

Kim's copy

Appendix A

Good evening,

First, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak here tonight.

My name is Kimberley Evans and my daughter is with me and her name is Hannah Grace Evans. My daughter has a life threatening peanut allergy and she was diagnosed when she was 18 months old and she has been living with this allergy for 14 years. She has completed grade nine. A couple of months ago on June 7, 2017 there was a pranking incident at Senator Oconnor, a student placed peanut butter on door handles of the school. On Feb 22 a student was eating peanuts two rows over from Hannah Grace. We were told at that time from the acting principal that the judgement of what students are allowed to eat in the classroom was at the discretion of the teacher. There seemed to be no clear rule or process regarding what was allowed. We all know that cross contamination is fatal for students with allergies. I spoke to many students and parents from the school community and the most popular response was " I don't think there is a policy about bringing life threatening food in the school, our teachers lets us bring what we want." My husband and I felt that the communication and education of the staff and students needed to be revisited. We were very sad on the day of the pranking incident. The reality that Hannah Grace could have been a victim of a prank and the possibility that we could have lost her was heartfelt. Every student with life threatening allergies deserves to feel as safe as they can in their learning environment. I feel that this topic is important and it aligns itself with our Catholic mission, inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

Hannah Grace

I started my grade 9 academic year at Senator Oconnor. I learned really quickly that I had to self advocate for myself especially regarding my allergy because there was no communication that was given to me from the staff at Senator Oconnor. I submitted my medical form and that was the really only written acknowledgement of my allergy. There was no discussion about when I am in a portable or a place that is not close to the office or with friends how I access help. There was no emergency plan about how they would help me if I was in trouble. I soon realized that having an allergy in High school was very different then elementary school. As a student I can only protect myself based on the information that is provided by the school. I feel there were a lot of details that were overlooked in my first year and I want to make the system better.

I want to invite students with allergies from different Catholic high schools to participate in a panel discussion on how we can create a better understanding of how allergies affect students in high school. Our mental health is affected when we have a life threatening allergy. We need to find coping mechanisms to help us. We need the opportunity to talk about how things are done regarding allergies and to ensure that we are knowledgeable about our school environment. It would be my hope that we could collaborate together to create a video or a communication of some sort that would become part of the enrollment package for all new students entering Catholic High School.

Thank you for taking the time to listen.