Standing up for others
Trinity High School holds anti-bullying campaign

BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

TRINITY — Trinity High School students took a stand against bullying in the school cafeteria with a two-day anti-bullying campaign on Thursday, Oct. 27, and Friday, Oct. 28, to continue the momentum established in October, which is National Anti-Bullying Awareness month.

“I have witnessed people being bullied at school and it really upsets me,” said Jayla Battles, one of several who joined forces with other students to do something about it. She and other student volunteers manned an anti-bullying station in the school cafeteria during all four lunches for two days.

Wearing a T-shirt that displayed the slogan “We Are Bulldogs, Not Bullies,” Nicole Royall invited diners in the cafeteria to “Take A Stand and Lend A Hand” to the cause. She offered Megan Frick her choice of paint in school colors and after applying the paint to her hand Frick made a handprint on a banner designed and painted by Sylvia Gregg.

After placing the very first handprint on the banner, Frick said, “I think bullying is a huge thing that has its biggest impact on freshmen and sophomores. I feel like we needed to do something to help stop it.”

Trinity High School Exceptional Children’s teacher Sarah Luz, who feels everyone deserves a positive environment, spearheaded a ‘Spread the Word to End the Word’ campaign when she was a student at High Point University.

The event was a source of inspiration for both organizers and participants who made handprints.

Jayla Battles said, “Even though I have not been bullied, I feel their pain when I see someone getting hurt or bullied and I don’t want to cause that.”

Over the past decade, the instances of bullying have increased across the United States, sometimes escalating to harmful acts that can damage both the person being bullied and the bullyer. StopBullying.gov defines bullying as “unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.” Anti-Bullying awareness efforts serve the purpose to help people understand that all types of bullying — verbal, social and physical — can have a profound effect and need to stop.

Devin Shepard described the personal impact of other people’s unkind comments and actions.

“It made me feel depressed, sad and angry,” he said.

“It made me realize that I was letting people control my thoughts about myself and that some people do not think before they speak,” said Royall.

“I am so proud of these kids for standing up for what they believe in,” said Luz. “They have worked so hard toward this end goal and the response we got from the school was incredible. I truly believe they have made a huge impact on their peers.”

“I hoped we could get it across to others that bullying is not cool and you have to treat people with respect in order to get it back,” said Zoe Nicholson.

“What we hoped to achieve with this banner is for people to understand that it is better to stand up for others than not to stand up at all,” said Royall.

Above: Staff member Justine Carter didn’t shy away from a little blue paint if it would bring awareness of the problem of bullying.

Right: Coach Rob Shore applies a Bulldog blue handprint next to that of Nicole Royall.

Students, teachers and staff members could pledge their support in two ways — place their handprint on the banner or wear an anti-bullying ribbon. Jayla Battles was among a group of students who spent two class periods assembling the ribbons prior to the event.