

Welcome to the

UNITY AWARDS

Presented by:

**The Faces of Change — The Youth Advisory Board
of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center**



PACER's

National Bullying Prevention Center®

Create a World Without Bullying | PACER.org/bullying

UNITY AWARDS



Founded in 1977, PACER Center was created by parents of children and youth with disabilities to help other parents and families facing similar challenges. Today, PACER Center expands opportunities and enhances the quality of life for children and young adults with disabilities and their families. PACER is staffed primarily by parents of children with disabilities.



Founded in 2006, PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center actively leads social change to prevent childhood bullying, so that all youth are safe and supported in their schools, communities and online. PACER provides innovative resources for students, parents, educators, and others, and recognizes bullying as a serious community issue that impacts education, physical and emotional health, and the safety and well-being of students.

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center is a program of:

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~ A message from PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center ~

This year, due to COVID-19 concerns, our Unity Day celebration will take place virtually. While it may look different from years past as we are not holding the usual in-person ceremony, we are excited to share the incredible achievements of our Unity Award recipients.

This is a powerful opportunity to recognize those who are creating change in their schools and communities but don’t always get the recognition they deserve. We are honored to celebrate the efforts of those who are helping to make the world a kinder, more inclusive, and more accepting place.

We hope that this virtual celebration inspires you and reminds us all of the impact our actions can make. This year’s Unity Award recipients have each created a ripple effect in their communities—thanks to their focus and commitment to act with kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. When you consider all these actions collectively, it makes a truly powerful impact!

***Congratulations again to each of the 2021 Unity Award recipients.
Together, we can create a world without bullying!***

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center actively leads social change to prevent childhood bullying, so that all youth are safe and supported in their schools, communities and online. PACER provides innovative resources for students, parents, educators, and others, and recognizes bullying as a serious community issue that impacts education, physical and emotional health, and the safety and well-being of students.

PACER staff:

Paula Goldberg, PACER's Executive Director

Julie Hertzog, Director of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center

Bailey Huston, Coordinator of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center

Danna Mirviss, Associate at PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center

Judy French, Coordinator of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, Los Angeles office

Tara Ricasa, Puppet Program Coordinator, PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, Los Angeles office

Youth Advisory Board Vision Statement

The Faces of Change believes that our generation has a responsibility to lead and interact with kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Our goal is to promote bullying prevention and inspire students to support one another. We are leaders who care and we will use our voices to show that student involvement can create positive change, resulting in stronger relationships, safer schools, and more supportive communities.



Together Against Bullying



Medha Pappula

After learning about bullying in her early elementary schooling years, Medha Pappula has made it her mission to make sure the world is a bullying-free place. It started with modest impacts in her class, like helping resolve conflicts between friends or standing up for the underdog. She understood that bullying was a real problem and not something to be brushed aside. Using her talents as an animator, she created a spectacular video! This video spoke about one particular day: Unity Day! This day was special to Medha as it aligned perfectly with her goals to make the world a bullying-free place. This video explains what Unity Day is and what it stands for. She carefully crafted it to make it appropriate for all ages to watch. This video not only taught others what Unity Day was, but it also helped them understand what being kind can do for someone.

It was played throughout her school district and was even placed on PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center's main website! This was exciting for her as her message and goal would be shared to so many more people than she initially imagined when making the video. As an avid user of the internet, Medha has found that cyberbullying occurs a lot more often than people think. She has also learned that it can be a lot more hurtful and persistent than bullying. Because of this realization, she shifted her goals to focus on both types of bullying. After trying her best to stop cyberbullying on the internet, she realized she needed something more 'automated.' She couldn't be there 24/7 to help out cyberbullying victims, but an automated robot could be online forever! After this realization, she developed a custom online robot to take messages and run them through an Artificial Intelligence-powered classifier that would determine if the message cyberbullying or not. Doing this helped her achieve her goals, without being there all the time. This project was recognized by the military as an outstanding effort. So far, this bot has taken down many cyberbullying messages, making the internet a safer place. Medha is planning to expand this concept into a browser add-on or a mobile app! Throughout her journey, Medha has learned that anyone can help prevent bullying and cyberbullying! It could just be a small conversation or an animated video, but anything can help. She believes that if everyone pitches in, the world can truly be a bullying/cyberbullying-free place.

