## BREAKING

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minute of school." Kristen said. "Brooklyn just adores all of her teachers.'

They believe the bullying began after Brooklyn was elected school president last fall.

Earlier in the school year, Brooklyn's face was superimposed over nude photos and distributed. "It's not her," Kristen said. Within the past year, she had placed parental controls on her daughter's smartphone to monitor profanity, any words of suicidal tendencies, nudity, etc. "There has been none of that."

Brooklyn was "absolutely mortified, devastated," Kristen said.

The nudes resurfaced again this week, along with the desecrations of Brooklyn's face.

In early February, they had an intruder in their home. "The cops came before the person was able to get into her bedroom," Kristen said.

Awoken by the family dogs barking wildly, Brooklyn heard a young man's voice say "shut up" to the dogs. He knocked on her bedroom door as she hid in her closet.

"Right as he was knocking, thank God, my mom and a neighbor came into the house," Kristen said.

The Partlows immediately installed a state-of-the-art security system. One of the Partlows has a permit to carry, and they let their dogs remain untethered.

"I was worried about her safety because I had a terrible feeling about what this was leading up to, and it did," Kristen said.

The razor blade incident occurred a couple weeks later. Brooklyn reported that two boys came up to her during a free period and cut her leg. She went to the nurse's office, who didn't ask what happened, then went back to class. Kristen learned of the cut when it became infected. The Partlows

#### **Steps families can take** to help a child who is bullied

According to the Minnesota Department of Education, parents and family members can help prevent bullying and cyberbullying in a number of ways, mostly by being engaged, attentive and loving

► The first step should always be to contact the teacher, principal or counselor at the school with your concerns. If the problem is not addressed, contact a district administrator, the superintendent or a school board member.

► Take your child to a pediatrician or family doctor, if the child

reports injury.

- shows signs of not wanting to attend school crying excessively, extreme drop in grades or has decided to not go to the bathroom during the school day

has trouble sleeping, an extreme change in eating habits or stops socializing with friends and peers. A doctor may recommend mental health services, or may be able to recommend how to talk about the problem with people at the school. If your child is experiencing cyberbullying, take a screenshot of the harmful posts or interactions and consider taking down personal electronic media sites and have your child take a break from social applications for a few weeks. For more suggestions on how to respond to cyberbullying, go to Cyberbullying Research

Center or StopBullying.gov. ▶ Recognize the warning signs that your child is involved in bullying. They could be the target of

told the boys to "knock it the hell off," after an entire year of bullying from them and repeatedly telling them to "stop." The police officer

asked Brooklyn if the razor possibly came from a pencil sharpener. Brooklyn said it was possible. Later, after seeing a classic razor, she identified that as the weapon.

Either way, it's a moot point, Kristen said. "It was still used as a deadly weapon. In Minnesota, the law is that if you even use as much as your fist as an intimidation tactic, even that is a criminal act."

It is a felony to assault someone with a deadly weapon.

A month later, the Hubbard County attorney told them that charges were dropped, Kristen recounted, adding that she would have been okay with just apologies and the bullying ending, if the boys had sincerely been sorry "instead of laughing about."

Kristen was surprised when, on Monday, Valley News Live reported, "The county attorney says no charges have been made yet, but that doesn't mean there won't be in the future." When contacted by the Enterprise county attorney Jonathan Frieden said, "I am unable to disclose any information from the investigation due to its

bullying, the one engaging in bullying behavior or witnessing bullying. Talk to your child if they display any sort of behavioral or emotional changes. Often, kids won't ask for help, so it is important to know what to look for. If your child is at immediate risk of harming himself or others, get help right away.

NEWS

► Learn what bullying is and what it is not. Many behaviors that look like bullying may be just as serious, but may require different response strategies. Opening lines of communication before your child is involved in bullying will make it easier for them to tell you when something happens. It is also important to work with a school to help prevent bullying before it starts Encourage your child to keep a diary about the highs and lows they experience each day. This can help keep track of what is going well and what is not going well and may serve as a measure of frequency or infrequency of harm.

