



## No Ginger Day relation to school fight

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Reporter

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[http://www.bigbeargrizzly.net/art/images/topologo\\_winter.jpg](http://www.bigbeargrizzly.net/art/images/topologo_winter.jpg)

Kick a Ginger Day dominated TV newscasts Nov. 23 and 24 when it was learned that red-haired students were physically assaulted Nov. 20 in Calabasas, Calif. One mother in Big Bear Lake thought her son might have been a Ginger Day victim as well.

The Grizzly learned that a seventh-grader was involved in a fight at Big Bear Middle School on Nov. 20. The boy was taken to Bear Valley Community Hospital and the Big Bear Sheriff's Station notified. A report was taken by Deputy Helen Brunson, with investigation to follow.

Kick a Ginger Day was spawned from the animated TV show "South Park" in 2005. Ginger is a slang term for people with red hair. The idea spread across Facebook pages and eventually made its way into schools. The idea went viral and is being blamed for the assaults in Calabasas. But it doesn't appear the color of a student's hair had anything to do with the altercation at Big Bear Middle School.

The kids involved had no idea what Kick a Ginger Day was, said Julie Chamberlin, Big Bear Middle School principal. And there is absolutely no evidence the fight was related to the Ginger issue, she said.

Sgt. Steve Kruger of the Big Bear Sheriff's Station confirmed Chamberlin's statements. He said there was only one report of a school fight Nov. 20, and the comments made among the students involved were not related to red hair.

None of the kids involved had any past problems, Chamberlin and Kruger said.

Chamberlin said she became aware of the fight at the end of the school day when the physical education teacher brought the students into the office. The fight was mutual, Chamberlin said. And consequences were equal, she added.

The mother of the boy who went to the hospital and her son met with Chamberlin on Nov. 23. The principal called in Ray Uhl, the probation officer assigned to the schools. She said until the mother told her, Chamberlin wasn't aware of Kick a Ginger Day, but did do research. She stands by her claim that the fight didn't involve the student's hair color.

The middle school, as do all schools in the Bear Valley Unified School District, has a zero tolerance policy regarding violence and fighting, Chamberlin said. There is a discipline matrix the school follows, which doles out consequences equally to all students involved in violating school rules. If a student is involved in an incident, administrators check to see if the student has been in trouble previously and consequences are administered accordingly, Chamberlin said.

Additionally, the **Peace Builders** program that was instituted in the local elementary schools is coming to the middle school. The Lighthouse Project sponsors **Peace Builders** and Soroptimist International of Big Bear Valley joined with Lighthouse to pay for training for all Big Bear Middle School staff. The training takes place Dec. 18.

School staff uses a recognition and reward program to acknowledge good behavior and Chamberlin is hoping **Peace Builders** will provide more structure. It will also teach the students more strategies for handling tough issues. There is a huge growth in maturity between seventh and eighth grade, Chamberlin said. In seventh grade students are reacting first, thinking second. They grow out of that as they get a little older.

Chamberlin said she thinks the students involved in the Nov. 20 fight let something get out of hand before thinking about the end result. They may have seen red, but it had nothing to do with hair color.