**I believe that people should speak up and speak out – Sam Raby**

A famous band once sang, “When I find myself in times of trouble, mother Mary comes to me speaking words of wisdom, let it be.”

When we’re young, there are always people around us to see us fall over, pick us up, dust off our knees and send us on our way to play again. As we morph into teenagers, those we love watch for the signs of broken relationships and tell us, “There’s plenty more fish in the sea.” But then we all grow older, our parents become frail-they themselves need to be picked up. One day mother Mary doesn’t come anymore. There are no words of wisdom to be spoken. What happens when we find ourselves breaking down into the pit of depression, where the coarse edges of sanity border on irrational impulse? We find no one makes a sound, offers a hand…..we are left to just be. This is what we are heading towards.

I’m not here to concentrate your mind on a specific idea. I am here to broaden it and make it look at the bigger picture. I’m here in front of you today to convince you to speak up and speak out.

Those who can speak up will be able to gain physical and mental support. One of the main situations speaking out needs to be implanted is bullying. In my primary school all you needed to say was that rhyme about sticks and stones to make the tyrants retreat. I know some people aren’t this lucky and tremble when the subject of bullying is brought into the light. One thing bullies don’t know is that while they sleep soundly, their victims every night collapse into dark, underground mines. They claw through their own frozen tears and scrape away at fragments of insults, desperately, trying to find a little white gemstone. A gem so rare, it might as well have been a myth. This star is hope, strength; it is the power of your own voice. Every once in a while when someone finds one, they storm into the battle fields of the school halls; they are heard from north to south, east to west. They say, “NO MORE”. Recent studies by the University of Saint Andrews shows that 40% of children in the UK’s education establishments are bullied - 36% of those students say, “Why should anyone care about my problems?” . Why should standing up and saying enough is enough be so difficult? Why should standing up to a person making your life a misery need to be a problem? We can all help. All we need to do is provide the support for those who need it and not laugh when someone asks for it because they are stronger than any of us.

If you don’t speak out you lose power, control and your rights. An example of this transpired in 1933; a man by the name of Adolf Hitler rose to power and became Chancellor of Germany. After a massive propaganda campaign, many mesmerizing speeches and a colossal shift in the nation’s collective mind, he persuaded a complete population to follow an idea so radical, so extremist it began to appear sane. He used words so well this man convinced a whole country of a story of treachery and betrayal, drawing on their anger and distrust to oppress an entire religion. He created the world’s largest cult, and in the process of doing so set himself up as their saviour. These poor, deluded people, furious after their mistreatment at Versailles had been led into a dictatorship, and finding themselves there, lone voices against the system no longer mattered. The utter ruthlessness of the Nazi party in stamping out opposition and discord, meant people lost their ability to speak freely and in doing so lost their power and control and subjected themselves to the mercies of the Nazi regime. They were too afraid to stand up and speak out. They lost their voices because someone assumed they could do a better job. They were wrong and they will always be wrong.

If you stay silent today, you will also succumb to the pressure of society. In the UK alone out of the 2.8 million drug users, 70% say they felt forced to enter down this rabbit hole. In recent years a night out with friends has distorted into a drug addled blur of eternal devastation. No one stands up and refuses to be fooled by this evil trickery. The largest error of the evening does not occur during or after this ritual, but before. People dress themselves up in ghastly garments and costumes with the final piece being a mask. This mask is probably a creation by the devil himself. They follow these crowds mindlessly and cower behind this cloak; concealing all traces of who they were. Whole societies would rather conform and be seen as the norm than be dissimilar to someone else. They feel like their own voices would not matter. Our current generation is crumbling and out of the crumbs is forming a new world where everyone no longer cares for their own welfare. These individuals surrender themselves to be pulled in the opposite direction and are pressured into the wrong things. Everyone must speak up and speak out if we want to be free of peer pressure for the future.

Do not be deceived into thinking these are the only cases this concept needs to be applied. They are everywhere around us; every minute, every second. We need to try as hard as we can to spread confidence. I do not expect to leave this classroom pleased that everyone will now stand up and let their voices be heard. I would be ecstatic knowing that just one more person walks out of that door a little bit more comfortable with speaking up and speaking out.