



I am safe?

Safer Schools – Safer Communities

November 10th 2009

Bullying Awareness Week

November 16th – 20th 2009

Here's to the kids who are different.

The kids who don't always get A's!

The kids who have ears twice the size of their peers and noses that go on for days.

Here's to the kids who are different, the kids they call crazy or dumb,

The kids who don't fit, with guts and grit, who dance to a different drum!

Here's to the kids who are different, the kids with the mischievous streak.

For when they have grown, or history's shown,

It's the difference that makes them unique.

Digby Wolfe

We believe in shedding light on bullying throughout the year and that is why we distribute the "I am safe" newsletter on a monthly basis. Special days or weeks that draw attention to a particular cause or issue have a questionable impact. They can be overdone and overblown. They certainly crowd our calendars!

To confuse matters, municipalities and provinces have bullying awareness days and weeks at different intervals throughout the year and they generally have different names!

We have always promoted Bullying Awareness Week to coincide with National Child Day (sigh, yet another special day...but we think a very important one!) and we do it again this year with another special edition of the newsletter.

We encourage the promotion of a clear and positive message that bullying hurts. In almost all cases it can be prevented and certainly minimized in schools and communities.

Please consider doing something special throughout the week but more important – develop a sustainable year to year program that is a conjoint effort between pupils, educators, community and parents. When this is done well it beats all of the one time and often piecemeal initiatives that sometimes do more harm than good!

We also invite you to visit: www.bullyingawarenessweek.org

The following resources are designed to augment whatever else is planned in your school. – Please feel free to print and pass along to others!

Thank you

Display and Art Work

Students can contribute to a group display such as a "Helping Hands" tree with suggestions for the prevention of bullying written by individual children onto paper leaves and hung on the tree. Similar displays can be created using balloons, flowers, jigsaws or kites. The message being that we all come together to build safer, friendlier schools. Teachers can be even more creative and develop other more ideas such as a friendship quilt, mosaic, monster tee shirt, or a clothes line from one hallway to another.

Posters can be a powerful way for student expression. Teachers will get more effective results if they have discussed bullying in depth and helped students think about feelings and consequences relating to bullying.

Creative writing and poetry will also produce good stimuli for artwork. Try to encourage students to focus on positive themes such as celebrating differences, looking after each other, ways to stay safe. One school we know ran a contest with the theme of "5 ways to build a safer friendlier school" with the winners being showcased on the school website and cards produced to go to parents.

Students may also use digital cameras to create photo storyboards on a bullying theme and add dialogues in speech bubbles. They can also use Powerpoint™ or similar slideshow software to make creative or informative presentations.

Students can create a design for a school flag or create a school bulletin/graffiti board that lists the items, influences and forces that have a hurtful impact on children and youth.

Survey

Bullying Awareness Week is a good time to launch a survey to find out what students think and feel about bullying in school and equally importantly what they think they could do about it. Schools can use the findings as a baseline and repeat the survey every 12 months to evaluate. There are many short surveys (4 questions) to very long (3 page) questionnaire template that are available for download – contact us and we will pass along the links.

Classroom Projects

Students are asked to respond in writing to the following question: "How would you like to be treated in this class—by me as the teacher and by everyone else?" After students discuss their answers the teacher asks, "How do you think you should treat everyone else in the room?" This provides an excellent link into a discussion on reciprocity and empathy.

Students are asked to write a letter to the Editor of the local newspaper or the Mayor on the importance and value of building safe and friendly cities and one way that they would enhance the safety of their community. The letters are reviewed by a joint panel of students and teachers and the best forwarded – with the consent of parents.

Students can write and record their own Public Service Announcement for morning announcements.

Using the word **RESPECT** each class can be asked to produce words starting with each of the first letters that best exemplify school spirit.

R is for Relationships that are based on....

E is for Empathy a word that means....

S is for Sharing a special part of you're...

Other words to use: Tolerance – Diversity – Justice.

School newsletter/magazine/Ezine

The school's newsletter can be a compelling way to convey information about the way in which bullying is addressed. We like the idea of a magazine that is produced by students - one that includes personal stories, poems, cartoons and artwork about the effects of bullying as well as accounts of the school's anti-bullying initiatives. It could include the following sections:

- Why we've decided to produce the magazine
- Student rights and responsibilities
- The causes of bullying and how it can impact on students, teachers and the school
- Cyber bullying and social bullying
- What we're doing to reduce bullying.

School Creed

Each student can be provided with a copy of the statement below and asked to create a blueprint or idea of a creative medium for the message to be best profiled or communicated (sculpture, photograph, cartoon, poster, painting). The most creative idea will then be developed and the final product displayed in the school lobby. Schools may wish to come up with their own draft creed or covenant.

Our School Creed

Take care of yourself
Take care of others
Take care of this place.

