

'I've stood around too long'

Central Kings students wear pink to send bullies a message

By IAN FAIRCLOUGH | The Chronicle Herald, Halifax, Sept. 13, 2007

CAMBRIDGE, NS — Two students at Central Kings Rural High School fought back against bullying recently, unleashing a sea of pink after a new student was harassed and threatened when he showed up wearing a pink shirt. The Grade 9 student arrived for the first day of school last Wednesday and was set upon by a group of six to 10 older students who mocked him, called him a homosexual for wearing pink and threatened to beat him up. The next day, Grade 12 students David Shepherd and Travis Price decided something had to be done about bullying.



Central Kings Rural High School students David Shepherd and Travis Price bought 75 pink tank tops and other pink items for students to wear after a new student at the school was bullied for wearing a pink shirt. (IAN FAIRCLOUGH / Valley Bureau)

RELATED: Pink shirts legend grows

"It's my last year. I've stood around too long and I wanted to do something," said David.

They used the Internet to encourage people to wear pink and bought 75 pink tank tops for male students to wear. They handed out the shirts in the lobby before class last Friday — even the bullied student had one.

"I made sure there was a shirt for him," David said.

They also brought a pink basketball to school as well as pink material for headbands and armbands. David and Travis figure about half the school's 830 students wore pink.

It was hard to miss the mass of students in pink milling about in the lobby, especially for the group that had harassed the new Grade 9 student.

"The bullies got angry," said Travis. "One guy was throwing chairs (in the cafeteria). We're glad we got the response we wanted."

David said one of the bullies angrily asked him whether he knew pink on a male was a symbol of homosexuality.

He told the bully that didn't matter to him and shouldn't to anyone.

"Something like the colour of your shirt or pants, that's ridiculous," he said.

"Our intention was to stand up for this kid so he doesn't get picked on."

Travis said the bullies "keep giving us dirty looks, but we know we have the support of the whole student body.

"Kids don't need this in their lives, worrying about what to wear to school. That should be the last thing on their minds."

When the bullied student put on his pink shirt Friday and saw all the other pink in the lobby, "He was all smiles. It was like a big weight had been lifted off his shoulder," David said. No one at the school would reveal the student's name.

Travis said that growing up, he was often picked on for wearing store-brand clothes instead of designer duds.

The two friends said they didn't take the action looking for publicity, but rather to show leadership in combating what they say is frequent bullying in schools.