

Pink Shirt Day

Mr. Speaker, today is national Pink Shirt Day. Wearing pink today symbolizes that we, as a society, will not tolerate bullying of any kind. This day of recognition and action was started in 2007 by two young men in Nova Scotia, David Sheppard and Travis Price. As an act of protest and support, they gave pink shirts to their fellow students, after a grade 9 student was bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school.

These two young men raised global awareness of bullying, starting from one school in Cambridge, Nova Scotia. In the last year, more than 180 countries have participated in the initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I provided pink lapel flowers for all of the Members to wear in the House today. We have done this for a number of years, to show support for victims of bullying and cyber bullying. It is also a reminder that there are many people working hard to bring this issue off the internet and out of the dark corners of schools. I am proud to see all the pink in the House today, marking our collective acknowledgement that bullying in any form is unacceptable.

In 2013, the Legislative Assembly passed Bill 12: An Act to Amend the Education Act, to establish a definition of bullying; provide for the establishment, by regulation, of a Territorial School Code of Conduct; and require education authorities to ensure the development of safe schools plans. The Northwest Territories Safe and Caring Schools Regulations and Territorial Code of Conduct were established in 2016, and safe schools plans have now been created throughout our education system.

Mr. Speaker, schools across the North are working to create safe and welcoming learning environments for all students. Our schools are actively engaging students of all ages in wellness, resiliency and inclusion activities, and making sure that all students are, and feel

they are, valued members of their community. We have seen some marked successes stemming from these actions, with students growing into advocates and ambassadors.

We must continue the work we began in 2013 to make our schools safe places for all members of the school community.

The 2018 national theme for Pink Shirt Day is cyber bullying. The Pink Shirt Day organization states that in today's digital world, it can be impossible to escape online bullying, whether it takes the shape of harassment, spreading rumours, sharing embarrassing information, or threats. This year, Pink Shirt Day is encouraging everyone, young and old, to combat cyber bullying by thinking twice before posting something negative, and instead using the internet to spread positivity.

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that all of our schools across the Northwest Territories will be marking Pink Shirt Day. I look forward to seeing the wash of pink across the North.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.