Together Against Bullying



Lake Stevens High School Interact Club

Even through this unprecedented year, Lake Stevens High School Interact Club has been meeting virtually and managed to get the word out about standing up against bullying. During October, the members made orange ribbons to give to students and faculty of the high school to show their support for bullying awareness. Interact also shared weekly newsletters with facts, resources, and challenges for the students and staff to better equip them to stand up against bullying. The members also illustrated a “Pledge Against Bullying” to be shared at the local elementary schools to teach younger children about the pledge to stand up against

bullying. The club also donated the book “The Juice Box Bully” to the local elementary schools’ libraries. Finally, the Interact members participated in the “Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying.” As a club, they walked, ran, or rolled over 500 miles. As their club leader shared, “I am proud of how, in spite of a pandemic, Interact is committed to the fair treatment of all people.”

United for Kindness



Wilda Hughley

Wilda Hughley is active and well-known in Hot Springs, Arkansas for her desire to end bullying. She began eight years ago when she founded the “Bully No More” organization to promote bullying prevention in the area elementary schools. It was one year after the this when she saw a need that went far and beyond reaching elementary school students. She had the opportunity to go on church-sponsored trips to Mexico and to Haiti, and being fluent in both Spanish and French, she was able to communicate with youth in both countries about global concerns regarding bullying. Her heart was touched hearing their experiences, and it was then that she decided to establish a bullying prevention pageant—Miss Victorious Pageant—that would touch the lives of girls from elementary to high school. Four girls would be chosen each year to be yearly advocates for the cause. For the past seven years, Mrs. Hughley has done so, touching the lives of many

young girls from ages 10 – 18, enabling them to become a voice against bullying and for self-empowerment and service to the community. For her, seeing the young ladies overcome the negative power of bullying is more than enough, for these young ladies (more than 28 over the past seven years) are now self-empowered to be ambassadors in their schools and communities as voices against bullying.

United for Acceptance

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Austin Area

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Austin Area has been celebrating Unity Day for last five years. In 2020, they sponsored a 24-hour walk-a-thon to promote awareness and to take a stand against bullying. This 24-hour walk-a-thon was called 24 Hours for Unity. Staff members, club youth, and community members walked for two-hour shifts around a quarter-mile track located at their Home Club location. Brave staff members walked the over-night shift. Orange glow sticks led the way as the club walked nonstop for 24 hours. Unity the Dog, the mascot for the event, joined the walkers for the first and last lap of the event. The youth took part in Unity Day lessons during program time to bring awareness to bullying while the walk continued outside. An Inclusion Essay contest was held for middle school and high school students. Elementary students took part in a coloring contest where students colored our Unity Day Logo. Each year, BGCAA proudly takes part in Unity Day, but our goal was to raise more awareness in 2020. During the 24-hour walk, the group had live streaming updates throughout that went out to their 7,000 followers on five different social media platforms. When the event was over, they logged 298 miles total – over 1,000 laps!



United for Inclusion



Vickie Booker

Vickie Booker created Get Along Girlz, a bullying prevention organization that educates young girls about the impact of being bullied, including the different signs and types of bullying. They have virtual events to promote unity among young girls and pledge to get along with other girls. As shared by a member of the group, “I love how I meet other girls that can share their stories like me, about being bullied. It’s a huge support for me. The Get Along Girlz approach is through fashion. We’re taught to speak effectively, walk tall with confidence, and learn to speak out and report bullying... It’s just so much FUN! They CARE and LOVE us.”

The Faces of Change Award



Addison Loerzel

Addie has created a presentation called “Share Your Sunshine,” which encourages all people to find what makes them unique, special, and happy and to share it with the world! She is doing this presentation for students in classrooms around the world! Addie has a disability and truly believes that we all have our own sunshine to share with our communities and that people shouldn’t place limits on themselves. Addie also has an annual cupcake stand where she raises money for Sunshine Foundation so kids with disabilities, illness, or who have been abused can achieve their dreams. She has raised around \$70,000 and has made 10 dreams come true.

