



WITS PROGRAM TACKLES BULLYING

by Cst. Vanessa DeMerchant, LISIMS/Nass Valley Detachment

The LISIMS/Nass Valley RCMP Detachment is situated in New Aiyansh, BC and provides policing services to the Nisga'a Nation. The Nisga'a Nation is comprised of four Nisga'a villages: Gitlaxt'aamiks (New Aiyansh), Gitwinksihkw (Canyon City), Laxgalts'ap (Greenville) and Gingolx (Kincolith).

Cst. Vanessa DeMerchant recognized the need to have a program to deal with bullying in the community. Simultaneously, Cpl. Ajit Tiwana of National Crime Prevention and Youth Services was coordinating seven pilot sites nationwide for the anti-bullying program, WITS. After consulting with "E" Division Crime Prevention & Program Support Services, Cpl. Tiwana chose this small northern detachment as one of the pilot sites. The acronym WITS stands for:


- **W**alk away
- **I**gnore it
- **T**alk it out
- **S**eek help

The program teaches children positive ways to overcome bullying and how to help when faced with victimization.

"We work closely on a daily basis with school counselors and the staff of School District 92," said LISIMS/Nass Valley RCMP Detachment Commander Sgt. Donovan Tait. "We are committed to focusing in on the important issue of bullying not only for the students but the community as a whole. We are very pleased and thankful that our little area of the world was selected for this program."

Cst. Vanessa DeMerchant brings the program into the classrooms. She visits several times throughout the school year, handing out "gifts" bearing the WITS acronym and integrating the program into the school curriculum with books, posters and pamphlets.

"We are receiving positive feedback from the community about changes they are seeing in the children and how they are relating to one another in the schoolyard and the village. Being a small community, a program such as this can have an immediate impact, and I think that is exactly what we are seeing," said Tait.

For more information about the WITS program, visit the Rock Solid Foundation at www.witsprogram.ca or contact Cpl. Ajit Tiwana at 613-843-6974. 



Young students pictured with Cst. Vanessa DeMerchant at WITS swearing in ceremony.