

BULLY

“IT’S REACHING
IN TO THE
MAINSTREAM
IN A WAY MOST
DOCUMENTARIES
CAN ONLY
DREAM OF.”
PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Over 13 million American kids are bullied each year, making it the most common form of violence experienced by young people. *Bully* brings human scale to this startling statistic, offering an intimate, unflinching look at how bullying has touched five kids and their families. The film documents the responses of teachers and administrators to aggressive behaviours that defy “kids will be kids” cliché, and captures a growing movement among parents and youths to change how bullying is handled in schools, in communities and in society as a whole.

WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

“moving and troubling” *New York Times*

“as vivid as any horror film, as heartbreaking as any Oscar-worthy drama” *TIME magazine*

“the best social documents on film do more than show you what’s wrong in the world - they make it personal. *Bully* does that with a passion.” *Rolling Stone*

THE IMPACT

FIELD GUIDE

& TOOLKIT

WHO SAW IT

TELEVISION SPECIALS

In April 2013 TBP partnered with CNN and The Cartoon Network to produce and promote The Bully Effect, which followed the work of campaign and the lives of families featured in the movie *Bully* since its release. Viewership unknown but in the millions cumulatively as it was broadcast 6 times on CNN, twice on CNN International and twice on the Cartoon Network.

WISH-TV, a CBS-affiliated TV station for Indiana, organized screenings of *Bully*, and a televised Q&A, as part of a week of extensive coverage of the film and the issue on their channel.

South Park referenced *Bully* in the episode "Butterballs" and gently poked fun at Lee.

In addition, Lee, the film and its subjects were featured on nationally televised programs including Ellen, The View, Anderson, Wendy Williams Show, Good Morning America, Kelly and Michael, Sean Hannity, Piers Morgan and Huckabee among many others.

30 FESTIVALS

in 13 countries. Premiered at Tribeca Film Festival 2011

7.5K COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

1000 via 1 Million Kids campaign
6500 via Bully Educational Kits

574 CINEMA

US release - 120 cities and 528 theatres
15 cities in Canada, Australia (28 screens), South Africa (5 screens), Brazil (5 screens), Norway (4 screens), Philippines (4 screens), Switzerland, New Zealand, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Mexico, Jamaica and Iceland

7 TELEVISION TERRITORIES

worldwide including Sweden, Turkey, Japan and Norway
Estimates up to 100,000 units

10 DVD TERRITORIES

US & Canada plus 8 other territories
Sales figures not available from distributor

13 AWARDS AND PRIZES

Including 6 Best Documentary awards

5.8M ONLINE TRAILER

5,836,692 views

1.7M WEBSITE

1.788 million unique visitors

168K EMAIL LIST

168,218 individuals, 300 organisations

383K SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

344,000 Facebook Likes
39,948 Twitter followers
Frequently engage over 80,000 users

2.6M STUDENTS

have now seen the film



THE CAMPAIGN

THE CAMPAIGNERS

The Bully Project (TBP) was formed to implement the campaign around the film *Bully*. The director Lee Hirsch, who had himself experienced bullying as a child, personally drove the campaign, becoming the face and spokesperson, and appearing at community screenings and extensively on national news. Six people work full-time at TBP.

CAMPAIGN AIMS

Prior to the Tribeca premiere filmmakers Hirsch and Lowen formed an advisory board and hired consultants to research the bullying epidemic in US schools. Key findings were that up to 25% of U.S. students are bullied each year and that studies show that more than 160,000 young people stay home from school every day out of fear of being bullied. At least 33% of adolescents report being seriously threatened online and 60% admit having participated in online bullying. They also analysed student, educator and parent needs, which determined the direction of the educational content provision.

Ultimately, the campaign's aims were to **sound the alarm** and **fuel a culture shift**: TBP hoped to reach a tipping point in society where bullying is no longer tolerated, founded on a belief that bullying was a condoned form of child abuse and a clear human rights violation. Work was to be centred on **dispelling age old myths** that "kids will be kids" that allowed bullying to thrive and responsible adults to look the other way. A **primary goal** was to ensure that **at least 1 million kids** got to see the film.

HOW THE CAMPAIGN WORKED

Traditional distribution marketing with a cause spin was used to create mass awareness of the film and the issue in the lead up to a theatrical release by the Weinstein Company, who put the full weight of their promotional machine behind the release.

