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### Did you know?

Research shows that 88% of children who engage in highly aggressive bullying behaviour become significantly less aggressive after they receive Roots of Empathy. When they do not receive ROE, the majority of these children go on to bully significantly more than they were already.

### Heartfelt moment

Beth Walker, an ROE Instructor in Toronto, Canada, shares this story about a Grade 3 student who was bullying another Grade 3 student in the

## News From the Green Blanket

### Empathy spreading in New Zealand



Learning from a tiny teacher in NZ.

In the Southern Hemisphere, where the school year has just begun, Roots of Empathy (ROE) is celebrating a major milestone: our fourth year of operations in a country outside of Canada. New Zealand now has the longest-running international ROE program, which has already reached 4275 children in four years. In 2010-11, we welcome new ROE partner Barnardos one of New Zealand's largest and most trusted children's organizations, as our lead agency in the country. The program was first introduced to 250 children in Auckland in 2007.

### Mary Gordon on The Huffington Post

In February, a blog post by Mary Gordon, "Empathic Civilization: Building A New World One Child at a Time," appeared on The Huffington Post, one of the most popular news websites on the Internet. Gordon was invited to submit her post by Jeremy Rifkin, whose new book, The Empathic Civilization, devotes several pages to Roots of Empathy and calls it part of "a new pedagogical revolution" in empathy and one of the "most

schoolyard. A younger child from her Grade 1 ROE program went up to the bully and said: "That is not Roots of Empathy. You are hurting his feelings." Reflecting on how this young advocate had become a "Changer," Walker writes that "those words of empathy solved a potential problem and everyone learned from a small child's words!"

### **ROE in the media**

ROE appears frequently in the media, from coverage in smaller communities to reporting with international exposure. Here are some prominent and recent examples:

[The Irish Times](#) ("Baby steps towards empathy")

[TIME Magazine](#) (article on bullying, child development and empathy)

[Education Canada](#) (journal article on ROE's model of growth and program integrity)

[Radio Canada](#) (TV documentary, en français)

[TVOntario](#) (TV panel discussion on "The Importance of Teaching Kids Empathy")

interesting innovations" in this area. For the next few months, leading thinkers on empathy such as Mary have been invited to share their thoughts on The Huffington Post.

We invite you to join this global empathy debate, a debate that Roots of Empathy has been advancing since 1996. You can

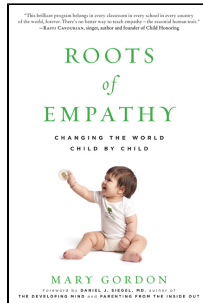
### **Why is our newsletter called *Green Blanket*?**

In Roots of Empathy classrooms, children gather around a green blanket where the loving relationship between a parent and baby is the lever for learning. The green blanket is where learning and sharing takes place -

and we want this newsletter to be a place for learning and sharing too! If you have comments about the newsletter at any time, please [email us](#).

comment or 'vote' on [Mary's post](#) or to share it on Facebook, Yahoo or Twitter. Or [comment on another post in the empathy series](#) (scroll down to Related Blogs on Huffington Post).

## Roots of Empathy book now available in the U.S.



In December 2009, the U.S. edition of *Roots of Empathy: Changing the World Child by Child* was launched at a wildly popular Town Hall event in Seattle, Washington, featuring Mary Gordon. The book is now available at booksellers throughout the United States and at online sites such as [Amazon](#) and [Barnes and Noble](#) (in Canada, it continues to be available online at [Chapters/Indigo](#)).

The new edition has received critical acclaim and features a foreword by Dr. Daniel J. Siegel, author of *The Developing Mind and Parenting from the Inside Out*, who writes, "Mary Gordon has created a brilliant strategy for teaching young children the essential skills to see the mind within each person... Empathy in all its forms is cultivated in this science-based, emotion-inspiring, life-changing immersion in the inner world of human development."

## Thank you holiday donors!

Thanks to all of our very generous donors for making ROE's first holiday e-fundraising campaign a success. The December 2009 "Gift of Empathy" campaign raised critical funds that are helping to bring ROE to thousands of children worldwide in 2010. Consider ROE this year if you are looking to give or request a meaningful gift for a wedding registry, birthday, baby shower, or for any occasion. You can [make a one-time or monthly donation](#) through CanadaHelps, a charity helping charities.

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## Shine a Light

### ROE advocate Thelma Messer



Thelma Messer of New Brunswick, Canada, first heard of ROE nearly a decade ago. As a public health nurse in the Healthy Learners in School program, a government initiative that sees nurses assigned to school districts, Messer had worked with a local advisory committee to identify social and emotional

health as a key health promotion priority for the children in her district.

She'd heard of ROE before, which prompted her to request a presentation about it for her community in 2001. "It was extremely well received," she says. "We saw right away that

Roots of Empathy was a perfect fit and had the evidence behind it. Everyone said 'Oh my goodness; we need to have this in our schools.'"

Today ROE is reaching nearly 500 children in Messer's school district. Her dream is to see every child across the province experience it, ideally twice (once in elementary and once in middle school). "If you have something that's good, that works, you want to share it," she says.

Messer is one of six Healthy Learner nurses acting as Key Point People (local program coordinators) for ROE programs in New Brunswick. Over the years, she has also been an Instructor and Mentor and made numerous community and government presentations about ROE, and now she is involved as a Trainer. "ROE is a big investment in those children," she says. "It's very well done, very intentional. The children are learning a lot and I feel it's a very valuable use of my time. If I can impact more children by facilitating other people who deliver it, that's pretty exciting."

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## Mary's Message



In February I was deeply saddened to learn of the suicide of 15-year-old Ashkan Sultani, a death that has been linked to the daily bullying this boy experienced at two successive high schools in British Columbia. My heart goes out to his family.

This tragedy was a failure of society. We need to address the prevalence of bullying, and draw the curtain on the shame and humiliation children and youth feel about being bullied, so that children like Ashkan no longer kill themselves in despair when they see no way out from the tormenting. The only way to truly prevent bullying is to work with children so they stop it themselves. We can help them stand up to peers who bully others, and we can also provide them with better emotional support so they do not become bullies in the first place.

Empathy is a natural brake to bullying. It is the base of all kindness and caring, while a lack of empathy is the base for all forms of cruelty. We need to foster empathy and build on children's social and emotional understanding, from preschool right through to high school. Otherwise we are failing the many Ashkans of the world - children who deserve better.

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