



## VICTORIA DINATALE

Anti-Bullying Motivational Speaker

912.695.2813

[www.standingvictorious.com](http://www.standingvictorious.com)

[www.facebook.com/standingvictorious](https://www.facebook.com/standingvictorious)

## Meet Victoria DiNatale



Victoria DiNatale is one of the nation's youngest experts on the topic of bullying. At 21 years old, she has shared her unforgettable anti-bullying message with thousands of students and adults across the southeastern United States. Victoria has been featured in numerous talk shows, blogs, newspaper and magazine articles, and she wrote the introduction to *The Bullying Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Deal with Social Aggression and Cyberbullying* by Rachelle Lohmann. It is this very passion to curb bullying combined with her enthusiastic stage presence that has inspired bullies and bullying victims everywhere to seek help and stop cold in their tracks. Called a "motivational powerhouse," Victoria is certain to deliver these students with a dynamic presentation of hope, help, and perseverance.

## The "Standing Victorious" Message

- Bullying is a decision. A decision to bully is a decision to hurt.
- Bullying is not forever. Students have the ability to overcome bullying and rise victorious over bullies.
- There is hope. There is help. Suicide is *never* an option!

# Victoria's Interview Transcripts

## “Activist Speaks Out Against Bullying, Cruelty in Schools”

*Published on October 16, 2012 by Priyanka Juneja in “The Daily Gamecock”*

Direct Link: <http://www.dailygamecock.com/index.php/multimedia-11/item/5140-activist-speaks-out-against-bullying-cruelty-in-schools>

Victoria DiNatale was bullied emotionally, physically and sexually in middle and high school — so severely that she's been hospitalized with a stress cough multiple times and diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

But now, DiNatale, a motivational speaker and Armstrong Atlantic State University senior, is currently traveling the country speaking confidently to students.

Statistically, one in every four students is a victim of bullying, and, despite her traumatic past, DiNatale is using her experience to inspire others who may be in similar situations.

“I am very passionate about reaching out,” she said. “You can let something like this completely destroy you or empower you to motivate others.”

DiNatale embodies the very principle she believes in. At the age of 21, she dedicated every Friday to travel to a different school to share her story and to help prevent bullying.

“There is help and hope for those who are being bullied,” she said. “I have been on the other side and I know what it's like to walk down those lonely halls and I can say that I have today completely overcome the effects of bullying.”

The audience at DiNatale's USC talk consisted of professors and education students. DiNatale aimed to empower them with enough knowledge and awareness to help someone being bullied.

First-year education student Forest Mobley commented on the dramatic increase and severity of bullying in recent years.

“I think it's a huge problem now,” she said. “It is because there are more mediums that people can use to bully. Before, once you left school it stopped there, but now, people can reach you at home through the internet or texting.”

DiNatale also said that she believes the tendency to bully starts at home.

“I think bullying stems from a lack of parenting,” she said. “Children are not being taught at home to be kind, loving and accepting of others.”

Doyle Stevick, an associate professor of educational leadership and policies, explained the role of educators in the prevention of bullying.

“What we need is practical identification (of symptoms) and networking and cooperation,” he said. “Because when there is a problem, there are signs and it’s a matter of piecing them together.”

Stevick also pointed out that help shouldn’t just be given to those who are bullied.

“Bullies often need help too,” he said. “Historically they are the most likely to be violent and end up in prison. We don’t look at bullies as needing support and intervention because they are inflicting pain but they can have a difficult life as well.”

Whether it is those who are bullying or those that are being bullied, DiNatale believes that everyone can find a way out of the vicious cycle.

“I hope to teach others that there are people who love them and care about them,” she said. “Suicide isn’t an option and it’s important to keep reaching out for help and if one person doesn’t help, then there will be others who do.”

## **“Victim: ‘They Were Such Lonely Days for Me.’”**

*Published on October 15, 2012 by Crandall Sims in ABC Columbia*

Direct Link: <http://www.abccolumbia.com/news/local/Victim--They-were-such-lonely-days-for-me--174256121.html?m=y&smobile>

COLUMBIA, S.C. (WOLO) -- "The constant laughter, the constant isolation and walking down the halls lonely, isolated," says Victoria DiNatale, Senior at Armstrong Atlantic State University.