When an R certificate was awarded for bad language the team started an online petition, meaning the young people who most needed to see the film would be turned away from cinemas. They subsequently found out that Katy Butler, a 17 year old activist, had started her own petition on change.org which was generating massive interest. They abandoned



their petition and got behind Katy's. This created a perfect storm of publicity resulting in wide media coverage and 523,471 signatures "to overturn the classification."

REACHING YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATORS

"The 1 Million Kids Campaign" was kickstarted in April 2012 when more than 6,500 LA students went to see a special screening of *Bully* at the Nokia Theater in the presence of Mayor Villaraigosa, LAUSD (LA United School District) Superintendent Deasy, and several Nickelodeon stars signifying a major piece of advocacy within the LA School District. This was covered by the major LA news channels.

Screenings were organized in 705 schools representing 250,000 students and over 7,500 teachers were trained in approximately 175 cities throughout 2012. TBP developed, organized and funded these trips with DonorsChoose.org (a crowdfunding platform for schools projects) and First Student School Busing (the largest school busing company in the US) which donated bus trips for the screenings along with substantial in kind donations from AMC Theaters and other chains, and The Weinstein Company.

It is estimated that First Student transported approximately 100,000 of the students in the campaign and saved TBP \$250,000. This saving helped to send and train another approximately 40,000 students and 150 teachers. First Student introduced a six week anti-bullying campaign called "Growing Respect" that reached more

than 59,000 school bus drivers.

AMC offered direct staff support to help TBP to book theaters at extremely favorable rates. It was estimated that 40% of the 705 trips coordinated through the 1 Million Kids campaign were booked at AMC theaters, which represented an in kind donation from AMC of approximately \$300,000.

This was complemented by more focused youth summits. In September 2012, a two day anti-bullying summit kicked off in San Francisco and Oakland. 17,000 students saw the film. All teachers were trained on TBP materials, and major campaign partner Facing History and Ourselves led professional development workshops in preparation. In addition, San Francisco Mayor Lee, Superintendents from San Francisco and Oakland, the US Attorney for the Northern District of CA, and Lieutenant Governor Newson all participated in the summit. The summit was widely covered by local television and publications.

**"THE
1 MILLION KIDS
CAMPAIGN WAS
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BY MORE
FOCUSED
YOUTH SUMMITS"**

TBP and Facing History and Ourselves (FHO), followed up with further summits in conjunction with screenings in Los Angeles, Cleveland, Toronto, Chicago, Denver, University Heights, OH, Palo Alto, CA, Memphis and Los Angeles, where students watched the film, shared their reactions and brainstormed action steps to take as a school.

Every school that participated in the 1 Million Kids campaign was asked to pledge to use the FHO materials. This resulted in *Bully* content on Facinghistory.org reaching almost 450,000 unique page views.

In October 2012, the Indiana Department of Education hosted two days of screenings for 200 administrators in order to work on bullying prevention strategies for their schools.

The two largest (competing) teacher unions the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) came together in an unprecedented way to co-host a screening in April 2012 in Washington, DC for over 450 educators, policymakers and parents. In the face of budget cuts and the need to raise test scores the public directive to take action on bullying was an important milestone.

RESOURCES

TBP's educational program produced a rich variety of resources including extensive Parent & Student discussion guides, the Bully Educational DVD & Toolkit which included a Roadmap to Building a Caring and Respectful School Community, a Youth Activation Guide, 10 Ways to be an Upstander, amongst others. They developed partnerships with approximately 200 partners of various levels of cooperation in order to spread the issue of bullying as well as curate the best resources from those partners and in many cases, specifically develop new resources for the film.

When 1 Million Kids began, the primary goal was to educate kids but over time TBP looked more towards adults.

Partnering with the Harvard Graduate School of Education, TBP looked for the most effective interventions they could deliver at scale and committed to the social and emotional

learning (SEL) approach to education reform, historically a tough sell for schools.

The Bully Educator's Toolkit sought to overcome this with its can do attitude and affordable price of \$29.99 (which includes a public screening license) and low-bar changes which could be implemented for free and activated by a single person within a school or community.

A SELF-SUSTAINING COMMUNITY

In planning for the longevity of the campaign, TBP interviewed approximately 30 key anti-bullying activists inspired by the film and interested in volunteering to do more. Almost

all had seen the film and coordinated a screening of the film for larger groups. In many cases, they had also started their own anti-bullying initiatives or had felt the need to respond to people reaching out for help on the Bully FB page.

