



Fitness Festival Contact: Renee Ortiz
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'BULLYING 2.0,' CHERRY CREEK SCHOOLS DISTRICT-WIDE GROUNDBREAKING PROGRAM USES BYSTANDERS, TEAM APPROACH

One of Several Programs Benefiting from Annual 'Cherry Creek Schools Fitness Festival'

It has been studied, structured into policies and tracked by school districts throughout the country: bullying. Though it is not a new concept, one aspect has received heightened focus recently – the power of bystanders to counteract bullying behavior.

Grants from the **Wellness Office of Cherry Creek Schools** used to implement programs like **'Bullying 2.0,'** are provided by the **Community Asset Project (CAP)** through funds raised during the annual **Cherry Creek Schools Fitness Festival**. "At **Cherokee Trail High School** we have used the grants from the **Wellness Office** for our students to create their own workshops, mentoring panels, design programs - that's what **'Bullying 2.0'** encourages – change the atmosphere," **Sameen DeBard, School Counselor, Cherokee Trail High School** said. "I believe nothing can change unless you make kids feel safe; that they can walk across the room and be confident all the way into adulthood, no matter who they are. That's what this program does."

'Bullying 2.0,' an innovative program designed by **Cherry Creek School District**, focuses on empowering bystanders to defuse bullying. "Three years ago, we were asked to do a complete review of our existing program," **Dr. Marla Bonds, District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Coordinator** said. "What we created was an approach which uses the power of the bystander to intervene. Our research shows that 80% of kids are bystanders, most are passive bystanders, and every one of them is different. Each has their own strengths and weaknesses. What **'Bullying 2.0'** does is to recognize the level of intervention that child feels safe with and then intercede. Whether it's asserting yourself directly, distracting the players or turning to someone they can trust – it's all about giving them the tools to find that level and then use what they know."

The significance of **Bullying 2.0** is it is *not* a script following a specific protocol. It is designed to change with the school, the community and the student as lessons are applied and then refined throughout the years. "It is important for schools to have consistent K-12 practices with regard to bullying," Bonds said. "We are one of the few districts that have a well integrated program and we are especially proud of our cutting edge use of student leadership in our high schools."

Though **'Bullying 2.0'** is presented as part of the classroom curriculum, the larger aspect of the program is the more powerful student led transformation of school culture where every student is invested in positive change *especially* in the high schools. "We encourage students to be proactive and present their own lesson plans, challenge themselves to create an atmosphere where blocking people out is not acceptable," **Lisa Sprague, Assistant Principal, Grandview High School** said. "But it is also important for parents and faculty to be in the mix. Bullying can be subtle on so many levels. When our group meets once a month we are, in essence, educating ourselves and monitoring what could be dangerous behavior."

But it's not just behavior *inside* the school that the program addresses; it is using **'Bullying 2.0'** *outside* in the far-reaching world of Social Media and the emergence of cyber bullying. "Kids fight for social power, no matter the setting and we can't police what is happening away from our school," **DeBard** said. "But **'Bullying 2.0'** provides the framework and resources if needed. The core messaging remains the same: empower the bystander to act."

The **2014 Cherry Creek Schools Fitness Festival** will be held on September 6th at Stutler Bowl on the Cherry Creek High School Campus, 9300 E. Union Avenue in Greenwood Village.

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