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PUTNAM ELEMENTARY STUDENTS LEARN TO BE “BULLY BUSTERS”
Putnam Family & Community Services brings Bully Prevention Program to Local Schools

Carmel, NY – When you want to prevent kids from bullying – and being bullied – in school, “who you gonna call?” Bully Busters!

That’s what students at Fulmar Road Elementary School in Mahopac are learning, thanks to Putnam Family and Community Services, Inc. (PFCS)...and a few unforgettable puppets. Since spring of last year, PFCS Prevention Educator Kristel Halton and her puppet sidekick, “Officer I.M. Goodman,” have been helping 2nd graders learn to avoid violence and build the skills they need to deal with difficult situations through a program called “Bully Busters.” Developed by Better Me Books, Bully Busters seeks to engage young children and take the fear out of bullying through lessons featuring a trustworthy policeman puppet. “Officer Goodman,” with Halton’s help, takes the kids on a series of imaginary travels where they encounter the mean “Wooly Bully” and learn to avoid his tricks.

“We use catch phrases and strategies that children can remember, like ‘Be strong, make a choice. Don’t listen to that bully’s voice!’” said Halton, who piloted the program at Fulmar Road Elementary School. “Students at Fulmar Road responded positively to the program and the staff have been nothing but supportive and involved in promoting a school atmosphere of teamwork and respect.”

Just ask Gary Chadwick, Principal and Bully Buster at Fulmar Road: “Teaching students to be the best that they can be and to have positive self-esteem is an integral part of their development and education. Thanks to Putnam Family and Community Services, we are able to work collaboratively to provide in-classroom education that is dynamic, presents relevant information and is 100% supportive of students.”



“Officer Goodman” and Gary Chadwick, Principal of Fulmar Road Elementary School

Besides the appeal of Officer Goodman and his friends, Bully Busters lessons reach students through songs and creative activities that help them develop healthy behaviors and coping strategies. PFCS also encourages students to speak up if they see another child being bullied. According to Halton, “We challenge the kids to be ‘upstanders,’ not bystanders. We talk about ways they can safely intervene in a situation if they see bullying happen, but we do know that it’s hard for children to stand up for themselves, and in that situation, we tell them to ask for help.”

PFCS has been very pleased with Bully Busters, and will implement the program at Mahopac’s Austin Road Elementary school this spring, with the help of Prevention Educator Christina Tozzi. The goal of the non-profit is for Bully Busters to eventually reach all four elementary schools in Mahopac, as well as Putnam Valley Middle School. “The kids love it,” said Halton. And their administrators seem to feel the same; added Principal Chadwick, “the Bullying Prevention Program offered by Putnam Family and Community Services is just one of the many great prevention initiatives that they provide. It is a pleasure to have wonderful staff teaching students the skills needed to handle life situations.”

About Putnam Family and Community Services, Inc.

Putnam Family and Community Services, Inc. (PFCS) is a private non-profit agency providing mental health, chemical dependency treatment and prevention, and family support services to people of all ages, regardless of ability to pay. PFCS promotes opportunities to grow, heal, and recover through comprehensive services including counseling, case management, family advocacy, community outreach, and assistance with addiction and rehabilitation. For more information, visit www.PFCSinc.org.