

X CLOSE ARTICLE

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Teens behind pink shirts launch anti-bullying website

By IAN FAIRCLOUGH Valley Bureau

It's been almost a year since the boys in pink became a worldwide symbol of anti-bullying, and now the two teens from Kings County want to reach out to anyone, anywhere who is or has been bullied.

Travis Price and David Shepherd became overnight sensations when they bought pink shirts and anything else of that hue for students to wear at Central Kings Rural High School when they started classes last year.

They did it to support a new student who was bullied when he wore a pink shirt to school.

The movement took off across Canada and beyond, with people at schools and businesses choosing to wear pink for a day to show support for the anti-bullying movement.

Travis and David have graduated but thought there was still more they could do to help people who have been ridiculed or otherwise set upon by bullies. At the suggestion and urging of a Valley business, they are launching their own website, **www.forceinpink.com**, so people can contact them to talk about problems.

They expect that the site will be ready this week.

They'll be communicating only through e-mail, and say they're not looking to replace the national Kids Help Phone. But they say there may be some people who want to talk to someone they know has gone through the same thing.

Both teens were bullied themselves as youngsters.

"We know we're not professionals," said Travis, who is attending university in New Brunswick this fall. "We can maybe give them some tips that helped us or maybe worked for us."

David, who is going to the Nova Scotia Community College before moving on to join the RCMP, says he's kind of nervous with the site going online, and wants to make sure they give good information to anyone who contacts them.

"I just hope we're able to do the same thing as last year and teach kids to stand up for themselves," he said. "That's the biggest thing, to not be afraid to talk to someone about what's going on in your life."

He said it will be a learning experience to talk to people about issues they may have. Every problem people contact them about "is going to be a new curveball for us. We're going to use our own personal experience to help the people that talk to us."

Travis said that some people don't have any close friends or anyone at home to talk to about trouble they're having with bullies.

"These are the type of people we want the website for . . . they don't have a form of support, and we can be their shoulder to lean on."

They plan to respond within a day of getting a message, and will refer people to other agencies such as the Kids Help Phone if the matter is really serious or beyond what they feel they are able to help with.

The site will also sell pink T-shirts, wrist bands and possibly other items for schools that want to take part in annual pink days or for anyone who wants to spread the anti-bullying message.

The pair won't make any money from the site and have sponsors to help cover expenses.

Last year, Premier Rodney MacDonald proclaimed that the second Thursday of every school year will be Stand Up Against Bullying Day in Nova Scotia. That makes next Thursday the first official anti-bullying day. People across the province are encouraged to wear pink to school or work that day.

British Columbia holds a pink day as well, and many schools and offices in other provinces and countries have also taken up the cause.

An event called Pink Day 2008 has been set up on the popular social networking site Facebook with more than 3,000 people indicating they will be taking part next week.

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