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CONTACT: Lauren Creiman, (909) 833-9853

Bonita Unified Middle School Students Follow in Historic Steps with Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – More than 300 Lone Hill Middle School (LHMS) students, parents and community members promoted inclusivity and acceptance as they celebrated the legacy of American civil rights icon and activist Ruby Bridges by participating in the school’s inaugural Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day on Nov. 14.

Students at Lone Hill gathered early in the morning, enjoying donuts as they prepared for a walk promoting inclusion and unity. Led by two students carrying a “Brave Like Ruby” banner, participants marched together in a large line, starting from two locations, holding signs that celebrated diversity and togetherness. The walk concluded with an assembly featuring speakers who highlighted the importance of acceptance and kindness as cornerstones of Lone Hill culture.

The event concluded LHMS’ Brave Like Ruby Week, a schoolwide initiative in which students learned about Bridges’ role in desegregating schools. Teachers incorporated lessons on perseverance into the curriculum, exploring aspects of the civil rights movement through creating posters and engaging in social-emotional learning to emphasize the values of inclusion, diversity and grit.

“Activities were designed to align with our social-emotional learning curriculum, helping students develop compassion, perseverance, and an appreciation for differences,” LHMS counselor Samar Yassine said. “It’s inspiring to see our community come together to support students in understanding that everyone belongs.”

LHMS partnered with the Ruby Bridges Foundation to host the event for the first time. Bridges is remembered for being the first African-American child to integrate an all-white elementary school in the South at only six years old, on Nov. 14, 1960. For her first year of school, Bridges had to be escorted to campus by U.S. Marshals to ensure her safety; today, children across the U.S. Walk to school on Nov. 14 to commemorate her bravery.

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Images of Bridges' first steps into William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans, where she was escorted by U.S. Marshals, became iconic and artistic symbols of the civil rights movement. She was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame earlier this year for her lifelong work promoting racial equality and tolerance. By highlighting Bridges' courage and resilience, the school aims to ensure students from all backgrounds know that they are valued, Yassine said.

Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day was a community-wide effort at Lone Hill Middle School, supported by the school's counseling team, the Where Everybody Belongs (WEB) peer mentorship program, and the Multicultural Club. Students in WEB-branded t-shirts partnered with teachers, fellow classmates, and parents who attended the event or donated snacks and drinks to promote participation.

"Brave Like Ruby Week really made me feel empowered," Lone Hill eighth-grader Londyn Graham said. "You can be courageous even when you're up against people who don't support you, and I think that's a good lesson to remember."

PHOTOS:

BUSD_BRIDGES1: Two Lone Hill Middle School students lead the school's inaugural Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day on Nov. 14. The event celebrates the bravery of Bridges, a civil rights icon, who helped integrate schools in 1960, by encouraging students to walk to school in honor of her bravery and historic impact.

BUSD_BRIDGES2: During Lone Hill Middle School's Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day event on Nov. 14, students held posters celebrating inclusion and diversity. This event capped off the school's Brave Like Ruby Week, which included lessons and activities focused on the civil rights movement, perseverance, and social-emotional learning – all aiming to emphasize the values of inclusion and diversity.

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