In response to these interviews and in line with the grassroots bottom up strategy, individuals and

organisations have been encouraged to create their own Bully Projects tools on the campaign website and Facebook, consolidated via Nation Builder software [drawing mark-up]. Regional teams are comprised of 150 volunteer leaders across 44 states and 3 countries. These teams are co-ordinated via Facebook and managed jointly by local leaders and TBP staff.

This has been supported through bi-weekly organising conference calls that have an average of 160 participants.

TBP has also established a team of "Facebook responders"; members of their community who volunteer to help TBP fulfill their policy to answer or respond to every Facebook, Twitter or website communication.

“IN LINE WITH THE BOTTOM UP GRASSROOTS STRATEGY INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO CREATE THEIR OWN BULLY PROJECTS”

THE CAMPAIGN

ONLINE TRENDS

A Google search of news articles on “The Bully Project” results in 16,300 stories and 13,200 on “Bully Film”. From Sept 1, 2011 to March 2011, the six months prior to the theatrical release, Google News reports that there were 259 major stories written about bullying. From March 2012-Sep. 2012, after the movie was released that number jumped to 567 stories. From Sep 2012-April 2013, as the film continued its outreach campaign as well as a DVD release, the conversation would further increase to 1,602 stories.

TWITTER TUESDAY

On Twitter, TBP organized two unprecedented days of action with partners, top celebrities and followers to raise awareness of the issue and the film.

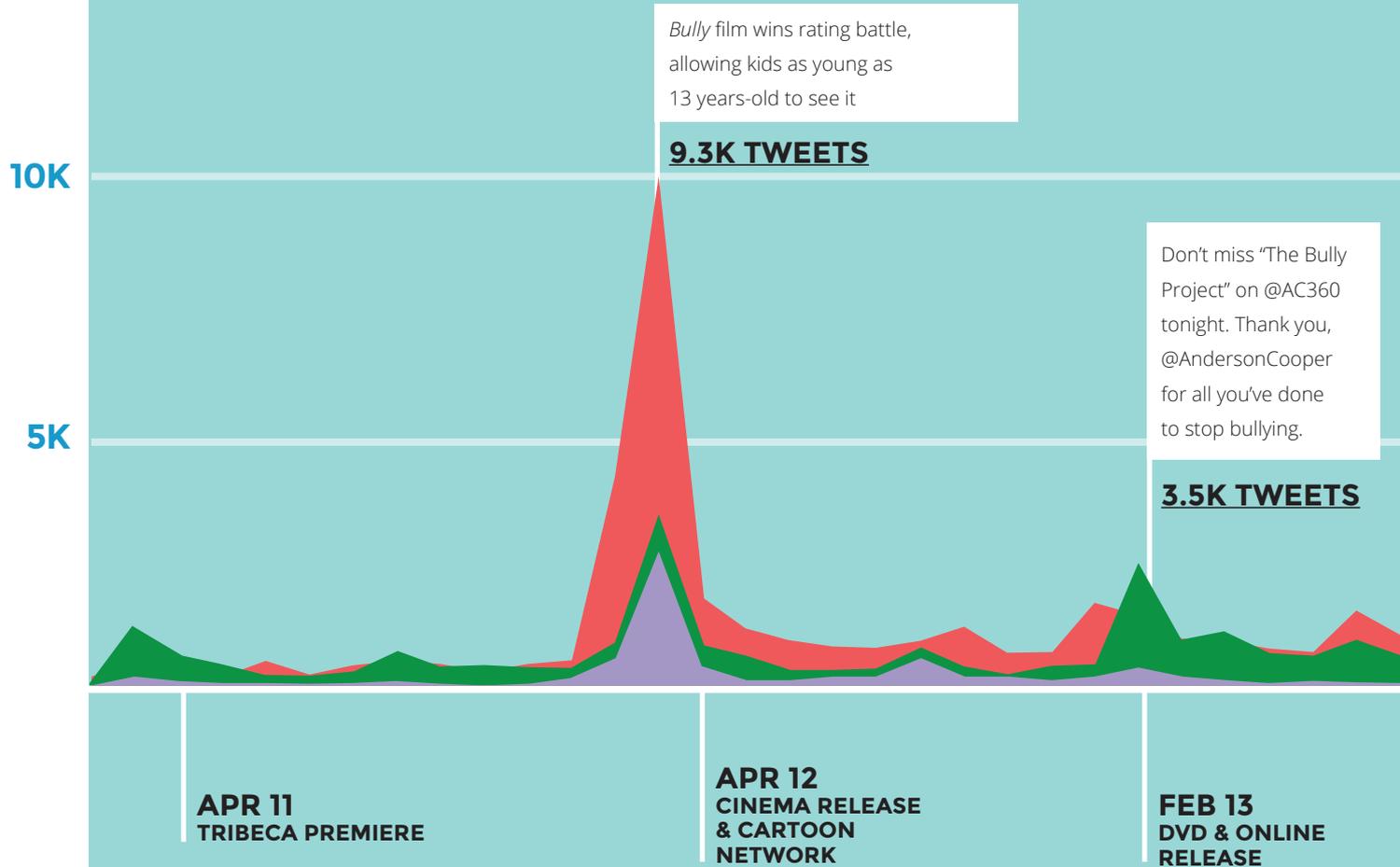
On March 27, 2012, TBP launched a “Twitter Tuesday” campaign to publicize the issue and the opening of the film. Bully trended 3rd on Twitter that day and the phrase “13 million kids get bullied every year. Today take a stand with me and @Bullymovie” was re-tweeted 58,000 times reaching an estimated 232 million total Followers.

