

Member Stories

To Stop Bullying, Character Development Is Key

 United States | by [CorinneGregory](#) September 2009

Our society is becoming increasingly rude, crude and indifferent to others' needs and wants. Our children particularly suffer because too many come into schools without the social skills, character development and values they need to be successful—in school and in life.

Bullying and other anti-social behaviors are one symptom of this behavior. We pour billions of dollars into Federally-mandated anti-bullying programs in our schools, yet in spite of that, our kids still stand a 1 in 4 chance of being the victims of school-based violence before they hit high school. A full third of kids ages 12-18 report either having been bullied or being the bully.

Generally speaking, anti-bullying programs have focused on management and mitigation of the problem once it exists and has been identified. I wanted to go one step further.

As Mother Teresa said, "We will never see an end to global conflict until we stop thinking 'anti-war' and start thinking 'pro-peace.'" I founded a company, The PoliteChild and created the SocialSmarts program to help students learn the types of skills and character development that they were often not getting anywhere else. Our fully-integrated curriculum helps build cultures in schools where bullying and anti-social behavior just no longer exists, because the kids won't stand for it. There is order and discipline. Kids are happy to be there and show up more often. Teachers get more productive teaching time because they spend less on classroom management and discipline.

See what a school with SocialSmarts looks like:





As a by-product, test scores go up, sometimes as much as double digits in just the first year. We're particularly pleased on the effects in low-income, high-minority schools. Good social skills are the fastest ticket to freedom and a better life and we love seeing the expressions on the kids' faces when they learn and use positive social skills and get praise for their new attitudes and behaviors.

And, the kids get why this is important, why it matters to them. As a 5th-grade student in one of our schools once stated to her local school board when asked what the program meant to her, she said, "I believe that this program will stick with many kids. If we had PoliteChild long ago, the world would be safer and better. What we lost long ago, we can make up for it now if every child has this program because children are the future."

We want to make this available to every child, every family, every community that feels they would benefit. It's my life's work and my mission, and I thank you for taking time to read about it.

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IDEA 1: [Learn more about this member's organization. Visit the SocialSmarts website.](#)

Tell us about your most memorable volunteer experience, or about a time you gave your time, money or talents to a cause you care about.

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