



## A bullied victim's parents fight back

The ending to this story could have been different....

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Read first and then lets talk about what we can do to keep this from happening again....

The following excerpt was taken from an ABC News Article at

[Teen Commits Suicide Due to Bullying: Parents Sue School for Son's Death - ABC News](#)



Eric Mohat, 17, was harassed so mercilessly in high school that when one bully said publicly in class, "Why don't you go home and shoot yourself, no one will miss you," he did.

Now his parents, William and Janis Mohat of Mentor, Ohio, [have filed a lawsuit](#) in federal court, saying that their son endured name-calling, teasing, constant pushing and shoving and hitting in front of school officials who should have protected him.

The lawsuit -- filed March 27, alleges that the quiet but likable boy, who was involved in theater and music, was called "[gay](#)," "[fag](#)," "[queer](#)" and "[homo](#)" and often in front of his teachers. Most of the harassment took place in math class and the teacher -- an athletic coach -- was accused of failing to protect the boy.

"When you lose a child like this it destroys you in ways you can't even describe," Eric Mohat's father told ABCNews.com.

The parents aren't seeking any compensation; rather, they are asking that Mentor High School recognize their son's death as a "bullicide" and put in place what they believe is a badly needed anti-bullying program.

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, names school administrators Jacqueline A. Hoynes and Joseph Spiccia, as well as math teacher Thomas M. Horvath. None would comment on the allegations.

### **Parents Say Three Other Students Killed Themselves**

The Mohats also claim that [bullying](#) was a "significant factor" in the deaths of three other students in Eric Mohat's class in 2007.

Click on links to read full story and others stories

## How could we have changed the ending?

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I use the word "WE" because I agree with Obama's quote: "We are the change, we have been waiting for." Do you as a parent or teacher feel you have an obligation to make change in your school? Do you as a parent have the attitude that your child is doing fine so it isn't your problem? Or as a teacher do you feel it is up to someone else in the school district to lead this change?

Do you feel helpless to do anything about it? I know that in many situations when parents go to the school administration and ask for something to be done about the bullying situation they are told the same answers- the school is doing something about it (but of course most of us can't ever figure out what that is!), there is no money, there is no time, or even worse we are told there is no problem. We can't let these roadblocks stop us from helping create the change that needs to happen in our schools. We need to push a little harder (ok--maybe a lot harder.) But if we all start pushing -we can make this change happen.

Recently, a parent of a bullied child told me she is finally starting to feel better about her child's situation. It isn't because the situation has changed (YET) but the parents and the child are taking action by participating in Girls/Boys Empowered programs, pushing back harder at the school for not taking care of the situation for the last 3 years, and making the decision to switch schools. The parent no longer feels helpless but EMPOWERED.

Many of us stand by feeling helpless and let all of this senseless bullying and meanness happen in our children's schools. If we feel helpless as adults just think how helpless our kids feel when they are the victims or bystanders to it. We all need to join together and speak up.

A few questions to ask your administration:

1. What are kids suppose to do when someone is mean to them or bullying them?
2. What are the consequences for bullying?
3. What programs are in place
  - to teach those who bully and use relational aggression a different way to handle life?
  - to help the target learn to stand up to the meanness?
  - to teach the bystander how to stand up for others
  - to teach kids empathy, kindness, inclusion?
4. Does every teacher have the same tattling/reporting policy? How does your child know the difference between tattling and when to get help for themselves or someone?  
What about middle school and high school what can kids do? Most kids are not going to "report" someone because they will be called a snitch.
5. What safety nets does your school have in place to help those kids who are left out, don't have anyone to sit with at lunch, have a hard time making friends or difficulty with social skills?
6. What training does the staff receive every year on how to handle bullying and relational aggression?
7. What programs are in place to teach parents about bullying and relational aggression?

Can you imagine walking into a school where math problems were on posters in a school and your kids had to figure them out? That there was no teaching how to do the math problem, no

discussion, no lessons, no practice.... why do we think kids can learn not to bullying with a few signs and maybe a policy in the handbook. Or having a teacher make the statement-- don't bully. What does "don't bully" really mean? And how would you like them to handle it?