Recess

The school yard is a common site for bullying to take place and a good start to Bullying Awareness Week programming. The school might want to work on making recess safer and more enjoyable for all by introducing new games to encourage children to play together. This could include the development of a compendium of games from different cultures or in different languages. This might also be followed by a survey of the school grounds to determine the 'hotspots' for bullying and other misbehaviors. Where do students feel safe / unsafe? Why? How could these areas be improved?

Drama

The script for the 20 min play **"You're Not the Boss of Me"** is available for sixty five dollars plus mailing charges and by contacting us at kidscan@sympatico.ca . The play features a group of teens dealing with incidents of bullying and harassment – it is suitable for grades five and up! The script is also an excellent resource as a reading exercise and catalyst for discussion. It even comes with a resource manual.

Ideas/Activities from Students

The following suggestions come from a focus group comprised of a group of 10 students aged 11 – 16 yrs:

- Review fairy tales that are violent, discuss and then re-write
- Search the Internet for stories relating to cyber bullying
- Make bookmarks with messages relating to bullying prevention
- Conduct a ribbon campaign
- Ask students to design an anti bullying button.

“Paper Clips”

Canadian Educators can go to the documentary section of their local Blockbusters store and rent this inspirational video. It will have a profound impact on teachers and students alike! Whitwell, TN is a small, rural community of less than two thousand people nestled in the mountains of Tennessee. Its citizens are almost exclusively white and Christian. In 1998, the children of Whitwell Middle School took on an inspiring project, launched out of their principal's desire to help her students open their eyes to the diversity of the world beyond their insulated valley. What happened would change the students, their teachers, their families and the entire town forever... and eventually open hearts and minds around the world. Check out the website: <http://bit.ly/LaLQe>

“Nineteen Minutes”

This is not a lesson plan for students but an emotionally charged novel that delves beneath the surface of a small town to explore what it means to be different in our society. It is all about the verbal and physical abuse of a 17 year old student and strongly recommended for all those working (and living) with youth. Rich with psychological and social insight, Nineteen Minutes is a riveting, poignant, and thought-provoking novel available in paperback and at most local libraries. Visit Jodi Picoult's website for more: <http://bit.ly/iNj5u>

“The Hundred Dresses”

The Hundred Dresses is a children's book by Eleanor Estes and a story about Maddie, a girl who, out of fear of being targeted by bullies herself, fails to protect a friend named Wanda from bullying. Wanda has only one shabby dress which she wears every day, but she repeatedly tells the other girls that at home she has “a hundred dresses all lined up” This only makes the other girls bully and ostracize her more. Eventually, Wanda's family moves far away from the abuse and the story takes an important twist when it is revealed that Wanda's “hundred dresses” are beautiful drawings she has made of dresses. The Hundred Dresses shows the difficult path by which a young girl comes to terms with her own responsibility for bullying. Maddie undergoes a process of moral development as she realizes that she was one of the girls who forced Wanda to move away, and that she will never have an opportunity to make amends. Instead, Maddie resolves that she must not let such a thing happen ever again.

School Ethos Evaluation

“What does this school look and feel like? This is a question that is not often asked of teachers and rarely, if ever, of students. And yet the school ethos is fundamental to the incidence of bullying and harassment. Ask students to draw or write about what a school with a poor ethos and anti-bullying policy looks like in terms of environment, communication, relationships, teaching, pastoral care, etc. What would they hear, see, feel, experience? For younger children ask them to draw or tell you ‘what a school looks like that is not a safe and happy place to learn and play’. For example: smelly washrooms with no locks; hidden corners in the school yard, teachers and students do not listen to each other, students told not to ‘tell tales’; long lists of rules beginning with ‘Don’t’; teachers ignore students treating one another badly, lessons involve teachers talking to students rather than asking them what they think; teachers don’t involve students in assessing their work. Teachers can ask students to identify three things that they can have some control or influence over and some responsibility for, and what could they do to make things better. The results of this activity could also be used by a school council addressing bullying issues. The outcomes from this activity could be shared and discussed at a school assembly.

“Don’t Laugh at Me” (Song)

Allen: Shamblin and Steve Seskin

<http://bit.ly/RQ36oex.php>

I'm a little boy with glasses, the one they call a
geek - a little girl who never smiles cuz I got
braces on my teeth - and I know how it feels to
cry myself to sleep.

I am that kid on every playground, who's always
chosen last - a single teenage mother trying to
overcome her past. You don't have to be my
friend if it's too much to ask.

Don't laugh at me, don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain
In God's eyes we're all the same some day we'll
all have perfect Wings
Don't laugh at me.

I'm a cripple on the corner
You pass me on the street
I wouldn't be out here begging if I had enough to
Eat and don't think I don't notice that our eyes
never meet.

I lost my wife and little boy when someone
crossed that yellow line
The day we layed'em in the ground was the day I
lost my mind. Right now I'm down to holding
this little cardboard sign.

Don't laugh at me, Don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain
In God's eyes we're all the same
Someday we'll all have perfect wings
Don't laugh at me.

