

New book aims to build self esteem in school kids

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As a new school year approaches, concerns over the way children might interact with one another in a negative way will once again surface to challenge teachers, administrators and parents.

Canadian author, illustrator and former teacher, Wendy Collier, has written a book entitled 'Being Different is Cool', aimed at helping children deal with the stress and self-esteem issues that arise — often undetected by even the child's parents — from mistreatment by peers.

The book is in limited release but can be found in Golden at the Short Stop convenience store (located at the Fas Gas service station on the Trans-Canada.)

“The majority of what children are hearing from other kids is opinion, not a truth about that person”.

—Author Wendy Collier

“The story is basically about three kids who are being teased for different reasons,” says Collier.

“One for having brown skin, one for being too smart and one for being too big.”

Collier creates an angel in the book to explain to the children what self-esteem is and also to help the children “reframe” what is being said to them.

“Reframe, or in other words, consider what someone says to you and determine if it is a truth or opinion,” she explains.

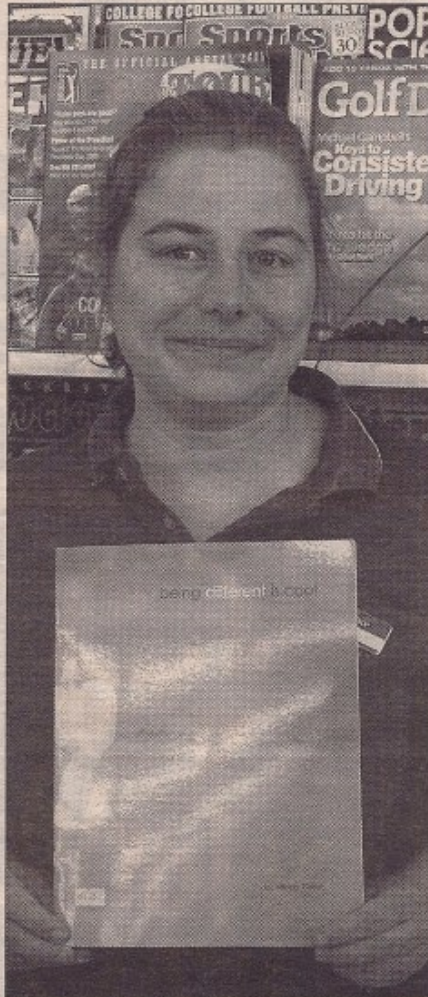
“The majority of what people say is opinion and the majority of what children are hearing from other kids is opinion, not a truth about that person.”

Collier says that the book is aimed at the 5-8 age group but also meets the criteria for the 9-12 age group because of the depth of the story.

The book includes eight pages of clip art, helping to demonstrate to the young readers that in nature, there are no two things alike.

“Kids end up understanding that we are all different and that is a good thing,” she says.

Collier says motivation for the book came from the years she spent as a



RICHARD MACKENZIE/GOLDEN STAR

Short Stop's Jayne Tress with a copy of Wendy Collier's book 'Being Different is Cool'. (Currently on sale at the convenience store.)

teacher, witnessing the effects teasing and bullying had on children, as well as from teasing episodes in her own childhood.

“I had to work really hard on my self-esteem and that really stayed with me.”

The Red Deer resident often speaks publicly on the value and importance of instilling self-esteem in children.

“Society underestimates how much it can help,” she says.

“If we can build up enough self-esteem in our children, there is no need for them to be swayed by their peers.”

“If they are strong in terms of who they are, there is less risk of alcohol, drugs, and violence.”