

BULLYGUARD® – UPDATED AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TODAY’S YOUTH THAT FOCUS ON BULLYING AND CHILD SAFETY

Tom Patire, President ^a

^a Tom Patire Group LLC, Park Ridge, NJ

Abstract

During the presentation to the convention audience Tom Patire, America’s Leading Personal Safety Expert® and the most publicized bodyguard in the media today, will present an overview of the BULLYGUARD® program that he has researched and designed. Tom will also present evidence to show how BULLYGUARD® has worked in the communities in which it was presented.

BULLYGUARD® is a high energy, empowering seminar that is presented to elementary and middle school level students. Within the seminar, BULLYGUARD® instructor(s) discuss with students the types of behaviors to expect from a bully and the coping strategies that build confidence, awareness and avoidance as seen through the eyes of a professional bodyguard.

In an interactive setting, Tom will address questions from the audience and explain/demonstrate the BULLYGUARD® theory (formulated from his life long occupation in protective services as a bodyguard for the rich and famous) - teach students what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. In addition, Tom and a member of his staff will also discuss the BULLYGUARD® curriculum, which provides a comprehensive follow up to “Tom Patire’s 5 Simple Rules/Rhymes that focus on confrontational avoidance.”

Summary

BULLYGUARD® is a high energy, empowering seminar that educates students on the types of behavior to expect from a bully and the coping strategies that build confidence, awareness and avoidance. The program was researched and designed by Tom Patire, America’s Leading Personal Safety Expert® and the most publicized bodyguard in the media today.

Dubbed ‘The Guardian of Safety®’ by Fox TV, Tom Patire took his protective service background as a career bodyguard for the rich and famous, adapted his non-confrontational techniques, infused a “cool” and significant demeanor, and developed a program that students find interesting, informative and successful. Students are accepting of the BULLYGUARD® concepts because of the mystique that surrounds bodyguards and their interaction with their clients. The essence of the program is five universal rules/rhymes of bully avoidance. Each rule is designed in a format that is rhyming in nature and easy to remember. For example, BULLYGUARD® Rule Number One is “Don’t Talk - Walk™.”

The BULLYGUARD® theory is simple – teach students what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. By providing a clear direction and promoting the importance of non aggressive behavior, BULLYGUARD® provides students with the confidence to Just Walk Away™. For classroom follow up, BULLYGUARD® is designed with a 10-month school curriculum that reinforces the seminar.

The following BULLYGUARD® past presentations and their overall outcomes will be discussed at the

conference:

In 2007, the Boys and Girls Club of Lodi, New Jersey implemented a pilot study using the BULLYGUARD® program. The program involved a population of 125 members (cross-section of four elementary schools from the towns/cities of Lodi, Garfield, Passaic and Saddle Brook), ages 7 – 11, that attended the BULLYGUARD® Program and received the ten BULLYGUARD® curriculum lessons. A second population of 125 members, ages 7 – 11, was created and they did not receive any BULLYGUARD® training. Both groups were monitored for six months (January – May) and the following results were reported:

- The BULLYGUARD® student population experienced a 25 percent increase in attendance at Boys and Girls Club facility.
- The BULLYGUARD® student population had a 30 percent reduction in disciplinary referrals.
- The BULLYGUARD® student population had a 50 percent reduction in incidents that dealt with fighting and incidents where students were singled out and 'picked on'.
- For 2008, the Boys and Girls Club of Lodi will implement additional BULLYGUARD® training in its programs.

Testimonial: BULLYGUARD® in the Fort Lee Elementary School, by Debbie Brigida, Head of Guidance

When BULLYGUARD® first came out several years ago, I was one of the first schools to test it as a pilot program. The reason why I accepted BULLYGUARD® into our school was because the other programs we used fell on deaf ears. The kids would attend and listen but then get bored, so we would be back to square one with our bullying problems, which all schools have.

I saw Tom Patire present in Lodi High School. He had over 600 plus teenagers in an auditorium and after two minutes of him on stage you could hear a pin drop. Now he spoke more to them about the pressures and temptations of life, but what sold me on him was that he kept the students involved in his talk by bringing the talk to them, not forcing it on them.

Tom and his team of bodyguards came to our school and presented in accordance to grade levels. What I especially like about all the talks was that each one was designed around that particular grade, and Tom kept them interested because he was grade specific by being scenario specific. What I mean by this is he related to them by talking to them about when he was in school and what he went through. For an established, respected professional he dropped his ego and was not afraid to talk about how he was bullied and how he felt. The icing on the cake was when he brought the kids up on stage with him and showed them how to be bodyguards. He even dressed them up with dark sun glasses and taught them how to scan, how to walk and how to avoid, yes avoid confrontation. He also spoke on how the profession has both men and women in it. In fact he had many of the girls in the audience act as the celebrities while the boys were the bodyguards.

That is when he broke down the rules of bullying as seen through the eyes of a bodyguard. Once the kids bought into him and his profession, the rest was clear sailing.

The results of the program were as follows:

- Sixty percent drop in bullying type incidents through the year;
- Fewer problems in the hallways when students were switching classes because we posted

- Tom's number on rule – Don't Talk – Walk!;
- Many teachers used Tom's rules and advice when speaking to kids that had problems with other kids.
 - Students watch Tom on a Fox Special called Stranger – Danger and then he became an instant celebrity to them, which led to positive talking in the classroom on what he does and how he does it. He became a Role Model for them to believe in, and our teaching staff to reference.
 - Overall it was because Tom Patire's BULLYGUARD® Program is very 'cool', as the kids say, and more of a trendy, contemporary program. That is why I see the kids really like it. Plus Tom gets the pulse of the kids, which, in turn, gets them to get him.

