



TODD HUNTER
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
DISTRICT 32
NUECES (PART)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 9/23/22

CONTACT: Chief of Staff, Angie Flores at 361.695.2048

Students gather for mental health symposium

State Rep. Todd Hunter, Flour Bluff ISD and K9s For Warriors joined forces today to host "You Matter," a mental health symposium for students.

Hundreds of Flour Bluff ISD students gathered on campus for the symposium, which focused on ways that students can manage and address anxiety, stress and other mental health issues that young people often face.

"We all recognize that the teenage years can be very difficult and present a number of unique mental health challenges," Rep. Hunter said. "We wanted to hold this symposium today to show these students that they are not alone. There are many great resources in our community and beyond our community for students and families who might be struggling."

K9s For Warriors provides Veterans with a service dog trained to help them with post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma. Amanda Peterson, a Veteran from Michigan who served in Afghanistan and Iraq, spoke to students about the benefits of a service dog.

"When it comes to mental health, you're always thinking someone else has it worse off than you, which leads to downplaying your own trauma," said Amanda Peterson, a graduate of K9s For Warriors. "With the number of options out there, you shouldn't feel as if you're already in the dark before you find your light. For me, my Service Dog named Chesdin was that light."

Students also heard from LeAnn Crump, an inspirational speaker who frequently shares the "You Matter" message to help every person understand their importance.

"We appreciate the time that State Representative Todd Hunter, his staff, and our community partners spent being present today with our Hornets highlighting the importance of mental health awareness," said Flour Bluff ISD Superintendent Velma Soliz-Garcia. "We strive to provide our Hornets opportunities to communicate and connect with FBISD faculty and staff when they need us most and stress the importance of the message 'You Matter' because EVERY Hornet is a significant member of our community."

Rep. Hunter has held several events in recent years to gather community feedback on mental health issues, suicide prevention and domestic violence.

Due to legislation that Rep. Hunter has authored, September is Suicide Prevention Month in the State of Texas. Rep. Hunter also authored legislation requiring the Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council to create a subcommittee focused on suicide prevention and include suicide prevention efforts in the council's behavioral health strategic plan.

"Our community has really rallied together to help young people over the last few years," Rep. Hunter said. "I'm grateful to Flour Bluff ISD for hosting us and for K9s For Warriors for joining our program. I hope we showed these students that their peers, their school and their community all care about them. Raising awareness with an event like this is one important way that we can help students feel less isolated and show them how much the community and their school care about them."

###

About Rep. Todd Hunter

Todd Hunter is the state representative for Texas House District 32 in Nueces County. He is the Chairman of the House Redistricting Committee. He is also a member of the State Affairs Committee, which deals with significant matters of state policy, ranging from the administration of the state government to cybersecurity, and he sits on the International Relations & Economic Development Committee.