

# bystanders

Ending Bullying

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**THREE IN TEN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AND TWO IN TEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NEW MEXICO SAY THEY HAVE BEEN BULLIED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY. LOCAL DOCUMENTARY FOCUSES ON ENDING THIS AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR.**

## BROADCAST:

**KOB TV 4 August 20 7 pm**

**KRWG 22 Las Cruces: Sept. 12 7pm, Sept. 14 5pm, Sept. 15 11am**

**KENW 3 Portales: 3-1 Aug 23 9:30pm, Aug. 24 8:30pm, Aug. 27 2:30pm  
3-2 Aug. 22 9:30pm, Aug. 25 noon; 3-3 Aug. 25 9pm**

ALBUQUERQUE —

*"I had people tell me to go kill myself and that I was a freak, and that I didn't belong anywhere and ...they would, they would throw food at me..."*

Abygail Merlino  
High School Student

Being bullied can cause long term trauma and affect lives for years according to the bullying and violence prevention coordinator of Albuquerque Public Schools, Brooke Tafoya. She also says that the power in the schools is not held by the aggressor in the situation but by the bystanders. And therein lays the solution to the problem. With only 15 % of the school population being either the aggressor or the target, 85% are the bystanders and hold the key to ending bullying. That is the primary message in a locally produced half hour documentary that explores the causes, effects and ultimate solutions to the issue of Bullying. "We learned so many ways that the bystanders can safely have a positive effect on these aggressive situations," says producer/director Chris Schueler. "We also learned that changing the terminology needs to be the start of ending bullying. Conflict is not bullying." According to Ms. Tafoya, "Bullying has become the catch-all phrase for any kind of mean thing or nasty thing that anybody does. There are really three key factors in bullying. First is power and control because it's an imbalance of power. The second is that it's repeated over time and the third piece is there has to be intent, intent to harm."

MORE

“This is crucial information for teens and for parents,” says Thom Turbett, President of the Board of SafeTeen New Mexico. “And in addition to the full documentary that we’ll distribute to all the school districts and the PTA’s, we have shorter training videos that APS has helped us create that can be used in schools along with a curriculum guide.”

Produced by multiple Emmy © Award winning director, Chris Schueler, the project is presented by SafeTeen New Mexico, Albuquerque Public Schools, Bernalillo County Substance Abuse Prevention Program, Cooperative Educational Services, New Mexico Office of the Attorney General, Independent Insurance Agents of New Mexico, State Farm Insurance, The City of Albuquerque, New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators and the New Mexico School Boards Association in association with KOB-TV, KENW-TV, KRWG-TV and the New Mexico PTA.

The documentary uses interviews with dozens of New Mexico youth who discuss the bullying issue and who have been aggressors, targets and bystanders. In addition to the statistics about bullying in New Mexico the project also explores the dangers and illegality of cyber bullying along with the parents role in helping to prevent bullying behavior.

“The key is not only understanding what bullying is and is not,” says Chris Schueler, Executive Director of SafeTeen and the producer of the film, “ but how effective the bystanders can be in putting an end to this destructive behavior.” In addition to the documentary, KOB TV 4 will also present a live half hour follow up program that will focus on solutions.

The Albuquerque Mayors Youth Advisory Council are involved in the project through production, marketing and distribution work. They have created a facebook page and are overseeing the Gala Premiere which will include an anti bullying march after the screening. The screening is slated for August 16 at 6pm at the Kimo Theatre. In addition to the documentary, there are shorter, targeted videos created for Elementary Schools, Middle Schools and Parents. For information please visit [www.SafeTeen.net](http://www.SafeTeen.net) or [www.ChristopherProductions.org](http://www.ChristopherProductions.org) . The documentary will broadcast on KOB-TV 4, KRWG 22 in Las Cruces and KENW 3 in Portales in late August and September.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

[www.SafeTeen.net](http://www.SafeTeen.net)

SafeTeen New Mexico has assembled information and resources on it's website including a free, downloadable discussion guide to be used with the program and a tape order form.

**The following project participants are available for interviews:**

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