On February 28, 2013, to support CNN’s special The Bully Effect another day of action on Twitter was launched using the hashtag #bullyeffect, which trended 5th on Twitter and reached an estimated total of 81 million followers.

SHORT FILM CLIPS RELEASED ONLINE

Upworthy: 750,000 views
 Mike Tompkins *Bully* music video: 1,721,289
 ABC News clip: 371,856
 Ellen clip: 910,635

KEYWORD MENTIONS ONLINE (TWITTER)



Bully film wins rating battle, allowing kids as young as 13 years-old to see it

Don't miss "The Bully Project" on @AC360 tonight. Thank you, @AndersonCooper for all you've done to stop bullying.

KEY

- “LEE HIRSCH” (TWITTER)
- “BULLY FILM” (TWITTER)
- “THE BULLY PROJECT” (TWITTER)

THE FILM

THE CAMPAIGN

IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

Apr 2011

••••• **TRIBECA PREMIERE**

Mar 2012

••••• **TWITTER TUESDAY**

Apr 2012

••••• **CINEMA RELEASE**

••••• **LARGEST BULLYING SURVEY EVER UNDERTAKEN**
KATY BUTLER'S PETITION ONE MILLION KIDS LAUNCHED
BULLY SCREENED AT WHITE HOUSE

••••• **PRESIDENT OBAMA ANNOUNCED SUPPORT FOR STUDENT NON-DISCRIMINATION AND SAFE SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT ACTS**

June 2012

••••• **LEE HIRSCH GIVEN CITATION BY OBAMA**
ANTI BULLYING CAUCUS LAUNCHED BY CONGRESSMAN MIKE HONDA

Sept 2012

••••• **BAY AREA ANTI BULLYING SUMMIT**

Feb 2013

••••• **DVD & ONLINE RELEASE**

••••• **BULLY EDUCATOR'S DVD AND TOOLKIT RELEASED**

Apr 2013

••••• **CNN/CARTOON NETWORK: THE BULLY EFFECT**

June 2013

••••• **ONE MILLION KIDS REACHED. NEW TARGET SET**

PRODUCTION BUDGET

US\$ 1.1M

CAMPAIGN BUDGET

US\$ 2.6M

CAMPAIGN IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

The target of reaching 1 million kids was exceeded in June 2013 and a new target of 10 million kids has now been set. The Million Kids counter has risen to 2,600,000 students.

So far there have been 6,500 sales of the Educational Toolkit. Preliminary evaluation via surveys of purchasers indicate that 91% of people are extremely likely to recommend the Educator's DVD and Toolkit to their colleagues, friends or community members and that 77% of people plan to recruit and engage youth to take an active role in creating a positive school climate after using the toolkit.

REACHING KIDS

A partnership with the Girl Scouts has resulted in a mentorship program in which 6th grade girls will mentor younger girls through the transition to middle school. This has the potential to reach 530,000 5th and 6th graders.

The Salt Lake City school district screened the film to 12,000 students and as from 2013 are working to show the film to every seventh grader (approx. 2,000 students annually) in the district before starting middle school over a period of five years.