The first step is the leadership in a school must value and decide that the culture of their school is going to be a place where bullying, relational aggression, and meanness is allowed and that kindness, inclusiveness and standing up for one another is the norm. Bullying is NOT A RITE OF PASSAGE. It is not "girls will be girls" or "boys will be boys".

Girls Empowered and Boys Empowered has the training to teach staff, parents, and kids! We've got the programs to teach what bullying and relational aggression is, to teach how to deal with it and stand up to it and then most important to teach the social skills, friendship skills, conflict resolution and problem solving skills so that kids have a different way to be then MEAN!

Email us at [kimber@girlsempowered.com](mailto:kimber@girlsempowered.com) to schedule Girls and Boys Empowered for professional development, parenting programs and student programs. We do have a training on June 6th for professional development.

## Earth Day is April 22nd

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**Why is Girls and Boys Empowered offering camps about being friendly to the earth? We believe in teaching kids to be responsible and accountable for their actions and behaviors to themselves, to others, and to the earth. We believe in being citizens of the world. And most importantly we believe in NOT being a BYSTANDER. What is great and different about this camp is not only do kids have FUN, learn great LIFE lessons, but they learn the skills that are needed to speak up, to problem solve, and most importantly to BE THEMSELVES and see they can make a difference. They learn how to use their own personal power.**



## Me and My Planet Earth

Reduce, Recycle, Reuse! Kids will have fun making earth themed crafts while learning to be a steward of the earth. This camp will teach kids to be empowered in living a healthier life, leaving fewer carbon footprints and being a responsible citizen of the earth.

On the last day kids will present an educational presentation to parents and friends. The kids will gain confidence when they show you what they have learned and practice their presentation skills. Camp includes daily fitness activities, games and fun crafts!

June 22-26 Girls PreK-1 Academy of Sacred Heart, Bloomfield 9:00-12:00  
July 27-31 Girls 6-9 yrs Rochester Community Ed 9:00-12:00  
July 27-31 Boys 6-9 yrs Rochester Community Ed 9:00-12:00  
July 27-31 Girls & Boys 4-6 yrs Rochester Community Ed 1:00-4:00  
July 27-31 Boys & Girls 6-9 yrs American Allstars Gymnastics 9:00-12:00  
Aug 3-7 Girls 6-9 yrs, 10-14 yrs Franklin Athletic Club Full Day/Half Day  
Aug 3-7 Boys 6-9 yrs, 10-14 yrs Franklin Athletic Club Full Day/Half Day  
Aug 3-7 Girls & Boys 4-6 yrs Franklin Athletic Club Full Day/Half Day  
Aug 10-14 4-6 yrs Troy Community Center 9:00-12:00  
Aug 10-14 7-9 yrs Troy Community Center 9:00-12:00

To see our full schedule of summer camps go to [www.girlsempowered.com](http://www.girlsempowered.com) and [www.boysempowered.com](http://www.boysempowered.com)

**Want to learn more about Earth Day?**

[Earth Day 2009 | Campaigns and Events | The Green Generation | Earth Day Network](#)

Don't miss these great workshops!

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### **For Coaches, Scout Leaders, and those who teach girls!**

#### **Navigating the Girl World**

Learn how you can help the girls you teach become empowered girls. Learn how to help girls identify mean kid behavior, stand up for themselves and others, and how to build self-esteem and confidence in the girls you teach. Learn ways to help your girls deal with conflict and be empowered girls!

May 17 1:30-3:00

Location: American Allstars Gymnastics  
3275 Martin Rd. Suite 125 Commerce, MI 48390

Cost is \$25 per person

248-668-9805

[www.americanallstarskids.com](http://www.americanallstarskids.com)

#### **Bully Proof Me - NEW!**

The night is all about strategies for dealing with bullies and mean-spirited behavior. Kids learn valuable strategies, make a bully-proof themed craft and play games that will teach them techniques to avoid bullies. Please wear tennis shoes, bring a snack and water bottle.

