

Mikayla Student

Mrs. Arnold

Language Arts, Period 3

19 January 2011

Bullies Are Criminals

Bullying is a constant problem in schools today. It starts with annoying comments, but escalates to more severe matters. We've seen it happen, and a lot of us know how it feels. None of us like it. People might say they are just ignorant kids, but bullies truly are criminals, stealing self-esteem and at times ending lives.

First of all, bullying is a crime, because of the serious effects it can have on an individual. "And, once robbed of their self-esteem they can suffer from mental and physical problems, drop out of school and even commit suicide." (Dimond 1) "Many adults still get teary recalling their humiliating days at the hands of the class bully, mainly because bullies don't operate alone. They pick up sycophantic disciples along the way and that multiplies the victim's pain." (Dimond 2) The old saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me?" (Steiny 2) isn't necessarily true; words hurt. Maybe not physically, but when kids already have insecurities, bullies don't help. They build on those insecurities and insult the different qualities of kids. No one likes the way insults feel, and this is why bullies are criminals and deserve more severe consequences.

Secondly, bullying can end in a tragic death. Though it does not happen often, it has happened. The usual event is suicide of the victim, or a violent act by the bully that may end in murder. For example, "15 year old Phoebe Prince hung herself after being harassed by classmates who threw cans at her before speeding off." (Scholastic Scope 1) Phoebe had been

bullied for almost three months before this occurred. There is also teenager Larry King who was shot in the head in front of a teacher and a whole classroom full of students. (Dimond 2) These horrible events can start for many reasons including jealousy, gender bias, or racism; it just isn't right. Bullies are criminals; they terrorize and harass their victims, ripping apart their self-esteem and attacking their insecurities until the unthinkable happens; violence or even a tragic death.

People often think that bullies don't see the effects of their actions, or that they don't understand what they are doing to others. The thing is, bullies understand what they are doing. Whether the bullies are kids or adults, they know it is wrong. Bullying someone is abuse. Some people might say, "Bullying is really common. What are we going to do, send half of American kids to jail?" (Scholastic Scope 2) Half of American kids won't end up in jail because there are other alternatives. For instance, bullies could be required to do community service, therapy, or be made to visit a prison to be shown what their future may be. In addition, parents, schools, and kids need to work together. The problems won't go away on their own. We need to look at the facts of each case and take the appropriate action.

In short, bullying needs to stop! Bullying is a criminal act. Bullies harass, make threats, terrorize, and use verbal and physical abuse on their victims. We need to stand up to bullies and not let them strip us of our self-esteem. Bullies must face the consequences of their actions with either therapy or some version of criminal punishment. Maybe if we take a group of bullies to visit a jail to show them how rough their life could turn out, they may rethink their behavior. Please sign my petition asking the principal to arrange such an outing.

Works Cited

“Are Bullies Criminals?” Scholastic Scope 6 Sept. 2010: 18 Print.

Dimond, Diane. “Today’s Bullies – Tomorrow’s Criminals?” Official Site of Diane Dimond.

Hudson Moon Productions, 23 Aug. 2008, Web. 14 Jan. 2011.

<<http://dianedimond.net/todays-bullies-tomorrows-criminals/>>.

Steiny, Julia. “Psychologist Warns Against Turning Bullies Into Criminals.” Projo. The

Providence Journal Companies, 27 July 2008, Web. 12Jan. 2011.

<http://www.projo.com/education/juliasteiny/content/se_educationwatch27_07-27-08_U6AURGC_v7.283070d.html>.