

Bullying about power — not rivalry, says expert author

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

Bullying is not about conflict — it's about contempt.

Until parents and educators understand that crucial difference, many anti-bullying programs will have little effect, according to parenting expert and author Barbara Coloroso.

"Bullying is not a fight between two kids or sibling rivalry," Ms Coloroso ex-

plained in a recent interview from her Colorado home.

"Conflict resolution skills help, but they won't stop it. It's not typical anger, it's hostility. It's an imbalance of power and the belief (bullies) have the right to exclude — those are the psychological advantages bullies have."

Ms Coloroso's first book, "kids are Worth It" was a national best seller in both

Canada and the U.S. and was praised for its no-nonsense, practical advice on parenting.

She helps parents teach their children to take ownership of their problems, giving them the gift of inner confidence in dealing with them and provides tips in non-violent conflict resolution kids can apply every day.

Her second book, Parenting Through Crisis:

Helping Kids in Times of Loss, Grief and Change, was also well received and she was approached by publisher Harper Collins Canada last year to produce her third title: The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander.

The Markham Public Libraries is playing host to An Evening with Barbara Coloroso Monday night at the Crystal Fountain Banquet Hall in Milliken.

The internationally recognized speaker will discuss several areas in her new book including:

- What bullying and sexual bullying is and isn't.
- Warning signs and steps to take if your child is being bullied.
- How bystanders aid and abet the bully and how they can become peacemakers.
- Helping kids develop an inner code of compassion and integrity.

Ms Coloroso believes the combination of a bully who gets what he wants from his target, a bullied child who is afraid to tell, bystanders who watch, participate or ignore the bullying and adults who dismiss the behaviour as simple teasing can create a deadly mix.

"We have enough incidents in the past to convince us it's not just the bully who can terrorize the community, it's the bullied child as well," she said. Bullied children can later act out their frustration against others.

"The bystander has a crit-



BARBARA COLOROSO: Bullying expert speaks at Markham library fundraiser Tuesday night.

"A bully has good leadership skills; he's just using them in the wrong way," she explained. "If they are isolated, out of school, not taking responsibility for their actions, well, that's how they turn into an uneducated, angry, hostile, contemptuous adults."

And having one good friend can make all the difference to a child — both bully and bullied.

"We can teach them friendship skills and how to be thankful for friends and express that. If a child has one good friend willing to step in and say 'knock it off' (to a bully) or to tell the friend (who is bullying) to stop his behaviour in a civilized way — these are important everyday skills."

Her Sept. 23 appearance is part of a fundraiser for the Markham Libraries Investing in Excellence campaign and proceeds go to the purchase of youth-oriented materials.

She will be on hand to sign her new book at 6 p.m. and after her speech, which runs between 7 and 9 p.m. at the Crystal Fountain Banquet Hall, 60 McDowell Gate, off 14th Avenue, west of Kennedy Road.

Tickets are \$15 in advance and available at all Markham Public Library locations, or \$20 at the door.

For more information, call 905-513-7977.

Copies of The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander will be available for purchase that evening or through www.harpercanada.com.

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