

The Bully Project

A community service of Book Workshop, Inc.

1501 E. Orangethorpe Avenue, Suite 130, Fullerton, California 92831

Phone (714) 525-0882 FAX (714) 879-7156 Website www.BullySurvey.com

April 25, 2008

Dear Education Leader,

Did you know *160,000 students a day* miss school due to bullying? That is nearly 30 million absences a year in our nation's schools. With school budgets based on average daily attendance, bullying is a \$2 billion dollar drain on school budgets. When every penny counts, would it help if your school reduced absenteeism?

I am a parent, business owner, and community member concerned with educational outcomes in the area we serve.

Last year I received the proverbial wake up call. I had jury duty on a gang shooting trial. The teens involved participated in a rolling car-to-car gun battle down residential streets. Afterwards, I asked myself where does the violence start? And when can the community intervene to end it?

My client base includes two criminal psychologists, a psychology professor, other mental health and law enforcement professional, and a dear friend is the director of a local Boys and Girls Club. I started asking questions about the causes of youth violence. One criminal profiler told me that everyone she profiles is a bully whose behavior continued to escalate. It also appears that one of the indicators for gangs is bullying. I would like to partner with the education community to identify behaviors that leads to bullying in school aged children.

Stories of cyber bullying that lead to a teen suicide, teenage girls severely beating a Florida classmate in a misguided attempt for MySpace fame, and other headline grabbing stories kept my attention this year. I don't know whether or not there is a dangerous trend developing—or whether the media has latched onto a topic where so little is actually known that it is easy to sensationalize the headlines.

I think it is important to start a dialog with educators, parents, community leaders, and our children to help alleviate the psychological and social burden of bully behavior. I hope we can work together to accomplish this goal.

Here is what Book Workshop will do to start the process. First, we've designed an anonymous survey that can be taken online. While it is not a scientific study of bullying, with enough participation it can be a statistically significant representation of what students experience. The survey can be taken by anyone, but we will be reviewing the findings for grades 3-6 first, and then reviewing other population segments over the course of the 2008-2009 academic year. Teachers and parents can take the survey as well. We will be collecting data from May 1-31, 2008. We will make the survey results available to participating schools in Fall of 2008.

Next, we have developed a lesson plan for students to write about and share their bullying experiences. This is an opportunity to create a mechanism for students to share their experiences. Children who have been victims of bullies will have an opportunity to learn that they are not alone. Bullies will have an opportunity to hear how their actions affect those around them, and to discuss the conditions that lead to their behavior choices. Perhaps starting a peer-to-peer discussion will help teach our children why bullying is so hurtful that both victims and bullies pay an emotional toll their whole life.

Book Workshop would like to share the best written examples of these stories with the community-at-large. Teachers have an opportunity to forward exceptional stories for inclusion in a newspaper style publication to share with their students next year. Students can take the newspaper home to share with their parents, siblings and others who can help monitor and support behavioral changes to end bullying and the long-term effects.

Finally, we will establish free online tools for parents, students and teachers on the latest news on this issue. We will include bulletin boards and other communication tools to continue the online dialogs.

This is our way of giving back to the community. We hope that our time, talent, and treasure will be a long term investment in our youth. I am anxious to hear how you feel about this project, and I hope you will partner with us to help reduce the toll of bullying. Please contact me with any questions you may have. I can be reached at 714-525-0882, or e-mail Teresa@MyBookWorkshop.com.

Sincerely,



Teresa Trujillo
President

The Bully Project

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This form must be completed and sent with submission. Entry Deadline is June 15, 2008

Submission Form

Student's Name _____ Grade Level _____

Teacher's Name _____ Teacher's Signature _____

Principal's Name _____ Principal's Signature _____

School Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

School Phone Number _____

School Contact e-Mail _____

PARENT'S ENDORSEMENT AND ASSIGNMENT OF PUBLICATION RIGHTS

I _____, parent of the above named student, hereby agree to enter my minor child's writing sample in the Bully Survey writing contest sponsored by Book Workshop, Inc (BWI). All submissions become the property of BWI and I understand that the submission material will not be returned. I understand that that my child's work may be selected for publication in a newsletter and distributed to classrooms who participate in the Bully Survey program. I have seen my child's writing and agree that it should be submitted to this judged writing competition. If my child's work is accepted for publication he or she will be compensated with a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond. I am assigning the rights to publish this work for one issue of the newsletter during the 2008-2009 academic year. All publication rights will be returned to the author, my minor child, after one print publication of the work and a corresponding electronic posting to Bully Survey and Book Workshop websites.

