



## Power of Peace Program 2011 Aggregate Report

### Introduction

Michael Arterberry, the Founder and Executive Director of the Youth Voices Center, Inc., a non-profit organization which has the sole purpose of improving the lives of young people, is also the creator of the Power of Peace program. The Power of Peace program was introduced to Westchester County, NY and surrounding areas in 2005.

The results of the Power of Peace program for 2011 are presented in this report. The implementation of the program took place at six sites: 5 high schools (Peekskill, Ossining, New Rochelle, Port Chester and Schenectady) and one Youth Bureau (Mt. Vernon) during seven months throughout the year: February, March, April, September, October, November, and December. A total of 18 Power of Peace workshop cycles were completed in 2011.

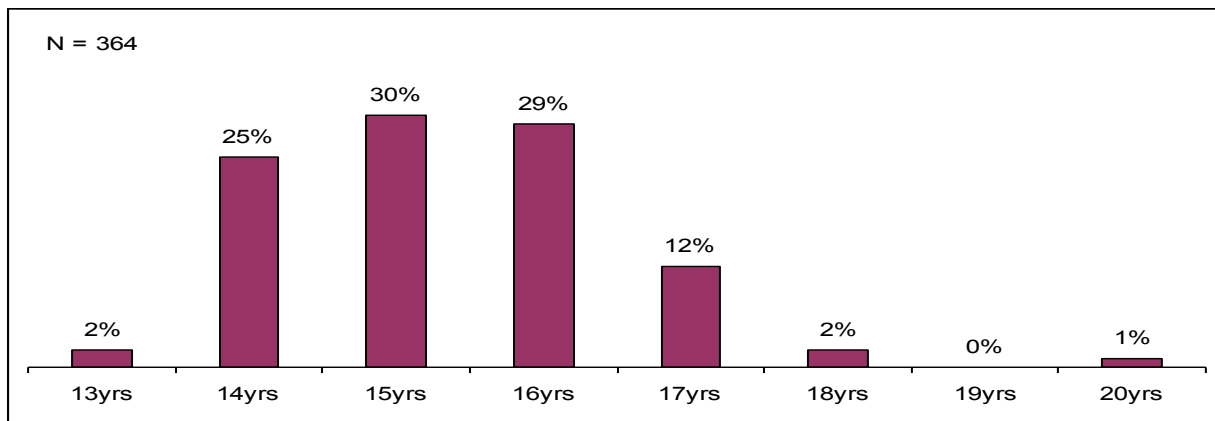
### Program Description

Power of Peace is a succession of experiential workshops, with a focus on conflict resolution and anti-violence, designed to enable young people to use their voices to express their concerns, fears and dreams within a safe environment. The workshops address the issues that youth confront daily, the components of which include: positive youth development, leadership, conflict resolution, team work and collaboration, decision making, respect for others and self, and diversity.

### Demographics

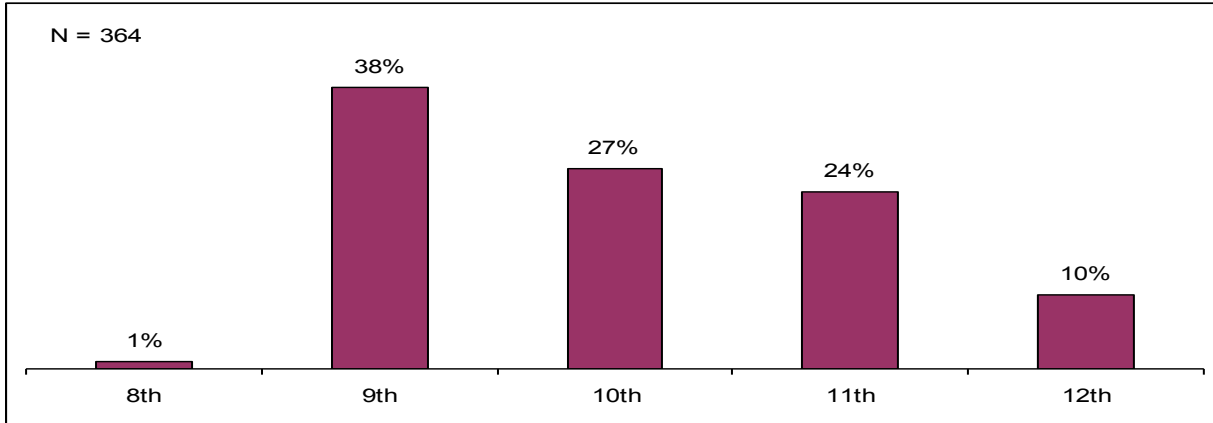
There were 364 students who participated in the Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 161 boys (44%) and 203 girls (56%) in grades 8 through 12 and ranged in age from 13 – 20. Distributions for ethnicity, age, grades, sites and participation are presented in the charts listed below.

