



OWEN GAUDIO

is a sixth grader at St. Barnabas Elementary. In his free time he likes to play basketball, run and spending time with his family. His favorite subject is Science. Owen thinks he might like to go in to the information technology field when he finishes school.

Bullying has become a very serious form of discrimination. The American Psychological Association defines bullying as, “a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort.” Bullies pick victims usually because the victim is in some way “different.” This makes bullying a kind of discrimination. Many of us think of bullying as an act done by kids to other kids, but in this case middle school kids were bullying a 68-year-old woman.

The following story of bullying really made me upset and uncomfortable. In June of 2012, four middle school kids on a school bus were bullying a bus monitor that they thought was too old and fat. They called her names, used swear words, said that her family did not want to be near her, and threatened her. The bus monitor became so upset that she began to cry, but the kids just thought she was sweating. When she told the kids that she was crying they said she was crying because she missed her box of Twinkies. The kids posted a ten minute video on YouTube of this horrible act of unkindness.

Bullying needs to be stopped! One way we can work towards this goal, is to have anti-bullying classes in schools. Our school started an anti-bullying program last year. I think that it has made kids more aware of how they treat others. There needs to be serious punishments for kids that are involved in bullying. Kids and adults should be taught what to do if they witness a bullying situation, even if they are just a bystander.

This story has somewhat of a happy ending. A young man who had been a victim of bullying himself, started a campaign to raise money for the woman. His goal was to raise \$5,000 to send the woman on a vacation. When the campaign ended in July, it raised over \$700,000. The woman has used part of this money to establish an Anti-Bullying Foundation, and the money has also made it possible for her to retire. The four middle school students that were involved were suspended from school for one year, and they must complete fifty hours of community service for the elderly and attend an anti-bullying program. We can learn from this story that bullying can effects kids as well as adults and we all need to focus our attention on stopping ALL bullying.