

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Anti-Bullying Program

Herman Goldstein Award Submission Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

Sergeant Oscar Cardenas, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office

District 14 – City of Lake Worth

Program Director

5/31/2013

PBSO Anti-Bullying Program

In the City of Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida, an increase was seen in the amount of bullying and gang related incidents in the elementary and middle school aged students. This issue has been occurring and increasing over the past several years. Previously, middle school students attended the SMART (Students Matter Antiviolence Response Training) program that taught them about conflict resolution, crime prevention, and gang awareness. It was found that several of the juveniles that are arrested in the city are graduates of this program. The information and data ascertained this information was provided through the cooperative efforts of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and the Palm Beach County School Board.

A meeting in March of 2012 was attended by the deputy in charge of the SMART program, area teachers, principals and members of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office District 14 Community Policing unit to brainstorm what needed to be done to improve the program. It was determined in the meeting that intervention at an earlier age, most likely elementary school, to teach the students about bullying and gang awareness. Additionally, it was learned that the first year of middle school is when the kids are being approached to join gangs and are being bullied by the older students. Because of this information, a program was pursued to target children before they get into middle school about gang awareness and bullying. While speaking with the principals of these schools, the need of an elementary level sports program was also addressed. With input from the Community Policing unit, the idea of incorporating kickball into the program addressed this issue. Kickball is a sport that is accessible to all children and can teach kids the importance of friendship, being a part of a team and positive verbal support. Existing bullying programs were researched to identify a base line model. Other units in the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office were contacted to ascertain if like programs already exist. The program

was named “Bullying Behavior” and the curriculum focuses not only on the anti-bullying and gang awareness but also life skills, core values and team building. Another positive outcome is the interaction between elementary school aged children and law enforcement deputies. The program is fifteen weeks, twice a week with one day being classroom instruction and the other being kickball activities. The classes are conducted weekly by deputies from the Community Policing unit. Books for the lessons were made with assistance from the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office Graphics Unit and the necessary kickball equipment was purchased. The program starts with an orientation where the children are informed of the goals and objectives and introduced to the instructors. To get an understanding of the students’ knowledge of bullying, questions are asked including:

- Who has heard of a bully?
- What are the first words that come to mind when someone say’s bully?
- Who can say exactly what a bully does?
- Can siblings or other family members bully?
- What should be done if someone is being bullied?

The weekly lessons introduce the students to the many types of bullies, including:

- The Pushing Bully
- The Name Calling Bully
- The Intimidating Bully
- The Vandalizing Bully
- The Stealing Bully
- The Rumor Bully
- The Teasing Bully

- The Extorting Bully
- The Ethnic Slur Bully
- The Insulting Bully
- The Fighting Bully
- The Excluding Bully
- The Cyber Bully

Each week the students are asked to remember about the bully they learned about in the previous week. In the new lesson they read two stories about bullies then break for a role play activity. The students get practice with ways to verbally defend themselves. At the end of the chapter a review of the material occurs to make sure each student understands what was taught and that they reach the objective. There are no “tests” in the program but there are several assessments to be sure that the goals and ideas are being remembered. These assessments include having the student draw a picture of themselves standing up to a bully, creating a “NO BULLY” advertisement or a “NO BULLY ZONE” sign, creating a personal pledge against bullying, writing a story about a personal experience standing up to a bully and creating a song about “bullies and how they are not cool and they do not belong in school, they end up looking like nothing but a fool.” The classroom teachers can also assist in the lessons by supplementing the ideas in the classroom. Ideas include keeping a bully board with the names of the bullies that were discussed the prior lesson so the students can reference the characters if someone is acting like them. Bully Bucks (see Appendix F) can be earned for students who turn away from a fight, tell an adult or exhibit a correct behavior for a bullying situation. On field trips, the students are able to exchange Bully Bucks for real money. A Bully Box was also used in the class so students can anonymously leave notes inside to tell a teacher about a student who is being a bully or one

who is being bullied. This makes the teacher aware of possible bullying without the student feeling like they are tattling or fearing retaliation. With the success of the program several other schools have requested to be a part of the program. The project coordinators have been contacted by the Anti-Defamation League who after review of our curriculum expressed an interest in including it as a qualifier to their No Place for Hate School Program. This would allow the curriculum to satisfy the ADL's requirement for a school to be designated a No Place for Hate School.

