

Contact: Vicki Levengood
517-241-7978

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Traverse City to Host Anti-Bullying Conference on October 17 *Event to Focus on Student Engagement*

Lansing — The Anti-Bullying Task Force, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) and Northwestern Michigan College (NMC), will host the 3rd Annual Anti-Bullying Conference in Traverse City on Friday, October 17.

The one-day conference will take place from 8:30 am – 2:30 pm at the Hagerty Center on NMC's Great Lakes Campus, located at 715 East Front Street, Traverse City. The conference includes sessions for both youth and adults.

The focus of this year's event is student engagement, including tracks on being an "upstander" -- a person who speaks up or stands up to bullying and intolerance, either to prevent or intervene when someone is being harmed. The event will also kick off a "Not In Our School" (NIOS) campaign to empower students to create safe and inclusive environments that are free of bullying, harassment and all forms of intolerance. Each NIOS campaign is customized based on a community's characteristics and designed to address local issues and needs.

"We are thrilled to bring the "Not In Our School" campaign to Michigan. Their focus is on tolerance, acceptance and inclusion, which is part of our mission at the Michigan Department of Civil Rights," said Matt Wesaw, Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. "This conference will bring together students, educators and experts to share best practices and respond with models to best serve Michigan communities."

Conference facilitators are from the national "Not In Our Town" organization. Not In Our Town films, new media, and organizing tools help local leaders build vibrant, diverse cities and towns, where everyone can participate.

The Anti-Bullying Task Force is a partnership of local, regional and statewide organizations created to help eliminate bullying. The Task Force has focused its efforts in a five-county region in northwest Michigan, with an emphasis on improving school climate and helping vulnerable populations of all ages.

To learn more about MDCR, please visit www.michigan.gov/mdcr. NIOS materials can be viewed at <http://www.niot.org/nios/>.

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