2012 HERO AWARD RECIPIENTS

Being an “upstander” rather than a “bystander” in bullying situations requires courage, but individuals or groups who take the initiative to be “upstanders” - those people whom we describe as Anti-Bullying Heroes—are catalysts for change in their schools and communities.

During the Second Anti-Bullying Summit, held July 11-13, 2012 in Fairhope, Alabama. Auburn University paid tribute to those who have taken a stand against bullying by honoring them with Hero Awards. The HERO Awards were sponsored by the Auburn University College of Education. We appreciate Dean Betty Lou Whitford’s generous support!

2012 recipients were as follows:

- **KV K’NEX Advisors, Keith Valley Middle School, Horsham, Pennsylvania**
  Hero Award: *Teacher Leader - Group*
  The KV K’NEX advisors are the cornerstone for KV K’NEX, an umbrella program created three years ago that encompasses best practices in bullying prevention, character education, restorative practices, and student leadership. The advisors took a variety of unrelated lessons and programs and developed a coordinated program that consists of weekly group meetings with faculty advisors and students from all middle-school grade levels. A climate that promotes positive relationships among students and staff and reduces discipline problems has been established. Using restorative justice techniques, advisors engage students in conversations about decisions they make, enabling them to take ownership of their choices, look at who was affected, and attempt to make it right by brainstorming better choices for the future. Circles are used in advisory groups to discuss issues or role play scenarios to give victims and bystanders a voice. The advisors have also implemented an online anonymous reporting system through a “Bully Reporting Button” on the school website. KV K’NEX Advisor Ashley Kelly accepted the award on behalf of KV K’NEX and Keith Valley Middle School principal, Dr. Barbara Whitelock.

- **Ms. Denise Whittle, Bellingrath Middle School, Montgomery County (Alabama) Schools**
  Hero Award: *Teacher/Counselor Leader – Individual*
  Ms. Whittle has developed a series of sustained Anti-Bullying campaigns for grades 6-8 at Bellingrath Middle School that, according to Principal Sabrina Johnson, have been “instrumental in changing the climate and culture at the school, ultimately reducing bullying.” Activities have included Anti-Bullying training for the faculty/staff, an Anti-Bullying Parent Workshop, participation in National Mix It UP Lunch Day focusing on tolerance, Random Acts of Kindness Week, ART (Aggressive Resistance Training), and guest presenter Jessica Brookshire, founder of K.A.R.M.A.

- **Dr. Pattie Neill, Samford University School of Education, Birmingham, Alabama**
  Hero Award: *School – University Leader*
  While she was principal at Fairview Elementary School in Anderson County, Tennessee in 1995, Dr. Neill developed a Community of Character program that successfully reduced bullying by
46% during a three-year implementation period. She later implemented the program while serving as Superintendent of Cumberland County Schools (TN), and saw that it again reduced bullying and overall discipline problems while nurturing positive changes in school climate that resulted in better attendance. These programs are still in place today. Dr. Neill was nominated by Samford University professor Dr. Jodi Newton, who stated: “She has taken action and instituted anti-bullying programs before the topic had national attention. She writes and lectures on the importance of being a model in character and treatment of others, and helps educators, parents, and students deal with bullying.”

- Ms. Lyle Cogen, Teaching Artist, Merrick, New York
  Hero Award: Community Leader
  Ms. Cogen travels throughout the United States, promoting anti-bullying behavior through her one-woman show, Sticks and Stones. This play, commissioned by Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, has been featured in The New York Times, The Miami Herald, CBS TV, and other media. Ms. Cogen was nominated by her colleague, Stephanie Turner, who states. “After watching Lyle’s performances, bullies stop bullying and speak openly about why they behave that way, ‘bystanders’ step up to help victims, and teachers learn to recognize and manage subversive bully behavior.”

Congratulations to all of these Anti-Bullying Heroes!

Nomination Forms for 2013 Hero Awards will be available soon on Auburn University’s Anti-Bullying Summit website. www.auburn.edu/antibullying.