Before the film was released, Sioux City Iowa School District (where Alex Libby went to school) hosted a screening for 1,700 people that included a community discussion and panel afterwards. The Assistant Principal from the film, stood in front of the crowd and apologised, and everyone clapped for her. Afterwards, they installed high quality audio and video recordings on every bus, placed more trained adults on the buses and have dedicated more resources to towards bullying prevention and professional development. It is also likely that the film and subsequent outreach and advocacy played a part in convening the Governor's Bullying Prevention Summit in Iowa 9 months after the film's release and again in November 2013.

BUILDING THE FIELD

Facing History and Ourselves' *Bully* page had almost half a million unique page views, their Bully guide was downloaded almost 8,000



times, over 2,000 educators participated in their online workshop, and they hosted 93 face to face events which included almost 8,000 participants. All these participants are now entered in the FHO database for their future educational outreach.

TBP has featured the 121 Help.Me telephone helpline online since its inception and currently accounts for the majority of incoming phone calls. Since the release of the Bully Educational DVD toolkits in April, the amount of phone calls to 121 has tripled.

TBP also joined forces The Ad Council, AOL, Facebook and the Department of Education to catalyse an anti-bullying ad campaign called "Be More than a Bystander", aimed at parents. Using a scene from the film it was broadcast nationally and a further ad directed by Lee will launch in October 2013.

Through the 1 Million Kids partnership, DonorsChoose.org – an online crowdfunding website in which teachers post school projects they need to fundraise for - reached an additional 485 projects reaching 250,000 students and an increase of almost \$2 million in donations. Via its fundraising efforts, it is estimated that TBP was one of, if not the, largest supporters of DonorsChoose.org for 2011/2012.

POLITICAL WINS

Preventative/ educative measures have

been advocated for over legislative change at the local level via community screenings and debates. Notwithstanding there has been political buy in on the issue.

In Spring 2012, *Bully* screened at The White House, Capital Hill, The US Department of Education, The Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus and for the U.S. Department of Justice in South Dakota. The same day that *Bully* screened at the White House for political advisors and NGO's President Obama announced his support for the Student Non-Discrimination and the Safe Schools Improvement Act, bipartisan legislation that would help prevent bullying and harassment. In Feb 2013 Senator Robert Casey reintroduced the bill and cited *Bully* as the reason.

At the United States Conference of Mayors in June 2013, Lee Hirsch's presentation moved 140 mayors from across the nation to pass a bullying eradication resolution that calls for Mayors across the country to screen the film and take action.

LGBT

Bully successfully created a bipartisan consensus around the issue and conservative leaders such as Rush Limbaugh and Mike Huckabee both publicly supported the film even though it puts a spotlight on homophobia in the case of Kelby Johnson's story. In May 2012, Senator Howard Stephenson broke with Republicans in order to support pro-LGBT anti-bullying proposal and cites *Bully* as influence. The Congressional Anti-Bullying Caucus has signed up 41 bipartisan members of Congress and *Bully* screened at its launch as well as a year later in June 2013.

In June 2012 at the LGBT Pride Month Reception at The White House President Barack Obama cited Lee and the film for his work on raising awareness for bullying.

BEYOND THE US

Although there has not been the capacity to fulfil the full potential of the film abroad there has been some notable activity.

In Latin America, TBP is in talks with The Telmex Foundation (Carlos Slim) to bring *Bully* to every school in Mexico and many Latin American Countries.

In Australia, Lee worked with the Victoria Department of Education, to send out 2500 copies of the film to all schools in the state. They have also adapted TBP materials.

In Canada, in partnership with the US Embassy, educational leaders in all provinces gathered for a day of screenings and a webinar attended by Lee and hosted by the US Embassy.

In conjunction with film's release in the Philippines, a Bully Project Philippines "Not In Our School" anti-bullying campaign was launched by the Jesuit Basic Education Commission (JBEC). Local basketball and TV celebrity Chris Tiu was the face of the media campaign which was aligned with the Department of Education's Child Protection Policy. Similar to the US 1 Million Kids campaign, the JBEC offered several Saturday free screenings for schools to show the film exclusively for their community. Schools could also sponsor campus screenings for a minimal fee. JBEC also provided teachers and parents with a discussion guide to accompany the film and launched their own Bully Project Facebook Page prompting 3,000 Likes.

