

CKN Speakers at Bullying Prevention Workshop, Middle Tennessee State University

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

CKN's summary report

Background and overview: In May, Dr. Pam Ertel, (Professor of Education and Program Coordinator, Early Childhood Program, at MTSU Department of Elementary & Special Education), had reached out to CKN following her positive experience with Vic and Trish who introduced her Social Emotional Learning – Early Childhood Education class to Moozie's kindness program the prior month. She shared her proposed idea of partnering with CKN: Pam wished to offer a special 90-minute "MT Engage" interdisciplinary workshop for students in the fall semester. The workshop topic she envisioned was "Preventing Bullying through Kindness." She thought CKN could contribute to the session with information on Moozie's kindness program, resources and messaging for young children to help preclude bullying. Over the spring, Pam, Vic, and Trish planned the workshop agenda and collaborated on a \$1,000 MT Engage grant application to cover funding of Moozie books/puppet giveaways, supporting printed materials, and snacks. The grant application submitted by Pam was approved, with \$900 to fund Moozie resources for participating students. Through further planning, it was identified that a broadly-appealing agenda would also include (1) Stephanie's expert inputs on the science/psychological-impacts of bullying and guidelines for managing bullying, and (2) pre-recorded video of MTSU students interviewing Anjali Rao on the Kindly app that she invented to empower 10-18 year-olds to prevent cyberbullying.

The workshop was delivered on September 24, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., in MTSU Learning Resource Center room 101, to Pam's Education students (though all MTSU students were welcome). The class of about 20 students was very attentive and engaged. The program aimed to creatively educate, inspire, and prepare college students who currently are studying/practicing teaching careers (typically with elementary students). It offered guidance and insights for teachers, parents, and other caregivers, on the topic of bullying, unfortunately a wide-spread pattern with negative impacts among youth.

Participants:

- **Dr. Pamela Ertel** – EDD; MTSU professor
- **Stephanie Barca** – LMSW, JD; CKN Vice President; therapist
- **Trish Cronin** – CKN Executive Director
- **Vic Legerton** – CKN President & CEO; Moozie greeter
- **Connie Casha** – Director of MTSU Early Learning Programs; CKN Board member; guest observer

Highlights:

- The workshop proceeded as outlined masterfully by Pam:
 - Vic – Live Moozie personal greeting to each student entering the large classroom
 - Pam – Introductions; Definition of Bullying; Impact and Signs of Bullying; Prevention Strategies
 - Stephanie – Bullying Impacts on the Brain etc.; Case for Kindness; Bullying Guidelines for Parents/Educators
 - Trish – Anjali-Moozie History; Anjali's Kindly Invention Overview and Interview; Moozie Kindness Resources
- For each student, Pam provided the pre-determined resource package: Moozie's Kind Adventure and/or Moozie's Orchestra Adventure book; Parent/teacher guidelines for MKA/MOA; Moozie puppet, Parent Guide on Progressing after Bullying (prepared by Stephanie), sample Moozie curriculum lessons (e.g. inclusion; conflict management) for young children to help build social interaction skills that preclude bullying.
- The video of the interview with Anjali had been recorded and edited the prior week based on a Zoom meeting among two students (including Teaching Assistant Carmen), Pam, and Anjali. Prior to the workshop program, Pam executed the one-page contract requested for Anjali's engagement and provided by Bharathi Rao. It prohibits public sharing of video recording (though CKN may use small video snippets with permission). The video was well received when played after Trish's introductory background on Anjali and Kindly. Though a bit lengthy, the video was upbeat and structured with interesting questions and answers. Anjali's spirited and positive energy came through, readily holding viewers' attention.
- Pam set the stage very effectively with a solid introduction of what bullying is, how it can be identified and how to prevent it. She noted that teachers should help students understand bullying, be central to creating a positive classroom/school culture, keep lines of communication open, and model and reinforce kindness and respect.
- Stephanie captivated the students (and Pam) with excellent facts, supporting slides and delivery related to how bullying is an adverse childhood experience and how it affects the brain and behavior. She offered practical advice on how to handle bullying situations. The class followed Stephanie's references to specific research as well as personal and professional examples. Stephanie's presentation ran into other slides to be presented. Additional coordination among Team Moozie presenters will lead to smoother time management in future presentations.

- Prior to running the video of Anjali’s interview session, Trish provided overviews of how CKN (Ted/Karen Dreier) first connected with Anjali Rao when she was a young girl and what her Kindly app invention does. Trish’s presentation, especially regarding the history of Anjali’s meeting CKN Founder Ted, provided context to illustrate how CKN’s multigenerational approach addresses bullying in a unique way. For future sessions, Stephanie and Trish will coordinate more effectively as to who will address kindness impacts within class time. Trish overcame navigational challenges from the classroom computer but will consider using her personal laptop for future presenting at that site.
- Students asked and answered questions throughout the full workshop. There was a positive periodic dialogue during each segment, as students contributed their perspectives. The students’ eye contact, full respect, and attention were high. The session included a short mid-way break that seemed to be helpful, with the large majority of students remaining in the room to chat and nibble on snacks.

Additional Recommendations:

- The slides and materials prepared for this workshop have content that will be valuable during applicable future Moozie events, interactions, and resource sharing. CKN should leverage Stephanie’s Bullying-related guidelines as relevant in the future, with parents and/or teachers. Also, CKN should leverage the Kindly app write-up as applicable, with parents, administrators, and/or teachers.
- Some of the distributed Moozie books and [particularly popular] plushy puppets may be used by students in their student teaching and or personal/family contexts. Trish or Vic should check in with Pam by year-end to see if she knows of any impacts from these Moozie resources and/or interest in further contact with CKN.
- CKN should continue to stay in touch with MTSU’s Dr. Pamela Ertel over the short and long terms. Pam is a much respected and learned professor in her field of Early Childhood Education, a lovely individual, and a genuine fan of Moozie. She clearly continues to seek to improve her students’ classroom learning experience, with creativity and excellence. Both Pam and Connie Casha are valuable MTSU connections for CKN/Moozie.

Financials:

The MT Engage Program Grant secured by Dr. Ertel covers CKN costs (with margins of 25-60%) for the distributed Moozie resources:

30 MKA and MOA books @ \$10/each special insider price	\$300.00
50 Moozie plush puppets @ \$12.00/each special insider price	\$600.00
Total Reimbursement	\$900.00