

BRIGHT SPOT

Providing pupils at School 35 antidotes to violence

I, too, am outraged at the upsurge in violence in our community. Given the recent homicides

in Rochester neighborhoods, have you ever stopped to wonder why this is happening? If you look closely, you'll see that most gun violence

stems from arguments that have gotten out of control. It seems that many behaviors are "out of control" these days. Just look at the Dec. 6 killings in the Omaha

mall.

But there is hope. One local school is doing something about violence before it happens.

Pinnacle School 35 runs an after-school program called "Coping Power." Coping Power has been proven to reduce violent behaviors in its student participants by teaching them coping skills, so that they can de-escalate a situation before it turns to violence.

The program also teaches students how to succeed in school and at home. Self-respect, respect for others and understanding consequences of actions are the skills being taught to stu-

dents. These skills will keep them from becoming instigators or victims of violence. These are the skills that our Rochester youths desperately need.

The Coping Power program is run through the collaboration of school principal Robert Kuter and vice principal Rachel Winder, Peggy Avery from the Monroe County YMCA and a group of local pediatricians including Dr. David Topa and four graduates of the Pediatric Links with the Community program from the University of Rochester. Coping Power is an evidence-based program shown to increase graduation rates, de-

crease school suspensions and most importantly, decrease violent behaviors years after its implementation. It is a cost-effective program that has already been shown to work at School 35. It can be part of the solution to the epidemic of violence that has taken over our city.

So don't give up hope. Instead, let's support those making a difference. □

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