

October 9, 2007

Dear Keysor Families,

Today we officially kick off Keysor's "**Use Another Word**" initiative, aimed at stopping the use of hurtful words and language within the Keysor community. We regularly talk with kids about why we come to school - to learn and to achieve, and we know Keysor Kids can achieve more when they feel safe and secure with peers. This endeavor, sponsored by Keysor's Civil Rights Team, is another way students can be allies and support each other.

Attached is a "Use Another Word" pledge we'd like students and adult family members to talk about and sign. Students who sign the pledge commit to using positive and friendly language themselves and encouraging others to do the same. Once the signed pledge is returned to school, kids will get a button that says, "Use Another Word." All Keysor Kids will be taught to interrupt hurtful language in an appropriate manner, saying simply, "Please use another word."

Keysor's Civil Rights Team is comprised of all interested fifth grade students. This leadership group works with teachers to encourage positive, supportive behaviors from all Keysor Kids. Members must commit to certain ideas and behaviors themselves:

I believe that Keysor's diversity is its strength. I also recognize that treating others badly because of their differences can turn diversity into a source of loneliness and hurt. I pledge to have respect for people whose abilities, beliefs, culture, race, ideas or other characteristics are different from my own. To fulfill this pledge, I will examine my own biases and work to overcome them, set a positive example at home, school, and in my community. I will work to uphold the civil rights of every student at Keysor, and interrupt hate and injustice whenever it occurs.

Experts say the most lasting way to end hurtful or bullying situations is to give friends (or witnesses) the confidence and tools to help each other. Dr. King once said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." We appreciate your support as we raise Keysor Kids' awareness of these issues, help them make positive choices, and equip them with tools to stand up for others who may need their support.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to call (213-6120), email (painteb@gw.kirkwood.k12.mo.us), or stop by. Thanks for continues support of Keysor and Keysor Kids.

Sincerely,
Bryan