CORPORATE BUY-IN

It has been a feature of the campaign that they have created numerous strategic and smart partnerships. Too numerous to mention the project continuing to work with Aeropostale, Adobe, Body Shop and Walmart to launch new initiatives in 2013/4.

CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

Facing History and Ourselves
DonorsChoose.org
First Student Busing
BBYO
121.Help Me
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Facebook
Team Up to Stop Bullying
Stop Bulling: Speak Up
The National Center for Learning Disabilities
United Federation of Teachers
DoSomething.org
Love is Louder
National Education Foundation
Common Sense Media
Autism Speaks
NEA
Einhorn Charitable Family Trust
Vered Foundation
GLSEN
HRC
RFK Center
Cause&Affect
Purpose



There is no doubt that the film leveraged its impressive media presence to plant the issue of bullying firmly into the national consciousness, with coverage from all major media brands. Extensive and robust collaborations with a raft of corporates and nonprofits has been a hallmark of the campaign; an exemplar of successful

partnership in action. This has been complemented by outstanding educational resources and the genesis of a genuinely self-sustaining grassroots movement. We hope this will yield a more effective widespread response to, and reduction in, bullying, to be quantified in follow-up studies.

**“REALLY IMPRESSIVE POLICY IMPACT
AT LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL.”**

PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE

TEAM BIOGRAPHY



DIRECTOR

LEE HIRSCH's debut film, *Amandala! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony* is a feature documentary chronicling the history of the South African anti-apartheid struggle through a celebration of its musical heroes. This film was released to wide acclaim, winning the Audience and Freedom of Expression Awards at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival. Among the many honors the film received were five Emmy nominations and a win. He is also the founder, director and producer of the Local Voices for Obama project, a series of award winning ads featuring Obama supporters in small towns in swing states.



PRODUCER

Cynthia Lowen is an awardwinning filmmaker, writer and poet. She is the author of *The Cloud That Contained the Lightning*, winner of the National Poetry Series selected by Nikky Finney.

Cynthia is the recipient of the 2013 Women Authoring Change Fellowship from William Morris Entertainment, the DuPont-Columbia University Awards for Excellence in Journalism, and the Discovery/Boston Review Poetry Prize.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Winner, Stanley Kramer Award, **PGA AWARDS**

Winner, Silver Baton True Life Fund, **PGA AWARDS**

Winner, Audience Choice Award, **PGA AWARDS**

Winner, Best Documentary, **PGA AWARDS**

Winner, Audience Award, **PGA AWARDS**

Winner, Brizzolara Family Foundation Award for a Film of Conflict and Resolution, **HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FF**

Nominated, ShortList, Best Documentary, **ACADEMY AWARD**

Nominated, Best Documentary, **CRITICS CHOICE**

Nominated, Special Jury Mention, **SILVERDOCS**

Nominated, Sterling Award for Best US Feature, **SILVERDOCS**

Nominated, San Diego Film Critics, **SILVERDOCS**

Nominated, Best Documentary, **SILVERDOCS**

arts & life > movies > movie interviews

New Film Takes An Intimate Look At School Bullying

by NPR STAFF

March 13, 2012 5:19 PM

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All Things Considered

8 min 20 sec

- Playlist
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Road Rage: As documented in *Bully*, the school bus is a prime venue for students who target other students for verbal and physical abuse.

Weinstein Co.

The documentary *Bully* follows several middle- and high-school students who are different, awkward or for some other reason the targets of bullying. One of the kids at the center of the film is Alex, from Sioux City, Iowa.

In the film, Alex, a small boy, says people think he's not normal, and most kids don't want to be around him. And some kids at his school, or on the school bus especially, make his life miserable.

Director Lee Hirsch says Alex immediately struck him as someone who was having a hard time — and no one seemed to notice or really care.

"He's a remarkable kid," Hirsch tells NPR's Robert Siegel. "We met Alex on orientation day for his seventh-grade year; he was off sitting by himself, and the world just sort of passed him by as if he did not exist. One of the things that we were thinking about was this idea that some would say that a school doesn't have bullying — or 'I don't see it.' We were sort of thinking that, actually, if you're looking for it, it's very easy to see."

In the course of shooting the movie, Hirsch not only documented Alex's complaints, but also filmed actual incidents in which Alex was hit and verbally abused on the school bus. Hirsch says he was surprised that the bullies seemed undeterred by the presence of a camera — but he also can understand it on a couple of levels.



Director Lee Hirsch at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2011.