 Repeat family expectations for honesty, empathy, responsibility and kindness. If you have worked with your child and your school and need additional help, contact the School Safety Technical Assistance Center at 651-582-8364

#### When a child as maltreated by a school employee

If you are concerned that a school staff person's behavior or negligence is endangering a child, call the Student Maltreatment Program, Division of Compliance and Assistance at 651-582-8546. This division oversees implementation of the Maltreatment of Minor's Act.

> for the school. "Even though I have so many pieces of correspondence that I had sent to them over the course of the year, they said I hadn't written them a formal complaint," she said. "I had spoken with them. I have many things I have written to them, all being so respectful."

not yet initiated the homeschooling process. Brooklyn has not returned to Century Middle School for about three weeks. They inquired if Brooklyn could attend Nevis School, but was told it was too late in the school year.

devastated," Kristen said, adding she is an A or B

concerned for the many,

# A Snapshot on **Bullying in America**



Learn more about bullying and prevention at www.StopBullying.gov \*Bullying may be a contributor to suicide. To learn more or get help: suicidepreventionlifeline.org or 1-800-273-8255

confidential nature. I can say, generally, that when my office does not make a decision to criminally charge, an element or elements of the offense(s) to be proven beyond a light, my office can and does review files on the

Kristen said they have

"Brooklyn has lost her ability to go to school, and I just feel student and has always excelled academically.

"I am sorry that so many others go through similar situations. I'm absolutely reeling," Kristen said. "When I began recognizing the severity of this and the lack of any concern, really as a matter of fact, blaming the victim, that the school continuously did — I started to become really, really

filed a police report.

Kristen said a school official told the police that Brooklyn "sent mean messages" to the boys prior to the incident. Kristen said she was fully aware that Brooklyn is encouraged to file a report that's available from the principal, building supervisor or district office. Verbal reports are also accepted. Kristen is currently filling out paperwork

are missing or unable

reasonable doubt. In

information comes to

decision of charges. But

referring to no charges

**Students without** 

Park Rapids School

bullying as "intimidating,

District policy defines

threatening, abusive

is a behavior pattern

or hurtful conduct." It

that either "involves an

imbalance of power" or

"significantly affects

a student's ability to

participate in school,

classes or events. The fact

There must be substantial

that someone is simply

offended is insufficient

to meet this standard.

interference with the

student's educational

opportunities or rights."

According to school

who believes he or she

has been the victim of

harassment or violence

policy, any person

have been filed.'

a voice

again, in the case you are

the event additional

many students who are not with a voice."

Citing the number of impoverished youth attending Park Rapids Schools, Kristen asked, "Who speaks out for them?"

ucation, press releases, new data show decline in school based bullying," U.S. Depa https://www.ed.aov/news/press-releases/new-data-show-decline-school-based bully Dos Operations Tools Dependent Research Center, Cybertullying Facts, "Cybertullying Research Center, accessed August 2017, http://cyberbullying.org/facts. "SAMH-SR: Bullying and Suicids," Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, accessed August 2017, https://www.camhas.gov/suicids/envention/bullying, "StopBullying, gov, Who Is At Flack, Effects," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, accessed August 2017, https://www.camhas.gov/suicids/envention/bullying, accessed Human Services, accessed Human Services, accessed Human Services, accessed Huma

#### stopbullying.gov

### SISTERS

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liar and a hazard to other children. A faculty member offered to find her another school so (he or she) does not have to deal with myself, my husband or my child anymore."

During the 2017-18 school year, both Kinsey and Kamryn began suffering from anxiety attacks. Kamryn attempted suicide multiple times, and recently completed six months of treatment away from home for posttraumatic stress disorder.

"The attitude change in the kids was my first trigger," said Hanna. "They "We ended up pulling I made, that I have fam-were starting to argue her so she could grad-with the parents. They uate," said Hanna. They worth it." were starting to not want signed up their daughter to do homework, arguing because they didn't want to go to school. They homeschooling curricu-continuously had stomach lum based in St. Paul. aches, headaches. They completely shut down. They would refuse to do their homework. I'm like, that is not them. So, and Bs," Hanna added. what's going on?"

it.

