

Bullying target of campaign

EDUCATION: Thousands of pink T-shirts aim to raise awareness in Thames Valley schools

By JOHN PAUL HOGAN, SPECIAL TO SUN MEDIA

Classrooms across the region will be awash in pink tomorrow as students and staff at Thames Valley District schools take a stand against bullying.

The "Sea of Pink" campaign invites students and staff to dress in pink as a display of solidarity and support for the victims of bullying.

"There's a lot of kids who lack the confidence to stand up on their own," said Anne Scott, a teacher at Clarke Road secondary school.

Scott and fellow teacher Alisha Willis organized the school's week-long campaign.

More than 400 students and staff at Clarke Road paid \$5 for special pink T-shirts bearing the phrases "Be a Someone" and "Take a Stand," said Scott.

The Thames Valley District school board has ordered more than 11,000 of the shirts for the event that kicks off National Bullying Awareness Week.

"We're not raising money; we're raising awareness," Scott said.

She's especially proud that every staff member at Clarke Road plans to wear a pink shirt.

"Having everyone do this is really going to say something to the students. I'm really appreciative of that."

The "Sea of Pink" campaign began in Nova Scotia after a student was picked on for his pink clothing. The next day, a group of senior students came to school in pink T-shirts as a sign of solidarity against bullying.

This is the sixth year of the campaign, but the first time it's come to Clarke Road.

There was some early resistance to the idea of wearing pink, especially from the male students, said Scott. But after they heard what it was all about, they came around.

"I've been hearing students in the halls talking about the pink outfits they've picked out for Monday. They're getting excited," she said.

National Bullying Awareness Week continues with special lessons, pink-themed bake sales and guest speakers.



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