

# Inside Outside

## *Young Artists Unite Against Bullying*

**Dr. Androneth Anu Sieunarine, Joan Davidson, and Mario Asaro**

*Dr. Androneth Sieunarine, a past contributor to NYSATA News, along with Joan Davidson and Mario Asaro of NYSATA Region 8 in New York City, with the support of COPE NYC, recently coordinated a city-wide open-call exhibit of student work that addressed a pervasive topic in our schools – bullying. The goal of the project was for students to share their concerns about bullying in visual form, with the belief that understanding a problem is the first step in finding a solution. What follows the text is a gallery of student work that is poignant, incisive, informative and passionate – these young artists have used their voices to speak out in protest and in affirmation.*

“He bullied me,” Danny wrote about one of his former friends. “They did it constantly until I went into a fight.” Danny Fitzpatrick wrote in a letter before his suicide in the summer of 2016 that described the ordeal of dealing with bullies at his Catholic school in Brooklyn, New York. Danny was just a child, at 13 years old he hung himself in the attic of his home.

Having returned from a fellowship in Australia, Dr. Anu Sieunarine read about Danny’s death in the New York Post and was brought to tears; she asked “what can we do to commemorate Danny’s life?” In Australia she had seen a powerful exhibition of students’ artwork. “Inside/Outside” asked students to visualize bullying and the suffering their victims often hide behind their smiles.

Anu suggested having our own Inside/Outside exhibition that addresses the feelings of the children we teach in New York City. The idea was born to invite teachers to ask their students to voice their concerns about bullying and intolerance in a visual and written form, to share their inside thoughts to the outside world.

NYSATA Region 8 Chair Joan Davidson, who had been working for a year on researching and developing an article on Bullying for NYSUT Educator’s Voices, spearheaded the process of organizing the task. Her research became the basis

for the exhibit guidelines and resources for teachers that was posted on the Region 8 web page. Soon we had collected over 60 images from over a dozen citywide schools. The beauty, truth, and strength of these pieces spoke to the complex realities our young people are experiencing and it was clear that these works needed to be shared with others.

The United Federation of Teachers sponsored the exhibit by providing funding, helped publicize the event to teachers, and most importantly gave us an exhibition and reception space at their Manhattan headquarters. Student prizes were generously donated by Sax Arts and Crafts, Dick Blick, Sargent, and Faber-Castell. Peter Yarrow of Peter Paul and Mary committed the support of his organization, Operation Respect and Vida Sabbaghi of COPE NYC, an early supporter of the project has partnered to help continue the exhibit after it ends at the UFT.

We thank NYSATA for allowing us the opportunity to share our students’ images and writings and highlighting the NYC teachers that participated. Introducing this project allowed many of us to breach a subject matter that our students often don’t get to express authentically. “INSIDE/ OUTSIDE, Young Artists Unite Against Bullying” gives us a peek into that enormous darkness that sits upon our students’ precious hearts. If these works can help just one Danny then we will all be better for it.

**Jackie Cruz, Art Teacher, P.S. 1K, Brooklyn**

*"In this political climate where many immigrant students are fearful that their parents will be taken away by a bully government, we must provide opportunities for discussion and to draw their solutions to bullying. We need to help kids feel a sense of empowerment and control of their lives."*



**Student: Nathanael Garcia, Grade 2**

**Title: We Unite to Stop Bullying**

*"If you bully you are seriously treating people with no respect. So if you don't want to be bullied, treat people the way you want to be treated. I was thinking about people coming together to hold hands to stop bullies."*



**Student: Andy Chen, Grade 4**

**Title: Stop Bullying**

*"I think that people have to think about how it is not right to bully others. We have to convince others that they should not bully anyone. My work shows many colors with a design of peace to remind all that peace is better."*

**Erica Fairfull, Art Teacher, Robert Goddard High School, Queens**

*"Students learned about DADA and how DADA artists represented the world around them through collage. I gave them 5 categories for them to choose from, two of them being bullying and equality. Students were incredibly surprised at how strong images can tell an incredible story and they are as proud as I am of their compositions."*

