

NICOLE HOCKLEY
Trinity Class of 1992
Doctor of Humane Letters

It is a promise made to transform tragedy into positive cultural change for a safer future and to take a public health, evidence-informed approach to address the epidemic of gun violence. This is your promise, Nicole Hockley. It is the Sandy Hook Promise.

Before December 14, 2012, you were an accomplished strategic marketing and communications professional for companies in the United States and the United Kingdom. But on that day, the course of your life changed forever when your 6-year-old son, Dylan, was killed by a gunman inside Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history, a day former President Barack Obama calls the darkest of his presidency.

You chose to transform unspeakable grief and anguish into action, when one month later, in January 2013, you co-founded Sandy Hook Promise, a national nonprofit whose mission is to prevent violence in schools, homes, and communities. Today, as the nonprofit's chief executive officer, you have become a leading national voice on school safety and gun violence prevention, rising above the political divide to help ensure a brighter tomorrow.

Your intent is to honor all victims of gun violence by turning the Sandy Hook tragedy into a moment of transformation by offering programs and policies that protect young lives. Your leadership and advocacy have led to more than 18.5 million people participating in Sandy Hook Promise's lifesaving programs, averting countless acts of violence, with more than 3,270 mental health interventions, as well as 460 suicides prevented and at least 15 planned school attacks stopped. It is true that because of Sandy Hook Promise, communities are safer and policies are stronger.

As one of America's most well-respected thought leaders on the gun violence epidemic, you have presented several TEDx Talks; your opinion editorials have been published by *Newsweek*, CNN, *USA Today*, and *InStyle*; and your commentary has been featured on CNN, MSNBC, Newsy, ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC, among countless other media outlets.

You have said that your Trinity experience, where you earned a B.A. in English and theater and dance and participated in countless extracurricular activities, has helped drive your successful career in marketing and now in your life's newest mission. There is evidence to support the claim. The award-winning public service announcement campaigns you helped co-create with BBDO New York have amassed hundreds of millions of views worldwide, including "Evan," which generated two billion impressions and 10 coveted Cannes Lions Awards, and "Back-to-School Essentials" and "Teenage Dream," each of which earned a prestigious Emmy Award for Outstanding Commercial, in 2019 and 2022, respectively.

You were honored by Trinity with its 2017 Alumni Achievement Award, with your citation noting your "courage, hard work, and selflessness." You also were recognized in 2016 by *People* magazine as one of its 25 Women Changing the World, though your motivation lies closer to home in caring for your surviving son, Jake, and through the work of Sandy Hook Promise.

In recognition of your solemn promise to honor your son Dylan and the 25 other lives taken on December 14, 2012, and of your lifesaving work to encourage and support solutions that create safer and healthier homes, schools, and communities, I have the honor of presenting you, Nicole Hockley, for the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.