April 24-Boys and Girls 6-12yrs

Fee: \$20- residents / \$25-non-residents

Location: Auburn Hills Community Center  
1827 N. Squirrel Rd., Auburn Hills, MI, 48326  
(248) 370-9353

#### **Dealing with Bullies**

Kids and parents learn strategies together to deal with common conflicts between kids like how to deal with teasing, exclusion, and bullies. Parents learn strategies to help their children minimize the social pain that sometimes can be caused by peers. Parents and children will learn: how to identify bullying and mean behavior; the different role kids play in social situations; and how to use the Pick Your Stick

curriculum that Girls Empowered is traveling nationally to teach to professionals.

Location: Auburn Hills Community Center  
1827 N. Squirrel Rd., Auburn Hills, MI, 48326  
(248) 370-9353

Schedule: May 4 – Girls (9-12yrs) and parents, 5:30PM-7PM  
May 4 – Boys (9-12yrs) and parents, 7PM-8:30PM  
May 11 – Boys (6-8yrs) and parents, 5:30PM-7PM  
May 11 – Boys (12-15yrs) Teen only, 7PM-8:30PM

### **Mother Daughter Assertiveness Boot Camp**

**When:** Sunday, April 26, 2009 1:00-2:30

**For:** Girls/Moms 6-9 yrs 2:30-4:00 Girls/Moms 10-14 yrs

**Where:** Franklin Athletic Club, Southfield, MI

### **Girls Nite Out**

Two for one! Bring a friend free!

**When:** Friday, May 1, 2009 6:00-9:00

*Includes optional parenting workshop on building confidence and dealing with relational aggression and mean kid behavior*

**Where:** Franklin Athletic Club, Southfield, MI

### **Girls Day Out**

Two for one! Bring a friend free!

**When:** Saturday, May 16th from 2:00-5:00PM

**Where:** American Allstars Gymnastics Academy Commerce, MI

Email [kimber@girlsempowered.com](mailto:kimber@girlsempowered.com)

## Live an EMPOWERED LIFE

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At Girls and Boys Empowered we use a giraffe to represent those who STICK their NECKS out for others. Many people will say that being compassionate and making a difference in the world is important. But how many people really walk their talk? How many people's lives really reflect being a citizen of the world or does it come to the end of the day and they have the excuse of-- somebody else will take care of it, it is not my problem, what can one person do?, you have to take care of your own stuff first.....

At Girls and Boys Empowered we believe in walking our talk and living our message.

Part of being empowered means taking action when something needs to be done and caring about



others. We feel that children need opportunities to make a difference to teach them empathy, teach them how to problem solve and use their voice, help them find purpose in their lives, to show them how not to be a bystander, and to give their lives meaning. We do this in our programs but here is another opportunity to learn it and live it....

I am organizing a Kids Against Hunger event to take place on Saturday, October 3rd. Our goal is to have ONE THOUSAND kids and parents come together to help STAMP out childhood hunger locally and globally. Together we will pack over 50,000 meals and attend workshops about how we as individuals can help organizations like City Mission in Detroit

[| CITY MISSION |](#) provide food for children. We will also learn about the Wellspring of Hope and Michigan Darfur Coalition to help children in Africa.

What is great about doing Kids Against Hunger is that kids can actually physically do something to make a difference and that parents can do it with their kids. If your school, soccer team, hockey team, dance team, Scout troop, church or organization would like to be part of this event please email me at [kimber@girlsempowered.com](mailto:kimber@girlsempowered.com). I am looking for financial partners and community partners to help make this event happen!

Another opportunity for you and your children to participate in making a difference is on Saturday, April 25th. It is the Strides of Hope walk at the Detroit Zoo to help women with breast cancer. Go to [shadesofpinkfoundation.org](http://shadesofpinkfoundation.org) or call 248-594-04697 to register.