For DiNatale, bullying changed her life. While in middle school and high school, she says she was bullied so badly, doctors diagnosed her with PTSD.

"They were such lonely days for me," says DiNatale.

Crandall Sims reporting, "But, instead of letting her past stop her from having her voice heard, she's speaking out loud and clear. Today USC students just inside these doors...heard her message of love not hate."

"You can either let something like this completely destroy you or you can use an experience like this to help empower and motivate others," says DiNatale.

DiNatale has been traveling across the Southeast giving that same message to students of all ages.

"I hope to teach others that there are people who love them and people who care about them," says DiNatale.

Her trip to Columbia comes on the heels of the Amanda Todd story, another bullying case turned tragedy that's now making national headlines.

15 year old Todd made a video chronicling her story from the start and shared it on YouTube.

At one point, Todd writes, 'I have no one, I need someone.'

ABC News reports that officials say Todd was found dead in her British Columbia home, earlier this month of an apparent suicide; the official cause of death hasn't been released.

"I find that story so sad, to think that this girl thought that there was no other option for her," says DiNatale.

But DiNatale knows there are others just like Todd, and she hopes to reach them with her message.

"There is help, there is hope and suicide is not an option," says DiNatale.

For more on how you can help stop bullying along with what to do if you think someone has been bullied, including what signs to look for, visit [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

## **“Surviving Bullying: A Story of Hope and Never Giving Up”**

*Published on September 1, 2012 by Raychelle Cassada Lobmann, M.S., L.P.C. in “Teen Angst”*

Direct Link: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/teen-angst/201209/surviving-bullying>

In an effort to reach out to all of the McKenna's out there, I spoke to a remarkable young lady, Victoria DiNatale, who was once the victim of bullying. She now reaches out to teens through her motivational speaking at school assemblies. Her mission is simple—provide hope to those who are being bullied and let the bully know the impact their words and actions have on another's life.

Here are some of the questions I asked Victoria:

How old were you when the bullying started?

"The bullying that led to my illness and stole two years of my life began when I was 12 years old, on the day of 6th grade middle school orientation."

What happened?

"I was targeted by a group of girls in my class who recruited others against me throughout the school. I believe I was targeted because I was outgoing and very confident in myself and my abilities. I think this intimidated the bullies."

How did the bullying impact you psychologically/physically?

"I developed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder due to the severe psychological and emotional torment the bullies put me through. I became fearful for my safety at school."

When did the bullying end?

"The bullying in middle school ended when my parents withdrew me from that school for my own health and safety. However, because these bullies were not held accountable for their actions, some of them who attended the same high school as me picked up where they left off in middle school."

How has the bullying shaped who you are today?

"Through my strong faith, I have found complete healing and the ability to forgive the bullies of their cruelty. After thousands and thousands of dollars spent by my parents on pediatricians, a psychiatrist, psychologists, hospital visits and numerous medications, as well as uncountable hours of love and support given to me by my family and a new, safe school environment, I was finally able to heal. Today I am at peace and through my horrific bullying experiences have come to know that this is one of my missions in life--to speak out against bullying, and its negative consequences."

If you could tell a victim of bullying one thing, what would it be?

"This is but a small moment in the total experience of your life. These days WILL pass, and you CAN rise triumphant over your enemies! There is hope for you, and there is help. Never give up!"

And I'll conclude this blog with those last words, "There is hope for you, and there is help. Never give up!"

## **“Strictly Business”**

*Published in Armstrong Atlantic State University's, The Armstrong Experience*

Direct Link: <http://armstrongexperience.com/2011/10/04/victoria-dinatale/>

Victoria DiNatale is an open book when it comes to her past experiences as a victim of bullying. She travels across the low country speaking to thousands of elementary, middle and high school students about the dangers and consequences of bullying and cyber-bullying. But what most people don't know is that public speaking is more than a passion for the Armstrong junior, it's her very own business.