### Age



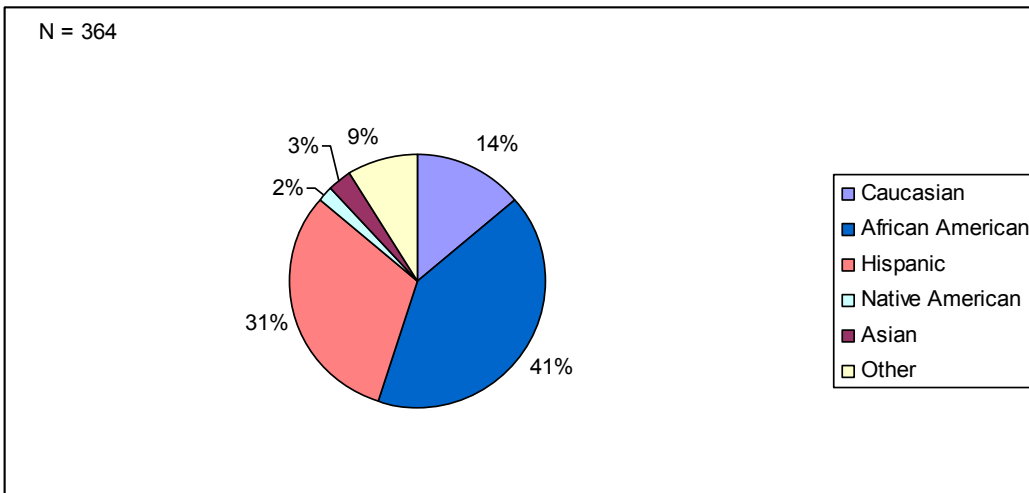
Over half of the participants were ages 15 yrs and 16 yrs (just under one-third each(30% and 29%) respectively).

## Grade



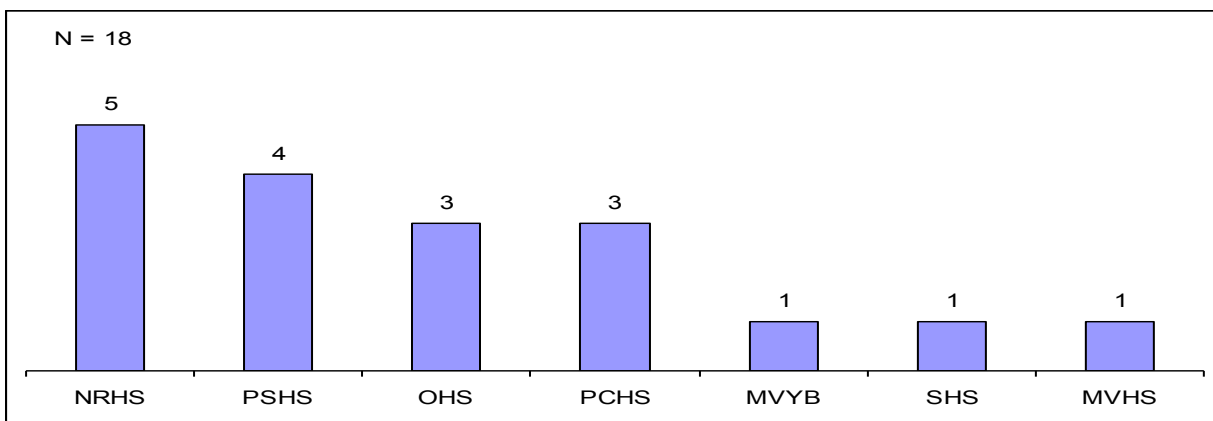
Over one-third (38%) of the participants were in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Ethnicity



