

L.I. teen who sued Catholic school over racist bullying starts anti-bullying crusade

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By Esha Ray



Devin Moore sued his Catholic school last summer for failing to take action against racist cyberbullying and is now taking matters into his own hands by starting an anti-bullying initiative. (Courtesy of Devin Moore)

A Long Island teen who sued his Catholic school last spring for failing to take action against racist cyberbullying is now taking matters into his own hands — by starting an anti-bullying initiative.

Devin Moore was an eighth-grade student at St. Mary School in East Islip when he began getting racist photos and messages from three classmates on an online gaming forum called Discord, according to the federal lawsuit filed last May.

The horrendous images, sent over several months, included a photo that said, “Black People Are Not Functioning Members of Society,” an image of a noose, and pictures of Devin superimposed on a gorilla’s body and with a gun to his head.

Though the lawsuit is proceeding in court, Devin claims that no tangible action was taken by the school, and the three students were allowed to graduate with him.

St. Mary School did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

“The day I went to graduation, the teachers acted like nothing had happened,” Devin, 14, said. “I was very anxious, and I didn’t really want to go.”

“But I wanted to be brave and face my bullies, and basically say, ‘You don’t have power over me.’ ”

With that mentality, Devin started #RaceToSpeakUp after graduation to help other teens face their fears.

Now a freshman at Long Island Lutheran Middle & High School, he has spoken at leadership conferences on Long Island, spread the word about the initiative to the local branch of the NAACP, and has spoken with Long Island elected officials about solutions to bullying.

Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory said he’s looking into forming an anti-bullying committee after speaking with Devin.

“I would like to establish a task force made up of young individuals that would hold meetings and public forums on the issue of bullying,” Gregory said. “I think that would be a good way to draw more public attention to the issue and make people better informed on how to combat it.”



Devin with Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory. (Courtesy of Devin Moore)

“It is terrific to see a young person like (Devin) who has gone through such a traumatic experience turn it around to become a positive force for change,” he said.

For now, though, the organization is a solo project for Devin, but he’s optimistic about its potential, and has been documenting his work on Facebook and Instagram.

“Kids are dying because of bullying, because the pain is too much to bear,” Devin said.

He spoke about a 10-year-old black boy from Kentucky who took his own life in January after being bullied over medical issues.

“I don’t want more young people to go through what I went through. I don’t want them hurting themselves or anyone else because of what’s going on with them,” he said. “I feel that I can help them.”

As she waits for their next court date on the federal lawsuit, Devin’s mother, Ursula Moore, watches with pride as her son forges ahead.

“How many 14-year-olds would even think to take racist bullying and turn it around into a teachable moment?” she said.

“As I’m watching him on this journey, so many people have come up to Devin amazed by him, saying most kids would never do what you’re doing. I’m in awe of my own son.”

Devin also wants to take his initiative into classrooms, where plenty of bullying occurs.

“I want to start a mandatory class in schools that uses role-play to teach students about bullying, and teaches them how victims and bullies can get help,” he said.

Devin’s ultimate goal is a law that would reduce bullying in schools.