



ANDVSA

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& Sexual Assault

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July 24, 2017

Mollie J. Rosier, MPH
Child and Adolescent Health Unit Manager
State of Alaska, Division of Public Health
Section of Women's, Children's and Family Health
3601 C Street, Suite 322, Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mollie,

Attached you will find our final report for the Teen Pregnancy and Violence Prevention grant for state fiscal year 2017.

ANDVSA so appreciates the partnership with the Child and Adolescent Unit. As someone who is new to this position, I am particularly grateful to get to work with you and your team, and appreciate the time you have taken to help me get up to speed.

The Teen Pregnancy and Violence Prevention grant funds facilitate such good work across the state. These funds empower communities, led by their youth, to take steps towards health and wellness on their own terms, in ways that make the most sense for their unique context and populations. The chance to support youth and communities in finding their own solutions is incredibly valuable, and not something that you see every day.

Thank you again for another year of successful partnership.

Sincerely,



Rachel Romberg

CC: Carmen Lowry
Jenny Baker

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July 10, 2017

The Department of Health and Social Services Teen Pregnancy and Violence Prevention Grant Report

During State Fiscal Year 2017, the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) funded 11 youth-led projects in communities across the state through the Stand Up Speak up Alaska (SUSU) mini-grants. The Teen Pregnancy and Violence Prevention grant from the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Section of Women’s, Children’s and Family Health and Council On Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault enabled ANDVSA to provide funding for SUSU mini grant projects in Cordova, Dillingham, Homer, Juneau, Kiana, Mountain Village, Metlakatla, Nenana, Palmer, Sitka and Valdez.

The SUSU Alaska projects were created and executed by youth with the support of partnering organizations. Each project incorporated two or more of the following *Six Steps for Healthy Relationships* identified in the SUSU Alaska campaign:

- Relationship Basics
- Building a Peer Culture
- Respecting Yourself
- Keep Respect Going
- Leading the Way
- Helping Each Other

The overarching result of the grant aims to improve the health status of Alaskans, by increasing protective factors and minimizing of risk factors for teen dating violence, teen pregnancy, and bullying. In addition, ANDVSA intends to increase in the organizational capacity of teen leadership support groups across Alaska as a sustainability measure.

The projects were able to reach numerous youth and adults throughout the state of Alaska and give them direct project implementation experience. A total of 140 youth and adults worked together across Alaska to plan and implement projects. An additional 5,005 were indirectly impacted by attending events, viewing projects, etc. The following is an estimated of people reached by community:

Community	Directly Impacted	Indirectly Impacted
Cordova	18	98
Dillingham	16	400
Homer	6	291
Juneau	11	232

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Kiana	30	80
Metlakatla	4	90
Mountain Village	14	389
Nenana	23	200
Palmer	2	60
Sitka	14	165
Valdez	2	3,000 (radio PSA)
TOTAL	140	5,005

The youth leaders also employed a variety of mediums in their projects—from videos and community presentations to leadership retreats to traditional cultural practices—to promote respect, youth leadership and end violence in their communities. The following communities and organizations were provided SUSU Alaska mini-grants.

Community	Grant Amount
Cordova	\$2000.0
Dillingham	\$2000.0
Homer	\$1560.0
Juneau	\$2000.0
Kiana	\$2000.0
Mountain Village	\$2000.0
Metlakatla	\$2000.0
Nenana	\$2000.0
Palmer	\$600.0
Sitka	\$2000.0
Valdez	\$2000.0

Project Evaluation

The wide range of projects and capacity of the different communities makes evaluation an ongoing challenge. Some communities have developed very high capacities for evaluation, with practices built into their projects, while other communities are just developing their evaluation capacity. Higher capacity was defined as organizations with prevention experience for at 2-3 years that are not doing one-time events but have larger goals and objectives and have strong adult collaborators to the projects. Those results are in the Project Impact Overview section for each high-capacity community. Only three communities were comfortable enough with evaluation to implement surveys to directly measure the impact of their projects. Most communities collected some form of attendance at their

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events, and almost every community captured qualitative data in the form of quotes from program participants, and videos or pictures of their projects.

