

From the Chancellor's Desk



Memorial Day 2022

May 30, 2022

KCCD Colleagues:

On May 27th, the White House published a proclamation – A Prayer for Peace.

On Memorial Day, we remember the patriots who gave their lives in the service of America, in the service of freedom, and in the service of justice. They made the ultimate sacrifice to defend our Constitution and our democracy. We are free because they were brave, and we live by the light of the flame of liberty they kept burning. They are all heroes, and our Nation is forever grateful.

As we honor our fallen war heroes during the weeks leading up to Memorial Day, we are heartbroken at the horrific massacre in Uvalde, Texas. While all mass shootings are a tragedy, there is something particularly distressing when the violence targets our little ones. Nineteen young boys and girls and two teachers were brutally slaughtered during a rampage that has left our nation reeling and grappling with what to do next.

As a nation, we have, and continue to create a long and painful history with gun violence.

On April 20, 1999, two high schoolers murdered 12 of their classmates and a teacher at Columbine High School in Colorado. At the time, it was the deadliest high school shooting in the history of the United States, and stimulated copycat shootings.

On April 16, 2007, 32 were murdered in two attacks at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia.

On December 14, 2012, 20 elementary school students and 6 adult staff members were slain at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. The students were between the ages of 6 and 7.

On June 12, 2016, 49 people were massacred at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

On October 1, 2017, 58 were killed at the Route 91 Harvest music festival in Las Vegas. Since then, an additional two victims have died – one in 2019 and one in 2020.

On November 5, 2017, 26 were murdered at Texas First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. On February 14, 2018, 17 were murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

Just over two weeks ago – on May 14, 2022 – 10 were killed at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York.

And on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, an 18-year-old gunman shot and killed 19 elementary school students and two teachers at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of all the mass shootings that have happened in our country. [In this NPR article](#), we learn that it's 21 weeks into the year – and there are already 213 mass shootings. That averages to about 10 a week. The [Gun Violence Archive](#) keeps this gruesome tally and defines a mass shooting as an incident in which four or more people are shot, excluding the shooter.

There was a time when any shooting held our attention, but it has become so commonplace that too often we have already forgotten the last before another one occurs just days or weeks later. We are barely given time to process and grieve and most importantly, take action, before our attention shifts to something else. But time and time again, another devastating shooting brings us back to the issue of gun violence, of gun safety.

This is a problem rather unique to the United States of America. While there have been incidents of mass shootings abroad, they are far less commonplace than what we are experiencing. We must find real solutions to this particularly American problem and address what sets us apart. It is a huge undertaking to find real, lasting solutions to a problem of this magnitude – but we owe it to each and every victim and their families of these horrific events to do everything in our power to prevent another tragedy.

In the meantime, as we at Kern CCD mourn these senseless tragedies, let's keep finding the love that lets us live. (The phrase is from Amanda Gorman's recent poem. For more, read my blog at <https://sonyachristianblog.com/>) Let's reach out and bring that love to our neighbors, friends and families while we steadfastly support a path forward for our country that ensures these preventable tragedies do not happen again.

We owe it to ...

Layla Salazar, 11



Layla's father said they loved to listen to the song "Sweet Child O' Mine" on the way to school, and she recently won 6 races at a field day, taking home blue first-place ribbons.

Nevaeh Bravo, 10



Nevaeh celebrated her 10th birthday in January, and her family spoke of how she always "put a smile on everyone's faces."

Xavier Lopez, 10



Xavier loved dancing to Colombian songs and doing face masks with his mom; he loved basketball and baseball, and his favorite subject was art.

Makenna Lee Elrod, 10



Makenna's family described the little girl who loved softball and gymnastics as "a light to all who knew her."

Maranda Mathis, 11



Maranda's family said she loved unicorns and the color purple, nature and the outdoors.

Jose Manuel Flores Jr., 10



Jose's family described him as a helper and a great brother - always trying to help take care of his infant brother, and helping his sister Endrea.

Tess Maria Mata, 10



In Tess' purple bedroom, she had a jar full of money she was saving up for a family vacation to Disney World.

Rojelio Torres, 10



Every day after school, Rojelio and his cousins played football on their grandmother's front lawn.

Eliahna “Ellie” Amyah Garcia, 9



Ellie loved cheerleading, basketball, and TikTok and was already planning for her quinceanera - and she was excited about the pool party celebration her father told her they were planning this week for her 10th birthday.

Eliahna A. Torres, 10



Eliahna wore number four on her softball jersey and was hoping for a spot on the city’s all-star team; she was excited for the last Little League game of the season – which was to be played after school the day she was killed.

Annabell Guadalupe Rodriguez, 10



Annabell was outgoing, an honor student, and was close with her second cousin, Jacklyn Cazares – who was also killed in the shooting.

Jacklyn “Jackie” Cazares, 9



Jackie’s dad described Jackie - who received her First Communion just two weeks before she was murdered - as “full of love,” someone who didn’t like bullies and would give the “shirt off her back” to help someone.

Uziah Garcia, 10



Uziah loved karaoke, Fortnite, and bouncing on the trampoline.

Jayce Carmelo Luevanos, 10



Jayce made his grandparents a pot of coffee every morning, and often brought neighborhood kids to play at his home just a block away from the elementary school. His cousin Jailah Nicole Silguero was also killed in the shooting.

Jailah Nicole Silguero, 10



Jailah's mother said that Jailah, who loved dancing and spending time outdoors, had asked to stay home from school that morning.

Maite Yuleana Rodriguez, 10



Maite loved her lime green Converse tennis shoes – she had hand-drawn a heart on the right shoe – and wanted to study at Texas A&M University to become a marine biologist.

Amerie Jo Garza, 10



Amerie was protective of her 3 year old brother, Zayne, loved vanilla bean frappes and Chick-fil-A, and will be remembered as a hero who was trying to dial 911 on her cellphone when the gunman shot her.

Alexandria "Lexi" Aniyah Rubio, 10



Lexi, who wanted to be a lawyer and "make a difference," got straight A's and had just received a good citizenship award.

Alithia Ramirez, 10



Alithia loved to draw and had recently submitted a drawing to the “Doodle for Google” contest.

Irma Garcia, 48



Irma was just about to complete her 23rd year of teaching at Robb Elementary, where she started teaching a year after she married her high school sweetheart, Joe Garcia. Two days after the shooting, Joe Garcia died from a heart attack. They are survived by their four children: Christian, 23; Jose, 19; Lyliana, 15; and Alysandara, 13.

Eva Mireles, 44



Eva worked as an educator for 17 years, and called her daughter Adalynn every day around 4:30 pm as she left campus.

(Photos and information compiled from the following sources:

<https://www.texastribune.org/2022/05/25/uvalde-school-shooting-victims/>

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-05-25/victims-of-uvalde-texas-school-shooting>

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/25/us/victims-uvalde-texas-school-shooting/index.html>)

With much sorrow,

your colleague,

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#KCCDDaringMightyThings