Initially we tried our program on Highland Elementary School, but the results were less than favorable due to lack of support from the school administration. We then decided to contact another school, North Grade Elementary School, for a second attempt and it was extremely successful. North Grade Elementary School is located in the City of Lake Worth in Palm Beach County. The school is in a residential neighborhood in the north east part of the city. The school is part of the Palm Beach County School District and the Principal is Nicole Patterson. According to the Palm Beach County School District website, the school is attended by 751 students from kindergarten through fifth grade for the 2012 – 2013 school year. With the success at North Grade we extended the program to South Grade Elementary School, which is located in a residential neighborhood in the southern part of the City of Lake Worth in Palm Beach County. The school is part of the Palm Beach County School District and the principal is Michael Riley. According to the Palm Beach County School District website the school is attended by 586 students from kindergarten through fifth grade for the 2012 – 2013 school year. The schools are two very different schools due to the fact that one school is attended by primarily English speaking students from middle class families and the other is primarily ESOL (English as a Second Language) students from lower income families. In 2011, prior to the start of the

Bullying program, the percentage of bullying at North Grade Elementary was 67%, student verbal abuse against teachers was 76% and student absenteeism was 62%. Two years after the program was started at the school, the student bullying went down to 55%, the student verbal abuse against teachers went down to 61% and the student absenteeism went down to 48% (see Appendix C).

On May 28, 2012, the first class graduated from the program from North Grade Elementary with 60 students receiving diplomas. At the graduation ceremony local celebrity and motivational speaker Greg Rice gave a speech and the kids were rewarded with Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office book bags filled with pens, pencils, notebooks and whistles provided by the Sheriff (see Appendix G). On January 29, 2013 the first class of 70 kids from South Grade Elementary graduated from the program. On February 6, 2013 the second classes of 50 kids from North Grade Elementary graduated and were given the title of the first elementary school in the Palm Beach County to be named a No Place for Hate School by the Anti-Defamation League. On May 29, 2013 another 50 fourth graders from North Grade graduated from the program. The program instructors are constantly being approached by the school teachers and principals who express the difference the program is making in the students involved and their desire to have the program available to every student school wide. The ultimate goal is to expand this program to Elementary Schools County wide. With each graduating class, the rewards grow. A field trip is in the process for upcoming graduating classes. At this time, the program is working on a plan to train other deputies so that they may provide the elementary schools within their own districts with this same program. Proper treatment of animals has also been discussed and the Animal Kindness Unit has assisted with the program (see Appendix B). The program has been featured in the Palm Beach Post, Lake Worth Herald, Channel 25 News and several commendations have

been received as a result of the positive impact we are having on our community's children (see Appendices H and I).

Key Project Team Members

Palm Beach Sheriff's Office

Sergeant Oscar Cardenas
Deputy Michael Donovan
Deputy Pierre Rouzeau
Deputy Christopher Johnson
Deputy Daniel Jozwick
Deputy Michael Mahoney
Deputy Paul Riddle
Deputy Devin Zuchowski

Project Contact Person

Sergeant Oscar Cardenas
Palm Beach Sheriff's Office
Commanding Officer District 14,
City of Lake Worth
120 North G Street
Lake Worth, Florida 33460
Phone: (561) 202-9638
Email: CardenasO@pbso.org

