

**Junior Essay
Second Place
Ben Warburton
Norfolk Academy
Ms. Jennifer Rodgers**

Why We Should Stand Up

Anywhere on the earth, at any time, there have been bullies. No matter if someone is young or old, small or tall, smart or dumb, someone will find something to pick on them about. When there are bullies, there are also bystanders, people who could do something to help, small or drastic, but choose not to. They empower the bully, feed the fire, because now the bully knows they can get away with it, that they have no repercussions to their actions, the actions that constantly push someone to their mental edge and cause great unknown (or known) pain and suffering. This could just be someone who calls people names on the playground, or a megalomaniac like Adolf Hitler, who decimated millions of innocent people just because he didn't like who they were or agree with their ideas.

But the bystanders are the real problem, because they could help substantially to stop a schoolyard bully or a psychopath like Hitler. Any little thing can help, like the people that hid away Jews in attics or basements, to that one teacher who told the schoolyard bully to stop.

But the worst bystanders are the ones in power. An example from my own life was my old Vice Principal and old school counselor. The vice principal's son decided that it would be loads of fun to tease me about as many things as he could find. This ranged from my sports ability (which wasn't very good and still isn't) to my clothing choices. I tried to reach out to my school counselor and the Vice Principal, but this had

no effect. Why? Because first off the Vice Principal wrote it off as “boys being boys,” (really just avoiding getting her son in trouble) and the counselor just bribed us by giving us candy. This worked for about 10 seconds, because I wouldn’t get candy if I told on him and he kept on teasing.

These people, who turned their heads away from any problems, caused me misery throughout that school year without really knowing what was happening. This just shows that turning your head doesn't help anyone. It is illogical (and slightly evil) to just tell yourself that everything is fine when, in fact, it's not. If our world stays like this, millions will hurt, inside or out, we need to stop feeding the fire and start fighting back. Can you help? Do you see the bullies and choose to fight back? Or are you just too weak to recognize these events? Help. Because just one helping hand sooner or later turns to two, then 4, 8, 16, 32. Be the first one, because you'd want someone else to be the first one for you too.