

# Paralympian teen teams up with CN for anti-bullying campaign in Africa

15-year-old Paralympian, Ntando Mahlangu, is teaming up with Cartoon Network (CN) to launch the 2017 anti-bullying campaign, CN Buddy Network in Africa which aims to raise awareness around bullying, empowering children of Africa to take positive action against discrimination and bullying, on and offline. The initiative encourages children and young people to *Be a Buddy, Not a Bully*.



## Following in the steps of Wayde van Niekerk

Cartoon Network's CN Buddy Network is a global anti-bullying campaign that started with Cartoon Network US and was then adopted by the EMEA region. CN Buddy Network was launched in Africa in 2016 in partnership with gold Olympic medalist and world record holder, Wayde van Niekerk.

Taking over the reins as Africa's CN Buddy Network ambassador, Mahlangu will appear in an on-air campaign on Cartoon Network, premiering on 23 June, which will also include an original series of animated shorts voiced by children who articulate positive messages around friendship, school and appreciating differences whether it is on the playground, sports field, or even online.

"What an honour to follow in the footsteps of Wayde van Niekerk, CN Buddy Network's brand ambassador for 2016. Wayde is an amazing athlete and I aspire to be like him one day. To learn that he was once bullied, was an opportunity for me to be brave and speak out about my experience in order to raise awareness around discrimination regarding disabilities," says Ntando Mahlangu.

"I am proud of who I am and what I have accomplished and I hope my bully can see me now. I was so excited when Cartoon Network approached me, I appreciate having the opportunity to inspire other kids like me, to be proud of who they are. I know what it feels like to be bullied, it's not cool. If you are being bullied, speak up so that together, we can beat the bully."

## Collaborating to assist bullied children

As part of the initiative, children's TV channel Cartoon Network, available across Africa, will be collaborating with Childline and SaveTNet Cyber Safety, two non-profit organisations that will work collectively to assist children exposed to all forms of violence and create a culture of children's rights in Africa. These leading platforms already provide immediate advice and support for children and young people in South Africa who are subjected to any form of bullying and violence. Together, Cartoon Network, Childline, and SaveTNet will spread the CN Buddy Network anti-bullying message, providing professionals and children with tips and advice on how to tackle the topic.

Childline South Africa National Executive Officer, Dumisile Nala says, "Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that impacts adversely on school climates and this can have a devastating impact on young people. It can affect their confidence, their school work, leave them feeling isolated and friendless, and even make them feel that life is not worth living. That's why Childline is delighted to partner with Cartoon Network again to reach out so that the kids do not have to

suffer in silence!”

“Sadly, many young people commit suicide because of cyber bullying and SaveTNet aims to save lives by creating awareness for responsible digital engagement. Cyber bullying has a long lasting effect and we encourage viewers to consider the consequences of what they share via digital platforms,” says SaveTNet Cyber Safety Chief Executive Officer, Rianette Leibowitz. “Partners, such as Cartoon Network, enable us to share the cyber safety message with a wider audience to ensure people know that there are help and support available and that they are not alone.”

## Online support tools

Another great initiative of the campaign is the dedicated online platform that children who are affected by bullying – whether directly or indirectly – can immediately access professional advice and relevant tips through videos and support tools online from the 23 June 2017 at [Cartoon Network Buddy Network](#). The site aims to inform children about bullying and what they can do to prevent it in a way that is relevant to them, empower children to speak up against bullying and to be aware of their own actions, while providing contact details for Childline and SaveTNet for immediate help, support and relief.

Pierre Branco, VP and managing director of Turner Africa concludes by saying: “Bullying is a real and, sadly, growing issue for our viewers and it concerns us knowing that most of our children across Africa are affected daily by bullying in person and/or online. It is hugely important for us to address this issue in a way that is positive, supportive and relevant. This year’s series of bespoke *Be a Buddy, Not a Bully* animations makes use of real thoughts and commentary from kids, which we hope will be really powerful and engaging for our viewers, encouraging them to stand up and speak out against bullying.”

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