The inspiration for DiNatale's anti-bullying campaign came from her encounters with bullying in middle and high school. "It was a very traumatic experience that led to me developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)," she said. "Because of that experience, I feel like it's my responsibility to reach out to others who are also hurting in the way that I was hurt."

According to a note written by one of her aggressors, DiNatale was attacked because the bully feared DiNatale would take her friends. In middle school, one boy went so far as to wish her dead.

"Bullying is glamorized," DiNatale said. "You see it in movies like 'Mean Girls.' What's cool about someone no longer wanting to live because they are being bullied so badly? What's cool about that? I teach these kids that if you want to be cool, you've got to be kind."

DiNatale combines her need to help others with her need to orate. She won oratorical competitions in middle school and high school, and has grown her business by speaking at public schools, churches, civic events and conferences.

“I have always loved public speaking,” DiNatale said. “At this point, it is a service to my community, but I will be charging next year. Right now, I’m building up my name and getting experience. At the end of this year, I will have two years under my belt.”

In addition to building her business, DiNatale, who is in Armstrong’s honors program and holds a 4.0 GPA, continues to juggle her busy class schedule. “During my time at Armstrong, I have become a better speech writer for sure. Over the last three years, I have meticulously honed my rhetorical devices and grammar, and my diction and syntax have improved. Perfecting these skills directly translates to the speech writing process,” she said. “The better writer I am, the better orator I am.”

After college, DiNatale plans to continue her anti-bullying campaign by taking her message across the country. “Mark my words, I will speak in each of the 50 states,” she said. She also wants to maintain her entrepreneurial spirit. “I like working for myself,” she said. “I am my own business.”

## **“Anti-Bullying Advocate Speaks at BCHS”**

*Published on September 22, 2011 in Bryan County Now*

Direct Link: <http://savannahnow.com/bryan-county-now/2011-09-22/anti-bullying-advocates-speaks-bchs%23.UQ9HkqDPyig#.UTU68qDPzC0>

When meeting Victoria DiNatale one would never think this vibrant and articulate young woman could have been a victim of severe bullying.

But on Sept. 16, the 20 year old Armstrong Atlantic State University student and motivational speaker visited Bryan County High School and told about the bullying she suffered in middle school and the detrimental effect it had on her well-being.

Bullying pushed DiNatale to the brink. The actions of bullies caused her to develop post-traumatic stress disorder, which is generally a condition experienced by military combat veterans she said. She told of the emotional abuse and physical and sexual threats she received from her bullies and how this led to her becoming very sick with a persistent stress cough, insomnia, undernourishment, allergic skin reactions, a ripped lower intestine, and eventually the contemplation of suicide.

However, DiNatale explained that with caring parents, a transfer to a new school, a helpful faculty, and faith she was able in time to begin her recovery.

As DiNatale related her devastating experience with bullying to the BCHS audience, she made her message abundantly clear:

- No one has the right to bully anyone
- Bullying is against the law

- Bullying is a choice
- Bad things happen when bullying occurs
- The consequences of bullying are very serious (for the victim and the bully)
- Suicide is not an option

The students at Bryan County High School appeared to sincerely appreciate her message and were very interested in learning more about the correct way to deal with bullying.

DiNatale shared anti-bullying websites and informational pamphlets with the students and faculty members in addition to sharing her inspirational story.

Student reaction to the program was largely positive. Amber Cobb commented that the anti-bullying assembly was a good idea and might help to prevent bullying in the future. Elise Hartman, a BCHS freshman, said, "Victoria's story was really heartwarming, and I learned quite a bit from the whole thing."

When asked about his impression of the assembly, Andrew Ferreira stated that he thought the assembly was very helpful and that it helped to make people aware of the problem so that they could really address it.

Eleventh grader Juan Calvillo felt that the assembly was a really great idea but the message would not be totally accepted by everyone.

After the assembly concluded, Dawn Hadley, principal of Bryan County High School, declared, "It is my sincere hope that Victoria's personal story will inspire us all to embrace our differences and to remind us of our responsibility to treat others as we wish to be treated."

