



Columbia Christian
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Columbia Christian Begins Initiative to Reduce Bullying — Parents Hold the Key

Portland, OR (April 25, 2019) – Anti-bullying expert Paul Coughlin will be speaking to parents and other community members at Columbia Christian School on Monday, May 20, at 7 p.m. in the campus gym.

Coughlin, founder of *The Protectors*, a freedom-from-bullying program and movement that is used by hundreds of organizations throughout the world, including England, Australia, Uganda, Brazil, and New Zealand, will explain the pivotal role that all parents play in diminishing what he calls the “Theater of Bullying.” But in order to do this, he says, “We have to explode the many myths that surround this growing concern, which according to a Harris Poll last year, is now the number-one concern of both parents and students—surpassing illicit sexual activity, drug use, and gang activity.”

“We are implementing *The Protectors* program to help our students take a stand against bullying, a problem that is widespread in our culture,” said Marquita Moss, president of Columbia Christian School. “The program is designed to help vulnerable youth know how to deflect bullies, inspire other youth to stand up and protect vulnerable students from bullies, and call forth repentance from youth who have been acting like bullies.”

The most prevalent myth that surrounds bullying is that it is really about conflict, misunderstanding, and the inability for some to manage their anger or impulse control. “That’s not bullying,” Coughlin says. “Bullying is really about disdain and contempt for others, which is both the language and behavior of superiority. Most bullies do not possess low self-esteem. They possess average to excessive self-esteem. Many feel great about themselves and are motivated by a sense of entitlement and sometimes narcissistic tendencies.” Statistically, he says, a person identified as a serial bully is five times more likely to commit a felony by his or her middle 20s, and four times more likely to abuse his or her future spouse and children. “Bullies are tomorrow’s prison population. No one wants this for them, even their targets,” he says.

Coughlin will explain how parents can help their children avoid being targets and will highlight the pivotal role that bystanders play in reducing bullying. “Authority alone cannot solve this problem given the predatory and secretive nature of bullying. Bystanders must stop being intimidated by bullies and become ‘Alongside Standers’ of targets, and give authority the information it needs in order to bring justice and compassion to targets, who often suffer in great silence and torment. Many adults look back on their high school years with regret that they didn’t help targets. They often feel great shame for their lack of courage. Parents can help their children avoid this deep regret, and *The Protectors* will show them how.”

According to Coughlin, “Parents must require that their children exercise courage and do the right thing even when afraid. Otherwise this problem won’t change since most bullying is done in front of peers but not in front of authority.” And when students learn how to exercise courage, they grow their capacity for this foundational virtue, giving them more character and leadership capacity later in life. “Many believe that courage is the virtue that underpins all other virtues. So the sooner we learn how to flex it, the better our lives become.”



In addition to the evening session for parents and other community members, Coughlin will provide several classes throughout the day for Columbia Christian students and staff to receive training. Reflecting on this opportunity, President Moss commented, “Inviting *The Protectors* to our campus is just one of the ways we are working to ensure the continued safety of our school. As part of our heritage of over 70 years in this community, we are intentional about contributing positively. Training this generation to be counter-cultural in light of alarming bullying trends is of great value to our neighborhood, city, state, and beyond. Raising children who stand up for what is right makes an impact that is eternal.”

About Columbia Christian

Columbia Christian School, known as Columbia Christian, is a private Christian school located in Portland, Oregon. Established in 1947, Columbia Christian seeks to provide a Christ-centered education focused on excellence in faith, character, and academics to students in PreK through 12th grade. With full accreditation from Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (through AdvancED) and Association of Christian Schools International, Columbia Christian provides a strong educational foundation in a community that nurtures students spiritually and socially. The school is affiliated with the Churches of Christ and is run by an independent Board of Directors. With small class sizes, caring teachers, and a beautiful campus conveniently located near the I-205 and I-84 interchange, Columbia Christian is an excellent choice for families in the greater Portland area.

About The Protectors & Paul Coughlin

Paul Coughlin (COCK-LIN) is the Founder & President of The Protectors, partnering with both faith-based and values-based groups to combat what is now the #1 form of child abuse in the nation, and the #1 concern of both parents and students.

The Protectors also partners with churches across the country, including Saddleback Church’s Justice & Trafficking Initiative in creating the first-ever *Justice Begins on the Playground* conference, which helps both faith-based and values-based organizations diminish bullying throughout their community.

He writes for FoxNews Headquarters about bullying, and is an expert witness regarding bullying and the law. He also helps professional athletes and teams, such as the Baltimore Ravens, combat the effects of bullying.

He is a former newspaper editor and is the author of numerous books, including *Raising Bully-Proof Kids* and *No More Christian Nice Guy*. He is also a men’s conference speaker who has appeared on *Good Morning America*, *Nightline*, *700 Club*, *Focus on the Family*, *C-SPAN*, *The LA Times*, *FamilyLife Radio*, *HomeWord with Jim Burns*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek* and other media outlets.

He is a former boys varsity soccer coach, where he was voted Coach of the Year Twice, and where is also served on the board of directors of a private school. He and his wife Sandy have three children and live in central Oregon.