Parent's Name _____ Parent's Signature _____ date _____

Parent's Contact Number _____

Parent's e-Mail Address _____

All additional contacts for the contest will be handled through the submitting student's school. Notification of selected writers will be made to the principal and/or teacher listed above. An electronic copy of the winning submissions will be required at the time of notification of winners and must be in the possession of the teacher or principal, who will forward the work to Book Workshop. The child will not be contacted directly by Book Workshop or any representative of Book Workshop. All decisions are at the sole discretion of Book Workshop, Inc. All participating classrooms will receive a classroom pack of Bully Project newsletters and study material.

All submissions must be accompanied by a \$20 entry fee and a hard copy of the submission.

Entry fee check made payable to: Book Workshop, Inc.

Mail Entry to: 1501 E. Orangethorpe Ave., Suite 130

Fullerton, CA 92831

Bullying

No. 80; March 2001

Bullying is a common experience for many children and adolescents. Surveys indicate that as many as half of all children are bullied at some time during their school years, and at least 10% are bullied on a regular basis.

Bullying behavior can be physical or verbal. Boys tend to use physical intimidation or threats, regardless of the gender of their victims. Bullying by girls is more often verbal, usually with another girl as the target. Recently, bullying has even been reported in online chat rooms and through e-mail.

Children who are bullied experience real suffering that can interfere with their social and emotional development, as well as their school performance. Some victims of bullying have even attempted suicide rather than continue to endure such harassment and punishment.

Children and adolescents who bully thrive on controlling or dominating others. They have often been the victims of physical abuse or bullying themselves. Bullies may also be depressed, angry or upset about events at school or at home. Children targeted by bullies also tend to fit a particular profile. Bullies often choose children who are passive, easily intimidated, or have few friends. Victims may also be smaller or younger, and have a harder time defending themselves.

If you suspect your child is bullying others, it's important to seek help for him or her as soon as possible. Without intervention, bullying can lead to serious academic, social, emotional and legal difficulties. Talk to your child's pediatrician, teacher, principal, school counselor, or family physician. If the bullying continues, a comprehensive evaluation by a child and adolescent psychiatrist or other mental health professional should be arranged. The evaluation can help you and your child understand what is causing the bullying, and help you develop a plan to stop the destructive behavior.

If you suspect your child may be the victim of bullying ask him or her to tell you what's going on. You can help by providing lots of opportunities to talk with you in an open and honest way.

It's also important to respond in a positive and accepting manner. Let your child know it's not his or her fault, and that he or she did the right thing by telling you. Other specific suggestions include the following:

- Ask your child what he or she thinks should be done. What's already been tried? What worked and what didn't?
- Seek help from your child's teacher or the school guidance counselor. Most bullying occurs on playgrounds, in lunchrooms, and bathrooms, on school buses or in unsupervised halls. Ask the school administrators to find out about programs other

schools and communities have used to help combat bullying, such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, and anger management training, and increased adult supervision.

- Don't encourage your child to fight back. Instead, suggest that he or she try walking away to avoid the bully, or that they seek help from a teacher, coach, or other adult.
- Help your child practice what to say to the bully so he or she will be prepared the next time.
- Help your child practice being assertive. The simple act of insisting that the bully leave him alone may have a surprising effect. Explain to your child that the bully's true goal is to get a response.
- Encourage your child to be with friends when traveling back and forth from school, during shopping trips, or on other outings. Bullies are less likely to pick on a child in a group.

If your child becomes withdrawn, depressed or reluctant to go to school, or if you see a decline in school performance, additional consultation or intervention may be required. A child and adolescent psychiatrist or other mental health professional can help your child and family and the school develop a strategy to deal with the bullying. Seeking professional assistance earlier can lessen the risk of lasting emotional consequences for your child.

