



Midkota is, once again, starting up our Sources of Strength program. Midkota contributed as a study pilot program when Sources of Strength was being established a number of years ago. We first started our program in the spring of 2019 and it came to an end during the COVID pandemic because of logistics with distancing. We are excited to be implementing it again to create a climate of inclusion, encouragement, and support. We see Midkota students as our most effective agents of change, and we are looking forward to watching how this group of peer leaders will influence the culture of our school into the coming years.

Sources of Strength is best defined by its statement at www.sourcesofstrength.org. Sources of Strength is “a best practice youth suicide prevention project designed to harness the power of peer social networks to change unhealthy norms and culture, ultimately preventing suicide, bullying, and substance abuse. The mission of Sources of Strength is to prevent suicide by increasing help seeking behaviors and promoting connections between peers and caring adults. Sources of Strength moves beyond a singular focus on risk factors by utilizing an upstream approach for youth suicide prevention. This upstream model strengthens multiple sources of support (protective factors) around young individuals so that when times get hard they have strengths to rely on.” The strengths that we focus on building with all students are: mental health, family support, positive friends, mentors, healthy activities, generosity, spirituality and medical access.

Diversity was very important in selecting the group as these peer leaders are to bring away what they learn and purposefully support their classes, peer groups, clubs, and sports teams. The group of peer leaders will shift over the years, and if there is interest in joining our peer leader group in future years, we would encourage students to visit with the adult leaders about that. Sources of Strength adult and peer leaders aim to meet twice a month. We look forward to creating connections and bridges between students and adults in a way that has proven to be incredibly effective. If you would like more information, we encourage you to visit the Sources of Strength website listed above, or to contact the adult leaders: Mrs. Stacy Adrian and Miss McKenna Frappier.