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## Sasebo Wears Pink to Teach Anti-Bullying and Tolerance

As school administrators consider anti-bullying events that might be appropriate for the upcoming Safe Schools Week (see page 2), DoDEA students in Sasebo, Japan have already started to show solidarity in the campaign against bullying. Former Sasebo Elementary School counselor Nicole Flores shared how students adapted a tradition of wearing school colors on Fridays to raise awareness about bullying. Flores, who coordinated the initiative, noted: "To show our school spirit, we usually wear our school colors on Fridays . . . on this day we chose to wear pink to show that we will not support bullying."

Flores explained that wearing pink to symbolize that bullying would not be tolerated started in 2007 in Canada when a boy who wore a pink shirt on the first day of school was teased. Instead of ignoring the incident, two students decided this type of bullying had to stop. They encouraged fellow students to wear pink the next day and even bought some pink tank tops for the boys to wear. The pair estimates that about half of the school's 830 students wore pink.

Flores continued, "It is important to empower students to 'Take a Stand and Lend a Hand' to students who are being bullied. We want our students not to be bystanders, but to act to stop bullying."



Sasebo Elementary students show off their pink clothing. This school year, counselor Nicole Flores plans to continue the tradition at her new school in Vogelweh, Germany.

The students from nearby E.J. King Middle/High School joined the effort. "Since we share a campus with King Middle and High School, I thought it would be fun to include the older students, so we asked E.J. King students to participate," recalled Flores. "The E.J. King cheerleaders got the students excited by doing an anti-bullying cheer and dance. Sasebo Elementary students also signed a pledge to help stop bullying and to promote friendship." Flores concluded that "Pink Day was a success, with 90 percent of the elementary students participating." Sasebo Elementary School principal Christopher Racek, Ph.D., described why the approach worked: "The event combined school spirit with a simple way to spread the message that we do not tolerate bullying."

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## **News & Updates**



## **Emphasizing Security During October**

During the third week in October (October 17-23, 2010), three campaigns emphasize complementary aspects of school security: violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, and character education. In recent years, the campaign coordinators have worked together to show how school administrators can meld topics into one week of awareness-raising by scattering events throughout the week.



National Safe Schools Week calls attention to school violence and encourages members of the school community to report students who threaten to harm others. The campaign encourages students to plan and participate in events that raise awareness and bolster student accountability. For example, students may design special t-shirts focused on the importance of reporting observations across the entire spectrum of violence, from bullying to lethal threats. One easy to implement activity involves inviting students to write their own pledge to refuse to participate in bullying or violence. This pledge can then be posted on the classroom wall. In the future, if a student's behavior veers toward bullying, the teacher can simply ask the individual if they

are living up to their pledge and refer to the statements on the wall.

Red Ribbon Week strengthens students' resolve to avoid substance abuse by commemorating the death of Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena. Agent Camarena was in Mexico on the trail of marijuana and cocaine smugglers in 1985 when he was kidnapped, tortured, and murdered. What began as a neighborhood movement to take a stand against illicit drugs in his hometown of Norwalk, California, has spread across the country. Today, more than 80 million people throughout the world take part in Red Ribbon Week to show that illicit drug use is not acceptable, and has consequences for people throughout society.

Character Counts Week provides an opportunity for students to recommit to "core educational and behavioral values." The Character Counts organization notes that the traits of Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship improve the learning environment and permit students to reach their intellectual potential. In addition to these Six Pillars of Character, Character Counts also emphasizes personal growth, social and emotional skills, and physical activity.

Similar activities can be used to raise awareness about all of these topics. For example, students may design t-shirts, create posters, or wear special clothes or ribbons to demonstrate their commitment.

While students are thinking about security, the end of October might also offer an opportunity to practice protective action drills, such as lockdown or evacuation. For additional information about programs that can be implemented during October, visit the Office of Safety and Security at <a href="https://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/">www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/</a>.

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## Safe Schools Planning



### Military Police Practice Response Drills in DoDEA School

On July 22, 2010, U.S. Army Military Police conducted a training exercise at Stowers Elementary School in Fort Benning, Georgia to let law enforcement personnel practice rapid response tactics. As exercise director Cris Cox stated, "This is training for a normal patrolman who might have to respond to an active shooter."

Henry Gregorich, an antiterrorism expert from the Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) Area Office, noted that this is an example of the type of cooperation that school officials strive to cultivate with emergency responders. "Letting them use our school familiarizes them with our facilities, while observing their drills helps us understand what to expect if military police had to respond to an incident," explained Gregorich.





