

Bullying vs. Suicide...Who will win? NO ONE WINS!!!

By Bernadette Love

School bullies have been around for as long as one can remember. They have stalked the halls of learning and made life miserable for countless of students all over the world. The problem with bullying is not limited to a particular culture, race, denomination, zip code, nationality or gender. Bullying can show up anywhere and at any time. And, it doesn't seem to be slowing down. As a matter of fact, it seems to be gaining momentum. Too many of us even over look it until it shows up in our own back yards.

Until recently, I must admit that I hadn't paid much attention to it either. I would hear about a youth committing suicide as a direct result of bullying and for that moment I was horrified and hurt. I would whisper up a prayer for the grieving family but then I would go on with whatever I had been doing. Until I got a phone call.....

One afternoon I got a call from my daughter. Little did I know that it would rock my world. After the pleasantries, she admitted that she had something to tell me that was hard. She let me know that my grandchildren were ok, but that Alex had tried to kill himself. Alexander is her 9 year old twin son. I was stunned and it took me a moment to catch my breath. I could not believe what I had just heard. As she went on to give me the details, my mind focused in on the fact that he had not been successful. He had tried to hurl himself through a second story window but his twin, Andrew, had stopped him.

As long as I live I will never forget how I felt at that moment. There were so many emotions going on at one time. Utter disbelief that this had happened in my back yard, hurt for my daughter and son-in-law who was facing this, relief that he had not been successful and fear that he would try again and succeed. I listened as she gave me the details, trying to hold back tears because I felt that I had to be strong for her. As she gave in to her feelings and began to cry, I wished that I was there so I could hold her in my arms and love the hurt away. My baby was hurting for her baby and all I could do was listen. I felt totally helpless.

She shared with me the steps that the school had taken to prevent the further harassing of Alex by his classmates and she told me that he had an appointment with a therapist in the coming days. Andrea let me know that it was imperative that we reaffirm to Alex just how much he is loved and what a vital part of our family he is. I wished at that moment that I could get in my car and drive the 100 miles to their home just so I could take him in my arms and hold him. The feeling of helplessness was overwhelming. But I knew that I had to place him in the care of God and trust God to take care of him. I will always thank God that he did not succeed, but I also had to think about the children who do.

Mother's Day was just a few days ago and I got a chance to spend time with my daughter and her children. When Alex saw me, he rushed over and threw himself into my arms. I cannot express how thankful I was. Although I was just as happy to see my other three grandchildren, I could not seem to get enough of Alex. I realized how close we had come to never being able to hug him again. In that moment I thought how close we had come to never seeing his smiling face and seeing his beautiful eyes. I am so grateful that the bullying didn't take him from us as it has so many other children.

This experience has taught me several things. Not only has it made me more aware of this ever present problem, but it has put a brand new appreciation for life in my spirit. This problem is one that we can't afford to continue to ignore. We can't look the other way because it has not come to our back yards. As a grandmother, I am asking the question, "What can I do?" How can I make a difference?