

Students support anti-bullying at C.R. Gummow

October 16, 2009

COBOURG -- A local elementary school is increasing bullying awareness within its halls.

C.R. Gummow, in Cobourg, initiated a two week bully-free campaign to educate students about bullying prevention, both in and out of the school environment. The bullying awareness movement features several spirit days where students will dress up in costumes to represent their ambition to stop bullying.

Bullying Awareness Week is an opportunity for students to recognize the different types of bullying, its reasons, and strategies for dealing with them. There are many types of bullying that can occur in the schoolyard such as cyber-bullying, and ostracization, both of which, C.R. Gummow officials hope to eliminate.

"We try our best," said principal Alison Kneen. "We have a safe reporting process for students and parents to let us know of bullying behaviours. We also promote a positive (and) caring school culture through extensive extra-curricular activities and events. Solving problems in a restorative manner where the perpetrator has the opportunity to accept responsibility for behaviour, and fix the behaviour in a positive manner helps to build respect for others."

The spirit days will include themes such as 'Too Bright to Bully', and 'Wear Pink', 'Bullying Stinks', as well as 'Caps for Caring'. The campaign kicked off with an anti-bullying assembly on Oct. 14 to get students motivated for the weeks to come.

"Classes are paired up to work together to do activities such as tracing footprints and handprints, or designing anti-bullying posters, or writing cards," said Ms. Kneen.

Each day there are thoughts for the day for student reflection, she said. The peer helpers will also do a presentation of the song 'Stand By Me' directed by the music teacher, Michelle Robinson.

Students at C.R. Gummow will also work together to heighten their awareness of acceptable behaviour, and learn more about what they can do as a bystander, Ms. Kneen explained. By grouping the grades together, the school creates a positive circle where the older students

look out for the younger students, and the younger students model themselves after their older peers, she added.

"When we have done anonymous surveys with our students, we find that our biggest problem is name calling," she noted. "Students are more willing to come forward and report if they know that the problem will be solved, and in a manner where it is less likely that there will be retribution.

"We want our students to become responsible and empathetic adults of the future."

Other schools in the Kawartha Pine Ridge (KPR) District School Board will also support the cause by celebrating Bullying Awareness Week from Nov. 16 to 22. For more information on bullying awareness and Bullying Awareness Week, visit www.bullying.org.

Ref: <http://www.northumberlandnews.com/news/article/137871>