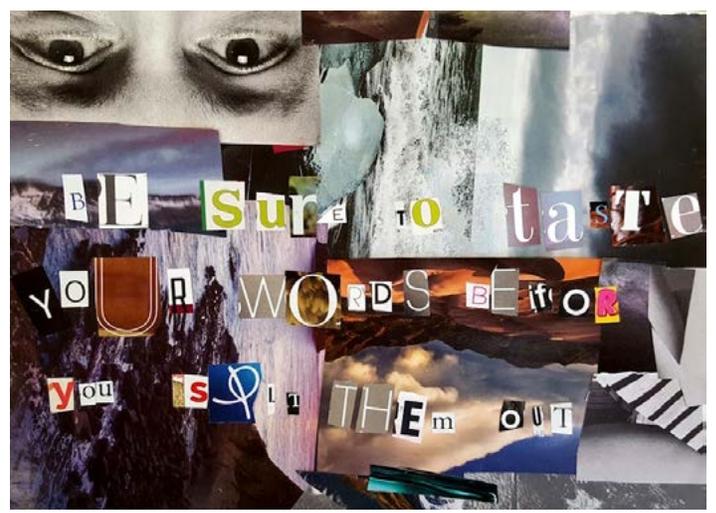


**Student: Lily Chau, Grade: 7**

**Title: We are all but a Rainbow**

***"If you bully you are seriously treating people with no respect. So if you don't want to be bullied, treat people the way you want to be treated."***

***Nathaniel Garcia Gr. 2***



**Student: Aryanna Austin, Grade 7**

**Title: Brave**

*"In this picture I felt that I needed to put pictures and a quote that a lot of people might relate to. I chose this because I felt that not enough people think before they speak. I have been bullied verbally and sometime physically, so I chose the pictures behind the quote because I felt with the quote it might really mean something to anybody that thinks it's ok. When you bully someone physically or verbally it may sound like it's a joke, but it really hits deeper than you might think."*

**Mario Asaro, Art Teacher, Marie Curie Middle School, MS 158, Queens**

*"I have seen a rise in students who are genuinely concerned and scared for themselves, their friends and others. The artwork and insights my students shared shed a light on the importance of speaking out against intolerance in our schools and communities."*



**Student: Cynthia Li Grade 7**

**Title: Signs (above)**

*In this world, people are always defined by the people around them. Whether their definition is good or bad, they can never really have a word about who they are. My artwork shows a crowd of people all with signs in front of their faces. The ones in the front are the positive signs and the signs in the back are more negative. People who are in the front are holding up their own signs, showing that they can take control of who they are. The people in the back are just shadows, letting others define who they are.*



