



Above left, Leon Manner discusses stereotyping in competitive sports with Ottawa Roughrider football star Robert Reid as students in the workshop go through role playing skits. Immediately above, teachers David Nimmo (back) and Judith

Ryan talk with Joan Walker, event organizer, and students who attended the Hate Propaganda: Everyone's problem session. — Sjoerd Witteveen

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Bursting racial barriers

By BRUCE ETHERIDGE
Local educators are taking new and innovative steps to combat racism.

About 250 Grade 7 and 8 students from public and separate schools in York Region attended the first annual Know No Boundaries conference at Unionville High School last Thursday.

The conference is designed to inform and enlighten students about Canada's multicultural society in an effort to break down barriers between different races.

Joan Walker, organizer of the event and a guidance counsellor at Milliken Mills Public School, said she got the idea at a track meet two years ago after over-

hearing Milliken students wondering about "these black kids" who were winning all the trophies.

Selected for leadership

The 12- and 13-year-old students, selected for their leadership abilities, attended various workshop sessions on such topics as racial slurs, stereotyping in sports and living in a multiracial society.

During the first part of the day, students were shown, through role playing, that while customs may be different, people are basically the same.

Sparked ideas

Jason Watson, a 13-year-old student at E.J. Sand Public School said he hoped to "pick up lots of good stuff" from the conference to take back to his school.

One idea he already had was to encourage his school to hold a Multicultural Day.

"By the time we're 27, we'll be in charge," said fellow student Geoff Rose. "If we're bigots how are we suppose to come together in the community?"

At the end of the day students got together with others from their respective schools to discuss and share their experiences.

Mrs. Walker said that "rather than putting a bandage on the problem" she hoped by "educating kids" racism might be eliminated altogether.

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Joan Walker organized the multiracial conference. She's a guidance counsellor at Milliken Mills Public School.