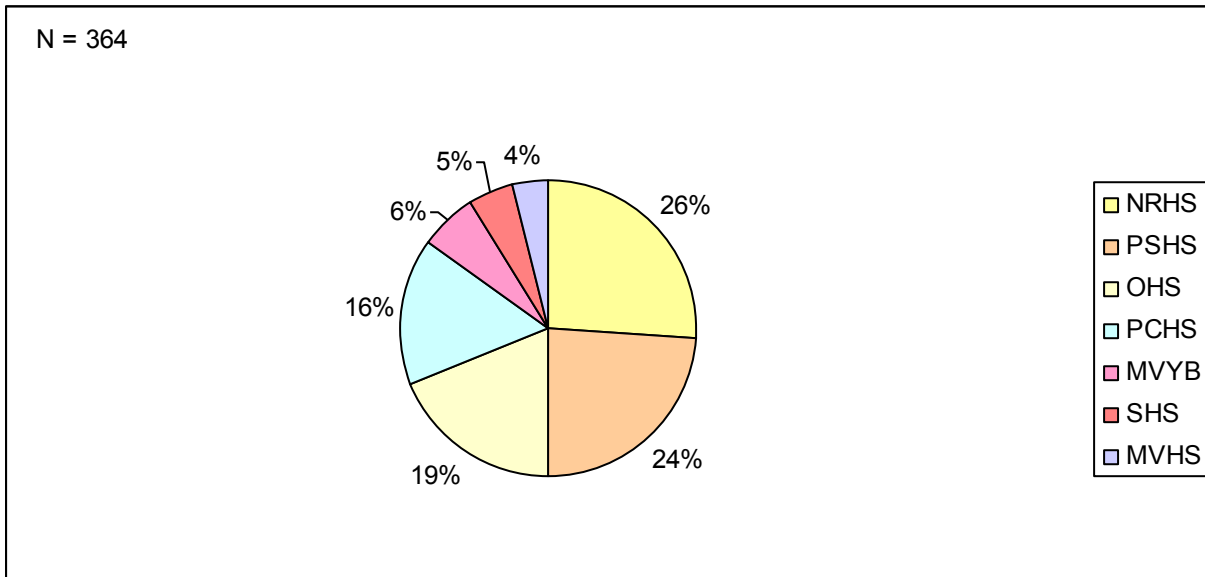
Over 85% of the participants self-identified their ethnicity as other than Caucasian with the greatest number (just under one half (41%) indicating African-American followed by nearly one third (31%) indicating Hispanic.

## Number of Power of Peace Cycles by Site



In 2011, New Rochelle High School (NRHS) led the way holding five cycles of Power of Peace, followed by Peekskill High School (PSHS) holding four cycles. Both Ossining High School (OHS) and Port Chester High School (PCHS) each held three cycles of Power of Peace, while Mount Vernon Youth Bureau (MVYB), Schenectady High School (SHS), new to the Power of Peace community, and Mount Vernon High School (MVHS) each held one cycle of Power of Peace in 2011.

### Percentage of Participants by Site



While New Rochelle (NRHS) and Peekskill (PSHS) combined represent half (50%) of the participation for 2011, they also account for one quarter (96 and 84 participants respectively) of the participation each, followed by Ossining High School (OHS) and Port Chester High School (PCHS) with just under one-fifth of the participation (69 and 57 participants respectively). The remaining 15% was relatively evenly distributed among Mount Vernon Youth Bureau (MVYB), Schenectady High School (SHS) and Mount Vernon High School (MVHS) with 24, 20 and 14 participants respectively.

### Program Evaluation

A six statement pre-survey and a seven statement post-survey were administered to assess the effectiveness of the program. Students were asked to complete the pre-survey prior to the start of the first workshop and asked to complete the post-survey at the end of the second workshop. Of the 364 participants, 99% (360) completed the pre-survey and 94% (341) participants completed the post-survey.

**Quantitative:** Responses to statements were on a five point likert scale ranging from 5 = “Yes, definitely,” 4 = “Mostly,” 3 = “Sometimes,” 2 = “Not Really,” to 1 = “No, Never.”

