

# CALGARY HERALD

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## MAGIC SHOW TEACHES SELF-ESTEEM



Ted Jacob, Calgary Herald

Steve Harmer takes his anti-bullying program to elementary schools.

## Abracadabra — bully's gone

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CALGARY HERALD

Magician Steve Harmer doesn't think there's anything magical about his anti-bullying message. But that doesn't stop him from using sleight of hand and a magic wand to teach kids how to avoid bullies.

"Magic captivates the imagination . . . There is a mystery that intrigues (children). Because they are intrigued, they are more likely to remember the message."

Harmer, a principal on leave for a year's sabbatical, uses ABC blocks to teach his crowd about bullying.

At a magic show Wednesday, the plastic blocks did more than disappear at the snap of the fingers or the wave of a wand.

The magic blocks also taught students a message about self-esteem — "A" for accept yourself, "B" for believe in yourself and "C" for challenge yourself.

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## BULLY

Developing stronger self-esteem in students is only one way to put an end to bullying in schools, said Harmer.

According to research, about nine per cent of elementary students are victims of bullying while another six per cent are bullies. Harmer said that percentage means two or three students in every classroom are spending their day afraid and in need of help.

As a Calgary Board of Education principal, Harmer decided to leave his administrative duties for a year and take his magic wands, unicycle, live bunnies and anti-bullying message on the road.

Students at Pineridge Community School, an elementary school at 1927 61st St. N.E., were captivated by his show Wednesday. "That was scary," said one little girl as Harmer wobbled on his unicycle. "That was amazing," she whispered after a rabbit appeared.

Children rushed to ask Harmer "How did you do it," after the show.

"The tricks are geared to children. They still have the innocence," said Harmer. "It is all about prevention and being proactive. If they know about it now, it will help prevent problems in the older grades."

Harmer takes the Be Aware and Care message to public and Catholic schools. He has performed more than 130 magic shows.