



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth Communications Office

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DATE: 10/21/2014

SUBJECT: Mayor Ness Spearheads Major New Initiative to Combat Bullying in Duluth Schools

BY: Pakou Ly, Public Information Coordinator

Mayor Ness Spearheads Major New Initiative to Combat Bullying in Duluth Schools

New National Partnership Between The U.S. Conference of Mayors, The BULLY Project, and Mayor Don Ness to Make Duluth’s School District Safer and Effective for All Students

[Duluth, MN] – Mayor Don Ness has teamed up with The U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Duluth Public Schools, and The BULLY Project as part of a major national initiative to develop local solutions-based responses to prevent the epidemic of bullying in local schools.

Mayor Ness joins well over 200 mayors from around the country who are launching the project in their communities during the month of October, during National Bullying Prevention Month. Called the Mayors’ Campaign to End Bullying, the project aims to raise awareness, foster safe school climate, and work with experts from The BULLY Project to create effective responses to bullying in their local school districts.

“Our children have the right to participate in school and activities free from harassment and bullying,” noted Mayor Don Ness. “To that end, I’ve proudly joined The U.S. Conference of Mayor’s and The BULLY Project in this historic campaign to wipe out bullying in our schools. We will be participating by hosting a free community-wide conversation following the screening of “Bully” at Clyde Iron (2920 W. Michigan St.) on October 30, 2014 from 6-9 PM. I encourage the community to participate in this important discussion.”

"As community leaders, it is the responsibility of mayors to raise awareness and educate city residents about not only the potentially tragic effects of bullying, but also the many real ways that school climate impacts how our schools perform and innovate," added Sacramento Mayor and USCM President Kevin Johnson. "Developing and implementing long term anti-bullying initiatives that engage top level community stakeholders including superintendents, law enforcement and philanthropic leaders is critical for the health and safety of not only our children, but all our residents. We are proud to stand in partnership with The BULLY Project on this historic Mayors campaign in order to end bullying once and for all in the nation's cities."

“With Congress stalled on legislation to end the bullying epidemic, the Mayors Campaign to End Bullying is a critical initiative to establish policies and programs that would improve the lives of the 13 million kids bullied in America each year.” said Lee Hirsch, filmmaker behind BULLY and founder of The BULLY Project. “Working with mayors across the country such as Mayor Ness of Duluth, we hope to engage the community in developing a city-specific action plans that draw from research-based initiatives and best practices, so that we move beyond temporary fixes to permanent solutions that enable all children and educators to learn and teach in safe, supportive environments.”

As part of the initiative, Duluth will have access to technical support from a team of education specialists at the University of Illinois and in partnership with The BULLY Project. The experts will provide participating mayors with advice and research on programmatic approaches to ending bullying, so the solutions developed through the initiative are based strongly in recognized best practices and have a sustainable impact that lasts beyond National Bullying Prevention Month in October.

FOR A FULL LIST OF ALL PARTICIPATING CITIES AND MAYORS:

<http://bullyproject.usmayors.org/>

The BULLY Project is providing participating mayors with screening resources, including the film and specialized discussion guide, strategic event support, and supplemental educational resources to help mayors plan and host scalable events that raise awareness and focus community efforts to keep schools safe.

The Mayors’ Campaign to End Bullying – Kicked off October 1st in cities across the USA. The initiative launched on Saturday, June 21st at the 82nd Annual U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Meeting in Dallas - and has gained the support from well over 200 mayors nationwide with nearly 70 percent of The U.S. Conference of Mayors attendees signing on in the first few days to tackle the issue of bullying in their local schools during National Bullying Prevention Month in October.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Rachel Kaplan @ The Bully Project (Rachel.J.Kaplan@gmail.com or (212) 725-1220) or Paula Reed in Mayor Ness’s office (218) 730-5339, or preed@duluthmn.gov

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The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are nearly 1,400 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/usmayors](https://www.facebook.com/usmayors), or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.

The BULLY Project is an advocacy and educational organization inspired by the award winning film, BULLY. Since 2011, BULLY has been seen by more than 3.4 million children through nearly 10,000 school and community screenings. Working with more than 100 partners globally, The BULLY Project motivates and builds capacity for educators to create safer schools, reduce bullying and improve educational outcomes for all. Find out more on

Facebook at facebook.com/bullymovie or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/bullymovie.



You Are Invited to Attend a
**Film Screening & Community
Conversation about Bullying**

FREE PUBLIC EVENT ♦ Everyone is welcome!

The *Mayors Campaign to End Bullying*, a partnership between the U.S. Conference of Mayors and The Bully Project, is part of a national movement to provide children and adults with the tools and resources necessary to end bullying in local communities.

Mayor Don Nies and Superintendent Bill Gronseth invite you to attend the screening of BULLY and engage in a discussion about efforts being made to address bullying and ways we can work together to make Duluth a bully-free community.

When: Thursday, October 30, 2014
Time: 6:00 – 9:00 PM
Where: Clyde Iron Works
2920 W Michigan Street

AGENDA

6:00 PM

Doors Open

Listening Circles / Resource Tables

6:30 PM

Welcome & Opening Comments

7:00 PM

Film Screening

Discussion

- Prevention and Remediation Ideas
- Ways to Become Involved in Community and Schools
- Tools, Tips & Other Resources
- Small Groups & Resource Tables

9:00 PM

Closing Comments

**FREE
Childcare
Available**

PRE-REGISTRATION
REQUIRED

CALL:

218-336-8700
Ext. 1172

ABOUT THE FILM

Over 13 million American kids will be bullied this year, making it the most common form of violence experienced by young people in the nation. The new documentary film BULLY, directed by Sundance and Emmy-award winning filmmaker, Lee Hirsch, brings human scale to this startling statistic, offering an intimate, unflinching look at how bullying has touched five kids and their families.

BULLY is a beautifully cinematic, character-driven documentary. At its heart are those with huge stakes in this issue whose stories each represent a different facet of America's bullying crisis. Filmed over the course of the 2009/2010 school year, BULLY opens a window onto the pained and often endangered lives of bullied kids, revealing a problem that transcends geographic, racial, ethnic and economic borders. It documents the responses of teachers and administrators to aggressive behaviors that defy "kids will be kids" clichés, and it captures a growing movement among parents and youths to change how bullying is handled in schools, in communities and in society as a whole.

Special thanks to our event sponsors and partners:

