Our View: Bullying victims, and bullies, need help

By IMPERIAL VALLEY PRESS STAFF

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The schoolyard adage has long held that sticks and stones can break bones, while being called names doesn’t hurt at all. Yet that may not always be the case. As recent national headlines have revealed, the psychological toll of being constantly bullied can prove to be too much for some young people. For these vulnerable ones, suicide seemed to offer the only respite from bullying.

For all of the supposed unity and togetherness of mankind, the sport of picking on those perceived to be different from the majority remains entrenched in our collective ways. So prevalent it is that many simply think that being the target of bullying is a normal rite of passage. But that way of thinking has to go.

A San Diego State University-Imperial Valley campus anti-bullying campaign held this week aimed to do just that. The SDSU-IV “Not in Our Town–Not in Our Campus” anti-bullying campaign, which was presented jointly with KPBS, sought to demonstrate that people of all ages could be doing more to promote acceptance and diversity.

The campus’s anti-bullying campaign exposed participants to poetry, music and a one-hour documentary that featured one New York community’s efforts to come together in the wake of the violent death of an Ecuadorian immigrant in 2008.

Sadly, bullying also seems to have been given new life with the advent of technology. Social media in teenagers’, and our own, lives means the bullying isn’t contained to the schoolyard anymore and has found a way into the household as well.

Here in California, the governor signed in October legislation aimed at curtailing bullying. While one of the bills, AB 9, was dedicated in honor of a gay Tehachapi teen who took his life a year ago, the new law is meant to ensure a safer school environment for all students and requires training of school site personnel in the prevention of bullying.

But the onus need not fall solely on school district personnel, who are strapped for resources as it is. Parents must have an equal or greater role in preventing bullying. And as the need to openly address the root causes of the bullying becomes more evident, so does the fact that bullies are just as much in need of help as the victims.
THE ISSUE:
SDSU-IV holds anti-bullying campaign.

WE SAY:
Bullying needs to be addressed.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?
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