

## EDUCATION

# Anti-bully drive to honor 8 schools

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Eight Miami Beach public schools will be recognized and designated as “No Place for Hate” schools Wednesday evening at a ceremony organized by the Anti-Defamation League as part of the group’s nationwide anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying campaign.

The eight schools — from kindergarten to high school — will join the more than 70 other Florida schools that have been recognized since 2010, when the program started in the state.

The initiative, which kicked off nationally six years ago, aims at “creating a school climate that’s respectful for all students,” said Lily Medina, ADL’s Florida education director.

The ADL was founded in 1913 “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” It has since broadened its scope to fight all forms of bigotry in the United States and abroad with 27 regional and satellite offices as well as one in

Israel.

To qualify for the “No Place for Hate” designation, schools must complete at least three anti-bias activities from the organization’s resource guide, participate in one ADL training program and sign a resolution of respect form. The activities and programs are intended to foster tolerance and prevent prejudice and stereotyping among students and teachers.

The designations are awarded annually, and the ADL covers the training fees for about 20 Miami-Dade schools each year, Medina said.

In elementary schools, the ADL conducts empathy-building programs in an effort to “stop the name-calling right in the beginning,” Medina said. Other initiatives like the CyberALLY program focus on the growing problem of cyberbullying.

The longer schools participate, the more effective they find the programs to be, Medina said. Some schools, like Cutler Bay Academy, make it a point to

receive the designation each year.

“The teachers say they see the changes in the school climate,” she said.

A 2012 study by an independent evaluation firm found that 93 percent of the students who participated in the CyberALLY program indicated that they had learned different strategies for responding to cyberbullying. Almost three-quarters of them said they applied what they learned in their everyday lives.

The eight schools to receive the designation this year are Miami Beach Senior High, Nautilus Middle, Fienberg/Fisher K-8 Center, Biscayne Elementary Community, South Pointe Elementary, North Beach Elementary, Treasure Island Elementary and Ruth K. Broad Bay Harbor Elementary.

The ceremony, featuring student musical performances and a banner presentation, will take place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday at the North Shore Park Band Shell, 7275 Collins Ave., Miami Beach.