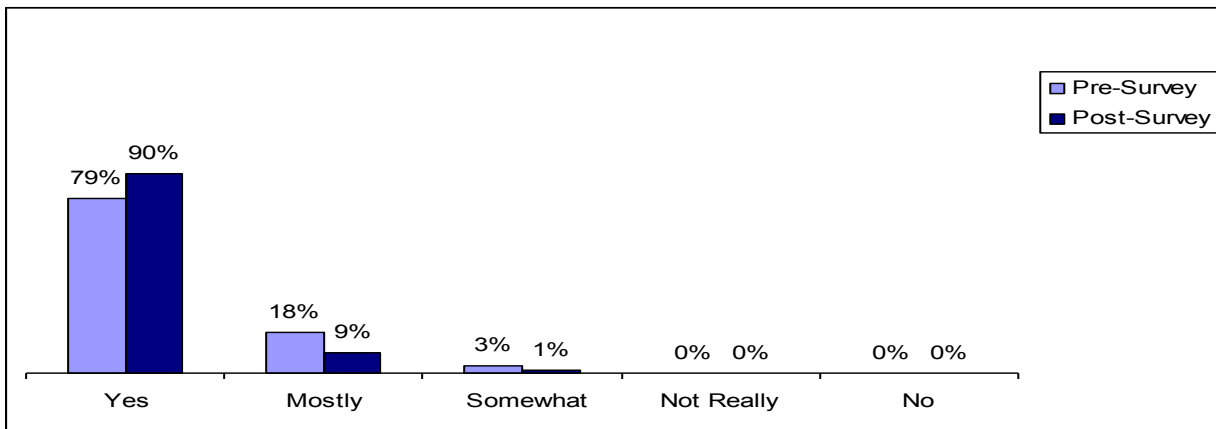
**Qualitative:** Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included at the end of the post-survey only regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

## Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, extremely significant ( $p < .0001$ ) positive changes in attitudes were seen across the board on all of the six items (up from five of six in 2010). Data were analyzed using t-tests comparing pre-survey responses with post-survey responses.

### Item 1: I respect myself.

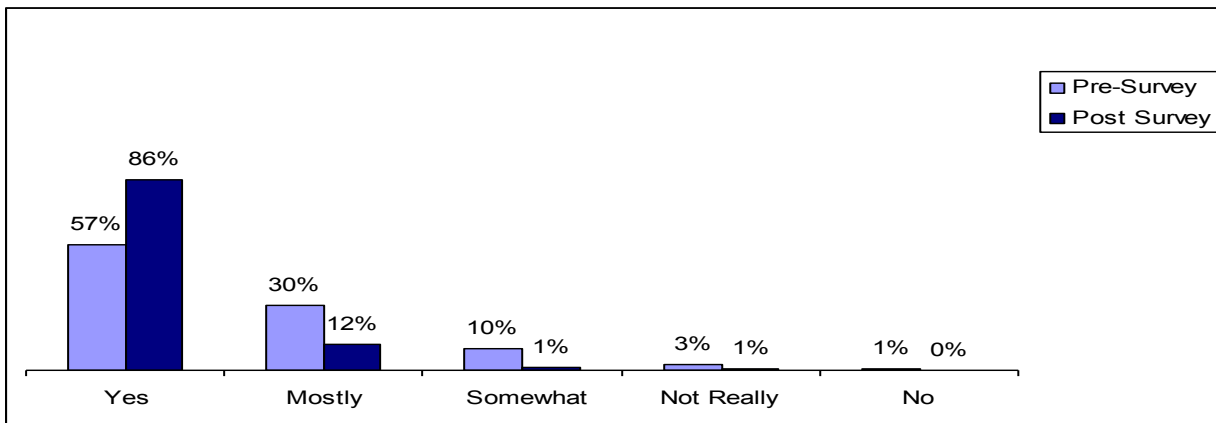
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 79% and at post-survey = 90%.



$t = 4.24, p < .0001$

### Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me.

