

JAN ENGOREN JENGOREN@TRIBUNE.COM

# Student essays offer solutions to teen violence

Surviving name-calling for being autistic, molestation, depression, death threats and even attempted suicide is just a glimpse of what students who are objects of bullying have to endure on a daily basis.

As part of a national campaign to stem bullying, Palm Beach County participated in the 2015 Do The Write Thing Challenge, which is part of the National Campaign to Stop Violence, and students wrote more than 27,000 essays and poems on the subject.

The challenge gives middle school students an opportunity to examine the impact of youth violence on their lives through classroom discussions and writing.

Students communicate

what they think should be done to reduce youth violence and make personal commitments to do something about the problem.

"The essays and poems written by the students were both heartbreaking regarding the physical abuse and mental anguish they experienced due to domestic violence and bullying, while at the same time inspiring to see how the students have positively addressed these challenges in their young lives and have committed themselves to helping others affected by violence and helping to prevent violence," said DTWT campaign chairman Bill Bone.

Two local students, Colby Guy, an eighth-grade student at Watson B. Duncan Middle School in Palm Beach Gardens,

and Maya Monson, an eighth-grade student at Independence Middle School in Jupiter, will represent Palm Beach County in Washington, D.C. during National DTWT Recognition Week July 11 to 15.

"Being an autistic boy growing up in the suburbs of Long Island, N.Y. and then later in Palm Beach Gardens, FL, violence has affected my life in many ways," Colby wrote in his essay.

"Ever since I was a 7-year-old second grader, I have been called names like gay, retarded and worthless just because I am different from everyone else, but December of last year, somebody took it way too far."

Colby received threatening anonymous mes-

sages on an online website, stating that if he did not commit suicide by Christmas, the person making the threats would come to his home and murder him.

They will present their views on youth violence to Congresswoman Lois Frankel and other members of Congress, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Attorney General of the United States and the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

On May 5, Colby and Maya, along with 10 finalists were honored at an awards ceremony at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach.

Annie Wu, an eighth-grade stu-

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Do The Write Thing campaign chairman Bill Bone and Congress Middle School student Annie Wu attended the awards ceremony at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach. SUBMITTED PHOTO