



# News Release

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities  
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## Character Education through Comic Books

### SACSC Offers Parents and Teachers a Free Resource During Bullying Awareness Week 2009

Working to prevent bullying is important for parents and teachers, but can it also be fun? Starting this Bullying Awareness Week (November 15-21), the answer is yes. The Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities (SACSC) has developed a series of educational comic books designed to involve youth in activities and discussions that deal with bullying and related issues. "Bullying is a complex problem, and there are no quick fixes," says Donna Blundell, Executive Director of SACSC. "The best way to prevent it is through early and ongoing character education, and these comic books are a great way to engage youth in this process."

The five-part comic series stars SACSC's mascot, a Canada goose named Niska, and the stories cover the following key topics: living respectfully, developing self-esteem, respecting diversity, dealing with bullying, and resolving conflicts peacefully. Each story ends with a moral dilemma that children are asked to solve by writing and illustrating the final page. This open-ended format serves two purposes, according to Donna: "It encourages youth to reflect on problems they might face, and it gives parents and teachers an opportunity to help them work through some possible solutions." To extend the experience, a list of discussion questions is included with each story and youth are invited to enter their drawings in a SACSC art contest. Teachers could also incorporate this resource into various curricular areas, including language arts, social studies, and health.

To launch Bullying Awareness Week on Monday, November 16, the Society's Honourary Patron Marie Stelmach will visit Pope John XXIII School in Fort Saskatchewan to read the comics to a grade four class. The first comic will also be available to download the same day at [www.sacsc.ca](http://www.sacsc.ca). A new issue will be posted each day until the end of the week, and SACSC is encouraging anyone who works with youth to visit the website daily to take advantage of this free resource. "The comic books will be available in printable format and as PowerPoint presentations for teachers," says Donna. "We want to make it as easy and fun as possible for people to engage children in character education, and what better time to do this than Bullying Awareness Week?"

SACSC has developed many additional resources, programs and workshops designed to help adults create safe spaces for youth. These include youth action projects, curricular resources for schools, and a series of community workshops. Free booklets on bullying and related topics are also available through the SACSC website. All of the Society's work is based on the belief that children and youth are the responsibility of everyone in a community, and non-violent behaviours must be reinforced consistently by the important adults in a child's life. For more information, please contact the SACSC office at 780-447-9487.

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