



VOICES AGAINST CRUELTY,
HATRED AND INTOLERANCE

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WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.VACHI.NET
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*HATE HURTS - THINK
BEFORE YOU SPEAK*

CHS SURVEY RESULTS: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- behavior:
- 45% of students witnessed another student being harassed/bullied/teased or called names on the basis of their race, ethnicity or national origin
 - 34% of students witnessed another student being harassed/bullied/teased or called names on the basis of their religion
 - 57% of students witnessed another student being harassed/bullied/teased or called names on the basis of their actual or

perceived sexual orientation

- 36% of students witnessed another student being harassed/bullied/teased or called names on the basis of their actual or perceived disability

VACHI officers presented the survey findings to CHS faculty members and made some suggestions to collaborate to try to reduce and hopefully eliminate hate behavior on campus. VACHI proposed three things: first, get the facts out to all interested stakeholders; second, open a dialogue between students, par-

ents and teachers; and, third, redefine the concept of tolerance.

VACHI is working with CHS administration and faculty to change the climate at CHS. This Newsletter is the first step in the process—to share the survey results with students and parents. The CHS faculty will also share the survey results with the students in class and hopefully start the dialogue. Currently, students are told the rules once in a rules assembly; VACHI proposed an interdisciplinary curriculum committee to integrate anti-bullying and tolerance

activities into existing school curriculum. State standards exist to teach students to respect individual differences and to promote tolerance.

VACHI members will also be going directly to the School Board to present the survey results and to seek new board policies that will hopefully improve the climate in our schools. We believe that with new policies, integrated curriculum and increased vigilance that we can make a difference. Our hope is that “zero tolerance” no longer means that half of our students are victimized by hate next year. VACHI needs everyone to help us achieve our goal.

Students: Take this Newsletter home and share it with your parents. Talk to your parents about the stories we have written. Write a one page summary about the Survey Results (Page one and four) reported in this Newsletter and include three ideas to HELP END HATE at our school. Cut out this box and have your parents sign at the bottom. Return this box with a parental signature and your one page summary by May 28, 2010 and receive extra credit from one teacher of your choice. Most teachers are participating (but please be sure to check if a specific teacher has agreed to provide extra credit for this project).

I read and discussed this newsletter with my child:

Parent Signature: _____

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THE VACHI VOICE

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CHS CONDUCTS SURVEY ON HATE MOTIVATED BEHAVIOR

Voices Against Cruelty, Hatred and Intolerance, VACHI, an organization dedicated to educating students, teachers, parents and administrators about the consequences of hate motivated behavior, (such as bullying, name calling and harassment) partnered with CHS to conduct a school-wide survey relating to hate motivated behavior. The survey was conducted shortly before winter break and involved 969 CHS students. The results were recently tallied and revealed that a significant number of current CHS students had experienced hate motivated behavior in the last school year.

The survey revealed the following results:

- 23% of students (224) have been pushed, shoved, hit, slapped or kicked by someone at school who wasn't joking around
- 52% of students (504) had mean rumors or lies spread about them at school
- 51% of students (500) had sexual jokes, comments or gestures made about them at school
- 16% of students were harassed/bullied/teased or called names on the basis of their religion
- 23% of students were harassed/bullied/teased or called names on the basis of their

race, ethnicity or national origin

- 15% of students were harassed/bullied/teased or called names on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation
- 12% of students were harassed/bullied/teased or called names on the basis of their actual or perceived disability

VACHI was aware that many victims simply will not admit to being victimized even when asked anonymously. As a result, the survey also asked students whether they had witnessed hate motivated behavior. More students revealed incidences of hate motivated (con't on page 4)

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS BULLIED OR HARASSED*

- Speak up if you witness any abuse
- Be a friendly ear; if your friend has someone to talk to, they won't feel alone
- Discourage abusers by refusing to laugh or smile at the things they say or do.
- Stand by your friend if things are getting tough.
- Tell someone

* www.need2know.com

NO NAME CALLING WEEK—JANUARY 25-29, 2010

No Name-Calling Week "Gang of Five" (as they are known) creates a new political party during student council elections and runs on a platform aimed at wiping out name-calling of all kinds. Though they do not win the election, they gain the support of the school's principal for their cause and their idea for a "No Name Calling Day" at school. Motivated by this book, more

than 40 National Organizations have bonded together to create National No Name Calling Week. This year, No Name Calling Week took place the week of January 25-29, 2010. The No Name Calling Week website states that the "project seeks to focus national attention (continued on p. 3...)

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OBAMA SIGNS HISTORIC HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION



On October 28, 2009, President Barack Obama signed a law that expanded federal hate crime protection; It is now a federal crime to assault an individual because of his or her sexual orientation or gender identity.

The hate crimes measure was added for Matthew Shepard, a gay Wyoming teenager who died after being kidnapped and severely beaten in October 1988 and James Byrd, an

African American man dragged to death in Texas the same year. In signing the bill, President Obama said that this was a step toward change to "help protect our citizens from violence based on what they look like, who they love, how they pray."

More than 77,000 hate crime incidents were reported by the FBI between 1998 and 2007 or "nearly one hate crime for every hour of every day over the

span of a decade", reported Attorney General Eric Holder to the Senate Judiciary Committee in June. A hate crime is a crime of violence that is motivated by hatred of the group to which the victim belongs. California already had a hate crime statute on the books.. From 1998-2001, reported hate crimes in California increased 29.2 percent. There was a 5 year downward trend, dropping 42.2 percent from 2001-2006.

