



Connecting Canada

A message of kindness from Carol Todd

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When it comes to combating cyberbullying, there are few who are more determined than Carol Todd.

The last five years have seen the Vancouver-area teacher and mom dedicate virtually every spare moment of her life to fighting online abuse among today's digitally connected kids. She's travelled the globe to deliver her message to public schools, colleges, universities, community events, police forces, political organizations and corporate boardrooms.

"I remind people to be kind to each other," Todd says. "We have to be more compassionate as a society in order to make progress."

The need to tackle cyberbullying has never been greater. [Nearly half \(42 per cent\) of Canadian kids](#) have been cyberbullied in the past four weeks, and 60 per cent have witnessed others being tormented.

Feelings of depression, anxiety, anger and embarrassment are not uncommon among those who are bullied.

In some cases, as Todd knows all too well, suicide is the result.

Her daughter, Amanda Todd, was 15 when she died by suicide in 2012. Before her death, Amanda posted a video to YouTube detailing the agonizing harassment she'd endured at the hands of an online predator. Her sense of isolation and depression was amplified when she also became the target of extreme bullying by various teens both online and off.

The heartbreaking video went viral, amassing tens of millions of views following her death, and sparking widespread public concern over the dangers kids are potentially facing in an increasingly connected world.

Even today Amanda's story has the power to hit home with people of all ages and across countries, cultures and language.

At the 2018 Juno Awards held in Vancouver in March, Todd marvelled at the wave of love she felt from the audience as she took to the stage alongside classical musician Jocelyn Morlock, whose sweeping instrumental piece "My Name is Amanda Todd" was named Classical Composition of the Year.

The impact was equally forceful at Pink Shirt Day in Victoria and at WE Day in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, where Todd worked this year with TELUS to encourage thousands of students to rise above cyberbullying with kindness.

"Amanda's message has impacted everyone's family. Kids who are 13 and 14 now have heard of her. The video she created and the story she told is timeless," she says.

Todd's ongoing partnership with TELUS is an extension of Amanda's influence as she continues her mission to spread the importance of kindness and respect.

TELUS has made it a priority to educate and empower children and teens on their roles and responsibilities as they navigate a highly connected world. Cyberbullying is a big part of the conversation, with Todd working closely with the company to identify new and innovative ways to connect with kids through technology. One example of that work is the [TELUS Wise Digital Pledge](#), which launched May 14 and encourages all Canadians to take an active role in making the digital space safer for everyone.

Todd also has a long relationship with [TELUS WISE](#), a free educational program that serves to teach Canadians of all ages about managing their privacy, security and reputation online. Todd lends her support to TELUS' social media-focused [#RiseAbove](#) campaign and upcoming [#EndBullying](#) initiative, which includes providing youth with effective intervention strategies if they see others being cyberbullied. She's trained as a TELUS Wise Ambassador, helps to promote Wise programming and messaging, and has authored several articles for the TELUS Wise site. Her work to combat cyberbullying won her a TELUS Wise Outstanding Canadian Award in 2015.

Todd is grateful for the support.

"Cyberbullying needs to be an ongoing conversation every day," she says.

Todd has heard many stories of painful, even criminal, abuse in her travels. Today, there are more ways than ever to hurt someone through [photo, video or text](#) sharing or hacking into a personal account, and cyber abuse is much harder to stop than other forms of bullying.



Yet, she remains optimistic that the day will come when cyberbullying has less of a grip on society than it does now. It's what keeps her going, from one event to another, city after city, country after country, year after year.

"I want to ensure no one will have to go through what Amanda went through, ever," she says. "It can be done. We can stand up for one another."

There is, too, another force at work, one that is always top of mind and closest to Todd's heart. With each invitation to deliver a speech, accept an award or meet with politicians, parents, teachers or students, she feels grounded in her purpose.

"I get to talk about Amanda and her story. I get to share her voice," she says.

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