



Brighter Futures

Celebrating the powerful impact
of BullyingCanada donors

2021
Donor Update



More bullied youth consider taking their own lives Lingering pandemic restrictions very hard on Canada's kids

As COVID-19 continues to spread relentlessly, public health shut-downs and ongoing isolation is having a devastating impact on the mental health of Canada's children and youth.

A study published in February 2021, led by Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, revealed that 70% of children aged 2-18 years reported worse mental health during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Stress caused by isolation is the major cause. Difficulty handling online learning and missing extra-curricular activities also play a big part.

"The added stress kids are feeling has resulted in more bullied kids contacting us than ever before. Online bullying is the main way kids are tormenting each other," says Rob Benn-Frenette, Executive Director of BullyingCanada.

"The biggest complaint is that bullies are humiliating, taunting and threatening kids publicly over social media. When piling this abuse on top of the stress kids already feel due to the pandemic, more of those we talk

to admit feeling so bad that they think the only solution to stop their misery is to end their own life."

BullyingCanada Support Responders, trained in suicide prevention, are on call 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The need for BullyingCanada's life-saving services are greater than ever before

This training is critical, considering that a 2020 UNICEF Canada report noted that Canada has one of the highest rates of

adolescent suicide in the world.

"Kids come to us looking for some hope that they can be happy again," says Rob.

"Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we can stick with every youth until we find a way to bring an end to their being bullied.

"When no one else will stand up for them, we will be there to bring bullied children and youth peace.

"We also try to help bullies, who often act as they do because they've been bullied or abused themselves. By helping bullies, we try to break the cycle of hurt."



When a pink coat both brightened and ruined a boy's day

Sometimes bullying can destroy a child. But sometimes, it makes them stronger and more compassionate to others.

Joshua (whose name was changed to protect his privacy) is one of the lucky kids who learned a big lesson when classmates turned on him for wearing a pink coat.

Joshua's mom, who has a Psychology degree, contacted BullyingCanada for advice, telling us her story.

"Last Christmas, my seven-year-old son Joshua begged me to get him a pink winter jacket, since pink is his favourite colour. His new coat filled his heart with so much happiness. He wore it playing with neighbourhood friends.

"In February, Joshua wore his coat to school for the first time. When I drove to pick him up at the end of the day, he was carrying his coat, not wearing it. I gave him a hard time, because it was a cold winter day.

"Joshua told me that at recess, six

of his classmates had picked on him so badly, saying so many 'cruel words' to him that he lied and said the coat was his sister's, and eventually took it off."



Knowing how bullying can scar children, Joshua's mom has a long chat with him, sharing that true friends will lift him up, not tear him down.

"I told him how bullies want to make him feel isolated, but that I will ALWAYS stand with

him by his side, or like a brick wall in front of him when needed."

To make sure Joshua got the best advice, his mom called BullyingCanada. After explaining what happened, we talked at length to Joshua, and told him there was nothing wrong with wearing any colour he liked. We explained how he could also be supportive of other kids who are 'different'.

We also contacted Joshua's teacher, who mentioned that she had already planned to have her students do a project on bullying in the future, but instead would move this lesson to the next day. We sent her an educational kit to support her presentation, and BullyingCanada wristbands with contact info for her students.

We later followed up with Joshua's mom. "Joshua's doing well," she said. "He's proudly wearing his coat to school all the time now.

"He keeps an eye out for bullied kids. He chooses to hang out with them, and with other kids like him who are different. This experience made him a more caring person!"

How your donations are giving bullied youth a brighter future

Countless children and youth are deeply touched and forever changed, with your help.

- In 2020, **BullyingCanada** answered 207,500 terrified calls for help. Based on calls coming in now, this number will be much higher in 2021.

- In 2020, 46.9 million people visited **BullyingCanada.ca**



- **BullyingCanada.ca** is now available in 5 languages: English, French, Chinese, Punjabi and Arabic.

- **97 minutes:** Average time a Support Responder spends on the phone with a bullied youth.



- **62 minutes:** Average time a Support Responder spends on a texting support session.

Helping heal mental and emotional scars from bullying

Many of the children and youth who contact BullyingCanada for help are contacting us as a last resort.

They have been bullied for so long, and so badly, that they feel we are their last hope to once again be able to live a happy life.

Finding solutions that end their bullying can take weeks, months, or even more than a year.

Then when the bullying has stopped, we refer the youth that their parents to local counselling services that can provide therapy to help bullied kids heal, psychologically and spiritually.

However, not every family can afford counselling for a youth with a bullying-related case of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or related problems like recurring nightmares.

Affordability has become a bigger problem during the pandemic, with many parents struggling



BullyingCanada hopes to expand its services by hiring professional counsellors and social workers to provide counselling to youth whom we help to become free of being bullied, but still need help to heal from mental and emotional scars left by bullying.

with a loss in household income.

BullyingCanada is in negotiations with professional counselling services to provide Support Responder back-up when we are faced with kids at the end of their rope who have experienced very severe, long-term bullying. We are hoping to get these critical services donated.

We also are fundraising to add two or three social workers to our staff, so we can deliver free in-house after-care therapy to bullied youth whose families cannot afford to pay for this critical, often lifesaving therapy. It's our goal to add these vital services in 2022.

The profound impact that our website BullyingCanada.ca has on bullied youth

This note was received in December 2020 from youth website visitor:

This site has really helped me with my own bullying situation.

After i stood up and said something, things started to go well.

i just wanted to say thank you! ❤



BullyingCanada founders recognized as being upstanders in society

BullyingCanada founders Rob Benn-Frenette and Katie Thompson (Neu) received a letter from Noah, a student in Calgary, Alberta offer this kind thank you message.



Rob Benn-Frenette was made a Member of the Order of New Brunswick in 2012, when he was 21 years old. He is pictured here with Katie Thompson on the day he received his honour.

My name is Noah, and I am a student attending Dr. Martha Cohen School in Calgary, Alberta. I am writing you this letter part of a classroom project called The Universe of Obligation. We looked into why people feel obliged to help others. I chose to write to you because you stand up against bullying.

I found the website BullyingCanada.ca when I was searching for an upstander that has helped and supported our country. I read that both of you had been bullied and experienced very bad times in your life. Because of that, you two wanted to step up to bullying and created a website where youth that are having a hard time in their life can get help and have hope again.

Recently, tons of kids have been contacting BullyingCanada and have received lots of help. I am really happy that kids can get help and support if they are being bullied, and I thank you both for launching an organization that helps Canadians.

I am extremely thankful for your service as upstanding citizens in Canada, and of the impact you two have had on Canadian society.

Sincerely,

Noah

You can leave a life-saving gift of caring in your will

By making a heartfelt donation in your will to BullyingCanada, you will be forever remembered for your compassion towards bullied children and youth.

Your legacy can be to bring smiles back to faces, and give brighter futures to vulnerable kids, for years to come.

For more information on making meaningful legacy gifts, visit:
www.BullyingCanada.ca/Donate



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