

Bullying Prevention Initiative

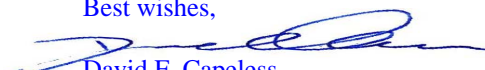
A Program of Community Outreach and Education

Educator News

Dear Educator:

On May 3, 2010, Governor Patrick signed into law comprehensive legislation to address bullying in public and non-public schools. Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, *An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*, requires school leaders to work together with stakeholders to create and implement strategies to prevent bullying and to address bullying promptly and effectively when it occurs. The bullying prevention and intervention plan must include age appropriate instruction on bullying prevention that is incorporated into the curriculum of the school district, and I am pleased to be able to offer education and training programs that support schools to meet the mandates of the law. State and Federal grants have enabled my staff to receive training on the most researched and innovative approaches to bullying prevention. This newsletter is a vehicle to pass this information on current trends to the educators of Berkshire County. I hope you find this resource a helpful tool in promoting positive behavior. I encourage you to contact my staff with your ideas and feedback, so that we may continue to work together for the health and safety of the children in our lives.

Best wishes,


David F. Capeless
Berkshire District Attorney

National Conference on Bullying: School Safety Advocacy Council



In February, District Attorney's staff members Carol Mulcahy, Cheryl Penna, Kim Blair and Robert Kinzer attended the National Conference on Bullying presented by the School Safety Advocacy Council.

The three day conference featured nationally recognized speakers who addressed topics covering

such as Using Digital Literacy to Combat Bullying, Bullying—What Are the Trends Telling Us?, Cyberbullying, The Reality TV Generation and Liability 101. The conference also showcased a variety of successful school prevention efforts from across the country.

The keynote presentation was delivered by former Assistant Deputy Secretary of Education Kevin Jennings, who headed the department's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and led the Obama Administration's Anti-Bullying Initiative.

In 1990 Mr. Jennings founded the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Educa-

tion Network (GLSEN), a national education organization bringing together lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and straight teachers, parents, students, and community members who wanted to end anti-LGBT bias in our schools. He is currently the CEO of [Be the Change, Inc.](http://www.bechange.org), a nonprofit that creates national issue-based campaigns on pressing problems in American society.

To learn more about the conference and download the speakers' Power Points or notes, go to: <http://www.schoolsafety911.org/event05.html>

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Responding to Hate Speech

Recently some disturbing incidents of hate speech have been occurring locally, by both youth and adults. How do we address it as a community?

Stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, bias, and hate are part of a broad continuum of behavior. Along that continuum are a number of negative behaviors, including bullying, threats, exclusion, harassment, bias-motivated behavior, and hate-motivated violence.

To successfully interrupt this continuum, children, at as young an age as possible, must have opportunities to practice pro-social attitudes and behaviors, learn about themselves and others, and develop nonviolent responses to conflict.

As educators you have a particularly influential role in juvenile attitudes and behavior related to bias and hate. For elementary and middle school guides go to: <http://www.partnersagainsthate.org>

Upcoming Events:

With a goal of making an impact in the community, the *Hoop Club Hall of Fame*, *Pittsfield Public Schools*, and *Pittsfield Prevention Partnership* have teamed up to bring Chris Herren to the Berkshires to share the story of his career, path of addiction, eventual redemption, and personal fulfillment.

Thursday, April 12th

Pittsfield Boys & Girls Club, 7 PM
Free & open to the public, all ages

For more information regarding Chris Herren, the book *"Basketball Junkie"*, or the ESPN Films Documentary *"Unguarded"*, visit www.ahoopdream.com

The Bully Project, A Documentary. The rating controversy . . .



Directed by Sundance and Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Lee Hirsch, **BULLY** is a character-driven documentary—at its heart are those with the most at stake and whose stories each represent a different facet of this bullying crisis.

While the stories examine the dire consequences of bullying, they also give testimony to the courage and strength of the victims of bullying and seek to inspire real changes in the way we deal with bullying as parents, teachers, children, and in society as a whole. Through the power of these stories, **BULLY** aims to be a catalyst for change and to turn the tide on

an epidemic of violence that has touched every community in the United States—and far beyond.

The non-profit Facing History and Ourselves has worked with the creators of **BULLY** to craft a guide that can help adult and student audiences confront the stories told in the film and explore their meaning and resonance for their schools and wider communities.

Here is the link to the FREE guide: <http://thebullyproject.com/#/educators>

The film has initially been rated “R” by the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) due to “language”. That rating will rob many teenagers of the chance to view a film that could change their lives, and help reduce violence in schools. Please take a moment to visit the movie’s

site and click on the link to sign the petition to reduce this rating to PG-13.

The film is set to be released theatrically March 30. Go to the website and remember to sign the petition to reduce the rating to PG-13.

<http://thebullyproject.com>



Use Your Voice to Bring the Bully Movie to Berkshire County!

