

# (Not) Bully for them



Jessica Boisclair • Daily Times

**ABOVE:** Members of the N3 student group at Coventry High display pictures of young people ages 10-18 who committed suicide as a result of being bullied. **BELOW:** CHS teacher Bradford Pingley, the group's adviser, talks to assembled 10th-graders about Marco, a former student at Fall River's Durfee High and a victim of bullying.

# COVENTRY STUDENT GROUP TAKES A STAND AGAINST BULLYING

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COVENTRY — “The word bully, it’s a childhood term. I know you’d get picked on and people would tell me and other people to deal with it. Things have changed; we’re not going to deal with it anymore,” said Coventry High School teacher Bradford Pingley to an auditorium full of sophomores.

This powerful message was being spread by 22 students from the organization N3, at yesterday morning’s anti-bullying ceremony.

The organization is made up of Coventry High School students from freshman to seniors. A former student, Sam Caimano, graduated last year and came back to help the organization spread the word about bullying.

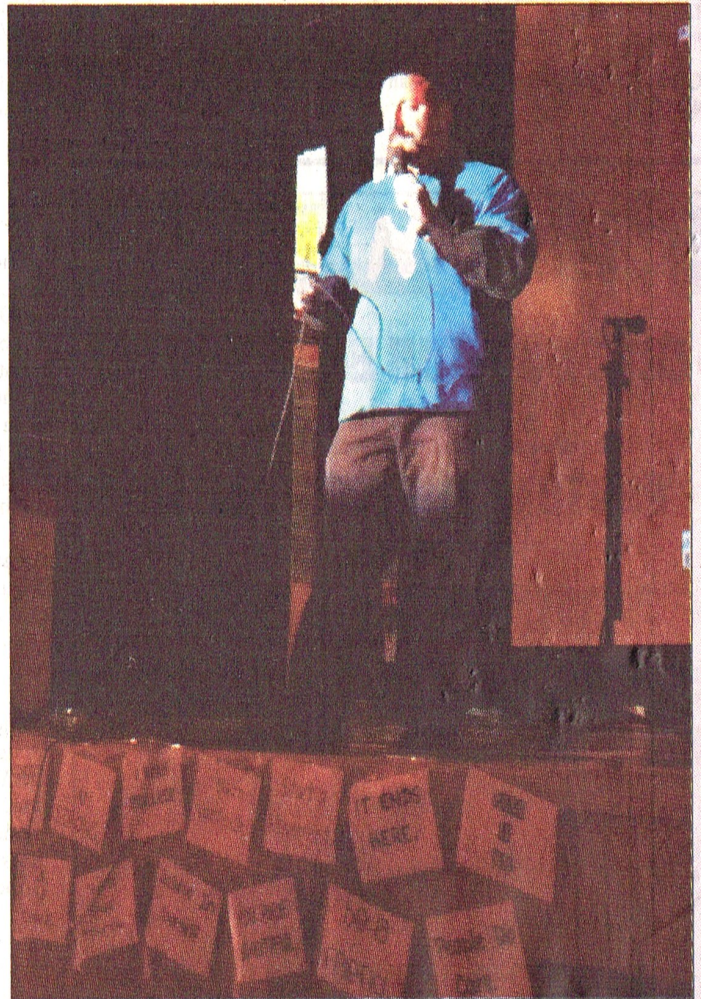
“This extraordinary group of people showed me that my life is important and worth it and they helped me. I wanted to give back to them,” she said.

The N3 foundation is a non-profit that focuses on tolerance, acceptance and diversity. The goal of this student-based organization is to spread awareness about bullying, harassment, hate speak and discrimination in schools, the work place and online.

Pingley, along with teacher John Farrara, taught the program at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School from 2004-2009. He said they traveled to various schools, such as Exeter-West Greenwich and West Warwick High School, to present the affects of bullying.

The members of N3 wear blue T-shirts with zebra lettering to represent the strength of a “herd.”

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# Bullying presentation at CHS

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"Zebras herd their elderly, newborns, slow of foot and their injured into the middle of their pack to protect them," he said. "That's what this herd does; were a herd of sophomores, a herd as a school, community and a town. We're strong like a herd."

He told the students that the goal of the organization is to change the culture because nobody deserves to be put down by somebody else.

Pingley explained that many states are charging people with manslaughter if death is the result of bullying.

He asked the sophomores in the auditorium if they'd "heard of Marco," and some students yelled out "Polo."

"Yeah, you're going to regret saying that in a few minutes," he said. "Because sometimes we open our mouths before we know what we're talking about. Sometimes we have to watch out what we're saying because words can hurt and be damaging."

He told the sophomores a story about a student named Marco Soares. He said Marco was a student of his at Durfee High School back in the '90's.

"A couple of students thought Marco was different than them," he said. "They tortured Marco. I came to school one day and teachers asked me, 'Hey, you heard about Marco?' He got beat up by some students."

He said a few days later, he was asked the same thing by the teachers who stated that Marco's car got keyed. The third time



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**Members of Coventry's N3 student group are all smiles after their anti-bullying presentation yesterday in the Coventry High School auditorium.**

it happened, Marco's locker was set on fire by some students.

Finally, Pingley said the fourth time a teacher told him about Marco, he had driven his car off a bridge in Fall River, killing himself.

Marco wasn't the only teenager to be tortured by bullying, and 17 students from N3 read off the names of various teenagers ranging from ages 10 to 18 who committed suicide because of bullying.

Student Katelynn Stalaboine gave a speech at last year's assembly explaining how she had been bullied by her peers.

At yesterday's assembly, she took a stand again and explained to the sophomores that the bullying stopped after her speech last year, but only for a month.

"I was bullied today," she said. "Look around, people are at their breaking point and I don't want another person to go through what I went through, because what I had to go through really shouldn't have happened."

Students were asked to partake in a stand up-sit down exercise to show them that they are not alone.

Members of N3 read statements such as: stand up if your parents are separated, divorced or deceased, stand up if you ever allowed your insecurities stop you from doing something and stand up if you or anybody you know has been affected by bullying. More than half of the auditorium stood up and students looked around in realization that they are actually not alone.