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Gabrielino Student Attends Bullying Conference

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Kimiko Nishitsuhi is among a group of parents and students meeting with President Obama

Gabrielino High School [1] junior Kimiko Nishitsuji [2] will be among a group of students and parents meeting with President Barack Obama [3] and first lady Michelle Obama in the Oval Office [4] today, sharing their suggestions on stopping bullying.

Make It Better Project [5] | **StopBullying.gov** [6]

Scroll to the bottom of this page to watch a livestream from 7:30 a.m. to noon.

"I'm really excited," Nishitsuji told City News Service. "I feel it's a great opportunity to spread awareness on such a huge scale of the seriousness of these problems and how much it affects youth."

The meeting is in connection with the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention, which the Obamas will then speak at in the East Room. The conference will also include Secretary of Heath and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius fielding online questions on bullying prevention and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan speaking on a national conference call with reporters and at the conference's wrap-up session.

The conference is part of the Obama administration's efforts to prevent bullying, which have also included the president and first lady recording videos and the establishment of a website, StopBullying.gov

[7].

Nishitsuji, a 17-year-old who lives in San Gabriel [8], said she was chosen to attend the conference after being featured in several articles and making a YouTube video for the Make it Better Project [9], whose goal is to make schools safer for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youths.

Nishitsuji, who was bullied when she attended Jefferson Middle School in San Gabriel, said stopping bullying "needs to start with the adults."

"A lot of teachers and administrators that I was around grew up in a generation when bullying was OK and it was just a part of childhood," Nishitsuji said. "A lot of them turned a blind eye because they really didn't know how to deal with it."

Nishitsuji said when she was in the sixth and seventh grades she was bullied, based on perceived sexuality. She was also the object of racial slurs on a daily basis for "probably two years."

Nishitsuji said she was punched and shoved down "in front of a school security guard."

"The counselors didn't make a great effort at protecting me from retaliation," Nishitsuji said. "That's something that really needs to be dealt with -- protecting students after the fact -- and dealing with why the bullies are doing what they're doing."

Nishitsuji said she later learned "that my bully was being bullied by someone else."

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GSA Network 1550 Bryant St., Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94103 | 415-552-4229 | info@gsanetwork.org
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