

Brighter Futures



Celebrating the powerful impact of BullyingCanada donors

2019/20 Donor Update

Kids standing by kids

The inspiring story of a selfless Ontario girl

BullyingCanada was begun by two teenagers who personally understood the terror of bullying.

Today, the tradition they started of kids helping other kids who are bullied is being carried on by a compassionate 9-year-old girl named Annabelle.

Two years ago, Michelle wanted to get together with a dozen friends to celebrate her birthday. She planned an untraditional party, with a specific goal in mind. At a local pool, she hosted a swimming party. She explained, "I don't need more stuff, so I asked that instead of bringing me presents, that my friends and their families make a donation to BullyingCanada."

She did this in 2017 and again in 2018. Combined, Michelle and her friends raised $2,435!

"I wanted to do something to help people," Michelle said. "I think bullying is wrong because it makes people feel sad. BullyingCanada's work is so important because it is good for bullied kids to have someone to talk to when they need help.

"I am proud of myself for choosing to help others. It feels so good to know I am helping kids who need it!"

Rob Benn-Frenette, the Co-Founder of BullyingCanada, said, "Heartfelt gifts like those from Michelle and her friends fuel the work of our Support Team.

"Their donations allow us to stick with bullied youths who contact us until we bring an end to their being bullied. *Michelle's selfless gifts are helping other kids experience joy once again.* Every time I think of her, I smile!"



BullyingCanada is so grateful to donors like Michelle (centre) who turned two of her birthday pool parties into opportunities to raise money that ensures bullied kids have our organization to turn to for help.

Following in Michelle's footsteps

Does Michelle's story inspire you to come up with a fun way to show your support to BullyingCanada?

Here are some ideas to turn group support into much-needed help for bullied youth.

- **50/50 raffles** - Buy tickets at dollar store
- **Bake sale** - An old idea that still works!
- **Casual Fridays** - Employees who wear casual clothes make a donation
- **Approach your local service club** - Ask a local service club to consider making a donation to BullyingCanada



Bullying isn't just a problem, it should be considered a national emergency based on the stunning statistics

47% of Canadian parents report having a child who is a victim of bullying

Rob Benn-Frenette
For CBC News
November 2, 2019

Fifteen years have passed since I first did what we are now doing as a country due to the recent death of 14-year-old Devan Bracci-Selvey – having a conversation about bullying and what can be done about it.

Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Rob Benn-Frenette, O.N.B, and I was bullied my entire school career.

Now I'm the executive director and co-founder of BullyingCanada, a national anti-bullying charity that provides youth in every part of this country with access to resources, information and support about bullying by telephone, text, e-mail and live chat.

BullyingCanada was formed out of necessity, because I could not find the support I needed when I needed it. That led me to ask, could others? Should I, at 15 years old and looking for someone to turn to for help, have to be asking myself that question?

I came forward out of necessity. I still have the physical scars from when two sisters burned the back of my neck while I was on the school bus one morning, for example.

And let's not even talk about the emotional scars that I will likely have forever.

They're why I skipped my 10-year high-school reunion. I went with my husband to his… he went to a different school, but I knew maybe five people at his reunion and almost had a panic attack. Could you imagine if we had gone to mine?

For anyone reading this who has bullied someone physically or emotionally, know that the effects stay with that person for a long, long time – possibly for the rest of their life.

The two sisters on the school bus were not held responsible for the attack because school board and provincial policy at the time was "a school bus was not school property." It was reported to police, but no action was taken. That was back in 2005.

It has been 5,475 days since I started my public conversation about bullying. What has changed over the years? Some things have gotten better – others not so much.

Society and schools have made efforts to stop bullying through rallies and initiatives like ribbon and T-shirt campaigns, but it's still happening with disturbing regularity. Kids are still being assaulted and physically injured.

I am the last person to blame the educators. They have 400 other things on their plate running schools and classrooms, along with ensuring that students who need extra help are getting it. Plus, it's not just happening in the schoolyard, and they'd need eyes on the back of their heads to make sure that kids are not bullying each other while they are teaching.

Yes, that does happen. Often.

According to recent statistics, 47 per cent of Canadian parents report having a child who is a victim of bullying.

Nearly half. Bullying isn't just a problem. With numbers like that it should be considered a national emergency.

This is where I will give you a "reader discretion is advised" warning … I feel that it's important for people to understand what bullying does to its victims. These calls for help that have come in to BullyingCanada are nightmarish, but they're examples of what I've grimly come to consider standard calls, albeit ones that require extra time and care.

One that comes to mind happened last year, from a youth in Ontario in middle school. She

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Numbers of callers continue to grow

In 2018, BullyingCanada answered 76,221 anguished cries for help. This was almost 2,000 more than the year before.

Yet for every tormented child we stand behind, finding a way to end their being bullied, there are so many more who don't know we are there to stand by them and give them hope that they can enjoy a brighter future.

It breaks our heart when we hear of a bullied child who has taken his or her own life, because they were not aware we were there to help.

