

**SIXTH GRADE NEWS #3**  
**September 9, 2005**

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

ECO Overnight	October 12, 13, & 14
Living History Wax Museum	October 28
Biography completed	September 30

Dear Parents,

Thanks for joining us for Back to School Night. We were pleased with the attendance, and we hope you have a better feel for what your students will be doing in sixth grade. Until we get to know you better, please feel free to walk up to us and tell us your name whenever the opportunity presents itself. There are some of you that we still don't know because we deal with all seventy-five sixth graders.

This week's theme deals with a new portion of our Character Education Program which is Character-Based Bullying Prevention and Education Program. Those of you who attended the big meeting in the gym at our Back to School Night were introduced to this program. Those of you who did not attend will find the insert for this program in your child's Friday folder. Please insert this into your TCKS What Every Parent Partner Needs to Know handbook.

All schools in the state were mandated to come up with a program dealing with bullying, and many schools purchased programs to be taught in isolation. However, since Traut already had a strong Character Education Program built into our curriculum, we wanted to fit the anti-bullying under our existing program. The new program puts a large emphasis on the character quality of empathy. Empathy is defined as the ability to identify with and understand another person's feelings or difficulties. Empathy allows you to take another person's perspective and be able to relate feelings to action, Empathy allows you to develop forethought. The lack of empathy is a significant issue for the child that bullies.

The purpose of this program is to provide a safe and non-threatening environment for learning, and to help students free themselves from bullying behavior patterns. The program has been designed to help children and adults recognize and prevent bullying. Through vocabulary, tools that provide personal skills, and intervention by adults when needed, students are encouraged to avoid bullying and build empathy and friendship skills.

The program's implementation focuses on moving children away from the roles of bully, victim, or passive bystander. The key word is "roles" – these are not labels, but behavior patterns that can be changed. There is not labeling of children in our program; the focus is to try to help children stay out of the roles of initiation or being victimized by bullying.

To start off each school year with awareness of our commitment to preventing bullying and providing a safe and supportive environment for all, each Traut community member will be asked to sign a “cooperation statement”. These reflect our general character qualities as well as statements specific to the prevention of bullying. The concept of a cooperation statement is recommended by experts from our research as a way to build commitment and to help move students across the gap from **knowing** what is right to **doing** what is right. You will find the “cooperation statement” in your child’s Friday folder. One side is for you to read and sign and the other is for your child. We would like to have these back by Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>.

Please take time to read this important program. We feel you will find it beneficial as a parent.

With appreciation,

The Sixth Grade Team

Mr. Hunt

Mrs. Wells

Mr. Parker

Mrs. Parker