



G A B R I E L R I C H A R D C A T H O L I C H I G H S C H O O L

January 14, 2026

To the School Contemplating a Fentanyl Fathers Presentation:

My name is Rachel Vitale, and I am the Director of Counseling at Gabriel Richard Catholic High School in Riverview, Michigan, and the mother of two teenagers. On January 9th, our school had the Fentanyl Fathers present in an assembly to the entire student body, grades 9-12. If you are considering having these men come in and present to your students, please do not hesitate. Just book them. If you are brushing them off, I beg you, please don't.

This organization of parents who have lost their children to illicit fentanyl are on a mission to prevent other young people and their families from experiencing the same devastating loss. They not only share their raw and real grief, but educate students on what fentanyl is, why it is so dangerous, and how to help others who may be experiencing an overdose. As administrators and as parents ourselves, we want to believe that this will never be our students, our children, but to believe this is naive at best and deadly at worst. To learn that an overwhelming number of fentanyl deaths happen to people who had no idea they were even taking fentanyl is sobering. To learn that the amount that can kill a person fits on the tip of a #2 pencil is even more terrifying.

This topic is difficult. It is heavy. It is uncomfortable. But to avoid it is to do our students and our children an absolute disservice. While most school assemblies I've attended in my career have had their fair share of rambunctious, fidgety, or sleeping teenagers, this one did not. When these fathers stood up and shared their stories, our students listened. And if their willingness to turn their loss into education and legislation saves even one life, they have done more than we as educators and parents could ask for.

If you have questions about having the Fentanyl Fathers present, please reach out to me. Their mission is needed, and it is working. I encourage you to speak with Mr. Michael Gillette or one of his colleagues, hear their stories, and set a date for them to present to your students.

Thank you so much for your time,

Rachel Vitale
Director of Counseling
vitaler@gabrielrichard.org