

## RCMP Officer Pays Own Way to Deliver Important Message



Tad Milmine, an RCMP Officer from British Columbia, gave a powerful anti-bullying presentation to West Colchester Consolidated students Sept. 27th, based on his own experiences and that of an Ontario teenage. Left to right: Tad Milmine, students Haley Eagles, Jason Riemersma, Dawson McAleer, and School Liason Officer Constable Jane MacDonald. (Harrington Photo)

*By Linda Harrington*

With over 26,000 hits on his "Bullying Ends Here" website, Tad Milmine is making progress in his goal of spreading a message of acceptance, tolerance and understanding by empowering youth to make positive, individual change.

Milmine travelled to Nova Scotia this September from his home in British Columbia to share a powerful message with local students. He wasn't being paid to speak; he had no sponsors, and was using vacation days to be here. He was inspired to present this message after reading about the death of a teenager, Jamie Hubley, who had taken his own life because of bullying.

"The more I read about Jamie, and his troubling experiences, the more of an inspiration he became to me," Tad told Grade 6 to 9 students at WCCS in Bass River. "Jamie wanted nothing more than to be loved. Although Jamie had a wonderful home life, he was being tormented daily by his peers at school. This went on for many years."

Tad knew all too well the pain and degradation that accompanies bullying. He began his talk by telling students about his own life, beginning when he was 5 years old. He told of his dream to become a police officer, so he could help people, and of the terrible years of abuse he endured until at the age of 17 he walked out the door and never went back.

Students listened intently as Tad took them back to a time when he, a shy introverted little boy, was ridiculed and abused both at home and at school, leaving him sobbing uncontrollably every day. No one came to his aid because he says, "Victims don't tell."

It wasn't until he was 33 years of age, after encouragement from a fellow baseball teammate (who was an RCMP officer), that he finally had enough courage to follow his boyhood dream. The teammate's words, "Tad one day you will grow old and you are going to remember you had a dream, and that's it! Or... you could try" gave him a needed push to fill out an application.

Tad is now an RCMP officer in Surrey, BC and he tells WCCS students, "If you do have a dream, no one will hand the dream to you, you have to try."

After giving students a 15 minute insight into his own life, Tad introduces Jamie to the students, telling them all about his life and his loving supportive family. At age 10, Jamie started to be bullied at school, beginning with name calling and escalating with punching, kicking, pulling his hair and spitting on him. Despite his wonderful support at home, Jamie still suffered alone.

"Victims don't speak," says Tad. Eventually the abuse escalated to a point where students shoved batteries down his throat, a medical emergency, and finally someone told his family what was happening.

Jamie's family moved him to a new school and made sure he never took the bus again.

At the new school, in the tenth grade, Jamie tried to make a difference for others. He wanted to inspire acceptance, tolerance and understanding but when students tore down all his posters and the ridicule continued; Jamie lost all hope and sadly, took his own life.

"He never called anyone a bad name, he never fought back, he always had a smile and he was still trying to make the world a better place," says Tad. "I would have been so proud to have met him."

When Tad read about Jamie in the newspaper he decided he could no longer sit still. He emailed Jamie's father and asked if it would be alright to tell the world Jamie's story. "I promised him I would follow through and do something," he says.

Tad began by starting a website called "Bullying Ends Here" and spending his days off speaking at schools, hoping to pick up where Jamie left off.

"Just like Jamie, I am gay. Me, Tad," he tells students. "I have no issues telling the entire world this." He said he hopes students might leave the auditorium a little better person than when they walked in.

"I have been gay the whole time I have been talking to you," says Tad as he asks students whether learning this fact has "changed something inside them". He assures them, it is ok, no matter what, "I still like you and as a police officer if you ever need to call 911, I will still be the first person at your door to help you, and I will sacrifice my life to protect yours any day."

Tad encourages students to reach out to others and give them a chance, to look in the mirror each day and ask, "Was I the very best person I could have been today?"

Students were given cards with Tad's website and contact information and he wants them to know he is there for them, if they ever need a friend. "From this moment on I will do what I can to make your world a better place."

Tad received over 400 emails in the four days he was in Nova Scotia and promises to answer every one of them. "I have never experienced such kindness and appreciation as I did while in NS. There truly are no words to describe it all." For more information visit <http://www.bullyingendshere.ca/>

Bullying will never end if we don't start with ourselves first.

## Great Village Community Association Notes

*By Linda Shears*

Upcoming events being planned include the annual Christmas Craft Sale, being held on Saturday, November 2, at the school gym, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. To book a table, at the cost of \$15, contact Heather MacKay at 668-2501 or by e-mail at: [greatvillagelearningnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:greatvillagelearningnetwork@gmail.com). The planned lunch menu for this event includes Glenda's ever-popular chili, as well as hot dogs, biscuits, cookies and muffins.

Another planned event is *Photos by Elise* at the Hall on Saturday, Nov. 9. Elise attended the Small Business Expo and she's returning in time to take photos for Christmas cards.

On Thursday, November 21, beginning at 7:00 PM, there will be a Sunset Gourmet and Steeped Tea Party at the Hall.

For those in the area who

would like to improve their reading, writing or math skills at any level, contact CALA instructor, Charlene Lannon, at 662-2214. She is providing adult education at the Hall

two days per week.

The Community Association's next scheduled meeting is on Monday, November 18, at 7:00 PM. We are always looking for new participants and new ideas.

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