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## H.E.R.O. Program Returns!

### Anti-Bullying

In 2009, New Jersey tightened its Anti-Bullying laws for schools in the state of New Jersey. Oradell Public School, like many schools across the state, has brought in programs to help support and supplement character education.

Fred Bargiacchi, owner of American Self Defense in Rochelle Park, started the H.E.R.O. (Helping Everyone Respect Others) Program in 1994 to help raise awareness about harassment, intimidation, and bullying amongst students. H.E.R.O. goes beyond the curriculum by putting students in role-playing situations and engaging them in physical activities.

100% of the students in grades K through 3 participate H.E.R.O. Program, and almost 60% of upper grade students (grades 4 through 6) are involved as well. **The Oradell Kids Foundation** has generously sponsored this program in its entirety.

### Stranger Awareness (Kindergarten)

At the kindergarten level, students learn about strangers and the tactics they use to lure young children. While some of the luring strategies are obvious (candy, toys), others

are sophisticated. Kindergarten students walk away from the program understanding how to react to different situations.

### Identifying Bullying Behaviors (1st Grade)

First graders are exposed to bullying behaviors typically seen at a young age. "The purpose of the program is to address real issues," states Bargiacchi. "Years ago, bullying was swept under the rug. Now, we can work with students to identify bullying behaviors early. We've even noticed trends in based on gender."

### Positive Team Building (2nd & 3rd Grade)

Jaden and Marisa, third grade students, participated in various team building exercises throughout their week in H.E.R.O. "We learned about teamwork and sportsmanship. We cheered on teammates and opponents by yelling 'Go, Team, Go!' instead of anything negative." Students in second and third grade completed tasks as a team, using communication skills and positive reinforcement.

### Leadership (4th, 5th, and 6th Grade)

An integral component to the success of the H.E.R.O. program is having support from the

## Operation: Indoor Fun

Sponsored by:

- Oradell Board of Education
- Oradell Kids Foundation
- Oradell PTA
- Oradell Public School's Student Government

young leaders of OPS. Students in grades 4,5, and 6 volunteered to help with their younger peers. In fact, given a choice of all activities, ranging from sports to games, the upper grades student's most popular selection was to assist with 1<sup>st</sup> graders and kindergarteners.

"This is where the H.E.R.O. Program can really expand," says Bargiacchi. "Upper grades want to do it, it's just a matter of showing them how." Plans are in the works to incorporate leadership training as part of the H.E.R.O. program in the future.

We look forward to hearing more great things about the program in weeks to come.



(Students engaging in an activity)