

- Home
- News
- Entertainment
- Movies
- Lifestyle
- Your Money
- Books
- Workology
- Travel
- Moving Up
- Sports
- Columnists
- Tech
- Special Section
- Toronto Contests
- Vancouver Contests
- Ottawa Contests
- Letters to the Editor
- Contact Us
- Advertise with Us
- About Metro

Read today's Metro...

- Toronto
- Vancouver
- Ottawa
- Montreal

Advertise with Metro
And Reach Out
to the GTA >



A Woman's World

Lisi Teshler

Analysis of events and issues from the female perspective.

PUBLISHED JANUARY 11, 2006

Joint effort can stop bullying

I was away on Boxing Day and missed the tragic Toronto news story about 15-year-old Jane Creba. The entire nation was shocked that this popular Grade 10 student was just a bystander murdered in a gun battle while innocently shopping downtown. But I haven't missed out on the feelings of frustration, outrage, and fear that accompany the multitude of shootings which have occurred in the past 12 months, claiming so many young people's lives.

Because of the relationship between violence, gangs and bullying, I spoke with Alex Penn, who, with her partner Delfina Moore, has co-founded Champions Against Bullying. Their organization works tirelessly to reduce school bullying and violence. She gave me a chilling statistic: more than 60 per cent of kids who are bullying, and are not stopped in elementary school, have a criminal record by age 24.

Why do these kids do what they do? More importantly, how do we, as concerned adults and parents, stop it?

According to Penn, it starts at a very early age. Even in nursery school, children know how to be mean. They know how to not be inclusive. They know that saying things like, "You're not invited to my party," are not nice.

It starts in the home. Children as young as six months copy the behaviour they see around them. They mimic parents, caregivers and older children. They learn their cues, their reactions to their surroundings. By age 3, children already have a learned pattern of behaviour of how they deal with the world, and how to achieve what they want.

If their pattern at home is to yell and scream, perhaps even hit, then they'll bring that behaviour with them into the school. At that stage, it's not the child's fault for he/she knows nothing else.

If their behaviour is not recognized and dealt with, these kids will continue this way as long as they get away with it.

Teachers shouldn't turn a blind eye to obvious behaviour problems. Parents of bullies also need to recognize the problem, and attempt to help their kids. It's important to get to the root of the problem and not wallow in blame. Parents, teachers and other school officials need to work together.

"Blame doesn't help anyone and it's the kids who need help," explains Penn.

Toronto District School Board chair Sheila Ward has called for more co-operation among various levels of government and the school board in seeing that violence prevention staff and programs are in place in schools.

Penn and Moore are already on board. They have created the No-Nonsense Guide To Kids' Bullying Solutions, an interactive e-book in CD format that offers preventive strategies and practical solutions for kids who have been bullied. For more information, go to www.championsagainstbullying.com.

Of course, guns and gangs have many other root causes, from poverty to lack of social programs. However, if we can stop the bullying, we're making some progress.

Tune into CFRB Talk Radio 1010 on Sunday from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. to hear Lisi Teshler on Ask Ellie And Lisi.

<< back

YOUR INTERACTIVE TOOLS

Submit a Letter

QUICK METRO LINKS

- Contests
- Today's TV Guide
- www.metropoint.com
- Letters to the Editor
- About Metro