You have the chance to play a hand in which cities will get this movie. The top 10 vote getters will be the lucky winners.

To vote to bring the movie here (Pittsfield is the selected Berkshire County City), follow this link: <http://movies.eventful.com/competitions/bully2012>



Bully Demand Competition | Eventful
movies.eventful.com

Bring Bully to your city and join the movement! The top 10 cities with the most demands will get the film. It's time to take a stand. Watch the trailer and Demand it!

What is the Best Means of Anonymous Reporting?

An old fashioned shoe-box wrapped in construction paper marked with the words Bullying Report Box, a downloadable PDF on your website and in the office, a dedicated landline with a voicemail or a texting service that alerts an administrator and maybe a few other staff members. Which avenue is the most effective to encourage students to report bullying incidents?

This is a good question, as each school is unique, but one thing is for sure . . . kids don't often tell. The statistics of youth who report bullying to an adult are low.



Is this working?

Maybe they feel that there is no real anonymity. Students don't want to be seen going to the counselors' office or putting a form in a drop box. They also want to know that someone is listening. Tip-lines and online forms do not provide any reassurance that the problem is being addressed.

A few companies are on the path to bring these anonymous reporting systems to the technology that kids are using. Today's students live online—students use text messaging to talk to one another and they are more likely to report issues if they can use the same method.

A number of companies have come up with two-way communication services with various contact points.

Here are three new ones to check out:



CaresAbout.us™
Anonymous Communication System

CaresAbout.us™
helps students to feel

comfortable communicating with their school staff members so they can seek the assistance that they need.

<http://caresabout.us/index.php>



Talk About It® allows faculty to meet students where they are—online and with text messaging—to help solve issues.

<http://talk.schoolmessenger.com/>



uTip™ combines technology with psychology to deter and decrease bullying at school.

<http://bully-buster.com>

Born This Way Foundation . . . A Movement

Cynthia Germanotta and her daughter Lady Gaga launched their new initiative to empower youth: the [Born This Way Foundation](#). The Foundation wants to create a kinder, braver world so that youth can be the change-agents that we all need them to be.

For youth to be empowered, the Foundation recognizes that

1. youth need to be safe;
2. youth need to have skills;
3. youth need to have opportunities.

Not only did they hold the launch at Harvard, they worked closely with leading researchers, practitioners and

most importantly youth. At first they'll be focusing a lot of their efforts on anti-bullying in the early stages, but the foundation's overall mission is:

"empowering youth & inspiring bravery"

They believe if young people felt empowered to make a difference and experienced the bravery of self-confidence and of knowing they can achieve great things, not only would we address the issue of bully-

ing, but we would also lay the tracks for transformative change that fosters the ultimate goal of a kinder and braver world.

Take the time to learn more about this "movement" and encourage others to do the same, especially youth.

Born This Way Foundation website:

<http://bornthiswayfoundation.org>

BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION
EMPOWERING YOUTH · INSPIRING BRAVERY ·

More Gaga . . . a Professional Critique of the Born This Way Foundation



Dr. Sameer Hinduja, the Co-Director of the Cyberbullying Research Center, recently attended the Born This Way Foundation Launch and led a discussion with attending professionals. He

wrote about this recently on his website blog. His task at the symposium was to help lead the [School Climate/Culture](#) stream (there were five other streams: Classroom-Based Curricula, Curricula as Campaign for a Networked Age, Evaluation and Assessment, Grassroots and Peer-Driven Initiatives, and Law and Policy).

Dr. Hinduja's REFLECTIONS:

1. Schools do not operate in a vacuum, but are rather embedded in a culture and society. Therefore, any focus on schools alone is limited. The shift needs to occur in culture and civil society, both from the top down (institutionally) and from the bottom up (grassroots).
2. Bullying is not an isolated youth phenomenon. Aggressive, prejudiced, and mean behavior is common among adults as well. Therefore, any solution to meanness and cruelty must confront these problems across demographics and while keeping in mind their causes (e.g., prejudice). Such a solution precludes adult-driven, vertical reflections and interventions that do not engage youth. As such,

young people can contribute to these reflections, as they offer perspective and experience not available to adults.

3. Traditionally, students in schools are often grouped as "successful," "lost causes," "athletes," "geeks," "outsiders," and so forth. Reinforcing these often artificial categories limits both young people's identities and our imagination when it comes to interventions. For example, zero-tolerance policies classify rule-breakers as "bad kids" incompatible with the school. Schools should encourage and build structures that lead to cross-interaction between groups and micro-cultures. For example, low-achieving students working with high-achieving peers begin to adopt better behavior. This is likewise true when it comes to social exposure (e.g., Gay-Straight Alliances).
4. Successful programs out there are diverse but share some characteristics including:
 - youth involvement in agenda-setting, implementation, and evaluation;
 - sustained and more meaningful parent involvement;
 - investment by teachers, administrators, districts, and community, especially in terms of funding;
 - attention to students' social success as well as academic, moving away from narrow attention to academic standards;
 - direct interventions for particularly at-risk groups blended with school cli-



www.cyberbullying.us—The **Cyberbullying Research Center** serves as a clearinghouse of information concerning the ways adolescents use and misuse technology. It is intended to be a resource for parents, educators, law enforcement officers, counselors, and others who work with youth.

mate initiatives (paying attention to the vast majority who are doing fine, while also "catching" the 5% at high risk through personal interventions).

