

Raynham Middle School students empowered to stop bullies

Middle schoolers get lessons on stopping aggressors

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RAYNHAM —

Seventh-grader Courtney Nunes has seen bullying in her school and now feels empowered to do something about it.

“If I see someone being bullied then I’ll tell someone in authority,” said Courtney, 12, after watching “Report Bullying” on Thursday, a program sponsored by the Raynham Police Department and offered this week to all middle school students in the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District.

Bullying, especially bullying done online, called cyberbullying, has gotten a lot of attention recently following the apparent bullying-related suicide of a South Hadley High School freshman girl in January.

Jim Jordan, president of ReportBullying.com, gave the presentation to Bridgewater Middle School students on Wednesday and to Raynham Middle School students on Thursday.

Jordan stressed the importance of bystanders speaking up and reporting physical, emotional and cyberbullying as soon as they know about it.

“There is a handful of students coming through those doors and trying to take your respect. Those bullies use deliberate, intentional, aggressive behavior to try to control you physically, mentally and emotionally,” said Jordan.

He urged students to take power back from the bully by having courage, integrity and respect for themselves and their school community.

“Each and every one of you has a special gift inside yourselves to do the right thing, and that is to be responsible and speak up,” said Jordan.

“The bullies are never going to stop what they do because they receive so much pleasure from it. They’re not going to stop until you understand your role as a bystander,” said Jordan. “It only takes one student in this school to create a safe environment. You guys are the ones in control because you’re the ones who can make a difference.”

Seventh-grader Desiree Bergeron, 13, said she thought the assembly would have a big impact on the school.

“I’ve seen everything he talked about, especially some of the verbal abuse,” said Desiree.

The 45-minute presentation used humor, video clips, visual aids and cash prizes to keep students engaged.

“The way he presented it made it fun,” said Daniel Bairos, 13, who along with friend Jerry Donahue, 12, said they, too, have seen bullying at Raynham Middle School.

“Now whenever I see harassment or emotional abuse, I’ll go to guidance or the assistant principal or a teacher,” said Daniel.