



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 25, 2015

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County Superintendent of Schools Hosts 3rd Annual Anti-Bullying Summit

SONORA - The Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office will host the 3rd Annual Anti-Bullying Summit on Friday, February 27th. Approximately 275 students from 7th – 12th grade from every school district in Tuolumne County, including teachers and school administrators, will take part in a conference-style summit designed to provide students with skills to identify bullying behaviors and learn about strategies to prevent bullying.

The Summit's opening session will highlight the work of Shane Koyczan, and his featured presentation on TED TALKS called "To This Day", which underscores the importance of accepting differences in one another, free from prejudice, and to honor each person for who they are. Also, local community agencies and school experts will provide a menu of workshops that participants will choose from with a variety of topics related to the anti-bullying theme and the development of positive behaviors.

- The Center for a Non-Violent Community staff, under the direction of Executive Director Laura Sunday, will give a presentation about shaking off stereotypes in an interactive look on how names, labels or words that people wrongly use to describe each other can be both hurtful and harmful.
- Sonora High School senior, Sinclair Darr, will give a workshop called "Just Like You". Sinclair, who has Down's syndrome, will talk about gaining a better understanding of Down's syndrome and an appreciation for diversity. Her talk is aimed at helping students become allies in helping their peers, especially those with disabilities.



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- Bill Silva, school counselor and licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with extensive experience working in various clinical and school counseling settings, will give a workshop exploring the emotional and psychological impact of bullying. Students will learn ways to positively confront bullying.
- Kristina Herrera, Tuolumne County Public Health Department Tobacco Education & Prevention Coordinator, will give a workshop called "Social Media 101". Social media is a tool that if used effectively can be a powerful way to communicate. Participants will learn effective online communication skills and get resources about how to be responsible and safe while using social media.
- Soulsbyville Principal, Bart Taylor, will facilitate a Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation workshop. Students will explore intervention strategies that promote positive school climate and student connectedness.

County Superintendent Margie Bulkin chairs the Anti-Bullying committee consisting of school counselors and administrators from area school districts, Tuolumne County alternative education teachers and special education teachers, Tuolumne County Behavioral Health staff, and behaviorists from the Mi Wuk Indian Health Clinic. Bullying can affect everyone and is linked to many negative outcomes including impacts on mental health, substance use, and suicide. "The commitment to support programs to prevent bullying in our schools underscores the collaborative nature of our county's resources", said Superintendent Bulkin. "Our work to help a child succeed is profound and taking time to engage in workshops to support prevention will help school personnel better prepare today's students for success in school and beyond."

The Summit will conclude with a dramatic performance called "*Only 13*", performed by actors from the Gallo Center & Walnut Street Theater. The short play re-enacts the story of a young girl experiencing peer pressure at school coupled with a troubled home life, leaving her to feel very alone, isolated, and worthless, until she meets a friend who gives her a new perspective on what she has going for her.



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The all day conference designed for students is by invitation only and with parent permission. The Summit is sponsored by the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office, and held at Columbia College. We want to thank the following community partners for their collaboration and support: Columbia College, The Center for a Non-Violent Community, Tuolumne County Behavioral Health/California Mental Health Services Authority, Black Oak Casino, the YES Partnership, and the eleven participating school districts from Tuolumne County.

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The Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office is a state agency led by County Superintendent Marguerite D. Bulkin. For more information, please visit www.tcsos.us.