



- Kristin Anderson/Vail Daily



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#### If you go...

What: Rachel's Challenge presentation  
 When: 7:30 p.m., Feb. 10  
 Where: Battle Mountain High School auditorium, Edwards  
 More information: Contact student council sponsor Sage Nelson at 970-328-2930, extension 5370

## Vail Valley students spread Columbine lessons

Vail Valley student council takes on shooting victim's challenge to be kinder to each other

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VAIL VALLEY, Colorado – Determined to make sure nothing like the Columbine High School shootings ever happen here, a group of Vail Valley students fastened colorful signs to the walls of Battle Mountain High School Wednesday morning.

“Freedom,” read the sign in the lobby.

“Smile :-),” urged the sign in the stairwell.

Several months ago, a group of Battle Mountain students watched a presentation on Rachel Scott, the first victim in the Columbine High School shootings. The students decided to get involved in a national program called Rachel's Challenge. Scott had written extensive diary entries before she died, outlining her goals of being kind to other people. Rachel's Challenge

spreads her message of tolerance.

“We're trying to be kind to people,” senior Katrina Baca said. “We're trying not to be judge-y and to pay it forward.”

Students plan a presentation on Feb. 10 at Battle Mountain on Rachel's Challenge. The program will be open to the public. It will include videos about the Scott's life and how Columbine affected her family. Students are also trying to arrange for a speaker from Rachel's Challenge to talk about Scott's legacy.

#### Diary entries

Messages found in Scott's diaries foreshadowed that she would die young and touch millions of lives, Baca said.

“In one entry she said, ‘I'm going to die this year’ and it happened, to be the year of the Columbine shootings,” she said.

One drawing Scott made right before she died stuck with Baca after she watched the Rachel's Challenge presentation at a November leadership conference at Loveland High School.

“She drew eyes. it looked like they were coming from the sky and they were crying,” Baca said. “She drew a rose coming out of the tears. If you count the tears, there happened to be 13, and there were 13 deaths (in the Columbine shootings).”

Other diary entries outlined Scott's goals for herself, and those are the basis of the national nonprofit Rachel's Challenge. The goals are: “Eliminate prejudice, dare to dream, choose your influences, kind words, start a chain reaction.”

#### Kindness at Battle Mountain

By spreading Scott's message, six students on Battle Mountain's student council want to prevent the kind of

intolerance that fueled the Columbine shootings.

“I’m hoping that it just gets rid of all our little barriers,” Baca said. “A lot of people say we don’t have them. A lot of people hang out with the same friends and don’t get to meet anyone.”

Junior Dawa Sherpa said he doesn’t see much bullying taking place at Battle Mountain.

“Our school is pretty good with, I guess, just being kind to each other,” he said. “We want to build on that and expand on it more.”

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