

Bullying in our Backyard

Bullying and Cyberbullying are major issues in society today. These issues can result in tragic endings and negatively impact mental health. It was reported, 1 out of every 5 middle and high school students report being bullied each year (*National Center for Education Statistics, 2019*). Bringing awareness of these concerns allows people to respect one another and give their fellow peers the dignity that they deserve. Students are often cornered by bullies for being a part of a minority group or a different culture, which is mainly due to lack of awareness. This is a concern that must be addressed to provide students with a safe learning environment

I have witnessed many of my friends including my younger brother receiving hate, and have seen multiple stories of people online with the same predicament. For example, my close Asian friend had been a part of Novi for over six years but just decided to move to a different school district because of the increased amount of hate he received. I want to enforce change into our society, and make an impact in everyone's lives. I strongly feel that in order to make an impact, you must believe in the power of three words. Educate. Empower. Enable.

Educate. Educating youth must be done in a special way to inspire them to help impact the people around them. I have come aware of the many programs that my state hosts, but I have never seen a children's event where youth present to adults, to show how a kid's thinking can even perplex the adult mind. Encouraging students to participate in a citywide bullying social & prevention event would benefit my society by helping them understand that all humans are unique and everyone has different beliefs and values. I will partner with my city and host seasonal youth speakers to talk about their experiences with bullying and how they overcame it. I

would encourage middle and high school students to attend, which will help stimulate change by addressing the root cause.

Empower. If I am bullied, I want to be able to talk about that openly to someone my age or someone I trust apart from my parents. I want to create that shared space for the victims to be able to express their concerns and a need for support when necessary. A buddy program can strengthen the school community and help challenge stereotypes and any misconceptions that students hold about different diverse groups. They can connect in a technique that enables both older and younger buddies to bond more closely with their school environment. It has been suggested that when students feel connected to their school, they also feel valued and safe and less likely to either bully or be bullied (*About Better Buddies, 2021*).

Enable. It is important to create a sustainable platform for this issue to subside, not just a one time action. As a high schooler, I want to establish a bullying prevention club at High School and through the City Youth Council. This club would be in charge of planning monthly activities to raise awareness about the cause and taking action around preventing bullying. The team will be responsible for organizing a monthly meeting with school administrators and teachers to discuss how they can play an important role in preventing bullying and creating a positive peer culture in the school. This club will also be presenting a unique award each month asking youth to nominate their peers who they believe have played an effective role in preventing bullying. This award would highlight the day to day actions of students who may often go unrecognized otherwise. This club will enable a structure within our current school system to help bring awareness and most importantly stop bullying, even after I graduate.

I have been bullied myself, I have watched my close friends and family as victims, I don't want to sit still. I want to stand up for these groups, enforce change, and most importantly, foster

a good community using my genuinity and purpose. “When someone is cruel or acts like a bully, you don't stoop to their level. No, our motto is, when they go low, we go high” (*Michelle Obama*). Educate. Empower. Enable.

Work Cited

“About Better Buddies.” *Better Buddies : About Us*,

www.betterbuddies.org.au/bb-about-us/index.php.

Rodríguez-Hidalgo, Antonio J., et al. “Ethnic-Cultural Bullying Versus Personal Bullying:

Specificity and Measurement of Discriminatory Aggression and Victimization Among

Adolescents.” *Frontiers*, Frontiers, 8 Jan. 2019,

www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00046/full.

“Statistics.” *Megan Meier Foundation*, www.meganmeierfoundation.org/statistics.

Acknowledgements

I dedicate this to my brother, my family, and all who are being affected by this.