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. Prevention and intervention needs to begin at the youngest ages.
2. Training for the change-makers (teachers, students, community) should be undertaken strategically with express attention to cruelty and meanness.
3. Supporting collaborative campaigns that harness youth collective power along with untapped resources, such as policy or even celebrity (this is where Lady Gaga can have a huge impact).

To read more about Cross-Stream Collaboration and Big Picture Ideas, here is the link:

<http://cyberbullying.us/blog/lady-gagas-born-this-way-foundation-launch-and-school-climate.html>

Free and Low Cost Education



Bullying Academy is a web-based interactive program for 4th through 8th grade.

The program was created to help students and educators recognize the dangers of bullying and cyberbullying. The primary emphasis is to inform students of preventative measures related to bullying as well as to develop effective communication strategies. The program generates data, which can be compared by class, school, or district in an effort to monitor effectiveness of bullying prevention education.

There are Student, Educator and Parent links to appropriate materials. And the program is **FREE** for schools through the 2011-12 school year. There is still time to participate. There are 5 steps involved:

1. Register your school
2. Students register/obtain username and password
3. Students take Pre-Quiz
4. Students complete 4 bullying lessons
5. Students take the Post-Quiz

Go to <http://bullyingacademy.com>



Passport to Peace is a program for elementary school children in grades K through 5, and it doesn't require travel! Instead, the passport represents a trip in which students learn to develop positive social attitudes, stop bullying behavior and increase tolerance. For more information go to: <http://www.hanleycenter.org/prevention/programs-services/passport-to-peace>



Too Good for Violence K-8, by the Mendez Foundation is a universal, school-based violence prevention and character education program that teaches the skills and builds the character students need to treat others respectfully and get along peacefully. <https://www.mendezfoundation.org/too-good/Too-Good-for-Violence-K-8.php>

Youth For Human Rights: An Educator's Package

The path toward the goal of a world where people treat each other with respect and dignity is through effective education. Many human rights organizations focus on research and advocacy for the victims of abuse. Youth for Human Rights International complements this work by addressing those issues with educational materials and activities. Therefore the Education Package is provided to educators free of charge.

The Youth for Human Rights Educator's Guide contains lesson plans, enrichment activities, ideas for activating the students on human rights education and a list of

specific correlations of the lessons to model education standards. This is a resource for implementing a complete human rights curriculum in your class or school, or can be integrated into an existing curriculum.

The Story of Human Rights is a powerful and compelling documentary film that defines human rights by telling the dramatic story of their history and development from earliest times to the present day. It is suitable for all ages.

Other components of the package include PSAs, UNITED—a music video, human rights booklets, posters and a glossary of terms.

The Youth for Human Rights Package is designed for upper elementary, middle and early high school instruction.

Order yours today, it is **FREE** for educators: <http://www.humanrights.com/edukitform.html>



The District Attorney's Community Outreach and Education Department works in partnership with schools, offering educational and enrichment programs which address the pressing social, legal, safety, and health issues facing schools, students and families.

In addition to student and school staff presentations, many parent workshops are available, including a workshop on safe social networking practices. Many books and resources are available for loan at the Berkshire District Attorney's Office. For information or resources on the topics of bullying, cyberbullying, internet safety and more, please contact:

Community Outreach and Education Department at 413-443-5951.

Additional Online Resources

www.ConnectSafely.org—A non-profit that has all kinds of social media safety tips for teens and parents, the latest teen tech news and many other resources.

www.stopbullyingnow.com—Author and educator Stan Davis' website to help adults prevent bullying.

www.isafe.org—Dedicated to protecting the online experiences of youth everywhere.

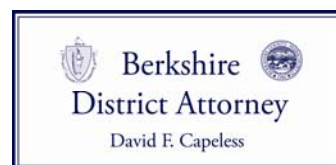
www.cybertipline.com (1-800-THE-LOST)—The resource to report cybercrimes.

www.netsmartz.org—The National Center for

Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) Internet Safety resource and education program targeting children K-12, parents and educators.

www.stopbullying.gov—The official US Government website devoted to bullying prevention.

www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org—The PACER Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) was founded initially for parents of youth with disabilities and now has become the **National Center for Bullying Prevention**.



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