The Faces of Change Award

Angie Behrens & Blue Wolf Bikers Against Bullying

This August, Angie will be hosting the 3rd annual Stop Bullying Ride to raise awareness about bullying prevention and to promote kindness, acceptance, and inclusion in her community. Angie also shares information about bullying and bullying prevention at her motorcycle repair and retail shop in Park Rapids, MN, by putting up posters and handing out bookmarks and flyers.



The Faces of Change Award

The Upstander's Club

The Upstander's Club are student leaders in grades 4 – 6 who exemplify standing up for what's right, reporting bullying and spreading kindness while assisting with creating a positive school climate. The Upstander's Club choose projects to create and promote. Last year, they created the kindness pledge and an accompanying animation video. This year, they participated in PACER's Run, Walk, and Roll Against Bullying as the Fairview Upstanders to help promote bullying prevention. Their next initiative was to create a fundraiser to help homeless youth and families at Fairview Elementary. They extended this philanthropic work to include a local homeless shelter and nonprofit organization that also supports homeless youth and families. The Upstanders set out to raise \$1,000 for this fundraiser. In their words: "There are many people on the streets and in shelters, and we hope to reduce that number to a minimum with your donations. Their goal is to raise funds so homeless individuals can eventually secure permanent housing and nutritious food." They created flyers, videos, spoke at our staff meeting, and strategized to raise funds for over a month! In less than a month, they surpassed their goal and raised \$1,445 to help support multiple homeless families! As a result, their fundraiser gained recognition from district administrators and district board members and will be presented as one possible solution to supporting homeless youth and families in our school district. These students created this fundraiser out of the kindness of their humongous, selfless hearts! As one student exclaimed, "Upstanders are superheroes!"



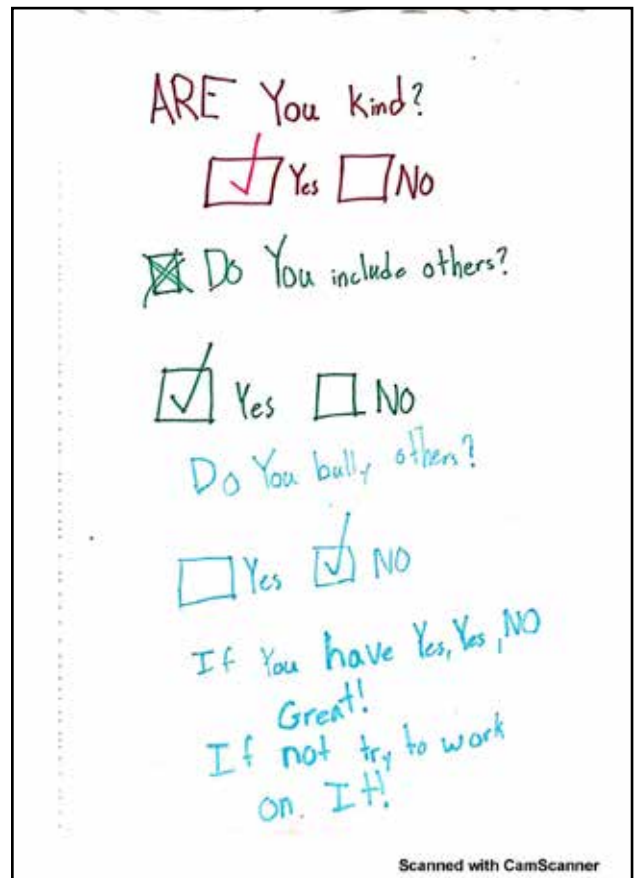
The Faces of Change Award



Finley Swanson

Finley is a member of the Thousand Oaks Youth Commission and in his work there and in the group Unity Conejo, he was instrumental in promoting inclusion and unity so that all student voices can be heard and acknowledged. He is also currently working with the LGBTQ+ Working Group in the Conejo Valley School District, promoting updated and inclusive gender education.

Some final thoughts on kindness and bullying prevention...



UNITY AWARDS



Drawing by Zariah, a third grade student from New Jersey



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