

Dear Parents,

As you may know, your child's school is participating in a research project with Penn State University entitled 'Social Responsibility and Prevention'. We think that it will make an important contribution to our knowledge of how young people help each other avoid risks. The project is a study of the ways that young people influence each other in a positive way and discourage risky behaviors. We are especially interested in understanding the key roles that teachers and parents play in developing what we have referred to as 'civic values' in young people and how these values may be effective in encouraging young people to be responsible for one another.

As part of this research, we would like to ask your child to participate in a focus group with other young people at their school. In the focus group we will discuss how young people have been or might be willing to intervene in the risky behavior of others. We would like to know if young people take steps to avoid risks and under what circumstances they are willing to intervene in others' behavior. The answers will be used to further our understanding of how we can encourage socially responsible behavior among young people.

If you agree to have your child participate in this study, he or she will be asked to attend a discussion with other students during the school day. We expect these focus groups to last up to, but not more than about an hour. All the students in the group will be about the same age. The focus groups will be tape recorded (audio) but your child will not be asked for any personal identifying information other than their first name.

If you are interested in having your child participate in this project, please review and sign the attached consent form and have him/her return it to school. We are working with the school's authorities to set up times and places for the group meetings.

Sincerely

Connie Flanagan
Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education
Penn State University