## **"Young Woman Shares Story About Being Bullied"**

*Published on October 8, 2010 by Brooke Kelly on WTOC's Website*

Direct Link: <http://www.wtoc.com/Global/story.asp?S=13293715>

SAVANNAH, GA (WTOC) - Children deal with bullying almost every day and one young woman is hoping to make a difference in students' lives by sharing her incredible story.

Back in 2005 WTOC introduced a young middle school student who told us about the constant attacks against her at Oglethorpe Charter Academy in Savannah. This young woman wants to let everyone know who she is, and share her story hoping to send a strong message to other students.

All eyes were on 19-year-old Victoria DiNatale as she stood up for the first time in front of hundreds of students at Gould Elementary School to talk to them about what it was like being bullied all through middle school even into high school.

"Not only did they make fun of my clothes and the way I walked and the way I talked but they made fun of my naturally curly hair-what's wrong with my hair?" said DiNatale.

DiNatale says she was the target of constant badgering which lead to serious medical problems.

"I was first diagnosed with a stress cough. That is when you cough and cough and you can't stop. That was my body's defense mechanism against the vicious bullying I was facing at school,"said DiNatale.

It's a story that's no doubt tough for DiNatale to talk about in public five years ago she shared her story, in shadow, with WTOC's Dawn Baker. DiNatale was just 12-years-old, scared and just wanted the bullying to stop.

"It was a very traumatic time for me and I walked the hallways alone it was a very sad time and all I wanted were friends and I didn't have friends because these students were spreading vicious lies and rumors about me," said DiNatale.

DiNatale says she wants students who are victims of bullying to know there is always someone out there to help.

And tell those who are doing the bullying just how hurtful their actions really can be.

"You see countless stories of kids taking their own lives because of the bullying they faced at school," said DiNatale.

These elementary school students like DreQuan Chisholm seemed to get the message, and really enjoyed hearing DiNatale's story.

"It's really important not to bully it's a really bad thing to do,"said Chisholm.

Bad thing to do with serious consequences.

DiNatale says she hopes by speaking to elementary school students she can stop bullying now before it gets out of hand.

"It's not something anyone wants to remember but it's necessary for me to come forward with this story in order to help other children and if I can help just one person it will be worth my time,"said DiNatale.

DiNatale says she plans to visit other schools in the area and plans to be a motivational speaker and visit schools across the country.

## **“Savannah Woman Sharing Story of Bullying”**

*Published on October 4, 2010 by Jan Scutch in The Savannah Morning News*

Direct Link: <http://savannahnow.com/news/2010-10-05/savannah-woman-sharing-story-bullying#.UTU80KDPzC1>

Victoria DiNatale is all smiles these days.

But her middle and high school experiences left her physically ill from stress at the hands of a group of bullying classmates "because I was happy. I was bubbly," DiNatale recalled recently.

She, like a lot of victims of abuse and intimidation, relied on her faith and her fellow members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to cope.

DiNatale is one of the featured speakers for the 2010 Faith Leaders Seminar Oct. 14.

The session will focus on resources to "Curb Youth Violence."

Chatham County District Attorney Larry Chisolm and his Victim-Witness Assistance Program, along with the Savannah-Chatham Family Violence Council, sponsor the program to bring the faith community to the table to build partnerships to provide support for crime victims.

Now in its 20th year, the event is directed at educating clergy on how to better respond to crime victims, District Attorney spokeswoman Alicia Johnson said.

DiNatale, now a freshman at Armstrong Atlantic State University, will offer a simple message.

"I'm going to tell them we all can agree on one thing - We all can be kinder than necessary."

It was a lesson learned hard.

DiNatale, then a 12-year-old sixth-grader, said her classmates felt threatened by her and began bullying her early on.

"They thought I would take their friends," she said. "Many students were laughing at me, mocking me."

The handful grew into a larger group whose actions caused a stress cough, then trips to the emergency room at Memorial University Medical Center, she said.

One classmate told her twin brother, Joseph, to tell "Victoria, I hope she's dead," DiNatale said.

