculty and staff your story of profound loss and extraordinary resiliency. You taught us, among other things, the pathway to healing is through channeling our grief in service to others.

It is difficult to comprehend the fact that several beautiful children will not be returning to our classrooms this week. As a community, we have been reeling. A malaise has hung over Mount Horeb. It is palpable. That changed when you took the microphone and shared your personal experiences. We needed to heal. We needed to know there is a way forward. No one, but you, could have provided that sense of hope.

As importantly, your insightful presentation has given our staff license to have courageous conversations about suicide. No longer can it be acceptable to simply explain away these deaths as “unexpected”. Like your beautiful Ben, each of these souls were contending with deep pain. In many instances, that profound anguish is too often masked for fear of societal stigmas. You reminded us the importance of moving discussions past the façade of a “brave” face to conversations which reflect the multi-layered realities of peoples’ lives.

Your inspirational Back-to-School Kickoff message moved our school community from a “post-vention” mindset to prevention. While words cannot possibly begin to express my sincerest condolences for the extensive loss you have endured, your fortitude in sharing your experiences exemplifies the very message you imparted on those assembled: be kind to one another, talk about suicide, and educate to demystify stigmas. The work you put into making us better is not lost on me. Our students, staff, and community will be the benefactors of your exemplary efforts.

With warmest regards,

Dr. Steve Salerno  
Superintendent

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