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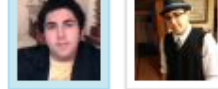
Feature | Local Connections

GNHS Grad Wants to Spread Anti-Bullying Message in Schools

Anthony Szulczynski, a 2012 graduate of Grayslake North High School, says children, teens and adults need more education about the damaging effects of bullying and plans to campaign against it in area schools this fall.

Posted by [Angela Sykora](#) (Editor) | July 26, 2012 at 07:21 PM

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Grayslake North High School graduate Anthony Szulczynski remembers how his life changed in the first grade. It was his first bullying experience.

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"I was adopted as a child by a gay couple. First grade was the first time I told someone I didn't have a mom."

Szulczynski said he went from being happy-go-lucky with lots of playmates to being ostracized.

"Everyone started treating me differently and stopped talking to me. They thought I was gay too. It was terrible. I had no friends. It lasted all the way to seventh grade."

As he grew into adolescence, said Szulczynski, the pain of being bullied became so hurtful and intense, he was at the point of considering taking his own life.

"I went to a hospital where you learn to know who you are as a person and to be who you are, that you don't have to be afraid."

That is the message Szulczynski wants to spread to other youths, a message of healing, hope and optimism for the future. That it does get better, but you have to stand up for yourself and be yourself.

There will be plenty of times in your life, said Szulczynski, when people won't like you, what you stand for, or your ideas and opinions, but you cannot give up or give in.

"I always changed myself into what people wanted to see. Now, people look up to me."

Szulczynski has started an [anti-bullying program](#) called, "The Bullying Ends Here," which he plans to bring to local middle and high schools. He wants to speak to students, and adults about the subject.

Szulczynski, who was a member of a GNHS activist group called "Voices," said he was inspired to create his own program after the "Rachel's Challenge" program came to his high school.

Rachel Scott was the first person killed in the Columbine High School shootings in April 1999. Her family and friends created Rachel's Challenge to inspire a chain reaction of kindness and compassion.

"I wanted to have a group based on a lot of the messages spread through that," said Szulczynski.

After a dear friend committed suicide, escalated by bullying, Szulczynski said he began asking himself "big questions" about what he could do to help prevent another such tragedy.

Through a public service practicum class at GNHS, Szulczynski began honing his public speaking skills and helped organize events like a 911 community heroes tribute.

Though he's studying at Grayslake's [College of Lake County](#) to become an emergency medical technician (EMT) "to help people even more," Szulczynski wants to continue bringing his anti-bullying message to the masses.

He's scheduled to give his first back-to-school presentation to [District 46](#) teachers on Aug. 21.

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Comments

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Softball Jim July 27, 2012 at 01:04 PM
What a great story. I hope all he does is succeed with his message. As a parent of a child who has been bullied. I hope this fine gentleman does well.
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GuitarMan July 27, 2012 at 04:28 PM
This is a good story. I'm surprised something so close to all our lives, and something we should have knowledge about doesn't start a stream of comments, or support for the idea.
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Kristi Whiteaker Wyckoff July 27, 2012 at 04:39 PM
This is WONDERFUL Anthony. Bullying is a big problem. Sometimes adults think kids should just tell the teacher or camp counselor, but this can sometimes make things worse for the "victim." I hope we can also provide assertiveness training for the bully targets. I see young kids' confidence diminish so quickly. They have SO much going for them, but all they see is how the mean peers view them. I hope you will consider bringing your program to elementary schools in Grayslake too. Kudos to you! I'm a MSW student and hope to work with kids myself soon.
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kelly July 27, 2012 at 04:45 PM
This is awesome..I wnt through this with my daught in what she was going to take her own life..it was awful.....good 4v u!!!
Recommend | Flag as inappropriate

Anthony July 27, 2012 at 05:01 PM
Thank you all so much for the comments of support! Kristi^ I would love to bring my presentation to the elementary school in grayslake. I want kids to be able to have confidenfe in themselves. which will indefinatly get them to do better in school. I hope to get in contact soon with a school and see where thing go. Thanks everyone again :)
Recommend | Flag as inappropriate

Diana Shepherd July 27, 2012 at 05:15 PM
So proud of you, Anthony! Keep up the good work. You are such a blessing to so many people. Your message of compassion is going to touch so many lives!
Recommend | Flag as inappropriate

Anthony July 27, 2012 at 05:23 PM
Thanks Aunt Diana :) Love you
Recommend | Flag as inappropriate

Angela Sykora (Editor) July 27, 2012 at 06:47 PM
I hope your message spreads far and wide, Anthony! Best to you!
Recommend | Flag as inappropriate

Anthony July 28, 2012 at 02:42 AM
Thanks alex! i would appreciate the advice. This group is focused on the bullying aspect. I would prefer kids learning those things on there own, when they are ready.
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Bonnie December 06, 2012 at 06:40 PM
What can we do to help someone being bullied? My nephew is going through this, and we don't know where to turn.
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National Library Card Signup Month at the Grayslake Area...

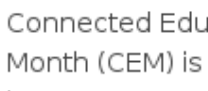
The NBA Season might not start until Oct...but National Library Card Signup Month is in a full...



Town Square
September 19, 2013 at 01:35 PM
Jill N. Alfrejd

Teachers—Take Part in LearnBop's Connected Educators Month...

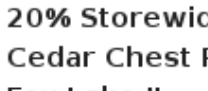
Connected Educators Month (CEM) is nearly here. Want to get involved?



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September 19, 2013 at 12:37 PM
Zacc Dukowitz

20% Storewide Sale Cedar Chest Resale Fox Lake IL

20% off store-wide sale on all regular priced merchandise. Musical instruments not included i...



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September 19, 2013 at 10:11 AM
Mercy R

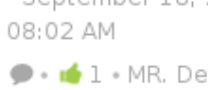
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Harry

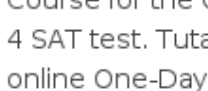
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Ninoshka Lopez

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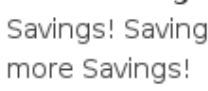
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Felicia Goodman Ross

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September 16, 2013 at 10:15 AM
Katie Davis

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Kathi's Musicians' Center School of Music —Mrs. Kathleen Cizewski, Founder and Directo...

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September 16, 2013 at 09:37 AM