This diversity of projects and capacity, along with the complete turnover of ANDVSA prevention staff partway through the SUSU mini-grant program period, meant technical assistance for evaluation decreased from previous years. The benefit of new staff, however, is an opportunity to examine practices and procedures to streamline and strengthen the evaluation component of the SUSU mini-grant program in this coming year. Ideas include ANDVSA providing templates for evaluation tools to all communities, hosting technical assistance group calls on evaluation, pairing communities with high evaluation capacity to those with lower capacity for peer learning, and hosting a workshop on program evaluation at LeadOn to help develop skills and knowledge before the projects even start.

Evaluation of the overall SUSU mini-grant program, usually measured through a survey administered to the youth and adults in each community who received mini-grants and implemented projects, slowed this year because of the ANDVSA prevention staff turnover. Loss of the Youth Engagement Coordinator and the Prevention Director, with the later hiring of just one Prevention Coordinator, meant the surveys were sent out late in the process. ANDVSA staff expect results of the survey by the end of August in the areas of leadership, project planning and violence prevention skills for youth and connection to peers and supportive adults.

Lessons Learned

Overall, the SUSU mini-grant project was successful and engaged over 5000(!) Alaskan individuals and 10 communities in teen dating and sexual violence prevention. As technical assistance providers ANDVSA learned lessons regarding how to engage and work with communities on a variety of topics throughout Alaska. The two themes were the importance of strengthening the capacity of adult mentors and the importance of interpersonal relationships and trust between ANDVSA staff and community members.

Just like last year, the theme of strengthening adult mentors rose to the top of the lessons learned. ANDVSA continues to discover ways to best offer training and skill building to supportive adults in the community. Focusing on adult capacity to support and empower their youth is key in increasing the impact of projects and the rates of completion. Ideas about how to better build this adult capacity at LeadOn and continue adult development after the conference are in the works. ANDVSA is committed to growing the sustainability of violence prevention efforts by strengthening the skills of supportive mentors in every SUSU community.

Strong relationships between ANDVSA staff and individuals in the different communities is vital to the success of the project. This component of the project suffered a set-back this year with the loss of the

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Youth Engagement Coordinator, Claudia Plesa. Claudia had spent years developing ties to a variety of communities and had strong personal relationships with youth and adults around the state. Because there was no overlap between Claudia and new staff, the seamless transition was challenging. It will take time for new staff to develop the quality of relationships that Claudia had with communities. Nonetheless, new staff are committed to the degree of respect and caring ANDVSA staff have always brought into communities and look forward to building relationships and trust with supportive adults and youth around the state.

Project Impact Overviews

The following project overviews were funded through the Teen Pregnancy and Violence Prevention Grant through DHSS. Grant recipients were both youth (Y) and adults (A) that partnered with a community organization. In the report below adults are defined as 18 and older, youth as 12-18, and children as 0-12 years old. Not all communities were able to collect demographic information, but it is included in communities that did.

Community: Cordova

Grant Recipients: Cordova Family Resource Center's B.I.O.N.I.C teen group

Partnering Organization: Cordova Family Resource Center (CFRC)

Project Description: Cordova teen group B.I.O.N.I.C. (Believe It Or Not I Care) is working toward the goal of starting a teen center in their community. They hope to partner with other youth serving organizations to find more funding support and to make the project more sustainable for the long term.



B.I.O.N.I.C youth making a Presentation to the School Board

In the meantime, B.I.O.N.I.C. is hosting teen nights to provide a fun, safe environment for teens to come together.

Outcomes: Members of B.I.O.N.I.C successfully completed the first phase of their long-term goal, which is to establish a permanent teen center. Phase one included writing a mission statement, voting for a teen advisory board, making presentations to the community, gathering information about running a teen center, business planning, and searching for funding opportunities through collaboration with a financial advisor. Teens utilized survey monkey to

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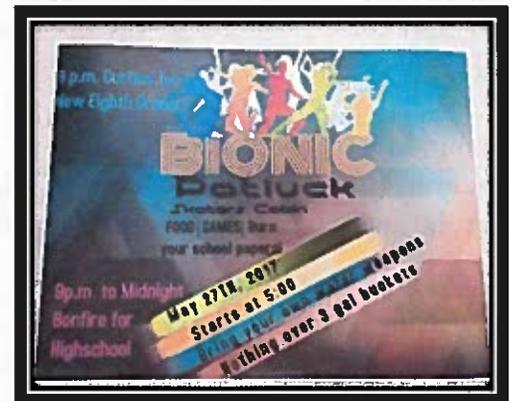
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finalize a mission statement and establish a teen advisory board. B.I.O.N.I.C. presented their plan of action, goals, and the need for a teen center to the school board, and the community coalition. Teens partnered with financial advisor, Lemonade Day State Coordinator, and AmeriCorps VISTA Supervisor Simone Jagers to examine budgeting, overhead costs, and fundraising opportunities.

B.I.O.N.I.C youth also held a "teen night" once a month. Each event was theme based, and provided healthy alternatives for entertainment. Teen night themes included movie night, karaoke night, jumbo/board game night, and an end of the year party with a burn your school papers bonfire.



Posters for B.I.O.N.I.C events

Approximately 98 participants of various backgrounds attended the event; age breakdown (adults defined as 18 or older, youth as 0-18) of participants is as follows.

Adults: 33

Youth: 65

Impact: The grant recipients moved closer to their long-term goal of building a teen center where all teens can all be safe and happy. They achieved their goal of hosting successful teen nights which helped the youth the community get involved in healthy activities rather than staying home, going to parties, doing drugs, drinking alcohol, or simply being alone. The youth and adult planners/volunteers were also impacted by the project as it brought them together as a community through mutual respect. Both the

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adults and youth learned from each other, and respected each other's creativity and ingenuity. The project raised awareness of the need for a teen center and community involvement was strengthened. The grant recipients look forward to continuing to work on their long-term goal, while providing a safe, respectful and meaningful place for teens to gather until the dream of a teen center can be realized.

Individuals involved in the project felt it had a big impact. They shared some of the most impactful parts of the project:

- "The commitment and perseverance of all the volunteers and team members was truly inspiring. To us, that was the best part."
- "I got to learn new information that can really help us in the future and had the chance to connect with other people and share ideas."
- "The best part of this project was seeing what others want to do to make this community be as one and how we are going to make it stronger. Just seeing how each one of us wants to make a difference in our community put a smile on my face."
- "Having time with other teens was really important to me. I liked being able to come together just to have fun because our community doesn't get that as much as we should."

Community: Dillingham

Grant Recipients: Safe and Fear-free Environment (SAFE)

Partnering Organization: Safe and Fear-free Environment

Project Description: After being inspired at Lead On, Dillingham youth decided they wanted to be better role models to their peers in how to promote a cleaner community. They will have an event where community members and youth leaders come together to help pick up the community monthly.



Youth of Dillingham Leadership Group (YDLG) members

Outcomes: The grant recipients hosted a clean-up event and further beautified their community by putting up a fish mural. Additionally, they put on a "show your spirit week" during the Beaver Round Up festival and hosted a barbeque. Approximately 400 individuals attended the BBQ; grant recipients did not track the gender and age of participants.

Participants: 400

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Impact: The community members who attended the BBQ expressed gratitude and were impressed that people of all ages were working together for a cleaner community. The community itself looked better after the clean-up event, and the event encouraged others to make a difference in their community. Additionally, the creation of the fish mural generated civic pride.



Teens work on fish for the fish mural.

Community: Homer

Grant Recipients: Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic's R.E.C. Room

Partnering Organization: Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic (KBFC)

Project Description: In an effort to reach out and educate adults in the community about adolescent brain and general development during adolescent years, peer educators hosted events called Adult Talks: Caring, Connecting and Communicating with Teens. The goal was to increase adults' understanding and awareness about teen issues and empower them in their abilities to be safe and effective supports for teens.

Outcomes: The grant recipients hosted 2 Adult Talks events at Homer Middle School with approximately 20 people in attendance. Using Facebook Live to film the event allowed another 240 people to participate online. Another two Adult Talks were hosted at Homer Flex Alternative High School with 11 people in attendance. Finally, one Adult Talk event was put on at Homer High School with approximately 20 people in attendance. Six individuals were directly impacted by the project in the planning and implementation of the Adult Talks.

Participants: 297

Impact: These events helped shift the way that adults think about and talk about teens in the community, while providing a much needed resource for adults who have teens in their life. With a total of five talks this year, awareness of this community resource is steadily increasing. The use of Facebook Live for one of the talks at Homer Middle School expanded the opportunity for many more adults to

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participate, and acts as a continual resource; interested adults can benefit from the content of the presentations any time.

Adults who participated in the events had only positive feedback to offer. Some expressed appreciation for the role teens played in the events. High school aged peer educators presented much of the content of the talks, including giving tips of how to effectively talk to teens. Additional feedback in a post survey indicated that participants learned a lot about supporting teens to make healthy choices and build positive relationships. Each event had more participation than the previous one and adults asked for even more Adult Talk events in the future.

The events were not only beneficial for those who attended, but also provided an opportunity for growth for the youth and adults who planned and implemented them. Adult planners of these events learned a lot about how to plan future events, including ways to make them truly collaborative; working with school staff to get them actively involved is the first step. The teens also learned much. In future events they plan to tighten up curriculum, promote the event in a variety of ways, improve scheduling so Adult Talks don't conflict with other community events and consider shortening presentations for families that are busy and are not able to access via Internet. Youth strengthened their leadership and presentation skills with these events.

Organizers conducted post surveys of the adult participants. The following findings were collected

- 75% of the participants said they learned something new about supporting teens to make healthy choices and/or have positive relationships.

90% of people said they either agreed or strongly agreed to: "I plan to talk in the near future with a teen about one or more of the ideas I learned from the Adult Talks event."

- "I was reminded to communicate with your teen even if it is uncomfortable."
- "I learned the importance of being patient and open with your teen. Treat them like an adult and be vulnerable with them."
- "I love it when the kids talked. They were so beyond helpful with experience."
- "I loved that teens share the leadership!"

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Community: Juneau

Grant Recipients: Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies (AWARE)

Partnering Organization: Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies (AWARE)

Project Description: Juneau teens intend to organize a youth-driven one day conference in the spring of 2017. This conference will focus on education for healthy relationships and social justice while simultaneously promoting youth action and community service.

Outcomes: 232 people registered for the youth-driven one day conference, Be the Change, on March 13th, 2017. Focusing on education for healthy relationships and social justice, the conference simultaneously promoted youth action. Workshops topics included healthy relationships, healthy sexuality, school policy, legislative advocacy, ACES and resiliency, equity and able-bodied privilege, substance abuse prevention, environmental advocacy, bullying prevention and cultural healing. Through motivational speakers and education, grant recipients inspired teens in Juneau to take action in their community on issues that are important to them.

Approximately 232 participants of various backgrounds attended the event; age breakdown (adults defined as 25 or older, youth as 12-18) of participants is as follows:

Adults: 18

Youth: 214

Impact: The grant recipient did a post survey to measure the impact of the conference. 118 people participated in the survey. The results are as follows:

72% reported some or very much improvement in their ability to promote respect in their school.

75% reported some or very much improvement in their ability to promote equality in their school.

75% reporting some or very much improvement in their ability to promote nonviolence in their school.

76% reported they were some or very much more capable of speaking up when they see someone being disrespected or hurt

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74% reported some or a significant increase in their opportunity for leadership

75% reported some or a significant increase in their ability to make a difference in their school

75% reported some or a significant increase in their ability to create social change

74% reported some or a significant increase in their ability to be engaged in school policy

Be the Change participants learned a variety of things from the conference. When asked “What is one thing you are walking away from this conference with that you didn’t have before,” respondents shared the following:

“Confidence”

“A sense of honor”

“that it’s okay to have a loud voice and to give your opinions”

“inspiration”

“I can change things if I want”

“the ability to feel what others feel”

“the things to look for in an unhealthy relationship”

“To stand up and be big. Everyone has a story to tell, and we should listen.”

“That its ok to be you, to stand up for what you believe in and to be different.”

“wanting to be more open.”

“A positive mindset.”

“Realizing how much we rely on each other.”

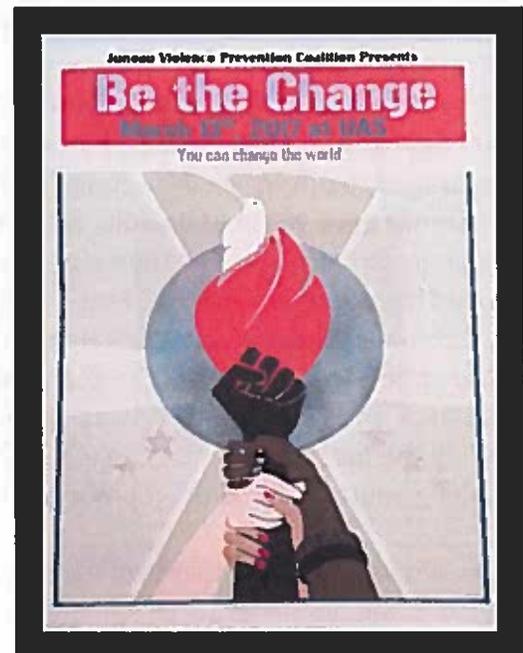
“I learned how to find my purpose and how to figure out my story.”

“Knowledge on what to say to injustices.”

“That I have been in an unhealthy relationship.”

“A sense of leadership.”

“Ensurance [sic] that I am not alone”



Be the Change 2017 Program

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Community: Kiana

Grant Recipients: Kiana Traditional Council

Partnering Organization: Kiana Traditional Council

Project Description: Kiana youth and supportive adults put on a leadership conference open to the entire community. The youth-decided theme is “every action counts and creates a ripple effect- choose wisely”.

Outcomes: On April 7th and 8th, 2017 almost 100 children, youth, adults and elders gathered in Kiana, AK to learn, share stories, share meals, dance and play together at the second annual OPT-In Conference.

OPT-In is both an acronym- One Positive Thing every day- and a play on words; participants are encouraged to opt for healthy choices. The 2017 conference gave youth and adults alike the



chance to do just that. The theme of this year’s conference was “Every Action Counts and Creates a Ripple Effect- Choose Wisely.” Presenters included Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Elder Aucha, Samuel Johns AK Rebel, and Nick Hanson, also known as Eskimo Ninja Warrior. Workshops for youth included Personal Safety: Safe in the Village and Reasons to Live, Making Positive Choices, Songwriting and Dance and Overcoming Adversity. Additional activities were held simultaneously for younger kids, sending the message that OPT-In is really for everyone. 30+ volunteers supported the conference, including youth, community members and presenters.

Approximately 90 participants of various backgrounds attended the event; age breakdown (adults defined as 25 or older, youth as 12-18, children as 0-12) of participants is as follows:

Adults: 31 Youth: 31 Children: 27

Impact: Community members, visitors and presenters alike acknowledged the work of the youth, the positivity throughout the conference and youth began- even before the conference was over- talking about next year’s OPT-In! Both the Sounder Newspaper and KNOM Radio were in attendance interviewing participants and presenters. The resulting articles can be found here:

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<http://www.knom.org/wp/blog/2017/05/17/story49-the-ripple-effect/>

http://www.thearcticsounder.com/article/1721adults_youth_learn_to_recognize_ripple_effect



Elder Aucha presenting to students

Event organizers conducted pre and post surveys, the exact results of which are being analyzed by a graduate student. Some highlights from the post survey include:

- 95% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that all youth can be leaders.
- 95% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they learned a lot about healthy relationships.

Additionally, many respondents who identified they had not had leadership opportunities previously reported feeling included and appreciating the leadership opportunity OPT-In Kiana provided.

Community: Metlakatla

Grant Recipients: Liwaayda Canoe Society

Partnering Organization: Metlakatla Indian Community

Project Description: Youth goals were to reconnect (and strengthen the relationship between) the youth of Metlakatla with the traditional elders to pass down their wisdom, traditional values and respect to establish a healthy, well balanced community. Monthly activities with youth and elders promoted these goals and provided youth with positive outlets to be part of.

Outcomes: Liwaayda Canoe Society used their 39" traditional xsoo (canoe) to help revive the tradition of beach seining with the youth of the community. To continue the Feed the Elders program, half the fish caught from beach seining was cleaned, processed and frozen by the youth for the elders in the winter months. The other half of the fish went to the families that helped and the community. The elders of the community are invited to share stories of days long since passed, when beach seining was their way of life, while the youth cleaned and processed the fish.

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Seining from the beach.

Approximately 90 participants of various backgrounds attended the five events. The xsoo holds up to 18 individuals, each beach seining expedition included a variety of individuals from children ages 7 years old to elders in their 60's-70's. We had plenty of youth 12-18 involved every trip. Four youth helped organize the events, but specific age breakdown for other participants was not available.

Participants: 94

Impact: Reviving beach seining had a huge a positive impact on the community. Youth were able to just show up and be a part of the event, which made it easy for many to participate. Seeing the community get excited and want to participate in this long since forgotten tradition was impactful for everyone, as was seeing people who haven't been out on the xsoo go and absolutely enjoy themselves out on the water and actively participate in culture. While there was no formal evaluation process, the number of people who kept showing up and the comments heard indicated success. Grant recipients shared: "we were satisfied with the smiles and thank yous of all the individuals that came. Each trip, everyone was appreciative to have the opportunity to participate and get fish for someone in their family."



The xsoo, or traditional canoe.

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Community: Mountain Village

Grant Recipients: Asa'carsarmiut Tribal Council Native Connections Program

Partnering Organization: Asa'carsarmiut Tribal Council Native Connections Program

Project Description: Youth put on activities that got the community involved in promoting a positive non-violent alcohol and drug free community. The activities hosted were focused on strengthening the community through increased traditional and cultural activities.

Outcomes: A variety of events were hosted, creating safe and positive spaces for individuals of all ages, and providing education on important topics including domestic violence, sexual abuse, bullying, and suicide prevention. Six men's basketball teams from different villages came together in a basketball tournament with three women's teams that boasted around 120 participants. Speakers came into the community to give presentations on domestic violence, sexual abuse, bullying, and suicide prevention. Grant recipients organized a dance for youth and also held a fiddling event. The final event was a health fair with a community potluck afterwards. The wide range of events meant many community members were able to get involved; there was something for everyone.

Participants: 403

Impact: This project not only created fun, safe activities for youth and adults, but it provided an important leadership opportunity for the ten youth involved in planning and implementing the events. These youth got to act as role models in their community, providing information on important topics. Community members commented how valuable it was to have the message come from the youth, who were, by speaking out on tough issues, an example to others. Their presentation on bullying and how to be a positive role model, "Leading the Way," was very well received by youth and adults alike. Additionally, this project provided important information to the community on subjects that can cause the alcohol and drug abuse that is prevalent in the village. One organizer shared the impact she thought this project had on the community, "Having the youth be an example to others hopefully opened their eyes to see that there can be change in our community if we just come together."

Community: Nenana

Grant Recipients: Nenana City School District

Partnering Organization: Nenana City School District

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Project Description: This project created presentations on connectedness, bullying, substance abuse, suicide, bad relationships and consent. The project then brought the community together by having youth leaders present to their peers and by doing social activities focused on the wellbeing of the community.

Outcomes: Grant recipients combined their efforts and hosted one big event: A Choose Respect march and potluck. Participants made signs and marched around the community in honor domestic violence and sexual assault awareness. After the march, the community came together for a potluck. A few local men made moose soup and dried moose, almost all the food was native food. Youth presented the volunteers with special awards, giving them artwork made by local artists. Additionally, five youth and five adults were given awards, "to recognize those natural helpers that might not have a helping title in front of their name." A LeadOn alumni and young adult, Jasmine Lake, presented to the audience about bullying, and the 3rd and 4th grade teacher spoke about domestic violence. Grant recipients also brought in community resources to highlight what support these individuals can offer. Each one was formally introduced, including the substance abuse clinician, the mental health clinician and the behavioral health aide. Additionally, a table was set up offering information on tobacco cessation.

Approximately 200 participants of various backgrounds attended the event, with 23 people helping to organize it. A breakdown of the ages of participants was not available.

Participants: 223

Impact: This project was informed by two community surveys, one asked what youth wanted to see in the community- the result was more community projects. The second survey asked youth to identify adults and other youth they trust. This project sought to build relationships between youth and positive adults and to provide a space where the whole community could come together. This project had a significant impact on the community. Adults and youth encouraged each other throughout the entire process and many people stepped up to volunteer. The audience was captivated by the speakers and were supportive of the youth and adults who received awards. Many participants asked if the event could become an annual event. Most of the high school youth were there and living center students were required to come. Children, adults and elders were also in attendance. All of the feedback received was constructive and positive.

Grant recipients made a short video to capture the event:

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Choose Respect -
Small (1).mov

Community: Palmer

Grant Recipients: Alaska Family Services

Partnering Organization: Alaska Family Services

Project Description: Youth planned to raise awareness about the problem of domestic and sexual violence in Alaska and to raise money for Alaska Family Services (AFS), while increasing awareness of what youth can do in Palmer to make a difference. Grant recipients planned on connecting youth with resources concerning domestic violence and sexual assault and created messages for their peers to learn what a healthy relationship looks like.

Outcomes: Grant recipients organized a concert to raise money for Alaska Family Services and to raise awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault. Focusing on the topics of Keep Respect Going, Sharing Help and Leading the way, the event provided resources on healthy sexuality and healthy relationships Resources were provided by Planned Parenthood, iknowmine, Identity, Alaska Family Services and ANDVSA.

Impact: The grant recipient shared that the project had a large impact in the community. Other youth and community members were excited about the event. Besides impacting the youth who attended, this project had a large impact on the organizer herself. "This was a big learning experience," she said. "Despite having to overcome many obstacles everyone was excited and motivated to make the event a reality." Other evaluation efforts have been made. A pre survey was distributed around the school to gather information on the needs of the community. Results from that survey indicated that half of the respondents did not feel as if they had enough information on healthy sexuality or healthy relationships, which helped guide the focus of the event. Post survey results are not yet available, but the grant recipient hopes to see a change in how equipped youth are to make healthy choices about relationships and sexuality.

Community: Sitka

Grant Recipients: Sitkans Against Family Violence

Partnering Organization: Sitkans Against Family Violence

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Project Description: This year Sitka Youth Leadership Committee (SYLC) members worked on building on and promoting the “End It Now” TDV campaign by adding a peer education component to increase the reach and saturation of these messages. The campaign, Teen Talks and additional activities helped increase understanding of healthy relationships, healthy sexuality, and consent.

Outcomes: SYLC has continued with the work they’ve been implementing in their community for the last several years around promoting respect and nonviolence in Sitka. This year, SYLC added a peer education component to their “End It Now” campaign for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month to help increase the reach and saturation of healthy relationships messaging and education in Sitka. SYLC also coordinated an event to premiere their SYLC documentary called “Hands Across the Bridge” for adult and student leaders from the rival high schools in Sitka. SYLC members facilitated a World Café conversation following the film to process the themes and brainstorm ideas for taking action on the issues highlighted in the film. SYLC youth helped facilitate and shared speeches at the Choose Respect march to help communicate a message about the importance of respecting differences and honoring each other’s unique qualities as well as encouraging their peers to make a concerted effort to accept and acknowledge others no matter where they come from. And lastly, SYLC expanded their “I Am” campaign (2016) to include stories and experiences of being a youth in Sitka. This project is modeled off the “Humans of N.Y.” Facebook blog and is aimed at helping youth feel seen, heard, and recognized in their community.

Impact: All of SYLC’s strategies are working together to build off of one another and reinforce messages that help create a positive shift in the current peer culture and school climate around healthy relationships and respect. The projects SYLC worked on this year aimed at increasing the likelihood of youth in Sitka feeling connected, accepted, respected, and educated or informed. They did this by increasing messaging and education about healthy relationships, teen dating violence, and consent; raising awareness about school rivalry and creating opportunities for positive interactions and connections between students from different high schools in Sitka; and promoting teen voices through a social media campaign highlighting youth stories and experiences.

There was a range of reactions to the film, “Hands Across the Bridge,” which touched on a very sensitive issue- racism. When asked to describe it in one word, participants in the post-film World Café shared words like, “surprising, heavy, deep, elaborating, interesting, intriguing, inspiring, and transforming.”

Other participants shared their comments about the film:

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- “It got people talking with each other and helped them realize problems.”
- “Everyone was excited, had an opinion, and contributed.”

SYLC members were also impacted by the film, describing it as a “culmination of everything we’ve talked about in SYLC”, bringing all the topics together in one event. They were proud of the success of the event and felt like there was a good response from the audience despite some of the negative criticism of the film. Because of SYLC, more youth in Sitka have had access to information, tools, and opportunities to take leadership in building a culture of respect.

This project also had a big impact on SYLC team members themselves. 75% of SYLC members were new this year and most of them said they joined SYLC because they wanted to contribute to community, make a positive change, and improve their individual leadership skills. These students gained skills in teaching and presenting as well as increased their own knowledgeable of the red flags and dynamics of unhealthy relationships. At the close of the year, 100% of SYLC members agree or strongly agree that as a result of SYLC they can now recognize the warning signs of an unhealthy relationship; feel more connected to their community; are more comfortable facilitating difficult discussions with others; feel more comfortable around people who are different than them; and make more of an effort to get to know people from other schools. 90% say they’ve greatly improved their leadership skills; and feel more comfortable talking to peers about healthy relationships, consent, and teen dating violence; and 80% say that as a result of SYLC they have better commitment and follow through on projects and have more people they can go to if they need support.

Community: Valdez

Grant Recipients: Advocates for Victims of Violence

Partnering Organization: Advocates for Victims of Violence

Project Description: Youth were interested and excited about starting a Suicide Prevention Program in their school. They believed a program designed after the QPR Institutes program would be the most effective. They also wanted to reach out to all community organizations and get people on board to start a collaborative Suicide Prevention program and planning committee.

Outcomes: Grant recipients worked hard to deal with the issue of suicide in the community of Valdez. Suicide has affected the community and teens and adults are motivated to make change. Youth hosted an introductory meeting to a book club which will continue in the fall and is centered around books which address issues contributing to teen suicide.

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students involved. They were grateful that they could contribute and actually speak out- even if it was just on the radio. Many of the youth were seniors who had been directly affected by a recent suicide, so it was particularly powerful and healing for them to participate.



Nine students and four adults attended the book club meeting. Grant participants anticipate the numbers will grow in the fall and look forward to regular meetings. Some of the teachers and counselors are on board and are excited to work with the students to get the message out to City Council and the School Board. The plan is to bring a Gatekeeper QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training into Valdez in the fall so individuals can continue developing the skills they need to address suicide in their community.

Shirts raise awareness about suicide; books for the book group.

Participants shared their thoughts about the project:

- "This is a wonderful project"
- "I think book club meetings plus getting involved in recording spots on the radio is a great introduction to how we can help introduce the subject of suicide and how it plays a part in everyone's life."
- "It is so great to have a support system for these young people, and to introduce a program that they can get involved in and feel that they are a part of- that is the first step."

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