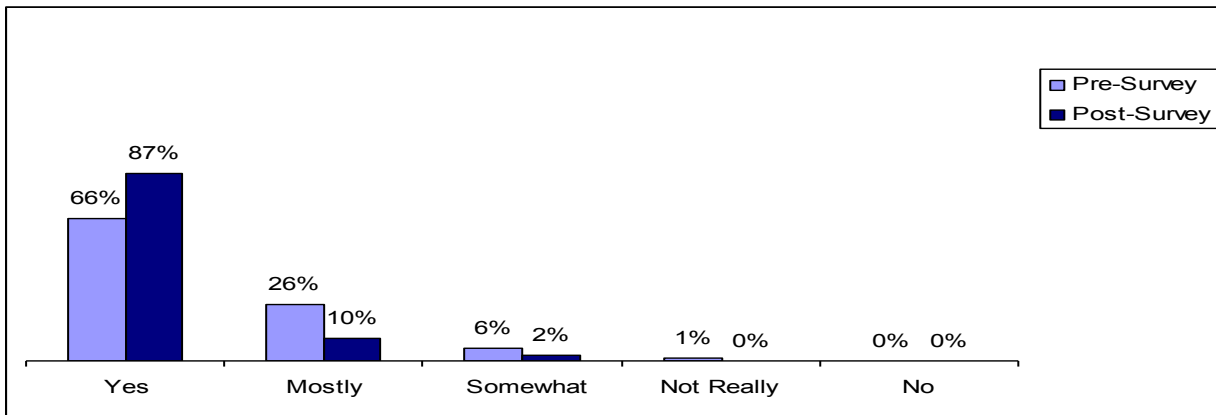
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 57% and at post-survey = 86%.



$t = 8.94, p < .0001$

**Item 3: I respect students different from me.**

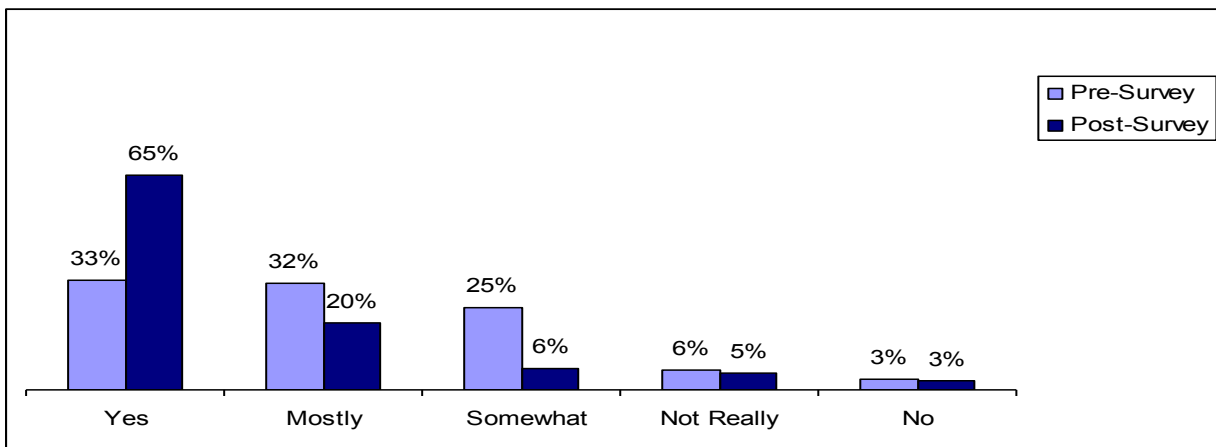
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 66% and at post-survey = 87%.



