

**Quad Cities COMMUNITY READ of Young People's Book
on Tolerance and Anti-Bullying
James Howe's new book *Totally Joe***

James Howe, award-winning author of *The Misfits*, will be in Davenport on February 22nd as part of a "Making Our Schools Safe for GLBT Students" event at Davenport West High School at 7 PM. We are promoting a Community Read of his new book *Totally Joe* and will have a book discussion with author on February 22 at the West High Library.

The Misfits was highly acclaimed when it came out. From a review by Cherri Jones in *Children's Literature*:

"When seventh-grader Addie decides to start a third party at school to prove that principles can win over popularity, she enlists the help of her friends Bobby, Joe and Skeezie. The foursome have dubbed themselves the "Gang of Five" (yes, five) because "Kids who get called the worst names oftentimes find each other." After the platform of fighting racial injustice is not accepted by the school's administrators, the group decides to focus on eradicating name-calling. When their black presidential candidate drops out because he feels this is not his issue, the Gang decides to run for election themselves, prompted by the realization that between the four of them they've been called 72 names over the years. Narrated in the witty, beyond-12 voice of Bobby, the "fat kid," and interspersed with dialogue from the group's many meetings at the Candy Kitchen, this probes a number of issues middle schoolers face--first love, peer acceptance, understanding adults around them, losing a parent and standing up to ideals. There is no perfect ending here, but much laughter and a lot of hope."

The Misfits was responsible for launching a very successful national project that promotes a **No Name-Calling Week** in schools each winter. For more information about this event, go the website www.nonamecallingweek.org. We will be promoting a **No Name-Calling Week** in local schools the week of **February 20th**.

Now James Howe has written a sequel to *The Misfits* titled *Totally Joe*, about the gay character in the first book. From **Publisher's Weekly Review**:

"Delivering trenchant messages about tolerance, self-knowledge and the vacuity of teenage popularity, Howe's ultimately uplifting tale marks the welcome return of the Gang of Five (though there are really only four), introduced in The Misfits. The novel's innovative format reveals the 'alphabiography' of 13-year-old Joe Bunch, the gay member of the seventh-grade misfits. In this alphabetical survey, assigned by his English teacher, he shares his heartfelt, snappy reflections. For 'A is for Addie,' he recalls his earlier years, when he liked to dress up and play with Barbie dolls (a pastime that bonded him to Addie, also from the Gang of Five). He confesses that in fifth grade he wanted to be a 'guy-guy' so badly that he asked his friend to teach him how ('Oh. My. God. It was pathetic'). Joe has a crush on 'totally cool, smart' Colin (the 'C' entry), a jock who returns his affection but is not ready to go public with their relationship and eventually calls it off. Encouraged by his insightful aunt, Joe takes a major leap when he comes out to his supportive family. Howe deals with weighty issues, but uses Joe's affable personality to interject ample humor, and the hero ends each segment with a 'Life Lesson,' many presenting principles appropriate to any kid (e.g., 'Just be who you are, okay?'). This narrator is anything but an average Joe: he's candid, memorable and – though he might find this hard to believe – totally charismatic. Ages 10-14." Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)

We are encouraging young people and parents to read and discuss this book together and to attend the event on February 22 at West High. For more information, contact Cathy Bolkcom at 563-289-4155 or Progressive Action at 563- 676-7580 or email cbarts4@aol.com or call Brad Clarke with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at (515) 243-1221.