Appendix A



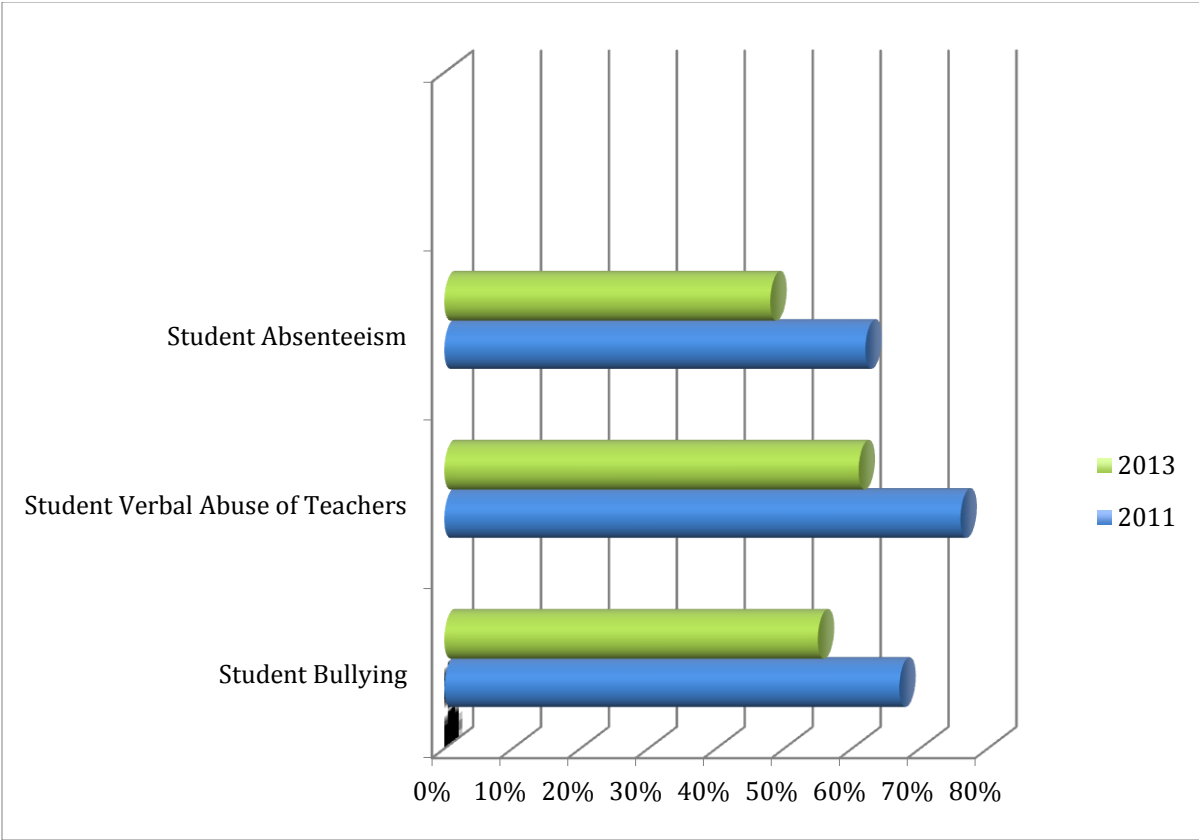
Students at North Grade Elementary School attending an Anti-Bullying Program class