#### **Threats on Kinsey**

Kinsey was in second grade when the family settled in Park Rapids. She recalls having trouble **Kamryn's struggle** fitting in by third grade. During her middle school years, Kinsey said, "I got into the wrong crowd" – but one that made her feel cool.

high school, she said. On the parents noticed the last day of her fresh- threats. "Threats of killman year, another student ing, throwing under a bus, threatened on Snapchat to from other students," said beat her up if she didn't Hanna. "That's when it quit talking to a certain started getting really friend, and warned, "if severe. We noticed that you're lucky, you'll live."

The family got a harassment restraining order I just got her back. Six names. Kamryn record-(HRO) against the other months gone in rehabilgirl — but "the school itation, residential treatdid absolutely nothing to ment.' keep the two separated, Hanna said.

Meanwhile, Kinsey's grades plunged. Previousstarted failing classes.

administrators were not open to helping Kinsey make up the credits.

for Minnesota Connections Academy, an online when she started to have

would come home and hard last summer and throughout her senior year to graduate on time.

Things are better now, Little by little, start- Kinsey said, with only a ing with Kinsey, the girls few days of course work. One boy tried inapprostarted to open up about to complete for her diploma and a job as a certified her a chance to get out of the house. "I love my job," she said.

Meanwhile, the Markerts noticed Kamryn becoming distant and withdrawn.

of their children's phones

Things got tougher in and social media accounts, she was cutting...She went boy continued to folthrough suicide attempts.

> she made multiple, serious attempts to die.

"I felt like I didn't ly an A and B student, she need to live," she said. "Nobody liked me. I felt mer school. "Just think-Hanna said school like I wasn't worth it, that there wasn't anything to live for. But then I realized, after every attempt if I'm with people." ily, and that my family is

started in seventh grade, panic attacks in school, which staff members mis-The senior worked extra took for seizures. Afterward, students taunted Kamryn by pretending to have seizures or panic "She's back up to all As attacks. When she ignored them, their tactics became physical.

Students shoved her. priately touching her, "so I beat him up with nursing assistant giving the baby-doll," she said, referring to a toy she had borrowed from Kendyl for a class project. "I was like, 'I'm standing up for the back of my head.' myself. I am done with this junk.'"

Another day, Kamryn a rock on the playground, said, the same boy put her being shoved into the perin a choke hold. In return, son ahead of her in line, During a routine check she gave him a black eye. and seeing her friends When school staff heard harassed by her antago-

to in-school suspension, worse," she said. where she got in trouble again for using her phone to tell her mom about it.

In spite of staff assurwould be kept apart, the low Kamryn and call her ed one incident on her phone but, Hanna said, when shown the evidence, feeling unwell. Kamryn confirmed that school staff only dingphone again.

To this day, Kamryn refuses to go near her foring about it kind of scares me," she said, "but I know I am safe where I am, and

taught her better coping their house down. skills than self-harm, Kamryn said the trouble and she discovered that she isn't "the only one in the world that has these issues."

Volunteering a word of wisdom, Kamryn said, "Stay strong. You can get through it.'

#### Kendyl's story

Last fall, the only member of the Markert family going to the public school was Kendyl.

"I was on the mon-keybars," she said, when another student "pushed me and made me fall off, and made me hit my head, and I had a big lump on

Kendyl also recalled being hit in the face with

Hanna said she and Jason noticed: "Friday hits; she's all excited, happy she's home. But ances that the students then, on Sundays, she's yelling at us, arguing with us. She doesn't want to go to bed. She's crying, just being a belligerent child." One day, school staff

called and said Kendyl was

"I was crying in class ed Kamryn for using her and didn't tell the teacher or anybody," said Kendyl. "I just wanted to go home.'

Back at home, Hanna asked Kendyl what was bothering her, and learned that other fourth graders

Hanna said she always we're done."

about it, they sent Kamryn nists. "It just began to get instructed her children to tell an adult if something happens, but Kendyl said she didn't trust her teachers "because they won't do anything about it."

In January, Kendyl and some other students were walking to class when someone tripped Kendyl. Another student pushed her and she ran into a door, getting a bump on the head and bending her glasses.

Because she incorrectly said she was pushed into a wall, school staff concluded that Kendyl was lying though, Hanna said, other students admitted Kendyl was tripped and pushed.

"Doesn't matter to me had threatened to harm what it was, it shouldn't Kamryn said treatment the family dog and burn have happened," said Hanna. "So, I said no,

