

## Project Empathy at Hodgson!



On May 28, Grade 8 students at Hodgson Sr. P.S. launched their proactive student-led, non-profit campaign to combat youth apathy and inspire their peers to take action against all forms of discrimination. They're using student-designed campaign merchandise, positive peer pressure and social media to promote their message.

"Through our project, we are asking people to think before they speak. Judging has become the culture of what we do – no one can say that they don't do it. Project Empathy is not about getting rid of that culture, it's about creating a new culture. A culture where people think twice about what they say, where they feel they can be themselves wherever they go, and where they feel safe wherever they go." Jackson, Grade 8 student, Project Empathy team member.





"We want people to empathize – 'put themselves in other' shoes' - with people in different situations, and realize how their hurtful comments affect others. We would like people to try to build others up by calling them an equal, not tear them down with discriminatory comments. We want others to project empathy, not hatred." Excerpt from the Project Empathy manifesto, collectively written by the 25-person Project Empathy Team, available at <http://projectempathy.ca/>



The launch event featured the student campaign organizers, and keynote presenter Anthony McLean, a renowned anti-bullying motivational speaker for youth and subject of the acclaimed documentary "Colour Me". In addition to the guest speaker, the launch event also featured the unveiling of campaign-themed merchandise available to the school



community, designed to encourage wearers to make a real fashion statement: by wearing Project Empathy hats, bracelets, pins and shirts, students can show solidarity with the campaign's goals.



"Yes, we started this campaign. But if you believe in Project Empathy, then you are Project Empathy. This campaign is for everyone."  
Charlie, Grade 8 Student,  
Project Empathy Team  
Member