$t = 5.75, p < .0001$

**Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.**

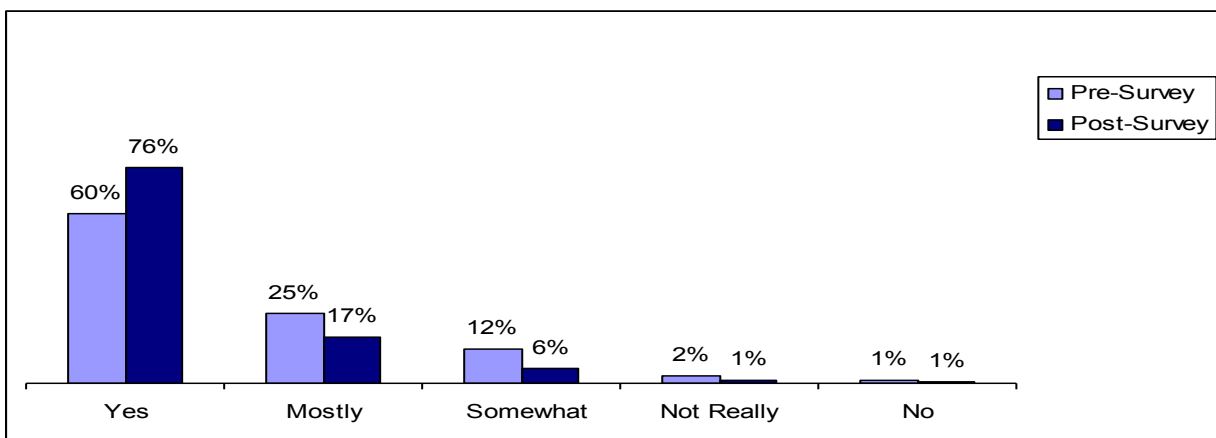
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 33% and at post-survey = 65%.



$t = 7.00, p < .0001$

**Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.**

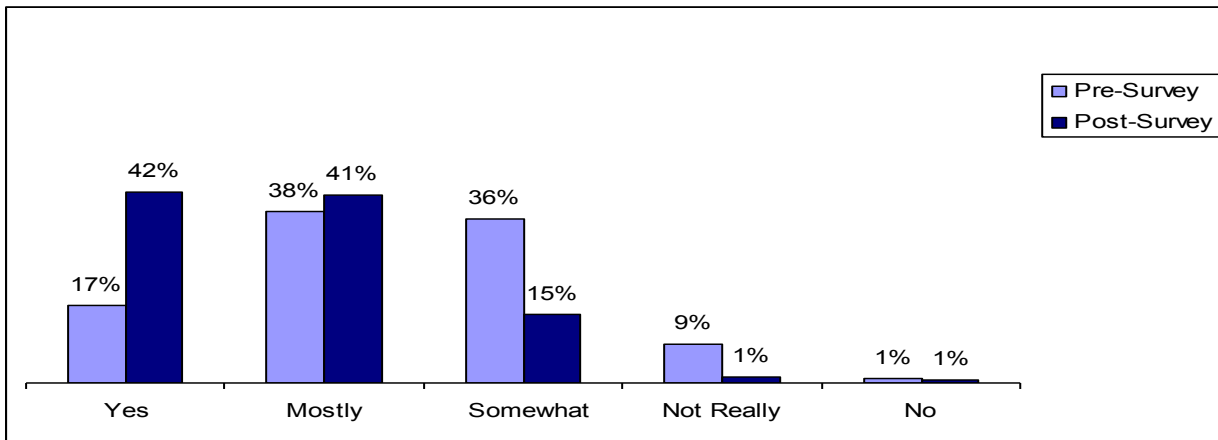
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 60% and at post-survey = 76%.



$t = 4.46, p < .0001$

**Item 6: I think I know how other people see me.**

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 17% and at post-survey = 42%.