**Student: Julie Li Grade: 7**

**Title: Smiling On The Outside (above)**

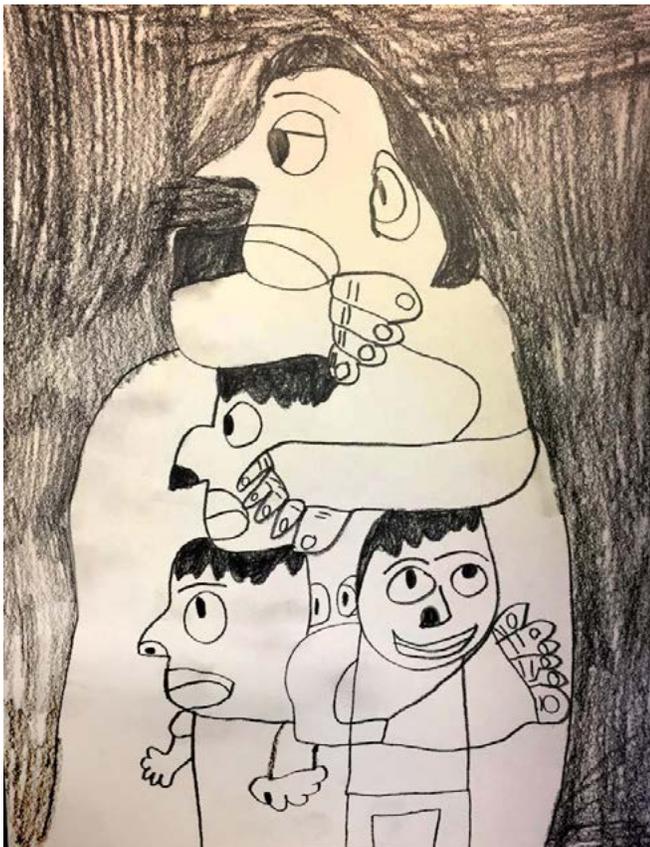
*Many people are victims of bullying. They may get hurt physically, mentally, emotionally or all. My artwork symbolizes the pain one feels when getting bullied. It shows how deep down they are hurt badly, but how they try concealing their pain by faking a smile. The person in my artwork has a piece of paper over her mouth with a smile on it. However, she is crying, showing the pain she's going through. The paper symbolizes how she is trying to be happy, but her tears convey that she is hurt deep down.*

**Art Teacher: Amie Robinson, PS77K (ungraded-D75)**

**Student: Anthony Rychalski Grade 12**

**Title: Protecting Friends from Bullies (at Left)**

*My graphite drawing was inspired by the artwork of Kathe Kollwitz. It shows a mom holding her three kids in a big hug. In the hug the children feel happy and safe and when they feel sad their mom makes them feel better just like my mom does for me. I don't have a bully problem, but I think bullying makes people feel upset and when that happens you should ignore them or help your friends if they are being bullied to feel safe.*





**Deborah DeStaffan, Art Teacher High School for Health Professions & Human Services, Manhattan**

*"An Advisory lesson on cultural diversity and tolerance was inspiration for this art making activity. Students worked in multimedia to create an image that reflected these ideas in a 3D design, a mask meant to be displayed as a reminder of our diversity."*

**Student: Esma Ahmed, Grade 9**

**Title: All United**

*This mask represents all people united. The word freedom is represented in different languages as the facial features. The bird crown is about being gay because we are all different in our likes and interests, and the hands on the shoulders reach out to all. Today, I live in the US with great diversity and hope for acceptance of all.*

**Dr. Androneth Anu Sieunarine, Art Teacher, August Martin High School, Queens**

*"I asked a group of 5 students in my art club at "How many of you have been bullied by someone?". They all raised their hands. Then I asked. "How many of you have bullied someone" And again they all raised their hands. This started our discussion, which lead to a series of important and powerful paintings."*



**Student: Leonora Rojas, Grade 11**

**Title: The Two Halves (2)**

*A person could have two sides to themselves – What they want people to see and what they see in themselves. A person creates these beings because of other people attitudes towards them. These attitudes create demons inside oneself and thus new personalities emerge."*

**Erica Fairfull, Art Teacher, Robert Goddard High School, Queens**

*"The theme of the assignment was Social Injustices. Students artwork was based on social injustices that had an effect on them. As a result their artwork reflected to current social issues, such as LGBTQ Rights, Marriage Equality, Black Lives Matter, Gun Violence. I am so proud of the honesty they had when creating these pieces."*

**Student: Anisa Purai, Grade 11**

**Title: Target Practice**

*The piece "Target Practice" was created to portray the nation-wide bullying on specifically African-Americans. We all like to think of bullying being within the boundaries of a school or on social media, but it is bigger than that. I wanted this piece to show police brutality on targeting a specific race. What inspired me to create this was the powerful movement: "Black Lives Matter". Being a part of this generation inflicts a form of responsibility on me to speak out and expose what is wrong with the present society. Topics like these are what need to be brought to attention and I believe that this sort of bullying that has continued over too many years fits the criteria.*



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