

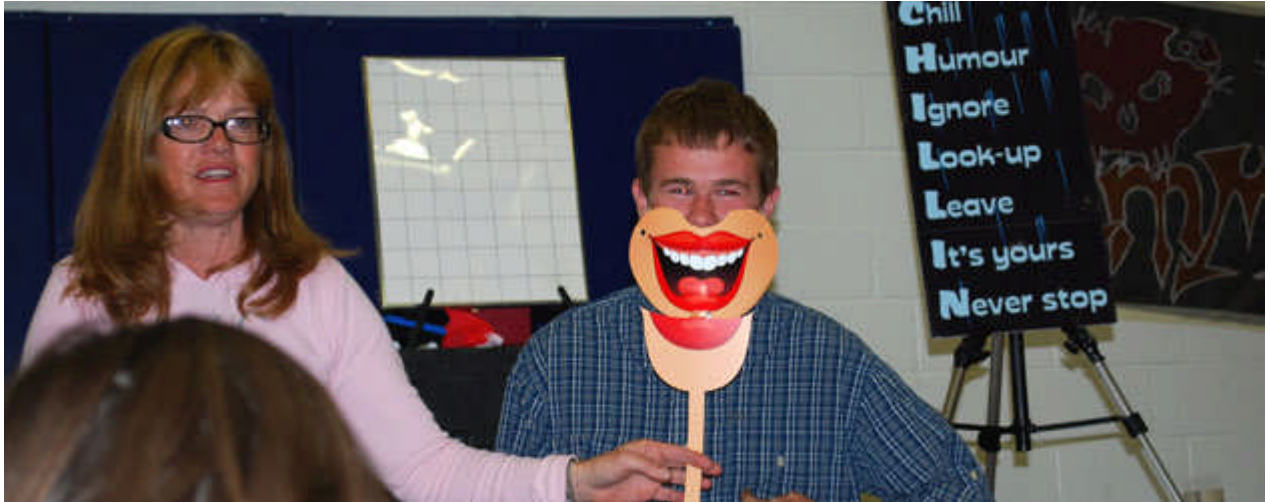
[Westwind Weekly News](#) Delivering news to the communities of Magrath, Raymond, Stirling, Del Bonita, Spring Coulee and Welling Alberta

Stirling School kids learn to CHILL

By

Kim Prinz

Published: May 13, 2010 **Posted in:** Community



A puppet show came to Stirling School on Thursday, May 6 to teach kids how to deal with bullying.

Val Hilliker, a comedy ventriloquist, came to the school to teach the kids “how to avoid bullying situations by being assertive but not aggressive, through a program I developed called the Chill Skills.”

CHILL Skills stand for **C**hill: take time to stop and think it through, count to ten, breathe deeply and slowly; **H**elp: if you are feeling scared or threatened, never stop getting help, until someone listens; **I**gnore: you can call on detachment; **L**ook-up: be assertive and use eye messages, without getting mad, say, “Stop that. I deserve respect”; and **L**eave: just walk away from a bad situation.

“We have a lot of fun, but teach a serious message about how to deal with being bullied,” said Hilliker. “I’m very passionate about teaching people about standing up for themselves. The younger ones get a lesson between tattling and getting help and the older kids get a more real approach.”

According to Hilliker, the younger kids are the ones who really got it. When asked for comments at the end of the presentation, they’re the ones who will say the basic message is “to be kind.”

The preschool show, which was held in the evening, was combined with the Mom and Me night. Hilliker said that it's not always easy to teach young kids what to do when they come to school because suddenly they'll be asked to do things they're not allowed to do at home.

"We instill a level of courage in them at school," she said. "When they first get here, they are facing a lot of challenges. It's a lot easier to get kids to talk to puppets. Puppets have more power than when parents say it and the kids' attentiveness is great."

Betty Pitcher, vice principal of Stirling Elementary, said she thought it would be a great idea to book a ventriloquist because she didn't think any of the kids had ever seen one before.