

**LETTERS PUBLISHED IN THE NY TIMES, ON BULLYING, STUDENT GREEN
(10/03 – 7/12)**

October 13, 2003

A Mother, a Son and a Suicide

To the Editor:

Re "After Son's Suicide, Mother Is Convicted Over Unsafe Home" (news article, Oct. 7): The conviction of Judith Scruggs of Meriden, Conn., is disheartening. The decision to blame the mother and not the school suggests that the environment at home was the primary cause of her 12-year-old son's death. This is almost certainly false.

Bullying is a known major cause of child suicide, even in the absence of any contributing problems at home or pre-existing problems in the child.

Adults are primarily responsible for actively addressing and preventing bullying. When they do not, severely bullied children will occasionally kill themselves, whatever the condition of their homes.

Judith Scruggs should not have been convicted; she should not even have been on trial.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., Oct. 7, 2003

The writer is director, New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention.

June 21, 2003

Students and Bullying

To the Editor:

Re "High School Is Virtual, but the Caps and Gowns Are Real" (news article, June 14):

The cyberschool you describe is a sad solution to a familiar source of suffering: childhood bullying.

As you report, some of the students now attending high school by computer were "pushed out" of their original schools by bullying.

The fact that the alternative is workable should not mislead us.

It is wrong that these students had to leave their original schools. Although your article portrays the cyberstudents as having been harassed because of being fat or otherwise appearing "different," it is not these commonly occurring characteristics that cause bullying.

Bullying is caused by adults who model, ignore and inadequately prevent and address it.

The administration and the staff of the schools in question are responsible for preventing and adequately addressing the bullying that caused the students' distress and eventual departure.

STUART GREEN

Director, New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention

Summit, N.J., June 17, 2003

May 18, 2004

Columbine Questions: Parents, Schools and Bullies

To the Editor:

David Brooks, while right to be supportive of Dylan Klebold's parents ("Columbine: Parents of a Killer," column, May 15), should not dismiss the importance of the school as a major factor in the killings.

Dylan Klebold was a bullied child, attending a school in which bullying was not being adequately addressed. Bullied children suffer tremendously, cannot end the bullying by themselves, and occasionally kill themselves or, rarely, others.

Adults are capable of effectively addressing bullying, but most continue not to do so. The "self-initiating moral agent who made his choices and should be condemned for them" is not only Dylan Klebold, it is also the adults in charge of his school.

Blaming the child alone won't solve the problem. And the problem needs to be solved.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., May 16, 2004

The writer is director, New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention.

March 5, 2005

The Autistic Child: Help and Heartbreak

To the Editor:

When a child with autism sits alone in a school lunchroom day after day, that child's intense suffering is an emergency that must be addressed. School administrators and staff members should expect and encourage other children to include and befriend the abandoned child.

In schools in which bullying awareness and prevention activities are a strong focus, children with autism can have a better day. This is a "false hope" at present for parents of autistic children only because there are still so few schools that recognize that the problem can be effectively tackled -- and then do so.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., Feb. 27, 2005

The writer is director of the New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention.

July 5, 2005

Bigger Problems Than Weight

To the Editor:

Re "For Overweight Children, Are 'Fat Camps' a Solution?" (June 28): The major factor in the unhappiness of overweight children is not their weight; it is harsh treatment and lack of acceptance by other children and by adults.

While it is unclear whether a child's participation in a weight camp will result in lower weight long term, it is certain that the child's school administrators and teachers can prevent much of the suffering associated with being bullied. In schools at which bullying is effectively addressed, children of all weights and shapes can find acceptance and support.

Such children are then truly free to try to make changes in their weight or not, as they wish, unburdened by the fears and pressures harsh treatment by peers adds to the mix.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J.

The writer is the director of the New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention.

March 26, 2008

LETTERS; At 15, He's Bullied, Again and Again

To the Editor:

Re "A Boy the Bullies Love to Beat Up, Repeatedly," by Dan Barry (This Land column, front page, March 24):

The article about the bullying of Billy Wolfe depicts most of the elements present in calls we receive almost daily from parents of bullied children.

From the parents' point of view, the school doesn't prevent the bullying or address incidents urgently enough. Parents feel they are treated as antagonists. Parents are outraged when staff members mistakenly focus on the role or characteristics of the bullied child.

Often, as in this case, the targeted child has a special health or learning need, or other perceived difference, and thus the bullying is a hate crime. Increasingly, the outcome is that parents sue the school.

Schools must understand that bullying is not an ordinary conflict between kids; it is an assault on the targeted child. What is happening in Arkansas is also common in New Jersey and New York. As Dan Barry writes, it's happening everywhere.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., March 24, 2008

The writer is director of the New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention.

April 4, 2010

LETTERS; Intervening to Stop Bullying

To the Editor:

Re "Playtime Is Over" (Op-Ed, March 27):

It's good to see David Elkind affirm the need for active intervention by schools to address bullying in the schoolyard, especially given his status as a leading advocate for the value of unstructured children's play.