I'm Fat, I'm thin
I'm Short, I'm tall
I'm deaf, I'm blind
Hey aren't we all
Don't laugh at me, Don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain
In God's eyes we're all the same
Someday we'll all have perfect wings
Don't laugh at me.

Suggested Videos

United

The award winning film depicts an inner-city kid
with a heart for basketball who is confronted by a
gang of bullies and has to fight for his right to
play. The video was created with a crew that
consisted mostly of teenagers and pre-teens.

www.txfilms.com/uniteddonation.asp

Apples and Oranges

'It's Not Cool to be Cruel' is the theme song in
Apples and Oranges, a film that addresses name-
calling, homophobia, and stereotyping. Designed
for Grades 4-8, this film is an ideal discussion
starter to teach children about the negative effects
of certain words and bullying behaviour.

www.nfb.ca

It's a Girl's World

This three-part exceptional CBC documentary
examines the sometimes hidden problem of
bullying between girls, as well as the tumultuous
nature of female relationships from girlhood to
adulthood.

www.cbclearning.ca



Suggested Website

PREVNet

PREVNet is a coalition of Canadian professionals concerned about bullying. Their primary goal is to translate and exchange knowledge about bullying to enhance awareness, provide assessment/ intervention tools, and promote policy.

www.prevnet.ca

Suggested Reading for Teachers

Bullied Teacher: Bullied Student

Parsons, Lee, 2004, Pembroke Press

www.pembrokepublishers.com

And Words Can Hurt Forever

Garbarino, James. and Delara, Ellen. Free Press
Katz, M. 2003

The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander

Coloroso, Barbara CollinsDavis, S. 2005

Stop the Bullying: A Handbook for Schools

Rigby, Ken. Markham, ON: Pembroke
Publishers, 2001

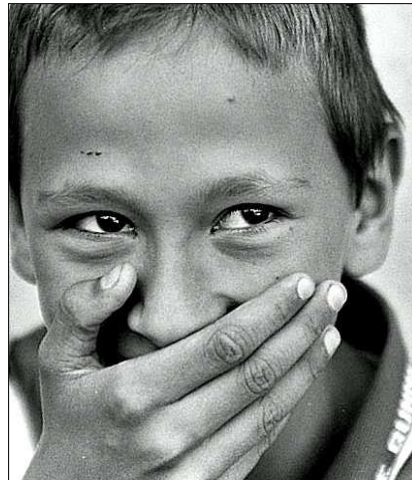
Note:

Every week we distribute *BUZZ* a short one page complementary newsletter relating to child & youth issues.

The newsletter currently goes to 900 subscribers in across Canada.

We have added a copy of the latest newsletter overleaf and we invite you to check it out!

If you wish to subscribe please contact us at kidscan@sympatico.ca



ABOUT US –

In 2002 we coordinated Canada's first national conference on bullying and went on to present yet another in 2005 and again in 2007. We also write and promote productions such as 'You're Not the Boss of Me', a play about bullying which has been featured in various parts of Canada; and we were the driving force in the development of the Ottawa Anti Bullying Coalition (OABC). Our youth built website can be found here:

You can contact us at: info@iamsafe.ca

Buzz!

November 5th 2009

Canadians coming together from key constituencies and across generations to improve the lives and prospects of children and youth

Research: Two New Studies Released by Vanier Institute of the Family

Two studies released this past week by The Vanier Institute of the Family say Canadian cities, in many ways, are failing to meet the needs of their youngest citizens. The reports raise critical questions about the impact of urban design and development on the health and safety of children and youth. The papers make the case that we would all benefit if youth figured more prominently in the urban planning process.

Item 1: <http://bit.ly/2Z7boW>

Item 2: <http://bit.ly/VLAwm>

Profile: UK Childrens Commissioner Sir Al Aynsley-Green

"... Whether it's possible for anybody to cope with a job that combines the responsibility to speak for 11 million people with so little real power remains to be seen". Fascinating article on the failures and successes of the UK's first Children's Commissioner.

<http://bit.ly/YnOLI>

Video: The Michael Palin centre for stammering children

Stammering is one of the most common speech disorders, but recent research shows that many teachers don't know how to deal with it – something the Michael Palin centre aims to change. Here children at the centre explain what it is like to live with a stammer in the classroom.

We love this series of short videos: <http://bit.ly/xjsRw>

Report: Creating a Province of Choice - A Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy..."

Bravo Newfoundland & Labrador for two exceptional reports that walk the talk when it comes to youth engagement. Time for other provinces to follow the lead!

Reports: <http://ow.ly/zAVm> - <http://ow.ly/zAVm>

Article: Youth Voices:

The Top 10 Problems with the Internet According to Youth <http://ow.ly/yEhF>

News: From the "Can't see it Happening anytime soon in Canada" Department

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown has appointed Dawn Butler to the new role of Minister for Young Citizens and Youth Engagement.

You can reach us at: Beyondtwenty20@gmail.co or kidscan@sympatico.ca