This exercise was part of a three-part training program designed to help law enforcement officials keep their skills sharp. The training familiarized patrol officers with the tactics, techniques, and procedures required to respond to an active shooter. The program consisted of one day of classroom learning, followed by one day on the shooting range, and the culminating exercise in an actual school setting.

Addressing the officers gathered in the multipurpose room, Mr. Cox explained the objective for the training: "We want you to have high confidence that everyone has been through the same training, speaks the

same language, and knows what to do. When the call comes in, patrol officers might be forming an entry team with officers from different units." In addition to preparing officers to respond to incidents in schools, the program increased patrol officers' readiness to respond to an active shooter incident anywhere in the community. Participants commented that the lessons they learned would be applicable if there was a report of a shooter at the PX or in an office building.

The U.S. Army Military Police, and representatives from the Provost Marshall's Office (PMO), thanked DDESS for making Stowers Elementary School available for the training exercise. Rapid coordination with the superintendent and building principal made the exercise possible, deepened rapport, and enhanced communication between responders and school officials at Fort Benning.

Above, Army military police respond to realistic scenarios. Right, exercise director Cris Cox conducts a verbal debriefing following each drill.



## **Education Issues**



### Administration Conducts First Anti-Bullying Summit

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan opened the first federal Anti-Bullying Summit in Washington, D.C. on August 10-11, 2010 by calling on all educators to reduce bullying and school violence. Secretary Duncan advocated "cultivating a culture of trust and accountability." He explained, "A culture of trust empowers students to tell teachers and other adults when bullying is occurring."

The U.S. Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Justice sponsored the summit and invited school officials from across the United States to participate. Leaders from all of the national level education associations attended. As DoDEA's representative, Tricia Cassiday, Ed.D., Pupil Personnel Coordinator, commented, "This conference brought together student leaders and experts in the field of anti-bullying and harassment prevention." Cassiday said, "Discussions focused on the most effective use of proven, researched-based programs for creating a safe school climate." Cassiday noted that the inclusion of students was a highlight of the conference: "Student leaders shared personal experiences and offered advice on what works for today's youth."

Guest speakers included Greta Massetti, Ph.D., from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Susan Limber, Ph.D., from Clemson University. Themes reinforced by the speakers throughout the two day conference included:

- Children cannot learn if they do not feel safe.
- School officials need to select prevention programs that have demonstrated effectiveness through research.
- Administrators need to communicate that bullying and harassment are unacceptable.

# Department of Education Statistics on Prevalence of Bullying



Secretary Duncan presented the following statistics to illustrate the prevalence of bullying:

- In 2007, nearly one out of three students in middle and high school – 8.2 million – said they had been bullied at school during the past school year.
- One out of nine secondary school students 2.8 million students – said they have been pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on during the past school year.
- One-and-a-half-million students said they were threatened with harm, and one million students had their property destroyed during the past school year.

Representatives from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced plans to expand their Bullying Solutions Web site to include materials for use with elementary school students. Presently the Web site includes curriculum enhancement materials that middle and high school teachers can use in language arts, mathematics, or social studies classes. To access the bullying prevention programs, visit SAM-HSA's searchable database <a href="https://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov">www.nrepp.samhsa.gov</a>.

Although Secretary Duncan said that "bullying is epidemic in urban, suburban, and rural schools" and cited statistics to support this claim (see accompanying text box), he also painted a verbal picture of a school that cultivates a culture of respect and caring. "As all of you know, it is obvious from the minute you walk in the door. A safe school is one where students feel like they belong. The students feel secure, valued, and are surrounded by adults that they trust." He concluded, "No school can be a great school if it is not a safe school first."



### Cyberbullying Peaks in Middle School

Cyberbullying tends to peak in middle school and subside as students grow older, according to findings released in August 2010 by the Cyberbullying Research Center at Florida Atlantic University. Addressing the anti-bullying summit in Washington, D.C., Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D., a member of the research advisory board for Harvard University's Internet Safety Task Force, reported that 15 to 35 percent of students indicated they were victims of cyberbullying during the previous school year. Dr. Hinduja defined cyberbullying as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices."