Bullying is indeed a significant problem. The new anti-bullying law in Massachusetts he mentions was spurred by the bullying-related suicide of a 15-year-old high school student. In addition to being a factor in youth suicide, bullying is the No. 1 reason for students to bring weapons to school. In fact, bullying affects everything at school, from grades to relationships.

Recess monitors are therefore a good idea, providing adult supervision to an area in which much bullying takes place and ensuring that activities include all children. Beyond the schoolyard, good supervision and active inclusion are needed in all school areas, from classrooms to hallways. We must continue to intervene.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., March 27, 2010

The writer is chairman of the New Jersey Commission on Bullying in Schools and director of the New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention.

July 27, 2010

LETTERS

How to Tame a Schoolyard Bully

To the Editor:

Susan Engel and Marlene Sandstrom understand what it takes to address childhood bullying effectively. Their emphasis on schools that model kindness and encourage collaboration is especially on target.

They are also right that as social and legal pressure to address bullying increases, schools often turn to narrow packaged programs and don't look deeply enough at school culture as the root of the problem.

But for schools to change overall functioning and attitudes, good laws are necessary. Only legislatures can finance the training and support required if society truly wants schools to change. Laws can empower and protect those most bullied and at risk by establishing and reinforcing rights and providing pathways for redress. And law is itself the clearest expression of society's expectation for change.

So let's do all that Ms. Engel and Ms. Sandstrom recommend. And let's also have strong anti-bullying laws.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., July 23, 2010

The writer is director of the New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention.

December 11, 2010

LETTERS

Mom and Dad vs. the Cyberbully

To the Editor:

In every case cited in the article, the cyberbullying occurred between young people who knew one another from the same schools or programs. For one child ("D.C."), it was his "loner" status in school that attracted the attention of the boys who attacked him.

In most bullying, a child likely to be targeted and his or her negative relationships with other youth can be identified even before an incident occurs.

There should have been at least one trusted adult in the school who was aware of the child's isolated status before the incident, who was working to improve it, and to whom the child could turn when incidents began. Apparently, this was not so.

I'm appalled that there continues to be an uncertain or negative response by school administrators and staff to parents and children when bullying — cyber or not — occurs. The adults who run the schools and youth programs that children attend are also responsible for addressing bullying! Until they do, much unnecessary suffering will continue to occur.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., Dec. 6, 2010

The writer is director of the New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention.

August 26, 2011

LETTERS

Should Colleges Stop Fraternity Hazing?

To the Editor:

Re "[A Pledge to End Fraternity Hazing](#)" (Op-Ed, Aug. 24):

The pledge by David J. Skorton, the president of Cornell University, to end fraternity hazing at Cornell deserves tremendous praise. His bold action will inevitably be duplicated by other college administrators. His shift in awareness and this decision are perfect examples of the institutional change sought by the surging anti-bullying movement.

In the end, helping children and other vulnerable populations always comes down to what courageous, groundbreaking individuals will do. Those of us who are advocates greatly appreciate Dr. Skorton's model leadership on hazing.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., Aug. 25, 2011

Director, New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention Summit, N.J.,

October 21, 2011

LETTERS

The Pain of Bullying

To the Editor:

Charles M. Blow's Oct. 15 column, "[The Bleakness of the Bullied](#)," is the best description I've seen of the pain children can experience from this isolating form of violence.

Mr. Blow makes terrible sense of the despair and sense of urgency in a child that produced his own near-act of self-destruction. He also captures the way in which bullying is a spiritual crisis, as much as it is anything else.

Finally, he lets us understand how one supportive, loving adult — in his case, his mother — can lead a child back to life. His essay, without ever speaking of advocacy, is a call for all of us to do more to protect our children.

And when bullying does occur, we must ensure that all children have the lifesaving adult support that rescued him, if not at home, then at school.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., Oct. 17, 2011

Director, New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention

July 14, 2012

LETTER

The Penn State Report

To the Editor:

Re "Penn State's Part" (editorial, July 13): You are right when you focus on institutional responsibility for the violence that occurred at Penn State and in the Catholic Church. But you should extend your analysis to all violence that occurs in institutional settings.

The exceptional case is when violence can be attributed to individual psychopathology. The rule is that violence occurs because of the characteristics of the setting in which it takes place. The most common example of this is violence in school, the most common form of which is childhood bullying.

The violence against children at Penn State and in the church is serious and dramatic. But in terms of frequency, the population of victims is larger -- and just as serious, in many cases -- if we consider the harsh treatment of children by peers (and occasionally by teachers) in schools and other youth institutional settings.

I applaud your passionate and heartbreaking editorial. Now let's also focus on the harm occurring every day in our country's schools because -- as you quote Louis J. Freeh, the investigator at Penn State -- "the most powerful men ... failed to take any steps" to protect the children.

STUART GREEN

Summit, N.J., July 13, 2012

The writer is director of the New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention.