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CALIFORNIA

TRAILBLAZERS

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CARRIE LEROY

GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER



PIONEER SPIRIT Carrie LeRoy looked at the case of Audrie Pott not only as a lawyer but as a mother. The 15-year-old California girl died by suicide in 2012, eight days after three boys sexually assaulted her at a party and distributed nude photos of her. She never reported the assault to an adult. Moved by the case, LeRoy, a technology transaction attorney, created a pro bono program called Cyber Dignity, which empowers young people to navigate digital invasions of privacy and bullying. LeRoy had helped clients dealing with misconduct on their digital platforms, and already knew that “there were some pretty awful things happening, with some very tragic, unfortunate consequences.”

TRAILS BLAZED LeRoy’s program sends attorneys into schools, where they talk with teenagers about their rights and responsibilities in the digital age. “We approach it through the lens of your legal obligation.” For instance, while victims of sexual assault or the distribution of nude pictures are not to blame, bystanders have a responsibility “to notify somebody because it really, truly could be, as in the case of Audrie Pott, a question of life or death.”

FUTURE EXPLORATIONS LeRoy offers the program in California as a pro bono opportunity for in-house counsel and for law firms, regardless of their practice area. She’s received inquiries about how to set up similar programs in New York, Florida and Virginia and hopes to take it national. “We would love to see this program go viral. We’d like for it to go to every state and maybe even, one day, international, because the problems that we cover are not limited to any specific jurisdiction. These are real problems that young people have wherever they are as long as they have access to the internet or a cell phone.”