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If you find *Facts for Families*© helpful and would like to make good mental health a reality for all children, please consider donating to the Campaign for America's Kids. Your support will help us continue to produce and distribute *Facts for Families*, as well as other vital mental health information, free of charge.

You may also mail in your contribution. Please make checks payable to the AACAP and send to Campaign for America's Kids, P.O. Box 96106, Washington, DC 20090.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) represents over 7,500 child and adolescent psychiatrists who are physicians with at least five years of additional training beyond medical school in general (adult) and child and adolescent psychiatry.

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Available on the internet at http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/bullying

The Bullying Project



Bullying is a common occurrence in childhood. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry estimates that 50% of all children experience bullying at some time, and 10% of all children are regularly bullied. Book Workshop, Inc. wants to help shed some light on the effects of bullying by encouraging students to write short stories, personal essays or news-style stories exploring the topic of bullying. The most illustrative stories will be collected into an anthology and made available for classroom use and retail sales.

"I hope to find some thought provoking and enlightening young writers who want to explore bullying," explained Book Workshop President Teresa Trujillo. "Each year we hear frightening news accounts that illustrate the extreme childhood bullying that results tragedy, but there are many stories to tell. I hope by exploring the topic and emotions with young writers they will have a forum for sharing and healing."

Bullying can take many forms. It can be physical, verbal, or delivered over the internet. Cyber-bullying made headlines last year when a parent of a young girl started an online cyber-bullying online dialog with her daughter's friend that led to a young girl's tragic suicide. Bullying has been cited as a cause in school shootings and other schoolyard violence.

"I would like to help break the cycle of bullying and violence in our schools," Trujillo said.

The project is designed to provide a safe platform for exploring the causes and effects of bullying and youth violence. Writers are given the opportunity to participate and receive a byline on their contribution, or they can contribute a story and be given a pseudonym for publication. Students whose stories are selected for publication will receive a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond.

Educators and students interested in participating in the Bullying Project can contact Trujillo at (714) 525-0882, or visit the Book Workshop website at www.MyBookWorkshop.com.



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Lesson Plan

1. Read the Bullying Fact Sheet from the The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)
2. Tell a personal story about your experience with a bully, or read Teresa's story about her experience with a bully.
3. Ask students to share stories of bullying that they have observed or experienced. As they tell you their stories, point out different kinds of bullying behaviors such as hitting, ridiculing, excluding from a group, damaging property, or threats.
4. Ask the student to tell you what they would do if they were the victim of a bully.
5. Ask students what they should do if someone they know becomes a bully.
6. Share the *How to Handle a Bully* information from Psychology Today Magazine Sep/Oct 1995.
6. Have students write personal essays or short stories with a bullying theme. Let them choose the genre for their work.
7. Submit the best piece of writing from your class for the Bullying Project classroom newsletter project. If the story from your class is chosen to appear the student will be awarded a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond.

The Writing Project

Here are some issues that students might like to explore in their writing.

1. Who do you know that is a bully?
2. What do bullies do?
3. What is the worst thing that you have seen a bully do?
4. What is the worst thing that you have done that could be considered bullying?
5. Can someone we love be a bully? What about an authority figure, parent, friend, or sibling?
6. How do bullies hurt others?
7. How do bullies hurt the community?
8. What can happen to kids who are bullied a lot?
9. Why would someone become a bully?
10. What should someone who is bullied do to stop the bully?
11. What would you do if you saw someone being bullied? Who should you go to?
12. Where do bullies do their bad deeds? Do they do them in front of adults?

Teresa's Story

By Teresa Trujillo
President
Book Workshop

My name is Teresa. I'm an adult now, but I still remember how I felt when I moved to a new school and became the target of a group of mean girls.

We moved to a big new house just before I started the sixth grade. The new house meant that I had to go to a new school and make new friends. We moved because I had a new baby sister and our old house wasn't big enough for our family. The new house was a very long way from our old neighborhood. It meant that I would not be able to see my friends. I was happy for my new house and my baby sister and sad to move so far away.

I was excited to start the new school on the first day of the sixth grade. We moved from a neighborhood where most of my friends' parents work in airplane factories to a neighborhood where a lot of doctors, lawyers and business people lived with their families. My father was a construction worker who built skyscrapers and big factory buildings.

