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A D V E R T I S E R



Steven Harmer, himself an educator and amateur magician, has discovered a way to combine the two arts and reach children on the detriments of bullying.

Magic captivates students

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A rabbit appears in an empty box. A snow white dove emerges from scraps of torn-up newspaper.

Magic enchanted, captivated and transfixed students from Norwood and CB McMurdo elementaries. This slight of hand and imagination were used as a method to send a message on the harm of bullying.

Steve Harmer, a former Calgary principal and amateur magician, discovered four years ago that he could combine both of his talents into an educational show that teaches "caring kids need to work together."

"A bully is somebody who, over and over again, hurts somebody else with words and actions," Harmer explained to his audience, using volunteers, word games and a puzzle.

"I think violence in society is increasing, and so more kids are responding with violence. We have to be a bit more intentional in teaching kids how to respond," Harmer said. "We need to teach kids what to do, and we can, because we are in the business of teaching."

If someone is being bullied, Harmer says to first "creatively try to help". Attempt to talk to the bully, or ask them to join your game.

Or, "Ask for help, that's what I always do," said Sean Lewis, a 10-year-old Grade 5 student from CB McMurdo who was chosen from the audience and asked to participate.

Norwood elementary's principal, Steven VanDiest, said although his school does not

have a problem, the show is a "proactive way of preventing and dealing with bullying."

"I thought it was really good," said Lewis. He was once pushed down for no reason by a bully and, "it made me sad."

For a finale, Harmer slowly tore up a newspaper, explaining how bullying separates and divides people.

"It's like he (Harmer) said...it rips you up inside," Lewis said.

The newspaper, however, was transformed into a dove, and that is exactly the message Harmer hopes his audience leaves with. "if you do the right thing, your life can become beautiful."