THE "R" WORD CAMPAIGN

Mental retardation is defined as someone with an IQ below 70 (average IQ is 100). While the words "mental retardation" are not derogatory, when used to describe someone or something you think is stupid, it is hurtful hate speech.

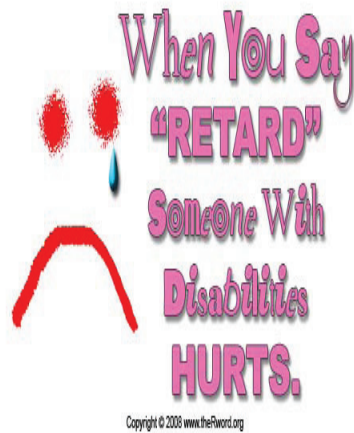
The "R" word campaign began after disc jockey Don Imus used

the "R" word as a joking racial slur. Then the movie "Tropic Thunder" made fun of people with intellectual disabilities. In response, the National Special Olympics started a "Spread the Word to Stop the Word" campaign.

The "R" word website explains that the "campaign stands to speak for those who can not, em-

power those who don't believe they have a voice and to help them see that ... our words do make a difference. As the originator of the campaign stated, "when a person stands up to tell someone else that this word offends them, it becomes a matter of respect."

Respect: words to live by.



Carl Walker -Hoover committed suicide after being bullied and called gay by kids at his school.

EDITORIAL: "THAT'S SO GAY" IS NOT OKAY

After a few classmates razed Rebekah Rice about her Mormon upbringing with questions such as, "Do you have 10 moms?," she shot back: "That's so gay." Rice claims that when she said those words she was not referring to anyone's sexual orientation but rather meant only "That's so stupid." Rice was disciplined

by her high school.

Derogatory terms for homosexuality are often thrown about as insults but in recent years, "that's so gay" has become one of the most commonly used phrases to dig at people's clothes, a television show, or pretty much anything that kids think is stupid. Gay rights advocates and

educators have tried teaching students that it is hurtful to use the word "gay" as an all-purpose word for something stupid. Indeed, there is even an on line pledge that can be taken to swear off the slogan and to substitute a host of more appropriate "stupid" synonyms; www.thinkb4youspeak.com/SignThePledge/ (go to p.3)

NO NAME CALLING WEEK (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

on the problem of name-calling in schools, and to provide students and educators with the tools and inspiration to launch an on-going dialogue about ways to eliminate name-calling in their communities."

Mayor Casey Tanaka issued a formal proclamation declaring "No Name Calling Week" for Coronado. The Proclamation was read before CHS students on January 25th at

lunch. Daily announcements were made to share information with students about the consequences of hate motivated behavior. Students were told that in one third of recent incidences of school violence, students were reacting violently to being bullied by fellow students.

VACHI brought No Name Calling Week to CMS and CHS. VACHI members provided curricular ideas to both schools to share the No Name Calling

message with students. VACHI encouraged students to NOT turn another cheek or ignore name-calling or bullying. Indeed, VACHI encouraged all students to stand up and shout out against any name-calling or other hate motivated behavior. It is VACHI's goal that parents will no longer have to tell their children that name-calling is "part of growing up."



Mayor Tanaka presents VACHI president, Joey Langerman, with the No Name Calling Proclamation; Joey presents the Mayor with a Hate-Hurts T-shirt. Also pictured: Jean Pehrsson, VACHI advisor, Principal Karl Mueller, Vice Principal Jenny Moore.

WHAT HAPPENED TO PHOEBE PRINCE?

On January 14, 2010, 15 year old Massachusetts 9th grader Phoebe Prince hanged herself, following intense bullying at her school. Phoebe, an immigrant from Ireland, was stalked and harassed beginning in September. After an investigation by law enforcement authorities, the District Attorney announced complaints and indictments against nine

teenagers. The investigation revealed that the bullying of Phoebe Prince was not only ongoing and severe but well known by virtually all students on campus as well as some teachers and administrators, something the D.A. referred to as "troubling" in her press statement.

In response to Phoebe's death, the

school appointed an anti-bullying task force to review its policies and procedures. Phoebe's death has brought national attention to the problem of bullying and hate motivated behavior on high school campuses. (Con't below)



PHOEBE PRINCE (CONTINUED FROM ABOVE)

EDITORIAL—"THAT'S SO GAY" (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

What is the big deal? Well, most heterosexuals think this is much ado about nothing and takes political correctness to an extreme. But, respectfully, if we don't start teaching tolerance now, when will we? Do you think that whites were offended by the N-word before the Civil Rights movement? Do you think that Germans

were offended by the slurs against Jews during the Holocaust? If gays and lesbians are offended by this, is it so hard to come up with a synonym for stupid? Are we so stupid that we can't come up with a different word for our stupidity?

As an epilogue, Rebekah Rice sued her

school district claiming her first amendment rights were violated when she was disciplined for saying "That's so gay." The judge disagreed and held that school officials are given wide latitude in deciding how to enforce non discrimination provisions of the state education code.

A significant part of VACHI's mission is to teach bystanders to take a stand. While no student should ever be subjected to hate motivated behavior, if it does occur, it is up to all of us to take a stand. Had the students in South Hadley helped Phoebe, or reported to administration, maybe she would be with us today.