Appendix B



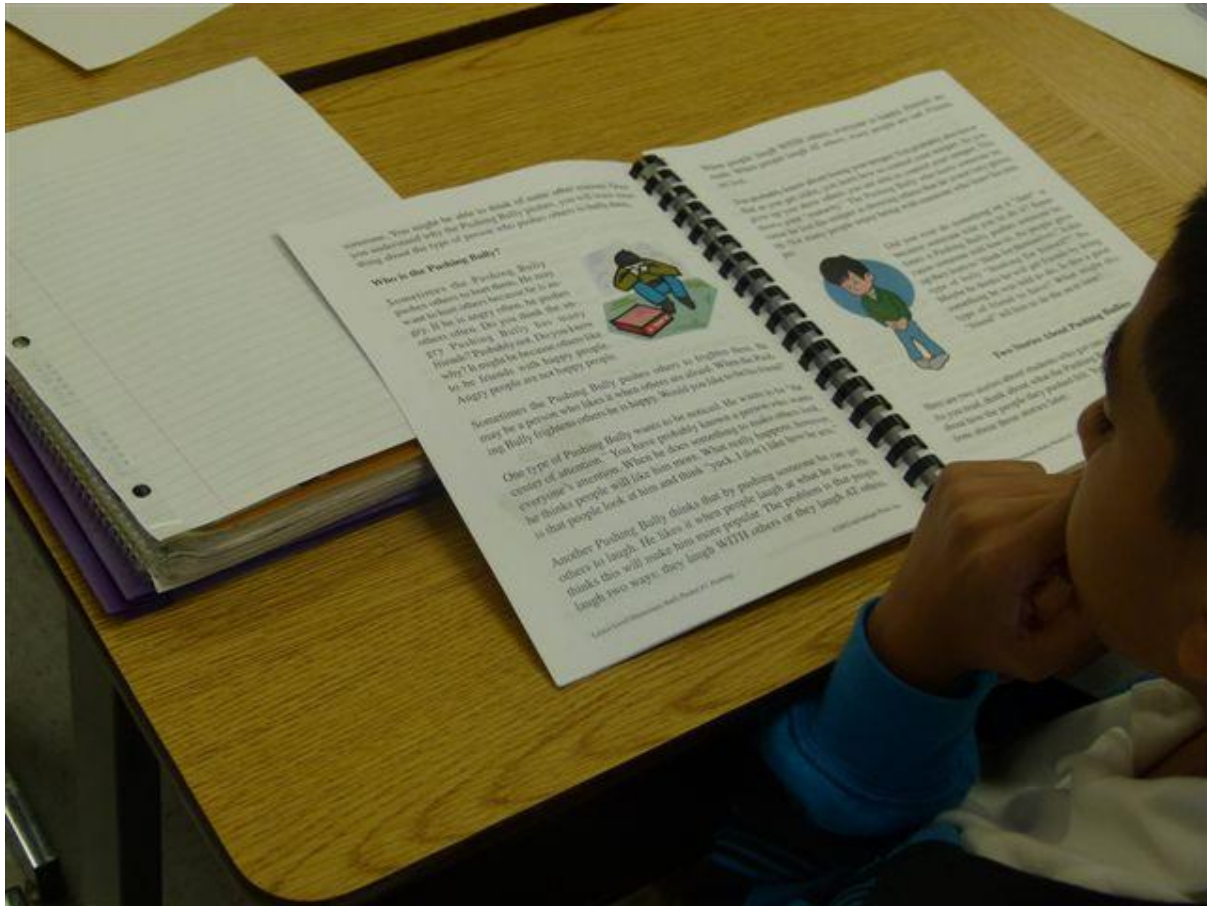
The Animal Kindness Unit visited students as part of the Anti-Bullying Program

