



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on June 25, 2012

Bus Monitor Bullied by Students Receives Astounding Payback Via Viral YouTube Video

A viral YouTube video (watch at end of article) showing a 68-year-old bus monitor in New York being verbally abused by students on the bus has resulted in a touching response by tens of thousands of well-wishers. The [ten-minute video](#) shows Karen Klein, a grandmother of eight who rides along on a bus serving Greece Central School District near Rochester, N.Y., being bullied and berated by a group of foul-mouthed students on the bus.

Although the student who shot the video using his cell phone apparently intended to continue the harassment by posting it to the Internet, the result was far different. According to [Fox News](#), once the video caught on — making its way to Facebook, Twitter, and hundreds of news reports — individuals outraged by the behavior of the kids began sending donations to Klein. What started out as an effort by one man to raise a few thousand dollars to send Klein on a much-deserved vacation has turned into a fund of more than \$600,000 that Klein will be able to use for retirement. Fox News reported that Klein has worked as both a driver and monitor for the bus company for more than 20 years.

The [New York Daily News](#) reported that as of June 23, the 10-minute video had received nearly five million views, and over 28,000 sympathetic viewers had sent in donations via the [IndieGogo](#) fundraising website where Max Sidorov, a 25-year-old man from Toronto, had launched the campaign on Klein's behalf.

"It was just sickening to see, it was disgusting what these kids were doing," said Sidorov of the video. "I felt very, very bad for Karen. I know how tormenting it can feel to be bullied. The best thing I decided to do was to send her on a vacation away from there."

Sidorov said he was astounded at the outpouring of emotional and financial support for the woman, which has far exceeded his expectations. "I'm shocked that people are so kind and so generous to take this to such heights," Sidorov told Fox News. "I'm really proud of a lot of people and it warms my heart they're willing to support this cause."

Southwest Airlines responded to the attack and call for donations by offering Klein a trip to Disneyland with nine guests. "We are so happy the nation has rallied around Karen, but also deeply saddened that it happened because of such a horrifying video," Southwest spokesman Brooks Thomas told Fox via an e-mail. "We didn't do it for the coverage.... It was just the right thing to do."

The disturbing video shows the students hurling aggressive insults and personal affronts at Klein, calling her a "fat a**" and denigrating her when she begins to cry as a result of their attack. Nonetheless, she told the local police department that she did not want to file charges against the students. "Obviously we are upset with what we saw in the video, both as parents and police officers," Capt. Chatterton of the Greece, New York police department told news reporters. "But at this time, she has decided she does not want to press criminal charges." Klein said that all she wants is for the students to learn their lesson from the incident. "I want them to make sure that they never do this again, to anybody," she said.

School officials said that they would deal with the students to the full extent the law allows. "Certainly the behavior of the students on the video is a clear violation of our district's code of conduct and will not be tolerated," Deborah Hoeft, assistant superintendent for student services with the Greece school



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district, told the [New York Times](#). “Disciplinary action to the fullest extent appropriate under New York education law will be taken against all involved.”

However, Klein was less than convinced at the written apologies offered by two of the boys in the case. One of the students, identified as Josh, wrote that he was “so sorry for the way I treated you. When I saw the video I was disgusted and could not believe I did that.” But Klein indicated that the boy’s past behavior was at odds with his sudden remorse. “Even if he wasn’t picking on me, it was something else,” Klein told [CNN’s Anderson Cooper](#). “So I just don’t think I would believe anything Josh had to say.”

Wesley, another of the students, wrote that “I wish I had never done those things. If that had happened to someone in my family, like my mother or grandmother, I would be really mad at the people who did that to them.” But Klein said neither of the students had apologized to her in person, and was doubtful that any of the offending students would come clean to her face.

CBS News reported that after the video went viral the father of one of the boys came to apologize to Klein, assuring her that his son would be disciplined. “There’s no excuse,” CBS quoted him as saying. “And we’re going to get to the bottom of that. But it really broke my heart and I shed a lot of tears thinking about that whole thing and I just want you to know that my family, all of us, are deeply saddened by this whole thing and we’re going to get it right.”

Apparently, some who have seen the video have tried to help teach the students involved a lesson. According to Greece’s police chief, the boys and their families have received some serious threats. “We have custody of one of their cellphones, and he had over 1,000 missed calls and 1,000 text messages threatening him,” the police official recounted.

Meanwhile, Klein told the [Associated Press](#) that she was overwhelmed by the support she has received from around the world. “I appreciate everything so much,” she said. “It’s just hard to believe strangers, people I never talked to, [have] never seen, will send me a message saying, ‘We love you, we think you’re a great person.’”

Klein initially had no intention of quitting her job as bus monitor, which pays around \$15,000 a year, But when a few thousand dollars in donations turned into several hundred thousand, Klein began to plan for retirement. “I don’t think she’s going to go back. I think she is pretty much done,” Klein’s daughter told reporters.

Photo at top: In this video image, bus monitor Karen Klein speaks during an interview, June 21, 2012, in Greece, N.Y.: AP Images



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