

Show teaches Raynham students lessons in bullying prevention

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Jim Jordan, president of ReportBullying.com, delivered his anti-bullying program at the Raynham and Bridgewater middle schools Wednesday and Thursday.

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Raynham —

Students at Raynham Middle School were shown a new perspective on the age-old problem of bullying Thursday.

A one-man show performed by entertainer Jim Jordan, president of ReportBullying.com, included magic, games, cash and twisty balloons to enforce the message that even if students aren't bullies themselves, they can put a stop to it.

"The role of the bystander is to get them to understand, when they are complacent they are complicit," Jordan said.

Rather than focus on victims, Jordan wants bullies stopped as soon as they start their hurtful behavior.

Bullying is most common among students in grades five through ten, he said. And the sooner bullies are forced to change their ways, the less chance they have of developing other destructive behavior as they get older.

When students report bullying they cut off the gratification bullies rely on to justify their actions. "We don't need bullies in the school, but bullies need you," Jordan told the students.

Parents, teachers and police officers must also confront bullying as soon as it is brought to their attention Jordan said.

He praised Raynham Police Chief Louis J. Pacheco and school resource officer Louis F. Pacheco for attending the program and promoting an awareness of online threats.

“The authority figures have to be part of the process,” Chief Pacheco said.

Bullying — and especially the online version known as cyberbullying — has been a big issue lately after the suicide of a South Hadley High School student in January. Jordan wasn’t familiar with the incident but said cyberbullying is like other online problems that parents should be policing.

“It’s just another form of bullying,” he said.

Jordan drew a distinction between telling parents and authorities about bullying and snitching, saying that snitching intends to get someone in trouble while “telling” parents or teachers of bad behavior is helping a victim.

Raynham Middle School Principal David Thomson said stopping bullies makes schools safer for all students. “Kids need to realize that kids who don’t bully outnumber the students who do bully.”

After the presentation, students said they were motivated to stop bullies at school. “I’m going to stop it as best I can with my friends,” said fifth-grader Tim Ennis.

“I realize now it’s a big problem in every school,” said eighth-grader Christine Schondek.

Assistant Principal Richard Florence said putting an end to bullying is like teaching any other subject.

“[Students] are not born knowing how to do math and read and they’re not born with social skills. They need to get taught at home and at school. It’s a challenge.”

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FAST FACTS

Tips students can use to stop cyberbullying:

- Never give out a password
- Don’t delete cyberbullying e-mails
- Always report something that makes you feel uncomfortable to your parents.