Appendix C



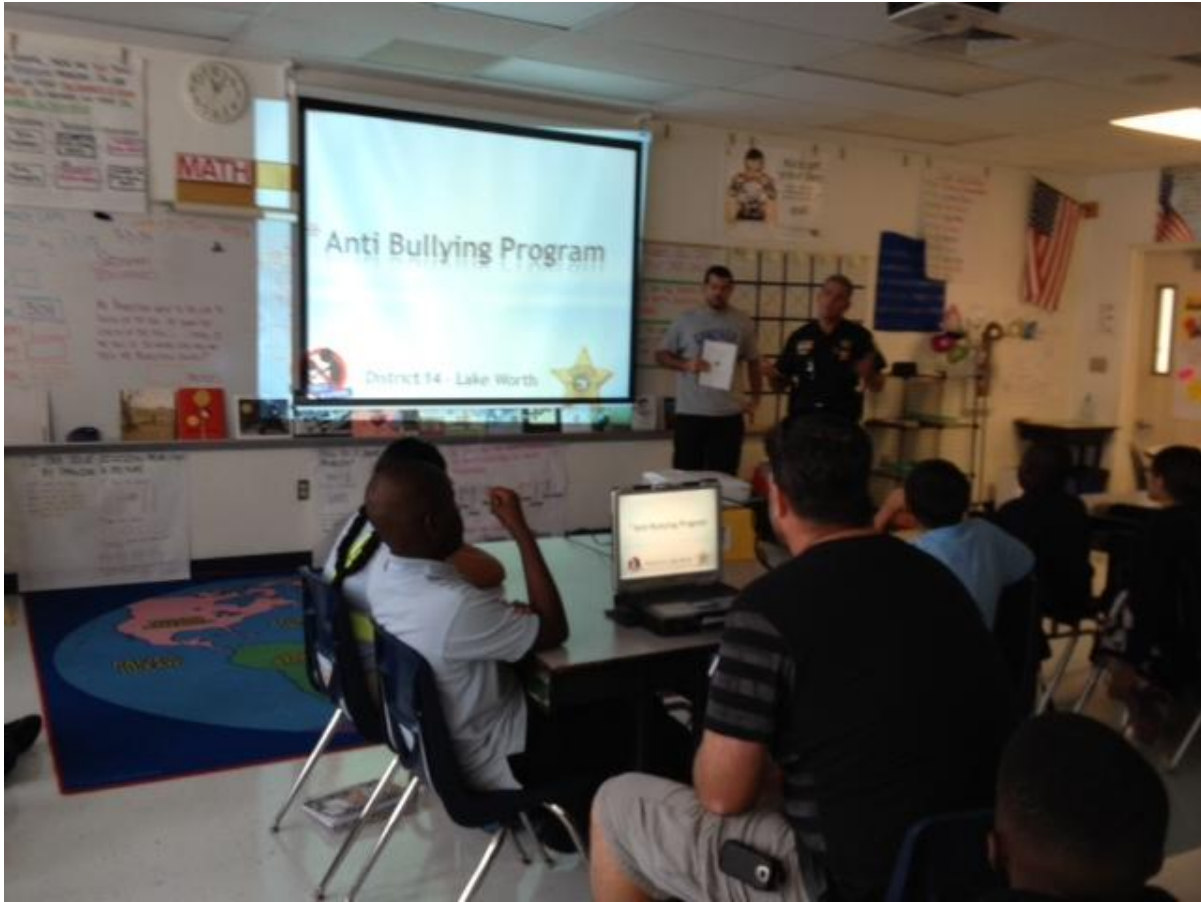
Graph showing statistics for North Grade Elementary School before and after Anti-Bullying program was established

Appendix D



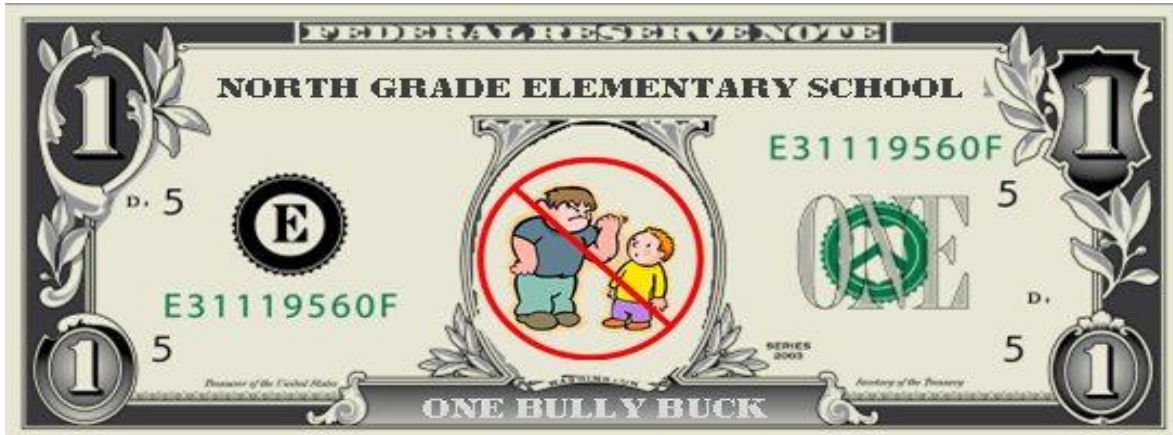
Each student was given a workbook to follow along with the lessons

