

KENTUCKY STUDENTS CREATE A CULTURE OF BELONGING ON NATIONAL NO ONE EATS ALONE® DAY - Feb 26, 2026

*Sandy Hook Promise and WellCare of Kentucky Help Students Connect with Their Classmates*

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Feb. 26, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Thousands of schools across the country celebrated **National No One Eats Alone® Day**, a program led by Sandy Hook Promise created to end social isolation and help students get to know one another, so that every student feels like they belong. WellCare of Kentucky, a leading managed care organization, and a company of [Centene Corporation](#) (NYSE: CNC), worked with local schools to support this program that helps students connect.

Thanks to the ongoing partnership with the [Centene Foundation](#), the philanthropic arm of the Centene Corporation, WellCare of Kentucky provided curriculum and art project materials from the Sandy Hook Promise for **National No One Eats Alone Day** at no charge to Kentucky schools.

"Social isolation harms children both physically and mentally in terms of detrimental health impacts – some of which can be long-term – and it's also a major risk factor and warning sign for extreme situations like self-harm and violence," said Nicole Hockley, co-founder of Sandy Hook Promise. "The power of personal connections is profoundly transformative, and that's what's so special about No One Eats Alone Day. Simple acts of kindness have the power to pull kids back from the brink – not only saving lives but changing them for the better. That's why we are so honored to partner with the Centene Foundation in this incredibly important mission to protect kids. By working together, we can create safer, healthier futures for children throughout our nation."

For the seventh year in a row, WellCare supported **National No One Eats Alone Day**. Across Kentucky, 151 schools across the state participated. In all, 64,000 students took part in the program.

A special guest speaker, Pro Football Hall of Famer Anthony Muñoz, spoke about important topics such as bullying and self-esteem during a schoolwide assembly of 800 students at the Academy at Shawnee in Louisville as a part of their **No One Eats Alone Day**.

According to a [recent World Health Organization study](#), teenagers who felt lonely were 22 percent more likely to receive lower grades in school. Loneliness and social isolation were cited with direct correlation to an increased risk of stroke, heart disease, depression, and thoughts of self-harm or suicidal ideation. The same study also linked social connection to improved physical and mental health.

Participating schools received a free Belonging Box, which included in-class lesson plans on social isolation and actionable steps to cultivate belonging. The Belonging Box also contained a student leadership guide, conversation starters to help students connect with someone new, and materials for *Connect the Dots*, an innovative art project that helps students share things about themselves and learn more about their classmates. All student materials are available in English and Spanish. All Belonging Boxes were provided at no charge to schools.

"Social isolation has been identified as a precursor to bullying, self-harm, and community violence," said Corey Ewing, CEO and Plan President for WellCare of Kentucky. "WellCare is sponsoring the program because when students are given the appropriate tools, they will stand up for others as empathetic and caring activists, not passive bystanders."

No One Eats Alone Day was launched in a handful of schools in Northern California in 2012 by the nonprofit Beyond Differences, which became part of Sandy Hook Promise in September 2024. In 2025, Sandy Hook Promise sent more than 3,100 Belonging Boxes to schools in all 50 states, reaching over 1.5 million students on National No One Eats Alone Day. Click [here](#) for additional information

**Photographs from the event can be downloaded at <https://www.flickr.com/gp/couragemedia/k2C6W8vYUS>**

#### **About Centene Foundation**

The Centene Foundation (the "Foundation"), a private nonprofit focused on investing in economically challenged communities, is the philanthropic arm of Centene Corporation (NYSE: CNC) ("Centene"). The Foundation supports projects and initiatives strategically aligned with Centene's mission-driven culture and enhances the work Centene is doing to remove the barriers to wellness that underserved and low-income populations face. The Foundation is committed to addressing social determinants of health and improving health equity in three distinct areas of focus: healthcare access, social services, and education. To learn more, visit the Centene Foundation's website.

#### **About Sandy Hook Promise**

[Sandy Hook Promise](#) (SHP) envisions a future where all children are free from school shootings and other acts of violence. As a national nonprofit organization, SHP's mission is to educate and empower youth and adults to prevent violence in schools, homes, and communities. Creators of the life-saving, evidence-informed "Know the Signs" prevention programs, SHP teaches the warning signs of someone who may be in crisis, socially isolated, or at-risk of hurting themselves or others, and

how to get help. SHP also advances school safety, youth mental health, and responsible gun ownership at the state and federal levels through nonpartisan policy and partnerships. SHP is led by several family members whose loved ones were killed in the tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012.

### **About WellCare of Kentucky**

WellCare of Kentucky provides government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors, and individuals with complex needs primarily through Medicaid, Medicare Advantage and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans across the state. WellCare of Kentucky is a [Centene Corporation](#) company. For more information, visit [wellcareky.com](#).

SOURCE WellCare of Kentucky

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