Andrew H. Walker/Tribeca Film Festival

"That particular world, that world of Alex's school," Hirsch says, "was a world where kids had become quite used to being able to bully Alex. I think the sense of consequence was very low."

Hirsch adds that the small scale of his production may have helped him capture real moments between kids.

"In our case it was just me alone and a very small camera that looks like a still camera," Hirsch says, "and I think that that sort of low profile also really helped."

Another scene Hirsch says audiences are reacting to is between an assistant principal and a bullying target named Cole. After the administrator dismisses the boy accused of the bullying, she tells Cole that because he didn't accept the boy's apology, he's being just like him.

"Except I don't hurt people," Cole says.

"By not shaking his hand, you're just like him," the assistant principal responds.

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How the #BullyMovie Twitter Campaign Triumphed Over the MPAA

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BY LAUREN HOCKENSON

APR 12, 2012

How do you promote a movie that attempts to give a voice to the voiceless? This is the challenge that fell upon the makers and distributors of *Bully*, a documentary on childhood bullying that will hit theaters nationwide on Friday.

The film's path to theaters is a rocky one. Initially released for a limited audience on March 30, the documentary was slapped with an R-rating for strong language by the [Motion Picture Association of America \(MPAA\)](#). The appeal was denied, effectively blocking the film's opportunity to reach its true audience of middle and high schoolers. Filmmaker Lee Hirsch says he was devastated at the possibility that his film couldn't have the impact he hoped it would.

"We knew we had to fight it, but we didn't know how," says Hirsch of his film's struggles. "It was a done deal."

It was, at least, until a massive multi-platform campaign to bring awareness to the movie was launched by myriad sources, with [Twitter](#) entering as a main theater of activity. *Mashable* spoke with Hirsch, [The Weinstein Company's](#) Senior Vice President of Marketing Bladimir Norman and 17-year-old [Change.org](#) petition leader Katy Butler about the documentary's massive Twitter campaign.

Do you think this campaign has changed ways to gain awareness through Twitter? Let us know in the comments.

The Strategy: Mega Awareness



What's Hot



WATERCOOLER
Telekinetic Coffee Shop Prank
Scares the Beans Out of Customers

4K SHARES



TECH
Fox News Replaces Desks With
Ridiculously Large Touchscreens

8K SHARES



LIFESTYLE
5 Pranks to Play on Your Friend's
iPhone

1.7K SHARES



SOCIAL MEDIA
78% of Twitter's Users Are Outside
the U.S.

1.6K SHARES



TECH
Tikker Is a Watch That Counts Down
Your Life

2.7K SHARES



Erin Mershon Become a fan erin.mershon@huffingtonpost.com

Like 308

Anti-Bullying Caucus Launching In Congress

Posted: 06/27/2012 8:49 pm Updated: 06/28/2012 8:44 am

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FOLLOW: 112th Congress, AARP, Bullying, Facebook, Video, Department Of Education, Mike Honda, Anti-Bullying Caucus, Anti-Bullying, Elderly Abuse, Anti-Bullying, Rep Mike Honda, Politics News



For Rep. Mike Honda (D-Calif.), creating an Anti-Bullying Caucus in Congress was more personal than political.

"As a Japanese American born at the height of World War II, I was placed in an internment camp before I could walk or talk," Honda wrote in a statement.

"For many years after the war, I endured confrontations and insults from my peers

solely because of my appearance."

Honda will launch the bipartisan Anti-Bullying Caucus on Thursday, in an attempt to "stop bullying -- both offline and online," according to a release from his office. At least 42 other representatives -- including three House Republicans -- have joined the effort to empower bullied "youth, seniors, religious communities and LGBT-identifying individuals," among others.

Bullying affected Honda's concentration in school, according to Jack d'Annibale, Honda's communications director.

"He struggled as a student," he told The Huffington Post. "It was difficult to be that fearful, and difficult to find his place in the community and the country because of it."

As a science teacher and an elementary school principal and administrator, Honda dealt with "both the bullied and the bullies themselves," said d'Annibale. "He's been on the front lines of this issue for 30 years."

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Honda, who represents a large portion of Silicon Valley, including Cupertino, made sure the caucus [mission statement](#) specifically addressed cyberbullying, since online attacks are a "fierce and urgent component of the issue as a whole," d'Annibale said. The focus on cyberbullying earned the caucus the support of social media giant Facebook.