Appendix E



Captain Rolando Silva addresses students at South Grade Elementary School during an Anti-Bullying Program lesson

Appendix F



Bully Bucks were given to students for participation. On field trips the students were able to exchange their Bully Bucks for real “bucks”

Appendix G



North Grade Elementary School students graduating from the Anti-Bullying Program

Appendix H

North Grade Designated “No Place for Hate”

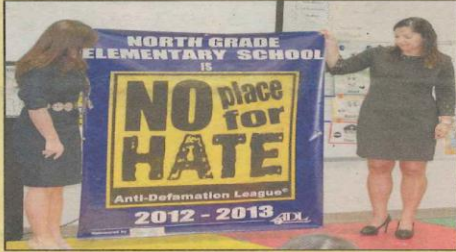
LAKE WORTH — North Grade Elementary became the first elementary school in Palm Beach County to be awarded the “No Place for Hate” designation by the Anti-Defamation League of Palm Beach County.

Forty students graduated from the Anti-Bullying program conducted by the Community Policing Division of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's District 14. PBSO's Deputy of the Year, Mike Donovan, conducted the classes for the students and other officers from the division assisted.

Each student donned a “No Place for Hate” t-shirt while they listened intently to the graduation message presented by guest speaker Greg Rice.

Rice fielded questions from the students about his experiences being bullied when he was younger.

The students received a book bag filled with goodies from the PBSO and were served cookies



Nicole Patterson, principal of North Grade Elementary accepts the banner from Lillian Medina of the Anti-Defamation League.

and water.

Lake Worth City Commissioners Andy Amoroso and Christopher McVoy were on hand for the ceremony.

After the ceremony, Erica Whitfield from the school board conducted a tour of the community garden located on school board property across the street from North Grade.

During the tour, Whitfield and Sgt. Oscar Cardenas explained the work and effort of those who participated getting the garden out of the ground.

The garden grows fresh vegetables and fruits the students get to take home. Students participate in gardening two days a week.

Article from the Lake Worth Herald

Appendix I

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
23RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
FLORIDA

RULES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
AND BUDGET PROCESS
RANKING MEMBER

UNITED STATES
HELSINKI COMMISSION
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

FLORIDA DELEGATION
DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN
SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0923

June 6, 2012

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0923
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FAX: (202) 226-1171
- 2701 W. OAKLAND PARK BOULEVARD
SUITE 200
FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33311
TELEPHONE: (954) 733-2800
FAX: (954) 735-8444
- DELRAY BEACH CITY HALL
100 NW 1ST AVENUE
DELRAY BEACH, FL 33444
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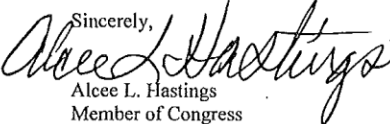
www.alceehastings.house.gov

Ms. Nicole Patterson
Principal
North Grade Elementary School
824 N. K Street
Lake Worth, FL 33460

Dear Ms. Patterson:

I am writing to congratulate you on your school's successful completion of Palm Beach County's first anti-bullying program. This fine distinction surely makes your family, friends, colleagues and the parents of North Grade students very happy and I share their joy.

I am very impressed that you volunteered North Grade for this important project. Education is a priority with me, and I am delighted to know that a school in my district has such a fine leader. You are an excellent role model for your peers and for all of us. Congratulations again, Ms. Patterson. Keep up the great work. I'm proud of you!

Sincerely,

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

ALH: dl