

Violence not the answer at middle school

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COVENTRY — About 90 percent of the students at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle school have pledged to be violence free.

The school had kicked off its program on Oct. 13. They held a pep rally, working with the group Students Against Violence Everywhere (S.A.V.E.), re-

minding kids of reasons to pledge to be violence free.

Charles Blanchette, coordinator of S.A.V.E., led the rally, showing statistics and helping kids to understand the effect vandalism has on every school district.

“Rhode Island now ranks second in the nation and first in New England in teen deaths in the last eight years,” he said. “That’s not a good statistic.”

Attorney General Patrick Lynch visited the pep rally, encouraging students to remain violence-free. They asked the students to make a two-part pledge, with a commitment to themselves and a commitment to others. Both commitments stress the importance of staying in school, and living a violence-free lifestyle in school and in the community.

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School takes violence pledge

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Blanchette said after the month-long drive, 90 percent of the students in the school took the pledge to be violence-free. Any classes that gave a 100 percent pledge rate were rewarded with special treats.

One seventh-grade team that had a 100 percent pledge rate took a field trip on Friday to the Knotty Oak Cemetery, watched a movie in the auditorium and, as promised by Blanchette, was allowed to throw cream pies at the teachers.

"We had promised them this if we got 100 percent," said Blanchette. "The teachers wore

ponchos and goggles. What I didn't know was that all the other teachers had conspired against me and all the cream pies went to me. The kids had a lot of fun with that."

The students certainly had rewards for the pledges they have made and the teachers and administration finds some rewards with this pledge as well.

Constance Tundis, seventh grade English teacher said what was nice about the pep rally was that it created a common language and reminded students what it means to be a good citizen. She said Blanchette really takes students out of the classroom and shows how their behavior anywhere

is important.

"It's unbelievable for a school this big to get this high amount of participation," said Tundis. "It's great."

Augusto Gomes, assistant principal said he is ecstatic about the results of this pledge.

"We can still do better," he said. "It's a good reflection of our community and by taking that pledge it's a reinforcement of the positive climate that we have here."

He said the drive also has side benefits of reducing behavior issues of students in the school.

"This drive is the culmination of all that is very good here," said Gomes.