

EPHRATA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Aavidum Club Launched at Ephrata High School

February 13, 2012 – *Aavidum* cannot be found in the dictionary. The word was created by a group of Cocalico High School students in 2004. It comes from the Latin root “vid” (meaning life) and is an expression of assurance to another person meaning, “I have your back.”

Knowing someone “has your back” can provide strength in times of depression and crisis. Ephrata Aavidum members pledge to “have your back” and recently launched a handprint campaign to remind their classmates of their support.

Ephrata Aavidum was started at the end of the 2010-2011 school year and has grown to include more than two dozen students in grades nine through twelve. Their goal is to bring attention to depression and help students having thoughts of suicide and struggling with depression.



“At Ephrata we are trying to do more than just raise awareness of youth depression and suicide. We are trying to let everyone know that even when they do feel alone, there are still people here for them. We feel most strongly about encouraging our classmates. We are here to support and push our classmates and friends to be their best,” said Kelsy Peterson, Ephrata Aavidum President. Other officers include Secretary Emily Reed, Treasurer Juliana Carvajal, and Parliamentarian Kelly Velasquez. Ephrata Aavidum advisors are Bill Harker, a Language Arts teacher, and Francie Wiker, a District Home and School Visitor.

Club members spent an afternoon in January writing inspirational quotes on handprints. They hung the handprints in the cafeteria and hallways and on the mirrors in boys’ and girls’ bathrooms throughout the building to remind their classmates of the support available from their classmates.

Aavidum clubs have also been launched at Warwick, Hempfield, Lancaster Mennonite, and Lancaster Catholic high schools in addition to Cocalico. An active club also exists at Penn State University.



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