

CANYON COURIER

Ideas for changing the world

WJMS eighth-graders present their ideas during school's annual Social Change Day

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Eighth-graders at West Jefferson Middle School have found their voices.

The students, working in groups, exercised their First Amendment rights by promoting their views on a topic they researched during the annual Social Change Day. This year, all eighth-graders participated in the unit in which they chose topics, researched them and came to conclusions on how to make the world a better place.

Their projects, most displayed on poster boards, filled the gym much like a science fair, and classmates, parents and community members walked from display to display to learn each group's conclusions.

"Students could speak about causes they value," according to teacher Michael Fisher. "This let them champion their own causes."

Eighth-graders Carli Novak, Jaeden Kucera and Izzi Allem championed finding ways to stop eating disorders among teenage girls. Izzi said one of the biggest causes was social media because girls see beautiful people and want to be that way, so they develop eating disorders.

Carli added that organizations exist to help girls with eating disorders, and writing in journals can help, too.

"This is a really important topic," Carli said. "A lot of people put on a happy face but are depressed inside. This topic is pushed to the side."



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ABOVE: West Jefferson Middle School's Social Change Day had the school's eighth-graders set up in the gymnasium to present their research.



LEFT: Savanna Schreuder and Lucy Lane did their project on racial inequality.

Connor Harrington, James Benish-Kingsbury, Weston Thorne and Nick Jacobs advocated for gun rights, saying people's rights to keep and bear arms were being eroded, and other causes of death were more prevalent than gun deaths.

James said gun rights are similar to Prohibition, which prohibited alcohol nationwide from 1920 to 1933. If guns are outlawed, he said, people will still find ways to get guns.

Savannah Schreuder and Lucy Lane decided to study racial inequality because they noticed the problem increasing, and they wanted to bring people's attention to that.

"We wanted to look at how you can prevent it and comfort people [who have been racial inequality victims]," Savannah said.

They suggested students should put themselves into the shoes of other people.

James Schiffers, Evan Moore, Noah Lievers and Owen Rosser looked at the reasons for suicide and how to prevent it. They learned about the Suicide Prevention Hotline and agreed that letting others know that there was faith and hope in the world would help.

"We need to tell people that their friends wouldn't want them to commit suicide," James Schiffers said.

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