Museum group works against cyberbullying

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In today's society, “cyberbullying” has become an issue of concern among adolescents. Children and teenagers are threatened, harassed and humiliated every day by others using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, and mobile phones.

October is National Bullying Prevention Month, and to recognize that, local students are participating in The Burnett-Eaton Museum Foundation's “Joining Hands to Prevent Violence” program.

Artwork and essay entries from local students are on display through Thursday, Oct. 28, in the main branch of the New Hanover County Public Library, 201 Chestnut St. The students created pieces on ways to prevent cyberbullying and violence as a part of a contest put on by the foundation.

“The purpose of the program is to mobilize support to the youth through integration of families, neighbors, churches, law enforcement, school and businesses, and to bring public awareness of the importance of working together to prevent violence,” said Islah Speller, founder and executive director of the Burnett-Eaton Museum Foundation.

Winners of the contest will be announced at a program at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 30, at the Wilmington Railroad Museum. First- and second-place winners will be chosen from each grade level, kindergarten through grade 12, from New Hanover County and surrounding area schools.

Speller believes it is important to give attention and recognition to youth through healthy competition.

“The art-essay contest promotes positive energy and critical thinking,” Speller said.

Dr. Sameer Hinduja, assistant professor in the Department of Criminology Justice at Florida Atlantic University and co-director of the Cyberbullying Research Center, will be keynote speaker.

The Cyberbullying Research Center provides facts and detailed stories about online aggression. It includes resources to address cyberbullying and to promote appropriate online participation. For more information on the center, visit www.cyberbullying.us.
The public is invited to attend the program. For details, contact Islah Speller at (910) 795-8597, or at spellerislah@yahoo.com.

The Violence Prevention program is one of several community-oriented projects that the Burnett-Eaton Museum Foundation participates in annually. The museum was founded in December 2006 in honor of two local African-American physicians, Foster F. Burnett and Hubert A. Eaton Sr., who dedicated their lives to justice and equality through health care and education and who helped to integrate Wilmington's medical community. The foundation is located at 410 N. Seventh St.

“The Burnett-Eaton Museum Foundation exemplifies its culture to include the underserved, underprivileged communities and invites all to participate. Together with your support, we can prevent child abuse, take a stand against bullying and help to stop violence,” Speller said.

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