



Inspiring healthy relationships

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Santa Barbara Unified School District contracts with **What is LOVE To Provide Dating Abuse Prevention Programming Utilizing Restorative Justice Principles to All High Schools.**

Santa Barbara, September 22, 2014 -- School principals, counselors, parents and teens have resoundingly expressed an immediate need for continued and expanded in-school dating violence prevention programs. Dr. Cash, Superintendent of Santa Barbara Unified School District, lead an effort to secure a contract with **What is LOVE** to provide this programming to all secondary schools beginning in the Fall of 2014. School board members unanimously approved the contract in June. ONE in THREE teens in Santa Barbara County experience dating abuse and most never ask for help.

Monique Limon, Board of Education member shared, "I am excited that every effort is being made to help our students be successful. This includes helping our students understand and identify unhealthy relationships. I am thankful to **What is LOVE** for partnering with the Santa Barbara Unified School District to change the troubling reality that one in three students in the county experiences dating abuse."

This type of violence can have a profound impact on the physical, emotional and academic growth of a youth with short and long-term consequences. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention points out that youth who are harmed by dating violence are more likely to do poorly in school, to report binge drinking, attempt suicide, engage in physical fighting, and have a greater likelihood of teen pregnancy. Together, they create lasting harm that affects the victim of abuse, their friends, families, schools and surrounding communities.

What is LOVE (WIL) is committed to addressing this crisis utilizing restorative justice principles, innovative outreach employing technology, the power of storytelling, and a teen driven awareness campaign. Their programs currently include a school assembly format, workshops for youth, parents and school staff, and outreach materials.



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Christy Haynes MA Psy., founder and director of prevention for **What is LOVE** said, “I am so grateful for this new partnership with Santa Barbara Unified School District, we can continue to provide this essential programming to Santa Barbara Schools and we can grow our outreach and programming. This new relationship with SBUSD will provide an opportunity to raise funds for more teen stories for a documentary, develop mobile APPS helping teens identify abusive love, train additional peer educators at UCSB, expand our outreach capabilities with on-line resources, provide educational workshops to parents & teachers, and provide every school in Santa Barbara awareness materials with resources for help”.

For more information about the program visit **What is LOVE** at www.whatisloveteens.org or join us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/whatisloveteens?ref=hl>