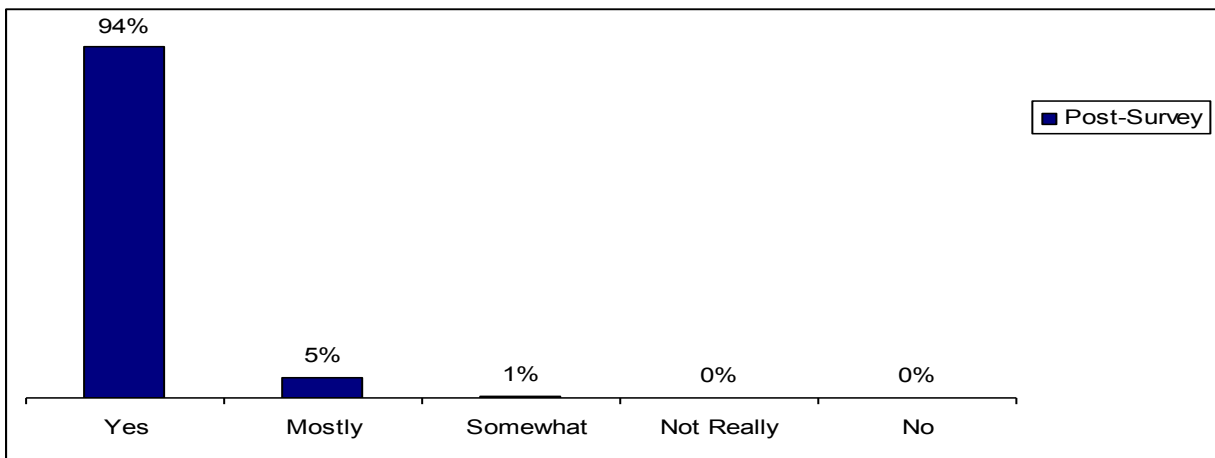


$t(36) = 4.46, p < .0001$

In addition to the six previous items listed, the three items listed below were included in the post-survey.

**Item 7: I think it’s a good idea for other students in my school to attend the Power of Peace workshops.**

The overwhelming majority (94%) answered “Yes, definitely.”



**Item 8: Please tell us how you feel about Power of Peace**

Of the 341 students who completed the post-survey, 97% of them took the time to comment on how they felt about the Power of Peace experience. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. Adjectives used to describe the Power of Peace program in response to this survey item include: great, awesome, fantastic, fun, eye-opening, cool, inspirational, enlightening, incredible, deep and the real deal.

## Quotes from participants include:

*Power of Peace helped me ...*

- *with how to control my anger and be a peaceful person.*
- *see that different people go through many of the same issues in life.*
- *meet people I wouldn't usually talk to and showed me that they feel the same as me.*
- *see people on the inside and not just from the outside view.*
- *figure out there's better ways to resolve issues.*
- *see a new perspective of how some of my peers live.*
- *realize that you don't really know people as well as you think you do.*
- *see how important respect is.*
- *find peace within myself.*

*Power of Peace taught me ...*

- *not to judge other people because you could draw the wrong conclusion.*
- *different techniques of how to improve my life.*
- *that everyone is going through something, not just me.*
- *about alternative ways to solve conflict.*
- *how to keep the peace socially*

*Power of Peace is ...*

- *an experience that breaks down barriers to help better ourselves as people.*
- *a safe place to come to and feel free, loved, and welcomed.*
- *a gift that all students should get to attend.*
- *a place where you can express yourself without being judged.*
- *the best thing that could happen to a teenager.*
- *the most positive thing that ever happened to me (other than my family).*

*And finally ...*

- *Mighty Mike (Michael Arterberry) is an overall humble person who inspires me to become a good person.*
- *After Power of Peace I actually feel confident of myself to finally talk to people I don't know and I feel proud.*

## **Item 9: Please tell us what we could do to improve Power of Peace**

Of the 341 students who completed the post-survey, 280 (82%) of them took the time to comment on how the Power of Peace program could be improved. Of that 280, the actual comment made by over two thirds (67%) of the respondents indicated that they could think of nothing that would improve the Power of Peace program.

Among the comments suggesting ways to improve the program the following were listed:

- *more schools, more time, more days, more sessions, more activities, more games, more stories, more workshops, more students, more often, more adults, more exposure ...*
- *meet year round, meet on weekends, meet for a week ...*
- *expand, publicize, advertise ...*
- *add female facilitators.*

## **Discussion**

The statement indicating the highest change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey (an increase of 32%) was Item 4: I believe violence will NOT resolve conflict. The statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey (an increase of 11%) was Item 1: I respect myself.

## **Conclusion**

The results presented in this report indicate that the Power of Peace program did have a positive effect in changing student attitudes in ALL six areas surveyed (this is up from five out of six in 2010). From pre-survey to post-survey, statistically significant positive changes in attitudes are seen in the following areas:

- a student's self-respect
- a student's willingness to talk to a student different from him/herself
- a student's respect for a student different from him/herself
- a student's belief that violence will NOT resolve conflict
- a student's awareness of alternatives to violence
- a student's awareness of how he/she is viewed by other students

These results are primarily limited by the fact that this was not an empirical study. Without follow up measures, it is impossible to know the extent to which any attitudinal changes will be sustained.