

## Is Your School “No Place for Hate?”

**“I used to beat people up.** Truthfully, I used to beat people up a lot. Many of you readers probably think I have been Mr. Goody Two-Shoes my whole life, but honestly, I was a bully growing up. In elementary and middle school, I threw kids against the wall. I rubbed their heads in the dirt at recess. I bit them. I even knocked teeth out.”

- Seattle Seahawks Quarterback Russell Wilson,  
“Let’s Talk About It,” *theplayer’stribune.com*,  
October 2, 2014

It’s something every parent fears; someone bullying their child at school. And it is a legitimate concern. A recent survey of East Cobb principals and teachers revealed some alarming statistics.

- 33% of respondents named bullying as one of the three most significant challenges they face with regard to culture and diversity in their schools, yet...
- Nearly one fourth of respondents, 24%, said that their school DOES NOT participate in an anti-bullying program.

- ECCC PTA Diversity Survey, Spring 2014

Studies show that anti-bullying programs can significantly reduce incidences of bullying at school, yet with school district budgets stretched to the extreme, how does a school allocate the resources for yet another program?

The answer is they don’t have to.

“No Place For Hate,” a project of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), is a free and flexible anti-bullying program designed to fit the needs of each school’s unique population and culture. The program offers simple step-by-step implementation instruction and requires leadership be governed by a diverse committee representing the school and community, which could include administrators, teachers, counselors, students, parents and even community and business partners. The committee oversees a needs assessment of the school with regard to bias and bullying and organizes an official presentation of a “No Place For Hate School Pledge,” promising to create a school environment that is “No Place For Hate.” The committee meets with school organizations and clubs for their input on how to address the issues identified in the school’s needs assessment. Finally, they meet to plan at least three school activities that align with the No Place For Hate mission of eliminating bias and bullying at school. With their activities completed, schools submit a brief description of their program to the ADL to earn a personalized banner declaring that their school is “No Place For Hate.” Banner presentations are usually a school-wide event, often celebrated in pep rally style with an ADL official to make the presentation to the school. Designations must be re-earned each year, but successful or existing programs can always be repeated.

Aside from the cost, which is literally nothing, the real beauty of this program is the way that it works to affect the very culture of the school. Unlike programs offering a single-day anti-bullying event or hosting a speaker for an assembly, requiring schools to complete at least three anti-bullying activities a year (they can do as many as they wish) sends a consistent, year-round message that “at our school, we don’t tolerate bias or bullying.” Students simply learn the message just like any other school policies and procedures. According to the “No Place For Hate” website, “The schools that benefit most from this program make it visible and incorporate its message of respect into the fabric of daily school life and school culture. No Place for Hate® becomes, as one teacher describes, “The way we do things here.”

As listed on the “No Place For Hate” website, eight of East Cobb’s 35 public schools took a stand against bullying and earned their “No Place For Hate” designation for the 2013-2014 school year.

Congratulations to:

Blackwell Elementary School

Davis Elementary School

East Cobb Middle School

Garrison Mill Elementary School

Mabry Middle School

McClesky Middle School

Nicholson Elementary School

Timber Ridge Elementary School

Is your school on this list? If not, contact your school administrators, councilors, and PTA and urge them to consider implementing the program. And please consider volunteering to help your school make it happen. There could be no better use of your time and talents.

For more information about the “No Place For Hate” program, check out their website at [www. http://noplacementforhate.org/](http://noplacementforhate.org/) or contact ECCC PTA Diversity Chair Wendy Stewart at [diversity@ecccpta.org](mailto:diversity@ecccpta.org).