

Latest news at mysuburbanlife.com

GENEVA

High school to host anti-bullying speaker

By Frank Vaisvilas
fvaisvilas@mysuburbanlife.com

One of the nation's preeminent voices on school bullying will speak Tuesday at Geneva High School.

Author Jodee Blanco hopes the forum will give courage to victims of bullying, and make teachers more aware and parents more sensitive to the issue.

"That's my goal when I come into these communities," Blanco said.

Blanco has written two books, the New York Times bestseller, "Please Stop Laughing at Me ... One Woman's Inspirational Story" and the sequel, "Please Stop Laughing at Us ... One Survivor's Extraordinary Quest to Prevent School Bullying."

The first book details Blanco's personal experience with school bullying in suburban Chicago schools, while the second book describes how she is sharing

"During the school year, there certainly have been some Facebook incidents that have made people uncomfortable."

Thomas Rogers, Geneva High School principal

what she learned about the issue with teachers, students, parents and survivors of bullying.

Blanco has been giving these presentations nationwide and in Canada in the hope that schools will adopt some of her programs, which address bullying in a more compassionate way, such as through empowering the students she calls "elite leaders" to motivate change.

Part of Blanco's message also is making people aware that bullying also can mean neglecting to do nice things.

If bullying gets out of control, Blanco said it

eventually can lead to school violence, such as a mass shooting.

"That's an established fact," Blanco said.

Geneva High School Principal Thomas Rogers said school officials were impressed at a speaking event Blanco presented in Naperville last month.

He acknowledges bullying can lead to school violence.

"I could certainly see where that could happen," Rogers said. "We don't have a situation like that here."

While physical bullying might not be apparent at the high school, Rogers believes some verbal bullying does occur. School officials have also become aware of instances of cyber-bullying.

"It's really easy to be anonymous using that cyber tool that's available," Rogers said. "During the school year, there certainly have been some Facebook incidents that have made people uncomfortable."

If you go

WHAT Jodee Blanco's anti-bullying program
WHEN 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday
WHO Parents, children 10 and older, and adult survivors of bullying
WHERE Geneva High School, 227 N. Fourth St.
COST Free and open to public