CAC Corner: Let's Stop Bullying

Center for Persons With Disabilities

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CAC CORNER: LET'S STOP BULLYING

October 6, 2011 by cpehrson

This CAC Corner blog is by Kelly Holt, a self-advocate member of the CPD Consumer Advisory Council.

Kelly is one of two recipients of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities 2011 Champions of Equal Opportunity Awards. This award recognizes outstanding leaders who have made significant contributions to advancing the values and goals of increased independence, productivity and integration of people with developmental disabilities.

We need to remember who we are...that we are all just people. We need to respect everyone. We don't want to put anybody down.

Unfortunately, sometimes people forget this.

At the last Disability Law Center Board Meeting I was at, we talked about the results of their 2011 Community Needs Assessment that asked what issues and needs that people with disabilities had in the past year. One of the main issues that was brought up had to do with bullying of students with disabilities in the schools.

Bullying and teasing have become a problem throughout the country. Some say that 37% of students with disabilities have been bullied, but I think it is much more than that because some don't tell their teachers or their parents.

Bullying can be name-calling, not being included, or maybe even getting pushed or hit by someone. I think everyone has been bullied at some time in their lives. Parents and teachers need to realize that it is still going on and they need to focus on it and watch out for it.

We need to stop the bullying and remind everyone that we are all people, even if we might be different from someone else. I think the best way to do this is to educate people. To talk to teachers, parents, and students about how important it is to respect everyone and to treat them kindly.

The Spread the Word to End the Word campaign helped to get the word "retard" out of the everyday speech. I think we could get rid of bullying if we started a campaign about it. If we can stop it in the schools, especially the elementary schools, by the time people are out of school, they will have learned to respect people with disabilities and treat them kindly. They will know that people with disabilities are people first, and their disability is just part of who they are.

I hope that we can educate people and help them remember that we are all just people, so bullying can be stopped.

[Note: "The Walk A Mile in Their Shoes" Report is a report on bullying and special needs and teaches how to "disarm" bullying. It is found on the Ability Path web site.]