The abuse led her parents to move her to Southwest Middle School, which she described as "a very pleasant experience."

After middle school, DiNatale found several of her former classmates waiting for her in high school and the bullying resumed, she said.

"It was just the same thing," she recalled.

She transferred to Jenkins High School for her junior and senior years and did quite well, graduating in June seventh in a class of 348.

Through the entire ordeal, she found Bishop Mark Welch and members of her Latter-day Saints Montgomery Crossroad congregation at her side.

From visits to flowers, baked goods and prayer, those folk - and her family - got her through.

"I felt their prayers," DiNatale said. "I was healed by my faith in God."

Now she wants to take her message against bullying to school-aged children and has met with a group of public school principals to offer her input.

She had addressed teachers at Gould Elementary School and will talk to fourth- and fifth-graders there Friday.

Looking back, she concedes her tormentors were not "very kind to me."

"But you know, I don't hate them," she said. "It was not OK what they did, but we are here to learn and grow."

"To become mean and bitter like them would be contrary to my faith."

## Testimonials

"I must declare Victoria DiNatale as one of the most effective, forthright, and vibrant speakers that I've ever encountered. She's a motivational powerhouse, and I would recommend her to any organization that is endeavoring to meet the challenge of bullying head-on."

*-Melissa Perkins, Bryan County High School, Pembroke, GA*

"Ms. DiNatale's presentation is powerful. I have never seen the students so attentive, so affected by a speaker. The most powerful endorsement for Ms. DiNatale came from a young lady who has been physically abused. She told me that Ms. DiNatale's story inspired her and gave her hope because she now understood that she did not have to be a victim for the rest of her life. And that is priceless."

*-Karen Thomas, Ebenezer Middle School, Rincon, Georgia*

"Victoria hooked the students with popular music and real life scenarios. When she told her personal account of being bullied, the students were on the edge of their seats...I highly recommend Victoria. She has remarkable stage presence and is truly professional."

*-Gaby Wheatley, Hilton Head Island Middle School, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina*

"Today, 3 days AFTER your presentation, I walked around the cafeteria while our 6<sup>th</sup> graders were eating lunch. I asked tables of students how they liked the assembly, and without fail, EVERY table said they loved it and wanted you to come back. ☺ I have also talked to several parents who said their child came home the day of the assembly and told them all about you and your story. Some parents said they used it as a "teachable moment."

*-Sharon McMillian, Hilton Head Island Middle School, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina*

"Victoria's presentation caught and held the attention of our students; this was no small feat considering that the audience was comprised of teenagers. Also, Victoria customized her presentation to fit our school's needs and time schedule. Her decidedly effectual approach of combining her own poignant personal history and the

hard cold facts of the consequences of bullying delivered a message that was simultaneously moving and informative. Victoria's dynamic speaking style and sheer force of personality [sic] ensured that her anti-bullying message was received by our students."

*-Melissa Perkins, Bryan County High School, Pembroke, Georgia*

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Q:** What does a "Standing Victorious" Presentation consist of?

**A:** Each "Standing Victorious" Presentation is custom-tailored to reach a specific student, educator, parent, administrator, faith leader, or community member audience. The bulk of each presentation consists of Victoria's real-life account of merciless bullying and the horrific illnesses she developed as a result of the harassment.

**Q:** How long does a "Standing Victorious" Presentation Last?

**A:** Each "Standing Victorious" Presentation lasts approximately 45-50 minutes followed by a 15-minute Q&A session.

**Q:** What is the cost of a "Standing Victorious" presentation?

**A:** Speaker's fees vary upon venue and location. To keep costs down for each group, Victoria works with a client on a one-to-one basis.

## Contact Information

*How do I contact Victoria about sharing her "Standing Victorious" message with my group?*

Victoria DiNatale, Anti-Bullying Motivational Speaker  
Telephone: (912) 695-2813  
Email: [Victoria.dinatale@yahoo.com](mailto:Victoria.dinatale@yahoo.com)  
Website: <http://www.standingvictorious.com>

## Social Media

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/standingvictorious>  
Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/standvictorious>  
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/standingvictorious>

