

**MEDIA RELEASE issued by *Changing Faces***

11 November 2010

## **Leading disfigurement charity urges everyone to face up to the challenge of appearance-related bullying**

*Changing Faces*, the UK's leading disfigurement charity, is calling on members of the public, children and young people, teachers and schools to face up to the challenge of appearance-related bullying and help stamp it out.

95% of the children and young people who contact *Changing Faces* have been bullied in some way. Their facial disfigurement or unusual appearance makes them stand out and because of that, they can be picked on by bullies, ridiculed, teased, called names, physically attacked and ostracised. This can lead to long-term psychological and emotional problems.

The charity is calling on:

- Everyone – challenge your own assumptions about disfigurement – then they will be able to talk to children about disfigurement and help prevent bullying.
- Children and young people – if you see disfigurement/appearance-related bullying in your school or anywhere, don't turn away – tell someone about it
- Teachers and schools: challenge your assumptions about disfigurement, become confident in supporting pupils with a disfigurement and make sure that your school's anti-bullying policies include disfigurement/appearance related bullying and are in operation every week of the school year.

14 year old Lucas, who has a condition called frontal-nasal craniofacial dysplasia, said: "I was bullied for most of my time at primary school. Boys would punch me and wrestle me to the ground and the girls called me cruel names like "pig nose" or "elephant man". He feels so strongly about this issue that he has worked with *Changing Faces* on a video highlighting his experience.

**Lucas is based in the Midlands - for radio or television interviews with Lucas please contact Colin Darling, the *Changing Faces* Regional Officer for the Midlands, on 0845 4500 655, or email [colind@changingfaces.org.uk](mailto:colind@changingfaces.org.uk)**

James Partridge, CEO of *Changing Faces* said: "Bullying of children and young people with disfigurements is a widespread problem. We know that 90% of people associate negative qualities to people with facial disfigurements (such as they are likely to live second-rate lives) – which is a completely wrong assumption to have. But it's perhaps no wonder children can get bullied at school.

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Telephone: 0845 4500 275 Fax: 0845 4500 276 Email: [info@changingfaces.org.uk](mailto:info@changingfaces.org.uk)  
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It is important that everyone takes action to help stamp out appearance-related bullying – and we've produced detailed advice on how to do this which can be downloaded from our website: [www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)

Schools in particular have a very important role to play and those which show best practice have worked with us to tackle the issue head on."

NB: If a child is experiencing difficulties Changing Faces offers specialist support to parents and children, and educational professionals to increase the support and inclusion of a pupil with a visible difference. Anyone seeking assistance should phone 0845 4500 275.

**-ENDS-**

#### **Notes for editors**

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- To request an interview with James Partridge, or one of our schools specialists please contact Rekha Patel, Press and Communications Officer on 020 7391 9276 (email [rekhap@changingfaces.org.uk](mailto:rekhap@changingfaces.org.uk)).
- Anti-Bullying Week takes place 15 – 19 November 2010 and the theme is 'Taking Action Together'.
- *Changing Faces* was launched in 1992 by James Partridge OBE, DSc (Hon), who sustained severe burn injuries following a car accident at the age of 18.
- *Changing Faces* employs a team of specialists who offer counselling and a range of practical strategies to children, young people, their families and adults with disfigurements, to enable them to manage public reactions and succeed in every part of their life. It offers a consultancy and training service to health professionals, teachers and employers on best practice in teaching, recruiting or providing customer service for people with disfigurements. It also raises public awareness and campaigns for social change.
- Over 1 million people in the UK have a disfigurement to the face or body. Over 500,000 people have disfigurements to the face - 1 in every 111.

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- Disfigurement can affect anyone, at any time or at any age. A disfigurement may be present at birth as a result of a birthmark or a craniofacial condition. Scarring, paralysis and other disfigurements can also be acquired following an accident, violence, an eye or skin condition, a surgical mistake, or cancer surgery.
- For further information, please go to: <http://www.changingfaces.org.uk>

Or contact:

Colin Darling, Regional Officer for the Midlands,  
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