



Contact:

Ross Goldberg
818-597-8453, x-1
ross@kevinross.net

**Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership to Incorporate
National Epidemic of School Bullying into 2012 Curriculum**

(LOS ANGELES – October 27, 2011) — Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) announced today that it is joining with other concerned organizations and citizens around the country to help address the national epidemic of school bullying. HOBY is the nation's foremost nonprofit youth leadership development organization.

“The solution to youth bullying lies with the youth themselves – they are the only ones that can stop it,” says HOBY President and CEO Javier LaFianza. “For that reason we have decided to incorporate the subject of bullying into our 2012 curriculum and are committed to providing America's youth the information, tools and skills they need to make a positive impact in this area.”

HOBY conducts approximately 70 regional seminars a year, touching more than 10,000 high school sophomores nationwide. Already, the subject of school bullying was addressed at HOBY's annual World Leadership Congress held this past July in Chicago. In addition, there are more than 400,000 HOBY alumni (or “ambassadors”) around the country that can play a part in working to eradicate the plague of school bullying.

School bullying covers a wide range of behavior done on school property including peer-to-peer bullying, bullying of younger children by older children, or bullying in which a teacher is either a victim or a culprit.

“Emotional bullying is the most prevalent type of bullying along with pushing, shoving, tripping and even spitting on someone,” said LaFianza. “And now we have cyber bullying to worry about as well. Victims of bullying are often scarred for life and display a wide range of responses including low self-esteem, difficulty in trusting others, lack of assertiveness, aggression, difficulty controlling anger and isolation. And as we have seen recently, at its extreme, has led to tragic suicides.”

(More)

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In a curious sense, the victims of bullying are also the bullies themselves who, for reasons not fully comprehensible, have turned early in life to this harmful behavior. And while psychiatrists and sociologists debate the root causes of bullying, many agree that it often stems from a negative environment, a lack of self-esteem and a shortage of positive influences in the child's life.

HOBY's embracing of school bullying as a seminal issue is a natural alignment with the organization's belief that students are not just the leaders of tomorrow but can be the leaders of today. "By feeding their energy in the right direction, students can make a positive impact right now in their own communities and beyond," LaFianza said. "Having students become more aware and personally involved in the issue of school bullying won't eliminate the problem altogether – no single action or program can. But we can make an impact by steering students in a positive direction and, in doing so, hopefully set them on a path of leadership, service and high self-esteem.

For more than 50 years, Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership has helped to cultivate tomorrow's leaders by inspiring a global community of youth and volunteers to a life dedicated to leadership, service and innovation. HOBY programs annually provide nearly 10,000 local and international high school students the opportunity to participate in unique leadership training, service learning and motivation-building experiences. HOBY also provides adults the opportunity to make a significant impact on the lives of youth by volunteering, and today more than 4,000 volunteers and over 365,000 alumni proudly make up the HOBY family. Further information on HOBY may be obtained at www.hoby.org.

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