

As the principal and founder of Face OFF Productions, a boutique entertainment company based in New York, I have focused on designing projects that elevate consciousness and inspire the recognition of human achievement. In the last six months my attention has been drawn to the multitude of stories about the impact of the bullying epidemic on our children and communities.

Upon receiving a disturbing video posted on YouTube.com depicting a distraught teenage boy who is communicating his message of despair and suicidal thinking by holding up a series of cue cards that describe his feelings about being bullied, I immediately felt compelled to become more involved in the anti-bullying movement. I posted the video I'd received on my LinkedIn profile accompanied by a personal message asking others to help spread the word.

Soon after, I received an email from Patrick Dati, a gentleman with a personal story of tragic sexual abuse and bullying both at home and at the hands of strangers. In fact, he was victimized by John Wayne Gacy, the notorious serial killer. Raped as a child and threatened with harm if he reported the crime, Patrick carried his secret and his scars for many years in silence. Through remarkable strength, he has now finally come forward and unloaded all of this pain through his writing and hopes to publish his story so that others might find the courage to confront their abusers.

In addition to publishing his story, Patrick's goal is to motivate others to stand up and speak out against bullying through lectures and other media events. He has created a website [www.youandmecanstopbullies.com](http://www.youandmecanstopbullies.com) and hopes to recruit others nationwide to his mission.

I have begun collaborating on short, animated public service announcement in a format similar to the original YouTube video I'd seen. We took some artistic liberties with characters and dialogue, but used the cue card idea that I thought was so powerful in the retelling of the boy's story. These videos not only tell the story, but offer some solutions for responding to the abuse.

My discussions with Patrick led me to another champion for education and awareness, Dr. Claudio Cerullo, President of Teach Anti-Bullying, Inc. ([www.TeachAntiBullying.com](http://www.TeachAntiBullying.com)) Dr. Cerullo is a driven, passionate man who has spent more than 20 years dedicated to the education of children and young adults. As a dedicated advocate of the anti-bullying movement, he conducts educational workshops for parents and teachers on addressing the growing concerns associated with bullying in our schools. He and his assistant Daniela Redpath immediately embraced my desire to partner with them on this noble effort. They asked me to create a Mascot to symbolize the mission and that was how Billy the Bull was born.

Billy the Bull is an easily recognizable symbol in his defensive stance against this terrible plague on our youth and others in our society vulnerable to the negative impact of bullying and abuse. Together we hope to bring Billy the Bull and his message in defense of standing up and speaking out against bullying to Washington, DC. With the endorsement of our nation's leadership, Billy the Bull is sure to be adopted as the national symbol for anti-bullying.

It is my hope that you will share in our mission to protect our children, the elderly, families and ourselves from the ever increasing violence we face in our world. Through the partnerships of many will come a true and lasting solution to this national epidemic. Billy the Bull will help save lives. Join us in this valiant fight to preserve the safety and well-being of our children and our world.

Helen LaLousis