



Family Channel Takes a Stand Against Bullying

Family Channel Partners with Bullying.org to Launch National Bullying Awareness Week November 15 to 21, 2004

Toronto, November 8, 2004 - Family Channel and Bullying.org Canada are launching the second-annual, national bullying awareness week on November 15, 2004. Running until November 21, the week-long campaign is intended to build awareness for the part that bystanders play in diffusing and preventing social/relational bullying situations. The campaign hinges on a challenge to young people to "Take the Pledge," an empowering statement that encourages kids to take a stand against bullying. Last year 55,000 Canadian kids took the pledge and the goal is to increase this number to 100,000 during this year's campaign.

This year's campaign will include a week of special programming on Family Channel; the launch of a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) demonstrating the part that bystanders can play in remedying bullying; and, an interactive website where Canadians can "Take the Pledge" and tell their stories of standing up to bullying. Schools across Canada will also hold events and organize initiatives during this week, and throughout the school year, to stop bullying and draw awareness to the part that bystanders can play.

"Social bullying is reinforced when kids who witness the act stand by and do nothing about it," says Bill Belsey, President, Bullying.org Canada. "Family Channel and Bullying.org are trying to change 'bystander' behaviour by showing kids examples of how they can act differently and diffuse bullying situations. We are not asking kids to get involved in a physical way, but rather to reach out to victim and show bullies that their actions will not be sanctioned or tolerated. The message of the Pledge is to encourage kids to be leaders and not followers, and set an example that bullying is 'not cool.'"

This is the second year for Bullying Awareness Week, which represents a partnership between Bullying.org, a leading Internet resources in the world on the issue of bullying, and Family Channel, a national specialty television channel.

"If it's important to kids, it's important to us," said Joe Tedesco, Vice President and General Manager, Family Channel. "The majority of our viewers are Canadian kids and bullying is an issue that faces every kid at one time or another. That's why Bullying Awareness week is one of the largest and most important initiatives that Family Channel participates in. To ensure that the messages of Bullying Awareness Week reach kids, we are mobilizing all of our resources and affiliations to create a campaign that will 'speak' to kids through television, internet and in print."

The 2004 Bullying Awareness Week will include:

Programming

A new Public Service Announcement called "The Cool Table" will debut on Family Channel on Monday, November 15. In the PSA, which takes place in a school cafeteria, the hero befriends a girl who had previously been excluded from eating lunch with a group of girls. "The Cool Table" was produced by DECODE Entertainment, the production company behind Family's Gemini-nominated series *Radio Free Roscoe*.

Throughout the week, Family is airing bullying-themed episodes of popular series along with the premiere on Friday, November 19 at 7:30 PM ET/PT of the original movie *Beautiful Girl*, which is an engaging story with a positive message about the differences that make each individual person truly beautiful.

PSAs

Other on-air spots will run on Family throughout the week to encourage kids to "Take The Pledge" and not be a bystander. This includes two PSAs that debuted during last year's Bullying Awareness Week: "Red Head" and "The Pledge." "Red Head" depicts another example of a bystander making a positive difference in a bullying situation. "The Pledge" is an empowering statement that encourages kids to take a stand against bullying. An updated version of "The Pledge" featuring Raven, from *That's So Raven*, and Kate Todd, Nathan Stephenson and Ali Mukaddam from *Radio Free Roscoe* will also air. *(These PSAs can be viewed on the accompanying video tape.)*

Website

Last year over 55,000 kids took The Pledge at family.ca. The challenge this year is to have 100,000 Canadian kids take the pledge. Pledges can be taken on the "Take the Pledge" section of www.family.ca from November 15 until the end of the 2004-2005 school year. The Web site will also contain information on bullying, a section for kids to submit their own "Stand Up" stories, and a registration area for teachers and educators to sign up to receive information about next year's Bullying Awareness Week so that they can coordinate their own anti-bullying activities during that week. Those who register will also automatically be entered to win a speaking engagement for their school from Bill Belsey of Bullying.org.

Bullying.org

Based out of Cochrane, Alberta, Bullying.org Canada Incorporated operates www.bullying.org, one of the leading Internet resources in the world on the topic of bullying. Launched in 2000 by Bill Belsey, a Canadian father, educator and former winner of the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence, the site is a safe haven where kids can share their bullying experiences and parents and educators can access bullying tips and resources.

Family Channel

Family Channel is a premium, commercial-free network offering the best in family television entertainment in more than 4.7 million homes across Canada. Dedicated to celebrating family life and providing a fun experience for all, Family airs a unique mix of series, movies and specials, with a large portion of programming supplied by Disney. Visit us at family.ca. Family is an Astral Media network.

Astral Media

Astral Media is one of Canada's leading media companies, active in specialty, pay and pay-per-view television, radio and outdoor advertising. Astral Media's solid and dynamic presence in the country's major markets rests on its commitment to offer a unique combination of high-quality, targeted media for all its audiences.

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Visuals are available at *imagebank.family.ca* (username: media/password: sonam)

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