

Grace O'Connor: Spreading Positivity!

Grace O'Connor is an eternal optimist. She knows first-hand the power of words, and how actions big and small can make or break someone's day. As a victim of bullying herself, she felt compelled to present a mind-shift to her classmates: Instead of focusing on what *not* to do to prevent bullying, she bravely took a stand to practice what you *should* do to encourage and support each other.

As a tenth grader at Northwest Tech Center, she entrepreneured the Positively Positive Message Initiative, a social experiment that caught fire with peers and staff alike.

It began simply - Grace put together public message board in the commons areas at her school. She used post-it notes to showcase her favorite inspirational quotes and positive affirmations. Her intent was to surround students with positive messages (we all need a little pick-me-up once in awhile!)

Soon, classmates began contributing their own positive messages. With the help of School Social Worker Adriana Haugen, students would submit a message and it would be printed and appear on the board the next day. It's become a unifying activity for the entire school community.

A positive school environment is important for everyone: students, staff, parents and our community. Grace is an incredibly talented student whose efforts are truly noticed. She's a reminder to everyone to pay it forward! Take the time to smile, say hello, and support one another with positivity, encouragement, affirmation and hope!