

Youth can get information, share their stories on anti-bullying site

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Bathurst, N.B. — An anti-bullying website created by youth for youth is providing a resource to all Canadians at an unparalleled level.

Robert Frenette, founder of BullyingCanada.Ca, said the site — no doubt spurred by Bullying Awareness Week — attracted more than 150,000 visitors last month. Formerly BullyingKidsSpeakUp.Ca, the site continues to provide information about bullying and offer a space for youth to share their stories.

Frenette said the target is youth, but parents, teachers, and the general public are using the various resources to get the information they need about a bully, a victim or a bystander.

“There are no other websites launched in Canada (targeting anti-bullying) by youth for youth,” Frenette told The Western Star in a telephone interview from Bathurst.

“That is the main reason a lot of people are interested. It is something a lot of youth can relate to just because it is youth working with youth. It is more of a peer to peer thing rather than an adult to peer thing, where they basically don’t relate as much.”

The 18-year-old feels the greater emphasis towards anti-bullying in general is making a difference throughout the country.

“Bullying seems to be decreasing a bit more than it was a couple of years ago,” he said.

“It seems now there are more resources provided for youth who require support in either getting over being a victim of bullying or being an actual bully. Along with that there seems to be more support for a bystander to bullying, because they are being provided resources with information as to how to curb the problem in their area.”

However, Frenette said there is a long way to go and said it is the provincial and federal government’s responsibility to provide greater resources to those in need. Meanwhile, he will continue to strive to offer the best resources he can on this site.

People have access to a page of links to other anti-bullying websites, along with a new interactive section with a chat room and a message board — both monitored by volunteers. There is also a weekly newsletter sent out with information about different anti-bullying projects. Just last week a poster campaign was launched to promote the site throughout Canada and the United States.

Frenette said he has had some correspondence with Newfoundlanders, but not enough to assess how severe a problem bullying is in this province. Like many places though, he said it appears bullying needs to be addressed to a larger extent.

He encourages everybody to access the site and use the resources provided.

He is also inviting those who would like to be actively involved in the sites operation to check it out. He said things like chat and/or message board monitors, writers and researchers are needed.

“We have been there and know the pain associated with bullying,” Frenette said. “We also know that bullying can be a solitary issue with many victims unable, for fear of reprisal, to speak out, and that is why we need a place for victims and targets of bullying to share information and seek out solutions.”