

# Forum on bullying draws big crowd

Story and photo by Chris Kaufman  
 ckaufman@appealdemocrat.com

Alayna Cauchi was bullied, in person and online, to the point of wanting to end her life. She attempted suicide four times.

On Wednesday night, the Feather River Academy's Boyd Hall in Yuba City was standing-room only as more than 250 students, parents, educators, law enforcement and concerned citizens gathered for a forum addressing the issue of bullying, both in and out of schools.

"When I was going through it, I wrote suicide notes to my mom and family members," said Cauchi, 19, who was a River Valley High student in 2012 when the bullying she experienced crippled her physically and emotionally. "I didn't want to do anything."

Cauchi, who loved English and Western-style horseback riding as a young girl, stopped riding and participating in other activities.

"It was jealousy. I feel girls can be very jealous of other girls," Cauchi said of the bullying, which she said was especially bad on Twitter, as well as in person.

Cauchi said she feels bullies try to make their victims out to be bullies to help justify their actions.

"I've gone to therapy, and that's really helped me learn coping skills," said Cauchi. "Everyone has been so supportive."

Cauchi's mother, Susie Cauchi, is president of Yuba-Sutter Stand for the Silent, an organization whose goal is to provide education, resources and support for students, parents and educators.



Susie Cauchi, president of Yuba-Sutter Stand for the Silent, speaks to the crowd during the Knock Out Bullying Community Health Forum event on Wednesday at Boyd Hall in Yuba City.

Susie Cauchi choked up after showing a trailer for the 2011 documentary "Bully." She talked about her daughter's experience and others who have been bullied.

"That trailer always gets me when I watch it," said Cauchi, who shared statistics about the lasting effects bullying has on the victim and the bully.

Cauchi said great strides have been made since the incident with her daughter. A schoolmate came forward with photo and video evidence to help support her daughter's case, and a teacher at River Valley has opened her room up as a bully-free zone, or safe room.

"In this age of technology, we all live on social media, and it's

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**Alayna Cauchi**  
 Bullying victim

unrealistic for us to try and stop kids from being part of that," said Cauchi, who said keeping an open dialogue between parents and children about being safe, appropriate and responsible online is key.

Cauchi said there are penal and education codes that help deal with bullying and cyberbullying.

Special Agent Scott

Yuba City Councilwoman Preet Diddal, who is organizing a series of similar forums, said the big turnout Wednesday was a sign the issue is important to the community.

"Bullying has serious and lasting negative effects on mental health and overall well-being of youth – whether they are bullied or they are bullying others," Diddal said.

She said even youths who observe bullying behavior report feelings of helplessness and less sense of connectedness.

"We all have an important and vital role in talking, understanding and supporting one another to make a positive change," said Diddal.

More resources about bullying

Yuba-Sutter Stand for the Silent: [www.yssfts.org](http://www.yssfts.org)  
 Cyberbullying Research Center Website: [www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org)  
 Federal Bureau of Investigation Safe Online Surfing: [sos.fbi.gov](http://sos.fbi.gov)  
 This is a free, always online Internet safety program from grades 3-8 providing content addressing cyberbullying, predators, and other criminal activity such as malware and phishing. The content matches both state and federal education curricula requirements and provides much-needed information in a game format.

FBI Child ID Application: This free smartphone application was designed in partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to provide preventative messaging, checklists for use in case a child goes missing, and secure storage for biometrics on the go. Profiles can be password protected, stored, and updated on the go but no data leaves the phone – it cannot be uploaded to the cloud – unless a parent/guardian presses a button to import the data into an email for transmission to law enforcement.

FBI Safety Tips for Kids: <http://tinyurl.com/h3uygr>  
 FBI Parent Guide for Internet Safety: <http://tinyurl.com/28wnbat>

## AROUND THE U.S.

### WHITE PINE, TENN.

#### Boy guilty of killing girl in puppy dispute

An 11-year-old boy in Tennessee has been found guilty of murdering an 8-year-old girl after she and her sister refused to let him see their puppies.

WATE-TV reports that Jefferson County Juvenile Court judge Dennis "Will" Roach II this week found the boy guilty of first-degree murder and sentenced him to state custody until he turns 19.

In his order, which WATE posted online, Roach said the state should use all reasonable resources to determine why the boy shot the girl, and he should be treated and rehabilitated so this never happens again.

"A child who commits first-degree murder cannot be willy-nilly turned loose into society," Roach wrote.

### MILTON, FLA.

#### Crime spree ends in arrest, killing

A weeklong search for a Missouri couple wanted in a series of robberies and abductions across the South ended with one suspect dead and the other wounded Friday, after authorities say they chased the pair across the highway and through a rural neighborhood and exchanged gunfire with them in Florida's Panhandle.

Blake Fitzgerald died, and Brittany Nicole Harper was at a hospital under armed guard with a wounded leg, Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan said at a news conference. She faces charges including home invasion, robbery, false imprisonment and grand theft auto, but no court appearances are scheduled, Morgan said.

The sheriff said the chase began shortly after reports of an armed robbery at a Famous Footwear store in Pensacola at 7:56 p.m. Thursday. Witness said the man held a gun on the clerk while the woman shopped, according to Morgan.

### WASHINGTON

#### Twitter joins terror fight

Twitter is now using spam-fighting

technology to seek out accounts that might be promoting terrorist activity and is examining other accounts related to those flagged for possible removal, the company announced Friday.

The announcement demonstrated efforts by Twitter to automatically identify tweets supporting terrorism, reflecting increased pressure placed by the U.S. government for social media companies to respond to abuse more proactively. Child pornography has previously been the only abuse that was automatically flagged for human review on social media, using a different kind of technology that sources a database of known images.

Twitter also said Friday it has suspended more than 125,000 accounts for threatening or promoting terrorist acts, mainly related to Islamic State militants, in the last eight months. Social media has increasingly become a tool for recruitment and radicalization that's used by the Islamic State group and its supporters, who by some reports have sent tens of thousands of tweets per day.

### NEW YORK

#### 1 dies in collapse of construction crane

A pedestrian was killed and three other people were injured when a huge construction crane being lowered as a weather-related safety precaution instead collapsed Friday morning on a street in New York City, police and fire officials said.

David Wicks, 38, of Manhattan was pronounced dead at the scene on Worth Street, about a dozen or so blocks from the World Trade Center, police said.

Among the three injured, a 73-year-old man with a cut to the head was taken to Bellevue Hospital Center and a 45-year-old female with a leg injury was taken to New York-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital, officials said. Both were in stable condition. A third injury was considered minor.

"Thank God it was not worse," Mayor Bill de Blasio said at a news conference, stressing the collapse was the first of a construction crane in New York City since 2008.

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