

GUARDIAN ANGELS BEGIN WORK WITH STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY

October 14, 2003, Succasunna, NJ... "New Jersey Cares About Bullying" is a statewide campaign designed to increase public and professional understanding about the general problem of bullying among young people. New Jersey is the eighth state to pass an anti-bullying law and the second state in the nation to design a statewide anti-bullying campaign.

In an ongoing initiative to foster "Bully Free and Safe Schools," the Roxbury School District is continuing their work with the Guardian Angels. On October 9, 2003, John Munro, Guardian Angel Educational Consultant, visited the Roxbury School District and met with Roxbury High School Freshman and Sophomores, as well as, Franklin and Kennedy School Fourth Graders. Mr. Munro, also conducted a community-building seminar with parents and community members.

In Mr. Munro's presentation to the community, he commented, "Your district is so committed to kindness and tolerance. The Board of Education, administrators and staff are making sure your children don't have the number one thief of childhood hanging over their heads – BULLYING."

Throughout all presentations, Mr. Munro used personal accounts with bullying to communicate its severity. "Kids love stories. They can feel it. They can relate. That's why we use our personal experiences to raise children's awareness of bullying."

As Mr. Munro conveyed to those in attendance different forms of bullying, he was clear to state that the hurt incurred by emotional bullying can far outweigh the hurt of any physical action. Fourth Graders from Kennedy School recalled Mr. Munro's rhyme, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can break my heart."

With the community, Mr. Munro reflected on the struggle that the community faces. "There is a tone of nastiness and violence that is prevalent in our society. Our goal here in Roxbury is to raise the levels of empathy and civility."

As a way to achieve this, the Roxbury Public Schools will look to institute an Academy with the Guardian Angels. The theme of this Academy will be "Kids sticking up for kids." Through this Academy, the Guardian Angels will aid the Roxbury Board of Education, administration, staff and student body to explore resources, which highlight strategies on how to identify at risk students and methods for reporting bullying.

In his closing remarks to the students of Roxbury High School, Mr. Munro stated, "Your administrators and teachers want you to be free, happy, healthy, and safe. In order for this to happen, you've got to take care of yourself and each other." The Guardian Angels will be conducting assemblies with the other schools and grade levels. Additionally, they will be meeting again with the high school students and Fourth Graders over the course of this year.