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"There's Only One Way to Stop a Bully"

New York Times Article

"There's Only One Way to Stop a Bully", an article written by Susa Engel and Marlene Sandstrom in the New York Times, supports the programs that Girls and Boys Empowered has been doing for year thousands of kids, parents and teachers! Finally, someone gets it! Massachusetts recently passed a new state law that requires schools to put in place an anti-bullying curriculum, investigate acts of bullying and report serious cases to law enforcement. There are only 6 states that do not have anti-bullying laws in place including Michigan. This was reported by the Michigan Messenger that one of the reasons that Michigan lost out on school funding through the Race to the Top program was because they didn't have a state law in place.

<http://michiganmessenger.com/40141/michigan-once-again-missed-out-on-federal-education-funds>

As this article suggests, legislation alone can't create kinder communities or teach children how to get along. THESE ARE VALUES THAT MUST BE TAUGHT. "But our research on child development makes it clear that there is only one way to truly combat bullying. An essential part of the school curriculum, we have to teach children how to be good to one another, how to cooperate, how to defend someone who is being picked on and how to stand up or what is right", state Engel and Sandstrom. YES!!!!!!!

My favorite Parenting Educator Chick Moorman says "If you want a behavior, you have to teach a behavior." At Girls and Boys Empowered we teach kids the skill, then we show them what it looks like, and THEN WE PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE it! We simply do not say "be kind", "Be nice", "Don't be mean."

Recently I was a guest presenter at an overnight camp. A few days later a very excited Supervisor at the camp told me that one of the

who was shy and who had been very quiet and homesick stood up another boy using what he had learned from our program. In his case one of the boys had been taking another boy's fan and making fun of the boy when he was trying to get it back. The "target" felt that most of the boys were ganging up on him in the cabin. After several days the quiet boy stood up and said to the aggressor. "Why are you taking his fan? Why are you lying about it? Why are you picking on him?" The aggressor said back to him something like, "Why are you getting involved. It isn't your business." The quiet boy replies (drum roll please.....) "Because it is the right thing to do." The aggressor says "You aren't going to do what that girl from Girls Empowered said to do?" Quiet boy says, "For your information, it is BOYS EMPOWERED and yes I am." And then guess what happened? The other boys in the cabin stood beside the quiet boy and supported him and the target.

What happened there? A boy who was shy and homesick decided to do the right thing and stuck his neck out. He didn't know if the other boys in the cabin would stand by him or the aggressor. I know most of our kids will choose to do the right thing when they are given the same support, and the opportunity to do that.

Another point the article made was that teachers and administrators must be trained to recognize just how complex children's social interactions are. Yes!!! We also believe educating parents is an important piece of this puzzle. We have to understand what the differences are between bullying, relational aggression, mean-spirited behavior, conflict, problems and rudeness. Right now most everything gets thrown together under bullying.

The article also pointed out that some kids bully because they have emotional and developmental problems, or because they come from abusive families and that they require our help more than punishment. YES!!!!!! Whenever I hear about a kid who is a real bully, the first thing I think is what does that child need that is missing in their lives to help them be a kind person. The first thing many people think is to suspend them. Many bullies are bullies because they can get away with it. Everyone has been told to ignore being mistreated by them so they think they can get away with it and they sometimes think by everyone's silence that it is ok to mistreat people.

At Girls and Boys Empowered we have high hopes for this coming school year that we will see great changes happening around this issue. Bullying has remained a hot topic in the news due to the tragic suicide of Phoebe Prince and students being charged for their involvement in bullying her. We look forward to being an organization that helps lead that change in teaching the skills, giving kids, parents and teachers a common language and understanding, and most of all inspiring people to take a stand, use their voice, and do the right thing.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/23/opinion/23engel.html?_r=1&emc=tnt&pagewanted=print

Don't miss these upcoming programs

Camps next week:

Now What? Social Skills for problem-solving

Kids will learn steps to effective problem solving including how to identify the problem, brainstorming possible solutions, how to put solutions into action and work through sticky situations with peers. Kids will be empowered by learning problem solving options, how to communicate effectively, and decision making skills.

Aug 2-6 Girls & Boys 6-11 yrs, Middle school kids 9:00-4:00
Location: Franklin Athletic Club 248-352-8000

Stop, Think and Go!

Kids will learn an easy tool to help them make good decisions about how to treat others or what to do when others are mean to them or asking them to do something that will get them in trouble! Kids will have fun making 3 crafts, playing games and activities teaching them how to deal with peer and societal pressure. Kids will learn social skills, respect, decision making and conflict resolution skills. Parents will receive a handout on how to use this tool at home! Camp includes fitness activities, crafts, games and interactive discussions.

Aug 2-6 Girls & Boys 4-6 yrs 1:00-4:00 or FULL DAY 9:00-4:00
Location: Franklin Athletic Club 248-352-8000

Assertiveness Boot Camp-What to say to the bully & more!

Being assertive is a life skill every kid needs to have in dealing with bullies, in negotiating, handling conflict, setting boundaries, to be taken seriously, and getting their needs met. Kids will learn and practice being assertive in their words, voice, and body language through role playing and crafts. This camp will help all kids no matter what their confidence level is including kids who may be too aggressive in how they communicate to those who don't use their voice at all.

August 2-6 Girls 6-10 yrs 9:00-12:00
High Velocity Sports 46245 Michigan Ave., Canton, MI
www.hvsports.com 734-487-7678

A few more spots open....

Empowered with ADHD

Boys will have **intense fun** being physically active while learning social skills, friendship skills, being empowered, building confidence and bully-proofing themselves. This camp is specifically designed for the challenges and opportunities boys with ADHD face. Games, Olympic challenge courses, role playing, educational activities, and going on nature hikes will all be part of the fun of teaching how to take advantage of one's strengths and learn to manage one's weaknesses. Guest speakers who have achieved success will speak about their journey.

Aug 9-13 Boys 9-11, 12-14 yrs 9:00-4:00 To register: Email info@boysempowered.com for registration form
Location: Roeper Upper School, Middle/Upper School, 1051 Oakla Ave., Birmingham, MI 48009

Scheduling now....

One-on-One Coaching and Counseling: For kids and parents w need help in dealing with meanness, bullying, self-esteem and confidence! Get ready for going back to school with confidence!!!! at 248-840-9858 to schedule an appointment!

Assemblies, In-classroom presentations, Parenting Workshop and Professional Development for Schools
in Spread the Kindness, Stop the Meanness

Scout workshops: Girls Empowered provides workshops for c 1500. Girl Scouts a year! Boys Empowered is ready to do programs for the Boy Scouts!

Mother/Daughter and Father/Son Retreat

More details to come but both retreats are taking place the same weekend- Oct. 15th. We received many requests to make them happen at the same time!

Location: Tamarack Camps



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