



NEWS RELEASE

Sacred Heart Catholic School Stands Up to Bullying Instead of Standing By!

Kirkland Lake, ON Date: April 4, 2013:

Sacred Heart Catholic School in Kirkland Lake has worked diligently over the past two years to decrease bullying incidences by 25%. Based on the student school climate survey from December 2012, we have been very successful! This success is largely due to the 2011 anti-bullying campaign in which we introduced an anti-bullying reporting system, Stop-A-Bully (www.stopabully.ca), to allow parents and students to report bullying anonymously. In 2011, parent and school volunteers also began a youth group to provide our students a safe environment for socializing. But our work at Sacred Heart Catholic School is far from over.

In 2012, the staff at Sacred Heart Catholic School developed and implemented a highly successful progressive discipline plan. This plan provided all staff members and students with guidelines to follow when minor and major problems occur that contravene the school code of conduct. The results have been astounding in that we have reduced the total number of Safe Schools Reports thus far in this school year by 33%!



Our next step in our bid to end bullying at Sacred Heart Catholic School is to end the **bystander effect**. A bystander is any person who sees bullying or knows about it, stands by and allows the bullying to continue. A bystander is someone who can help one of the people involved in bullying – the person bullying, or the person being bullied. According to *Bystander Power* by Phyllis Kaufman Goodstein and Elizabeth Verdick, "While everyone can be hurt by bullying, **bystanders have more power to stop bullying than anyone else**. More power than

teachers. More power than parents. More power than the Principal . . ." (3). Kaufman and Verdick call these individuals **Upstanders** or respect role models (ibid 56).

Cheryl Ricco, Sacred Heart Catholic School Principal proudly commented "Several students from each class at Sacred Heart Catholic School were nominated by their teachers to be the first Upstanders of our school community. These students received a two-hour training session on how to implement strategies to assist peers; 1) when they are a bystander to

bullying and they do not know what to do; 2) when they are the victim of bullying and they need to know that others care and can help and; 3) when they've been the bully and know that they have done bad things, but know that they are not bad persons and can change. The students have called themselves the **SHCS Troubleshooters** and their motto is: **To change the culture of our beloved school one student at a time.** The students' goal is to stand up to bullying and let bullied kids know that someone is looking out for them. Standing up is better than standing by."

For more information, please contact:

Andrew Marks, Community Relations Officer
(705) 268-7443 ext. 3213