My mother took us shopping for new school clothes just like any other school year. I had pretty new things on the first day of school. I liked my new clothes, but some of the girls at the new school didn't like how I dressed. Some of them didn't like my red hair. And some of them didn't like that I was the tallest person in the class. I looked different than everyone else. They had long blonde or brown hair.

A girl named Laura decided that she would be mean to me. She would walk by my desk and pull my hair. She made fun of my new clothes. She threw milk on me. And she called me names so the other kids would laugh at my red hair and freckles. She told the other girls not to be my friend. I used to go home and cry because I was teased.

Laura and her friends found out my father worked outside and got very dirty at his job. He also drove a pick-up truck to work. Their fathers all wore business suits and drove fancy cars. Laura told me that the girls at school would not be my friend because my father got dirty at his job. I love my father very much and this was very hurtful. I cried because the girls were mean to me. and now they were making fun of my dad.

My parents knew I was sad and my mother went to

talk to the teacher about how I was doing at my new school. My grades were very good, but the teacher told my mother that I didn't have any friends at school. The teacher knew that the other girls were making fun of me and ostracizing me on the playground. The teacher didn't think there was anything she could do about the mean girls. When I was a young girl most of the adults thought that children should be allowed to work their problems out. So the teacher did nothing.

One day the school called my mom to tell her I had been in a fight on the playground. Laura had pushed me to the ground while I was waiting in line to play handball. But, this time I didn't stay down on the ground or go to the bathroom to clean-up my scraped knees.

I was angry. The school year was almost over, and she still wanted to humiliate me in front of the other kids at school. This time I got up off of the ground and punched Laura in the eye. This time Laura was the one who was crying.

The teacher called my mom to school because I was in trouble for fighting with Laura. But, my mom was mad at the teacher for not defending me from the classroom bully during the year. The teacher had known that Laura was hitting me and pulling my hair, but Laura hadn't been in trouble or had to stay after school and have a meeting with her parent. Why was Laura being treated differently than I was?

I was asked to leave the room while my mother and the teacher talked. But, I could hear what they were saying outside the door.

The teacher told my mother that Laura's mother was very sick and not going to live much longer. Laura had been sad all year, and she wanted to make other people as sad as she was.

The school was not going to call Laura's mother or father to discuss this because Laura had a big black eye to show for the fight.



The teacher had sent a note home with her to explain that Laura had started the fight and had been a classroom bully for the entire year.

The adults decided that I was not going to be punished for trying to defend myself from a bully. I did get a lecture on why I should not have hit someone else—even if I was provoked into a fight.

Laura and I had to stand in front of the class and apologize for our fight. This was the last time that Laura did anything to me.

Laura's mother died when we were in junior high and we became friends in high school.

A lot has changed in the 35 years since this took place. Teachers have been trained how to handle school bullies better. If the same thing happened today Laura

would have been removed from the classroom for hitting me because most schools have very strict, sometimes zero tolerance, rules for striking another student.

I learned to stand-up for myself. I learned to be more independent and not worry about what other people thought about how I looked and what I wore. I worked hard in school and became successful. People actually liked me. I was the managing editor of my high school newspaper. I was elected student body president in college. I've had a successful career as an adult, and now I own my own business.

It is important to learn that being bullied is something that happens to us when we are young and vulnerable. But, it helped me grow stronger.

Sign-up for the Bully Project

To submit writing for the Bully Project competition and published newspaper visit the Bully Project website for details. There is a nominal submission fee of \$20 per submission to encourage teachers to submit only the highest quality writing. All classrooms submitting material will receive a classroom pack of newspapers in October 2008.

Submissions must be submitted by a classroom teacher and contain the following materials:

- A submission form signed by the student's parents, the classroom teacher, and school principal.
- An e-mail contact for the teacher that the teacher will use during the Summer.

This will be to contact the teacher of selected works for an electronic copy of the submission when the final choices have been made.

- The submission fee.
- Only one submission per classroom.
- The entries chosen for publication will receive a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond.
- Submission forms and information can be found at www.BullySurvey.com

Each participating classroom will receive a 30 pack of the published stories.

More information at www.BullySurvey.com