



## ■ Make It Matter

What matters most to you? Some of you may answer this question by talking about your family and friends, your health, feeling good about yourself or making a difference in your community.

Have you ever thought about what matters to you as a citizen? When people think about what matters, they may think about what they can do to participate as citizens.

Elections and voting are often associated with citizen participation. The election process, and the right to vote, are important parts of democracy. The results of an election can affect many aspects of your life, even though you are not old enough to vote.

However, many young people who can't vote decide to participate in other ways. They act on what matters to them. The following news excerpts show how some young people decided to get involved in an issue that was important to them – bullying.

I What difference can I make?  
make a difference  
vote  
community  
citizen  
participation

## Students stand up to bullying with 'buddy benches'

Windsor, Ont., school urges students who feel frightened to take a seat and wait for help

**Elementary school students across the country are taking a stance against bullying by — oddly enough — sitting down.**

The concept is part of a global trend known as "friendship benches," or "buddy benches," which are designed to raise red flags in playgrounds when children need help or feel lonely. When students are bullied, or just not feeling welcome, they are urged to take a seat on the bench. Teachers or fellow students are taught to approach them and ask what's wrong....

### Breaking the silence

St. Angela Catholic Elementary School in Windsor, Ontario will be one of the latest schools to get a bench next week. A group of high school students in the area donated the bench after working with anti-bullying agency Kill It With Kindness.

The Friendship Bench Project Canada is the group's latest focus in its efforts to stomp out bullying. They promote the bench as a way for children to get help and to teach other students to show compassion.

St. Angela school principal Jeff Fairlie embraced the idea, saying the bench will hopefully be another way for students to talk about bullying before situations go too far.

"There are still students who feel they don't have a voice," he said. "For those students, this particular bench will be another option for them. They don't have to have the words ready, they can just sit down and somebody will come to them."

# Grade 6 student spreads anti-bullying message

Tanya Cronin

Kamloops – Today's anti-bullying movement was felt at the elementary school level as well.

Kids at Dallas Elementary in Kamloops were treated to a lesson against bullying, taught by a fellow grade 6 student. Promise Dirkson put together her very own lesson plan and went class to class, in the hopes of stopping schoolyard bullying from happening. Promise has been a victim of bullying, and feels it's important to spread the message, so others don't experience what she has.

"I think that it's important that they know, so they don't be a bully or they know what happens when they are bullied what to do. I think bullying is when you try to make people feel less like themselves to make yourself feel better," says Dirkson.

Students were dressed in pink to stand up against bullying, something that can be a serious problem among kids as young as Kindergarten. Dallas Elementary ensures to create a safe environment for students, and is actively involved in promoting positivity both in the classroom and outside.

Watch Promise Dirkson speak about her message at <http://cfjctoday.com/article/514170/grade-6-student-spreads-anti-bullying-message>.

Cronin, Tanya (February 24, 2016). *Grade 6 student spreads anti-bullying message*. CFJC Today.

# Students leave their mark

Simon Arseneau  
Multimedia Journalist



Grade 6 students Jillian Gaudry-Sinclair (back) and Brodee Miller (front) leaving their handprints on a bulletin board as part of anti-bullying activities at Barr Colony School on Wednesday.

As part of the many activities taking place on Pink Day, students at Barr Colony School left their handprint to show their support in the fight against bullying.

Beginning Wednesday morning, students would read a pledge, leave their pink handprints on a bulletin board, and then sign their name under the print to show they are going to stand up against bullying.

Leaving the handprint is part of the theme of standing up and standing strong against bullying, which last year was represented by having every student leave their shoeprint or handprint instead.

Arseneau, Simon (February 25, 2016). *Students leave their mark*. Lloydminster Meridian Booster.



## What do you think?

What are some examples of situations or conditions that you think are unfair or unjust? What makes them unfair or unjust?



## Find Out More

Find out about other young people who acted on something that mattered to them.

Explore more ideas, examples and information about taking action in **Make a Difference on Building Future Voters** at [www.buildingfuturevoters.ca](http://www.buildingfuturevoters.ca).

Learn about the Ladybug Foundation at [www.ladybugfoundation.ca](http://www.ladybugfoundation.ca). Find out more about the WE movement at [www.we.org](http://www.we.org).

How could these unfair or unjust situations or conditions be changed? Select one and make a list of ideas for change.

What do you think you can do about the situations or conditions that need changing?