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BPA365 SPUR YOUTH TO RALLY FOR PEACE, SAFETY

Youth rally at 2018's anti-bullying conference promises to energize, educate, and excite!

[CHICAGO, IL, Sept. 14, 2018] Bullying Prevention and Awareness 365 (BPA365) will host their second annual 'Bullying Prevention and Awareness Conference' on November 2, 2018, at Chicago State University (CSU). In its sophomore year, BPA365 has elected to invite students to participate. Last year, the event, held at National Louis University, was attended by teachers, parents, stakeholders, and community organizers.

BPA365 has opted to shake things up this year, inviting youth to attend the day-long conference. The event will address combating bullying in school and curbing violence among adolescents in two parts, by confabbing with adults, also youth.

The decision to invite young people to a workshop setting came from Chicago educator and author, Dr. Dorothy Thompson. Dr. Thompson, a former CPS principal and the coordinator of the conference, believes that it's important to equip paraprofessionals, parents, advocates, and activists with essential resources to counter bullying. She also believes that young people have earned a seat at the table, so they can "create awareness on how to identify, address and intervene in bullying situations to promote student safety."

"If adults don't explore and arm themselves with measures to help youths counter this menace, more young people would be harmed emotionally and physically," said Dr. Thompson, who is the founder and director of BPA365. "And if young people begin to feel that adults have failed them, or they're not looking out for them, they'll begin to take matters into their own hands. It's the perfect time to meet with young people, learn what they're going through, and help them to navigate these tumultuous times."

According to federal statistics, one out of five students admits to being a bully or doing some bullying. In the near future, one out of four students will be abused by another youth. Every seven minutes a child is also bullied. Additionally, 160,000 students miss school each day for fear of being bullied.

"We're excited to invite young people to discuss the bullying they experience," said Nicole Akoukou Thompson, Content Manager and Chair of Logistics at BPA365. "That violence often takes many



forms: emotional injury, physical assault, psychological distress, and hostility. I am aware of the effects of bullying first-hand. Incidences of bullying have skyrocketed, especially among youths, even in cyberspaces, and this leads to violence or suicide. This has to stop. Today, nearly every conflict regarding young people, or sometimes even older individuals, involves bullying. The anti-bullying gathering we've organized at Chicago State University is a great place to keep off these important conversations.”

This year's theme, “The Collective Roles of Adults in Bullying and Students' Well-Being,” brings attention to much-needed changes that must be made. Carolyn Strong, author of *Black Girls Blues* and Dean of Students at Thornton Township High School, will return to host another incredible workshop on intra-racial bullying. Michael Keller, author of the best-seller, “*Bullies Among Us*,” has agreed to donate 100 extra books this year. Additionally, The Global Girls, a dance/performance troop under the direction of the group's leader, Marvinita Wooly-Penn, will not only perform at this year's conference, but the young people from that organization will attend the youth rally.

Educator, author, and trainer, Adra Young will host the youth portion of the conference, bringing decades of experience and insight on social skills and behaviors in urban and classroom settings. The Gary Indiana native attended last year's conference as a participant and returned this year as an organizer. The youth aspect will also be co-facilitated by Chicago educator and a mother of two Antonette Parker.

CSU-Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa International and ARRMInistries are co-sponsoring the conference.

Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Reservations are now being accepted. To register for the conference, visit www.bullyingprevention365.org, or email nicoleakoukou@bullyingprevention365.org.

[Bullying Prevention 365](http://www.bullyingprevention365.org) seeks to promote student safety related to bullying and cyberbullying by providing training and support to adults who directly or indirectly work with students.