



BILLBIERMANN of the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center talked to the sophomores, juniors and seniors on Dec. 4 about bullying during a two-day training course held at Decatur Community High School. — Photos by Whitney Wright

Students learn about bullying problems

By WHITNEY WRIGHT
Someone is bullied every seven minutes in this country, and one in five persons is a victim of bullying.

Nearly 160,000 students stay home from school each day because they are afraid of being bullied.

"Character is what someone is doing when nobody is watching," Principal Charles Haag tells us each year as he welcomes us back to school.

This motto also fits in nicely with the new state regulation that says all schools in Kansas must have a policy to prohibit bullying on school property, in a school vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event.

The law also requires that districts adopt and implement a plan to address bullying, which must include training and education for staff members and students.

But bullying is not limited to physical and verbal bullying. These are now joined by cyber bullying.

Our school district held a training course to learn about bullying, taught by Bill Biermann on Monday, Dec. 3, for all staff and then on Tuesday, Dec. 4, for all students.

Bill Biermann is the assistant executive director of Southwest Plains Regional Service Center and a former teacher, coach, and

principal.

On Monday night, Mr. Biermann also talked with parents. The school board wanted to involve the parents in the training because bullying is very common outside of school as well as at school.

On Tuesday Mr. Biermann spoke to two different groups. The first group consisted of the sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

The second group consisted of the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. In the afternoon, he was at the grade school.

"We got to go around and talk to people that we normally don't talk to, and I thought that was cool," said senior Seth Batson.

The training was held to help the students in the school stay safe. It was also a way for the students, faculty, and parents to develop a stronger character. Mr. Haag said the faculty and parents want the students to stand up for what is right and not let bullying be a part of the school.

Mr. Haag said he hopes the training will help our school prevent future bullying, and that it made everyone realize each person is important.

"Mr. Biermann talked to the students about the fact that this is their school, and it's their job to make it a fun place to be for everyone," said

Mr. Haag.

"I thought it was a good way to teach us how to not be bullies because he [Mr. Biermann] didn't just talk, he had us do activities," said seventh-grader Jesus Hernandez.

"It was a good use of my time because it taught me that even though we may not think someone is being bullied, they may think other wise," said sophomore Jeffery Isbell.

According to the Kansas State Department of Education, bullying can have both traumatic and lasting effects on the victim.

Bullied students often report difficulty concentrating on schoolwork. Being a victim of a bully can lead to feelings of anxiousness, which in turn may result in a variety of physical and emotional challenges.

Bullied students may have higher rates of absenteeism and dropout as compared to their non-bullied peers.

Students who are bullied tend to have higher levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, loneliness, unhappiness, and low self-esteem.

When faced with continual bullying, victimized students may become depressed and despondent, even suicidal or homicidal.

In fact, students who have had a long-standing history of being a victim of severe bullying sometimes retaliate with extreme violence,

such as the case with several recent school shootings. Overall, bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect a student's well-being.

Researchers have also found that years later, long after the bullying has stopped, adults who were bullied as teens have higher levels of depression and poorer self-esteem than other adults.

According to the state Department of Education website, bullying is "any intentional gesture or any intentional written, verbal or physical act or threat that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student or staff member."

This includes harming a student or staff member, whether physically or mentally; damaging a student's or staff member's property; and placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of harm to the student or staff member or to the student's or staff member's property.

Voice of Decatur Community High School

Decatur Dictator

By the DCCHS Dictator Staff

Kayettes observe their special week

By CHERISH MANNING
Kay Week was last week, and the Kayettes participated in a number of activities to help our school, community, and nation.

During the week students were asked to bring canned goods to fill up the back office doors of Mr. Dreher and Mr. Haag. If the students meet the challenge, the whole student body will be treated to ice cream.

The Kayettes made breakfast for the teachers on Wednesday.

On Thursday, the girls sold "Cookies for Cancer." Homemade cookies were sold during homeroom with all proceeds going to the Cancer Society. Several girls also delivered door hangers each Kayette made to the nursing homes.

Recycling boxes were picked up on Friday.

When asked what she liked most about Kay Week Kenzie Fisher replied, "I really liked going to the nursing home. That is always fun."

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School Menus

December 17-21 OBERLIN SCHOOLS
Monday: Breakfast: breakfast combo, muffin. Lunch: chicken sandwich, French fries. **Tuesday:** Breakfast: French toast sticks. Lunch: sliced ham, scalloped potatoes. **Wednesday:** Breakfast: breakfast pizza. Lunch: hamburger,

potato chips. **Thursday:** Breakfast: waffle, ham patty. Lunch: sliced turkey, mashed potatoes, dressing, gravy, corn, cranberry sauce. **Friday:** Breakfast: breakfast burrito. Lunch: pizza, peas. Juice and fruit served with breakfast. Milk served with all lunches.

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