He noted that 10 to 20 percent of students admitted bullying others online, and observed that most victims "knew, or thought they knew their bully." He pointed out that persistent cyberbullying can result in a variety of consequences ranging from physical to psychological:

- ✓ Physical Headaches, sleeping difficulties, and abdominal pain.
- ✓ Emotional Anger, sadness, and fear.
- ✓ Social Rejection, peer conflict, and lack of social competence.
- ✓ Behavioral Conduct problems, substance abuse, and academic struggles.
- ✓ Psychological Erosion of self-esteem, suicidal ideation.

Dr. Hinduja explained that countering cyberbullying will require additional assessments, information sharing, and peer mentoring programs. Ultimately, students need to use the same technology that enables cyberbullying to enlighten their peers regarding proper online behavior.

## Students "Reverse-Engineer" Cyberbullying

Some students are learning to use technology to develop videos and animation to teach others how to communicate respectfully via social networking, text, cell phone, and e-mail. Teaching techniques have ranged from sock puppets working through trust issues, to teens rapping out their message with synchronized dance, to animated fruit characters (e.g., Banana and Pear urging their friend Apple to ask his "juicy" girlfriend, Orange, to "peel something off" and send them a picture).

Videos designed by students are effective communication tools because they are viewed credibly by their peers. The messages on the anti-harassment videos consistently reinforce three themes:

- ◆ If a romantic partner barrages you with requests to know "where you are, what you're doing, and who you're with," it is important to explain that partners need to trust each other and allow each other personal space.
- Confident youth feel sufficient self respect to say "no!" to any request that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Part of respecting each other on-line involves speaking up to identify the harassing behavior and refusing to participate.

The technology that allows cyberbullying to occur works both ways. A new generation of students will learn how to defend each other and lead society toward respectful norms for online communication.

## **Prevention Programs**



### **Cooling Off When Tempers Soar**

Many DoDEA schools use anger management programs to teach students crucial life skills that enable them to navigate interpersonal conflict in the classroom, on the playground, and beyond. Even in the most collegial of working environments, however, adults can benefit from reviewing the precepts of those programs. After a long day, ill-chosen words spoken without forethought, or an e-mail written by someone who chooses to ignore the basic rules of social interaction, can be enough to cause tempers to flare.



When a person is angry, several biological events take place: heart rate, arterial tension, and testosterone production increase, setting off the response typically known as "fight or flight." Most people think less rationally during these times and are at greater risk of saying or doing something they may later regret. At these moments, taking a "time out" allows for a calming period during which individuals can gain perspective of their emotions and make better choices about how to resolve the conflict at hand.

Before hitting "send" on that e-mail retort and before saying something hurtful in the heat of the moment, consider these tips for cooling off when emotions boil:

**Use Humor**: If soldiers, emergency responders, and health care professionals can use humor to diffuse stressful situations, school administrators can use it too. Neurobiologists are not certain exactly how humor works, but research published by the American Psychological Society in 2009 found that laughter reduced the levels of three detrimental stress hormones. Dopac, cortisol, and epinephrine (also known as adrenaline), were reduced 38, 39, and 70 percent, respectively, when participants were exposed to humor. Moreover, laughter increases deep breathing, which disrupts the "fight or flight" response.

**Go for a Walk**: Exercise has been proven in numerous studies to have a positive effect on mood. A meta-analysis of over a dozen related studies conducted at Southern Methodist University found that individuals who exercised regularly experienced lower levels of stress and anger. Even though "walking it off" seems like common sense, many people dismiss exercise as too little, too late in the heat of the moment. A recent study conducted at Yale University, however, found that even a single episode of moderate exercise (20-30 minutes) reduced anger responses in male study participants. Furthermore, the study found that exercise was beneficial both before and after a stressful situation.



**Take a Break**: During a conflict, psychologists recommend asking for a break by using a combined verbal and physical signal. For instance, a person might hold up a hand while saying, "I am going to cool down." Dan Jones, Ph.D., director of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Recovery Program at the Oklahoma City Veterans Administration Medical Center, advises that when communicating the need for a time out, individuals should specify a time to continue the discussion. This avoids the tendency of some individuals to try to have the last word, which can further escalate conflict.

For information about anger management programs for children, contact the Safe Schools Program at <a href="mailto:safechools@csc.com">safechools@csc.com</a>. The National Crime Council offers a brochure featuring tips for keeping calm during an angry situation at <a href="https://www.ncpc.org/cms/cms-upload/ncpc/files/hotheads.pdf">www.ncpc.org/cms/cms-upload/ncpc/files/hotheads.pdf</a>.