Testimonial: BULLYGUARD® in the Urban Community – A Case In Point by Francine Burbridge (MSW) and Staff

Faced with the number of children pressured from gangs on the street, bullies in schools, and strangers trying to abduct or seduce them on their way home from school, as a social worker in the North Bronx in NY City, I looked for a program that would work for my children. A program that was real to them and one that would educate them about bullying and peer pressures, and yet would teach them to be safe and be confident within themselves. Social workers, like myself, in the urban communities are always looking for ways to implement new safety-type programs for their particular groups of children (those who have been listed in many studies and reports as some of the most vulnerable at-risk populations in the nation today).

Being able to motivate, encourage, and set goals is not enough if children aren't being taught how to deal with the ever growing pressures of bullies and potential dangerous situations where they are vulnerable and left unprotected.

After watching a recent Montel Williams Show episode that featured America's Leading Personal Safety Expert Tom Patire, and hearing him talk about different aspects of empowering kids to protect themselves in a non-fear based, non confrontational way, I was instantly attracted to the message that Mr. Patire was sending and portraying. I researched him through a local police department and found he was speaking at an elementary school on the topics of bullying and child safety. I went and sat in the audience and listened both as a caring social worker and as a single mother. That led me to schedule a meeting with Mr. Patire to discuss the ongoing bullying in the urban community where I have worked my entire career.

After the meeting with Mr. Patire, he called me a few days later with a re-designed group-specific program for my children, focused not only on bullying but gang pressures as well as everyday safety situations. Tom then presented his program to over 100 children from ages 8 – 12. From the minute he walked in the room I saw how he got the attention of the children by going over to them and talking to them on their level. I noticed how some parents who had never supported any of these events all watched as he interacted and laughed with them. I knew then that this was a program that was different from all the others and was very much needed in my community. Once the room calmed down, he began his interactive talk on bullying. The talk was approximately 45 minutes long and then he opened it up to questions from the children and the parents.

What made the talk different was that he first got the children to understand his story on how

he was bullied and how he grew up small in stature and eventually at the age of 19, he blossomed and grew to what he is today. It was because he was picked on and bullied that he dedicated his life to protecting others, first as a bodyguard and now as child protector. Our children sat still in their seats and watched closely as Mr. Patire took them through the world of protection, asking them to role-play as celebrities and bodyguards. They had a great time and once captured by Patire's message, he back-doored the rules of protecting oneself from bullying and dangerous situations. He then spoke about Bully Safe People and Bully Safe Zones and showed them a way out when they run into these situations.

The BULLYGUARD® presentation set the groundwork for his monthly curriculum where he and his team came back to reinforce and instill the 5 Key Rules on BULLYGUARD, as well as where safe zones are and who are considered safe people. I personally attended all the classes. What I realized is that Mr. Patire first gets the kids to trust them by showing how he was vulnerable himself when he was a child. He then goes to their level and sends his message so it pertains to them. I have attended different bullying workshops and many have a good message but the way some of them were portrayed did not reach everyone. BULLYGUARD® reached every one of the children for the reason Tom Patire told me. He said "I see it from their eyes because I was one of them and that is why my message hits home."

The program was ongoing for over 8 weeks and was well received. Many of the parents attended as much as they could just so they could reinforce the message further at home.

My group that participated was a cross-section of the NY City Parks Dept. After-School Program and the Derek Jeter Turn 2 Foundation. This allowed me to cover a multi-diverse group throughout the Bronx and to see how they would all respond as individuals as well as a single unit.

Following is the feedback directly from the children to me on how they felt about the BULLYGUARD® presentations:

"We like how cool the bodyguard talked to us."

"He showed us how to walk away and feel good about it."

"Mr. Patire cares and took the time to answer each one of our questions."

"He was big but not scary. He was very funny."

"The stuff they taught was in cool rhymes that were easy to remember."

"He showed us that even tough people like him have the confidence to walk away."

Following is the feedback from my staff:

"Mr. Patire showed the kids how to be confident. He didn't just tell them."

"What hit home with everyone in the room was when he talked about how he was bullied as a kid and how he did not let that affect him and went on to pursue his dream."

"Mr. Patire is a big guy with a blank expression on his face when you first meet him. Yet when he talks his passion and energy show through and you know then he is the real deal."

"He took the time to take the kids through the journey of how they can be confident in everything they do and be safe while doing it."

"The BULLYGUARD® talk is completely different because it teaches kids to be their own bodyguard through total avoidance and non-violent techniques."

"This program gets kids to buy into an ongoing program on a tough subject like bullying."

What else needs to be said, it's one of a kind.”

In closing I can go on and on about Tom Patire and his BULLYGUARD® Program but I would like to end with this:

Tom sent a message of hope through the eyes of a bodyguard who cares because he himself at one time was one of them. At the end of the day we want to instill confidence in our children but because of the tough environment in which they are growing up, we want them to believe in tomorrow by meeting a role model of today. Tom Patire is that role model. And yes, he and BULLYGUARD® will be back in our program this year to empower more kids!