In fact, more than 30 groups,

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Oakland schools combat bullying with film



Oakland school children prepare to head into Jack London Cinema to view the documentary "Bully."

By **Pendarvis Harshaw**

Posted September 25, 2012 3:00 pm



35



13

Chen Kong-Wick, who has the daunting-sounding job title of Violence Prevention Program Manager for the Oakland public schools, was in the lobby of the Jack London Cinema last week, explaining the district's newest efforts to take on bullying in the schools. Suddenly she stopped. A middle-aged lady was hurrying by, holding a tissue to her face, en route to the restroom.

"There's a parent that's affected by it," Kong-Wick said as she nodded toward the woman. "The movie is pretty powerful."

Kong-Wick identified the woman as a parent, one of a handful of chaperones accompanying several busloads of students to the theater early last Wednesday. MetWest High School, Roosevelt Middle School, and United for Success Middle School sent scores of students to see the screening of the nationally-renowned documentary "Bully."

The documentary, directed by Lee Hirsch, depicts the lives of six young characters, as camera crews capture first-hand accounts of them being bullied. For one of the characters, Alex, the film crew chooses to intervene and turn the tapes in to school officials because of the severity of the abuse he has been receiving from other students on the yellow school bus.

As the movie showed clips of Alex being punched and called names like "Fishface," the children in the darkened theater reacted as if they too were passengers on that bus. From the audience, one middle-schooler's voice could be heard, asking loudly and to no one in particular: "Why didn't the bus driver do something?"

The theater visit was part of a three-week Oakland Unified School District program called The Bully Project. From September 17 through October 4, most of the district's middle and high school students will have a chance to view the documentary. The project was made possible by Donor's Choice, an online charity that connects students in need to individual donors; the charity is a major funder of The Bully Project.

Through Donor's Choice, the Bully Project was able to work with Oakland School Superintendent Tony Smith, and provide funding for 14,000 schoolchildren to attend the movie, as a nationwide initiative to encourage a million students to see the movie by the end of 2012.

After the Oakland school board members approved a new anti-bullying policy earlier this month, teaming up with The Bully Project campaign served as an ideal starting point for the district's own initiative. "Our hope is that the opportunity of this movie will launch a conversation," said Kong-Wick, who directly oversees the district's initiative.

The school district is trying to reach students in several ways at once, Kong-Wick said. Large-scale events, like assemblies and school gatherings, will be supplemented by a more focused approach aimed at what officials believe is the 15 percent of Oakland students who need that kind of closer intervention. Officials are also planning one-on-one meetings and counseling sessions for students

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- How to Identify Bullying
- How to Intervene in a Bullying Incident
- How to Be an Advocate for Bullied Students
- Resources and Tools
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This is a movie every educator will want to see.

Award-winning director Lee Hirsch takes us on a journey inside the real lives of young people who day-in and day-out are tormented by bullies. You will never forget these kids. Hirsch gives voice to the voiceless, and his movie dispels forever the myth that "kids-will-be-kids" and bullying is a harmless rite of passage. "BULLY" will move you while you're watching it and long afterwards. [Here are some points to consider and actions to take.](#)



Points to Consider and Actions to Take:

- Despite the tears and torment in "BULLY," there is also abiding hope in this movie— it shows that adults and students can do something about bullying.
- Go to the [BULLY documentary website](#) and you will see that the people who made this movie are not out to trash public education and public school employees. They want to help us eliminate bullying from our schools. They, like us, care what happens to our children.
- Yes, some people may use "BULLY" to bash the adults who work in the schools attended by the students in the movie. Instead, we should focus attention and positive energy on solving the problem. Let us take the lead in creating safe, bully-free learning environments for all students.
- The film and its website beautifully complement [NEA's Bully Free Campaign](#). If you haven't already, please [take the Bully Free: It Starts With Me pledge](#). Our students need more caring adults in their lives.
- As advocates of a great public school for every student, we can use "BULLY" to remind ourselves and others that our work in preventing bullying is far from over. Every school board in America should see this movie.
- The issue of bullying is at the tipping point. NEA research shows that teachers and education support professionals across the country want to prevent bullying but need training in how to do so. Will the push by "BULLY," the Bully Project, and all of our bully prevention partners, be the difference maker? That's really up to us.
- Check out [A Guide to the Film Bully](#).
- See the movie. It will renew your commitment.

["Bully" Documentary a Catalyst for Action in Schools and Communities](#)

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