

Bullying killed my beautiful 15 year old daughter, Kelly. I am here today because I don't want any other parent to have to live through the hell that my family has endured for the past 3 years.

Kelly wasn't your typical bullying victim. She was cute, popular and a cheerleader at Helena High School. She had the world by the tail – until a single text message sent her life into a tailspin. One ugly lie spread like wildfire and into the hands of literally hundreds of high school students in Helena. Her best friend chose to believe the lie and that's all it took for Kelly to be ostracized by the "in crowd". Her reputation was ruined by rumors and lies. Continual harrassment followed via cyber bullying and text messaging. She was taunted at school every single day. She felt like she had no friends. Her life was sheer torture and she wanted to die.

Kelly was killed in a tragic car accident after turning to kids in Butte for friendship. She never would have been in that car had the bullying not occurred. She would not have been in that car had something been done at school to stop the torture. As parents, we tried to make it stop but we got little help from school administrators. Our hands were tied.

It doesn't have to be this way. I know we cannot legislate kindness – that has to come from home. But we can make students accountable for their actions and we must do so. Many schools across the state are

making strides in this area, but there is much more that needs to be done throughout the state. These policies will require strictly enforced consequences in order to be effective. Kelly was harassed everywhere – online, over the phone and in school hallways where people just looked away. Young people all over the country are literally being bullied to death. Please help us help the victims. Thank you.

Carl & Gail O'Loughlin