



Military Child Education Coalition®
17th National Training Seminar

Military and Veteran Kids:

Their Story, Our Mission

Cyberbullying was a hot topic at this year's National Training Seminar. We heard from a panel of experts about the concerns, dangers, and results of the imperious form of harassment. The panel shared their experiences from a parent, youth, and legal perspective while relaying the importance of putting a stop to this detrimental practice.

Bullying is an intimidation method that has been around for a long time. With the increasing advancement of technology, people are now able to hide behind the anonymity of the internet while using the age-old method.

In the fall of 2013, 13-year-old Trisha Prabhu came home from school to find an article online about an 11-year-old girl who had jumped off her town's water tower, to her death, because she was cyberbullied. "I think in that moment I was just shocked, stunned, and angry because it seemed unacceptable to me that an 11 year old, a girl 2 years younger than myself, had been cyberbullied persistently for years and eventually ended up taking her life," expressed Prabhu. She



Trisha Prabhu

explained that it was from that day forward that she made it her mission to stop cyberbullying before it happened.

At only 15 years old, Trisha Prabhu developed **ReThink**, a computer program that detects offensive language and gives the user a second chance to rethink the message before they send it. In a Google acclaimed study, Prabhu found that over 93% of the time, individuals changed their mind when they received a ReThink alert. "We thought that if people were really intent on posting they would, so we were surprised," said Prabhu.

Trisha's product is the first of its kind and only the beginning in preventing cyberbullying. At such a young age she has already defied challenges in both her life and the lives of others. "I've always been told by my family that it doesn't matter how old you are, you can always make an impact and you can always be a hero for someone and that's something that I always wanted to do."

Thank you

to the Military Benefit Association for sponsoring the Cyberbullying Panel Discussion at the 2015 MCEC National Training Seminar, which included: Kenneth A. Linzer, JD, Partner, Hobart Linzer LLP; Curt Schilling, Former Red Sox Pitcher; and Trisha Prabhu, Founder, ReThink.



Kenneth A. Linzer, JD
Partner, Hobart Linzer LLP



Trisha Prabhu
Founder, ReThink



Curt Schilling
Former Red Sox Pitcher

FORMER RED SOX PITCHER and current ESPN analyst, Curt Schilling, is used to being under pressure and facing challenges on the field. But some people may be surprised to learn about challenges Schilling has faced off the field, particularly cyberbullying.

Quiet and timid as a young military kid, Schilling became acclimated to the challenges early-on. “There were challenges and there were moves, that’s just the life you live,” explained Schilling. Learning to become resilient as a military child, Schilling learned how to stand up for himself and others.

In early 2015, Schilling’s daughter Gabby was accepted to Salve Regina University’s softball team. “I had tweeted out, what proud dads do. I was very proud of what she had accomplished,” said Schilling. He expected to get some comments back, nothing abnormal for his life. But then he received some comments that he believed crossed a line, what he thought constituted sexual harassment. “I replied to a couple people saying, you know, enough’s

enough and they stepped it up a little bit and then it became a point where I realized that some of what was being written was criminal, it was illegal.”

Schilling decided to do his research and find all of the young men who had made these comments. He reached out to the coaches and parents, and multiple Division 1 athletes were kicked off their teams and lost scholarships. “Basically, 140

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characters cost these guys \$140,000 in scholarships through no fault of anybody but their own,” said Schilling. “I feel bad that it happened to them but I don’t have one ounce of regret on what I did because as a father if I’m not here to provide and protect my family, I’m not really sure what I’m here for.”

Schilling expressed that the issue was cyberbullying and attacking of young kids. “My daughter is a very strong woman, but at that age your social

circles are everything and some of the kids that reached out and said the things that they did were at the college that she was going to.” Schilling shared the unsettling truth that kids commit suicide everyday due to comments similar to the ones his daughter received.

There is little doubt that perpetrators of bullying are struggling with insecurities or perhaps at one point even been the victim. “I think a lot

of them are people who are bullied themselves, and they feel like they need to put that on someone else because of the insecurity they feel,” shared Schilling. The repercussions of cyberbullying can be dire and sometimes deadly. Adolescents continue to be affected by bullying. Schilling continues to advocate for an end to cyberbullying, an anticipated uphill battle.

See Kenneth Linzer’s article on next page...

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Homerom
MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COALITION

Homerom, our newest resource, is an online platform for anyone interested in supporting military and veteran-connected kids.

It’s a great place to participate in discussions, ask questions, and connect with community members. *Homerom* also has an ever-growing list of downloadable, easily accessed resources.

Drop into *Homerom*, leave a comment, post a resource or share your experience. No matter where you are located, *Homerom* will be there to provide a place to gather in support of our great kids. This easy to use platform is available for smartphones, tablets, or computers. Check it out at Homerom.MilitaryChild.org!