

The Mary Foundation and Save the Children Denmark focus on bullying and well-being among children

Everybody has the right to belong. "The Mary Foundation – H.R.H. Crown Princess Mary's Foundation" launches today its first project aimed at preventing bullying among children. The project "Fri for Mobberi" ("Free from Bullying") has been further developed to now also include school children and is the outcome of a collaboration with Save the Children Denmark. "Fri for Mobberi" is part of a nationwide campaign "Sammen mod Mobning" ("Together against Bullying"), which the Danish Ministry of Education launches today.

Copenhagen, March 28th 2008: The objective of The Mary Foundation is to prevent social isolation and help those who are socially isolated, to encourage tolerance and understanding of diversity, and to create hope. Therefore, The Mary Foundation decided to work closely with Save the Children Denmark in order to help in the prevention of bullying among children.

On the initiative of Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mary, Save the Children Denmark has offered preschools throughout the country a flexible framework designed to reduce the incidence of bullying in schools and to help create a safe and happy school environment. The project "Fri for Mobberi" builds on four values "tolerance, respect, care and courage" and offers a package of activities and ideas for children, teachers and parents, presented in a practical suitcase.

The collaboration between The Mary Foundation and Save the Children Denmark means that together they will further develop the current and ongoing project "Fri for Mobberi".

As a result, a larger group of preschools will be exposed to the existing "Fri for Mobberi" project, and a modified "Fri for Mobberi" framework will be developed with new activities and ideas relevant to primary school children, their teachers and parents. Each participating school will be offered a course for teachers in order to introduce the material and provide inspiration for working with it. The concept will be launched in primary schools in August 2008.

"The Mary Foundation's choice of bullying as one of our first focal areas has been acknowledged by experts who work with marginalized groups in a broad context. Research and experience supports the assumption that the personal and social consequences of bullying will be reduced, the earlier the efforts are made to prevent it. Therefore, the earlier we teach our children to show tolerance, respect and care for each other in their daily interaction, the better", says Crown Princess Mary.

"I feel very strongly that everybody has the right to belong. And that every child has the right to a happy and secure childhood. Far too many children are bullied in our schools, and it has a damaging effect on the lives of these children. It is the hope of The Mary Foundation that the project "Fri for Mobberi" will help generate positive results and provide our children with the best possible environment and opportunities to grow and develop", the Crown Princess elaborates.

"Save the Children Denmark would like to emphasize that children's wellbeing is a joint concern, and bullying a joint responsibility. Together with The Mary Foundation, we would like to help more day-care centres and schools use the specific educational tools offered to prevent bullying. This project is an important step towards ensuring children a safe and happy life free from bullying in school", says General Secretary Mimi Jakobsen, Save the Children Denmark.

The project "Fri for Mobberi" is a joint contribution by the Mary Foundation and Save the Children Denmark to the nationwide campaign "Sammen mod Mobning" ("Together against Bullying"), which brings together schools, parents and children in a focused effort to prevent bullying. The campaign has been initiated by the Danish Ministry of Education and unites the relevant parties in the Danish Education System. The campaign's objective is to develop and implement effective anti-bullying strategies in schools around the country.

Save the Children Denmark's Mimi Jakobsen, the Crown Princess and management of The Mary Foundation will participate in the launch of the "Sammen mod Mobning" campaign, which will take place at the Peder Lykke School in Copenhagen today.

The concept "Fri for Mobberi" was introduced to Denmark by Crown Princess Mary who was inspired by the "Better Buddies" programme initiated by the Australian organisation The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, for whom the Crown Princess is international patron.

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