

## **Mariposa County Project Respect Kick-Off**

This fall, as a result of a two year planning process, a community-wide effort to prevent bullying will be launched in Mariposa County. The Mariposa County Unified School District (MCUSD) and Mariposa County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (MCDVCC) team up to bring the community **Mariposa County Project Respect (MCPR)**. The goal of MCPR is to end bullying in Mariposa County by increasing the community's awareness about the problem and by encouraging positive and respectful behavior among our youth. In order to do this, there are a number of activities planned this fall:

- MCUSD School Board will consider a Resolution, supporting MCPR efforts on August 17<sup>th</sup>.
- The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors will be presented with an Anti-Bullying Resolution on August 22<sup>nd</sup>
- MCUSD will hold a professional development staff in-service, featuring nationally renowned educator and performer Jay Banks, to discuss strategies for preventing and intervening into bullying on Friday August 18<sup>th</sup>.
- A community-wide media campaign will be launched, featuring posters, articles, newspaper ads, banners, a website, PSA's and more to inform and involve the public in bullying prevention strategies.
- Students, grades K-8, will have the opportunity to participate in *Steps to Respect* Anti-Bullying Curriculum throughout the school year.
- Community members will have an opportunity to learn about bullying and get involved through a community-wide contest. Details to follow!

A student survey conducted in Mariposa County in the winter of 2005, showed that over 40% of children in our County had been bullied over the past year. Although our vision of bullying often involves an older boy picking a fight with a younger boy, what we have learned in our community and nationwide, is that bullying is often more subtle and affects more kids than we know. It takes many forms, occurs among girls and boys, and is often difficult to recognize.

In the upcoming months, weekly articles in this paper and throughout the community will highlight topics such as:

- Definitions of Bullying versus Conflict
- Who is Affected By Bullying?
- Effects of bullying on Children
- What Parents, Teachers and Community Members Can Do To Stop It
- Bullying: When is it Against the Law?
- School Prevention Strategies
- Tips for Parents of a Bully or Victim of Bullying
- The Relationship Between Bullying and Domestic Violence
- The Relationship Between Bullying and Drugs and Alcohol

- And More....

We hope this series helps our community to gain a greater understanding not only of how we should intervene to stop bullying, but why it is so important that we do.

For more information about MCPR or related activities, or to request a presentation to your community group, business or church, please contact: Chevon Kothari or Cindy Robles at Mountain Crisis Services at 742-5865 or [mcs4you@sti.net](mailto:mcs4you@sti.net) or look for our upcoming website [www.mariposarespect.com](http://www.mariposarespect.com) to be launched soon! For more information on school based anti-bullying efforts, please contact Stella Pizelo at 742-0215.