Your compassionate support of BullyingCanada has dramatically improved the lives of countless vulnerable kids.

Thank you so much for making a caring gift that is offering bullied children help and hope!

You help our volunteer Support Team Buddies to bring an end to kids' torment, connect them with local social services to allow them to heal, and move into their future with a new joyful confidence.

Your heartfelt support truly saves lives.

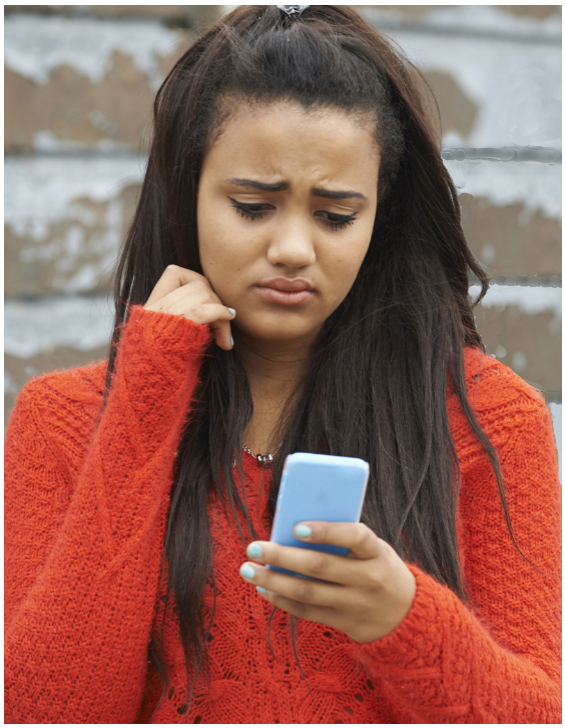
On behalf of kids like Desmond pictured below, please accept our warmest gratitude!



Support through texting now available!

Thanks to generous support from our telecommunications partner **RingCentral,** BullyingCanada is excited to now be able to communicate with bullied youth in a way they are often most comfortable and open to deeper conversations - through texting.

Our Support Team *SMS Buddies* can be reached through the same phone number hundreds of people use every day to call us: **1-877-352-4497.**



Interested in joining our Support Team?

We are looking for volunteers to support bullied youth who contact BullyingCanada by phone or texting.

We will provide some training, and require you take Applied Suicide Prevention Skills Training.

You must have a computer and reliable high-speed Internet to access training sessions and resources, and to communicate with youth through written methods. You must commit to at least 2 two-hour shifts per month.

You also are required to undergo a federal criminal background check.

Want to become an important part of our life-saving Support Team?

Apply by going to:

BullyingCanada.ca/Volunteer

Bullying is a national emergency

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was in her bedroom closet. She had just slit both her wrists. Her "owners" (that is how she referred to her bullies, because to her they controlled her entire life), had told her to end her life. She was calling us so that we could deliver a final message to her parents when they got home, because she did not want a younger sibling to find her first.

Luckily in her case, we were able to get emergency personnel to her in time.

Another was from a boy who called us from New Brunswick because he saw our TV commercial. He was being pushed and shoved on the playground, and desperately wanted to talk to someone about how to escape the constant torment. He was just six years old.

I spent two hours talking to him, and we were able to get his matter addressed. After that call, he asked if he could meet me to say thank you. We normally do not meet our clients (we had 76,221 of them last year), but we made an exception in this case – and speaking to this six-year-old reminded me this is why I do what I do.

I will leave you with this: If you see bullying of any kind, report it. If you are a youth, tell your teacher, guidance counsellor or school administrators. And if you're being bullied, tell someone you trust or contact a help line where there are people who will listen and want to help – you're not alone.

Bullying isn't just "kids being kids." It's harmful, it's dangerous, and it's against the law. We cannot afford to have another case like Devan Bracci-Selvey, or Rehtaeh Parsons, or all the others we have lost across Canada.

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What can you do to stop bullying in your community?

First, remember that you can communicate with a trained BullyingCanada Support Team Buddy, any day, any time.
To call or text: 1-877-352-4497.
Email: Support@BullyingCanada.ca
Online chats: visit www.BullyingCanada.ca

If you see a child being bullied:

- Tell the child's teacher, coach or school counsellor
- Move toward or next to the victim
- Use your voice – say "stop"
- Befriend the victim
- Lead the victim away from the situation

If you know a bullied youth, advise him or her to:

- Walk away from the bully
- Tell someone they trust – a teacher, coach, guidance counsellor, parent
- Say something complimentary to the bully to distract him/her
- Stay in groups to avoid confrontation
- Use humour to throw off or connect with their bully
- Pretend that the bully isn't affecting them
- Remind them that they are a good person, worthy of respect

If you know a youth that is bullying someone, advise him or her to:

- Remember that they can ask BullyingCanada for help
- Talk to a teacher or counsellor
- Think about how they would feel if someone bullied them
- Consider their victim's feelings – think before they act

BullyingCanada
A National Voice for Bullied Youth

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