



Power of Peace Program 2012 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 2012 are presented in this report. The implementation of the program took place at six sites: 5 school districts (Peekskill, Ossining, New Rochelle, Port Chester and Schenectady) and one Youth Bureau (Mt. Vernon) during seven months throughout the year: January, March, May, July, October, November, and December. A total of 17 Power of Peace workshop cycles were completed in 2012.

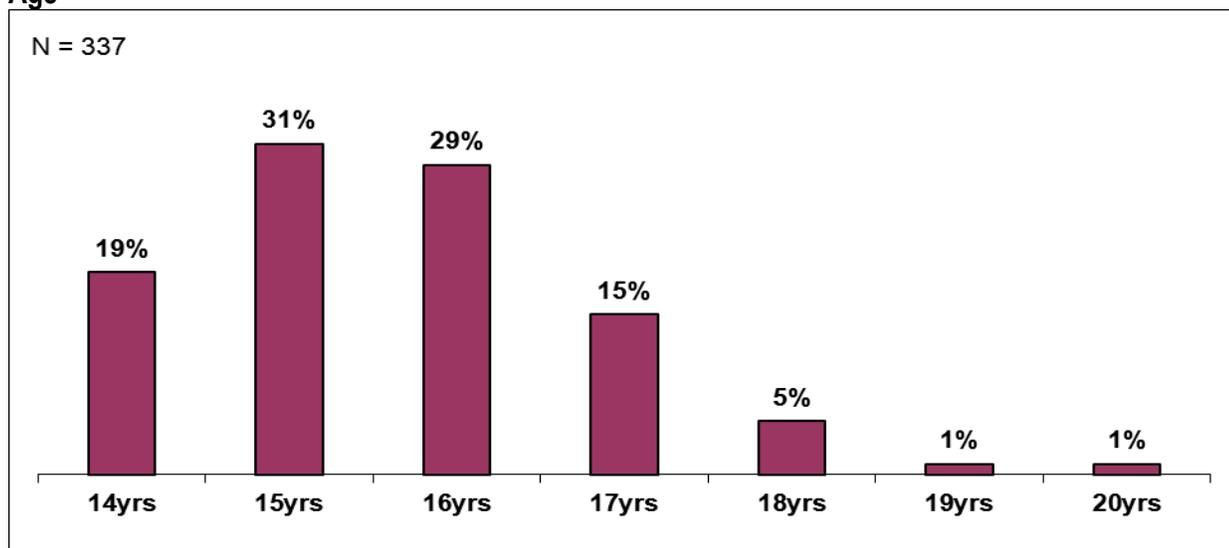
Program Description

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

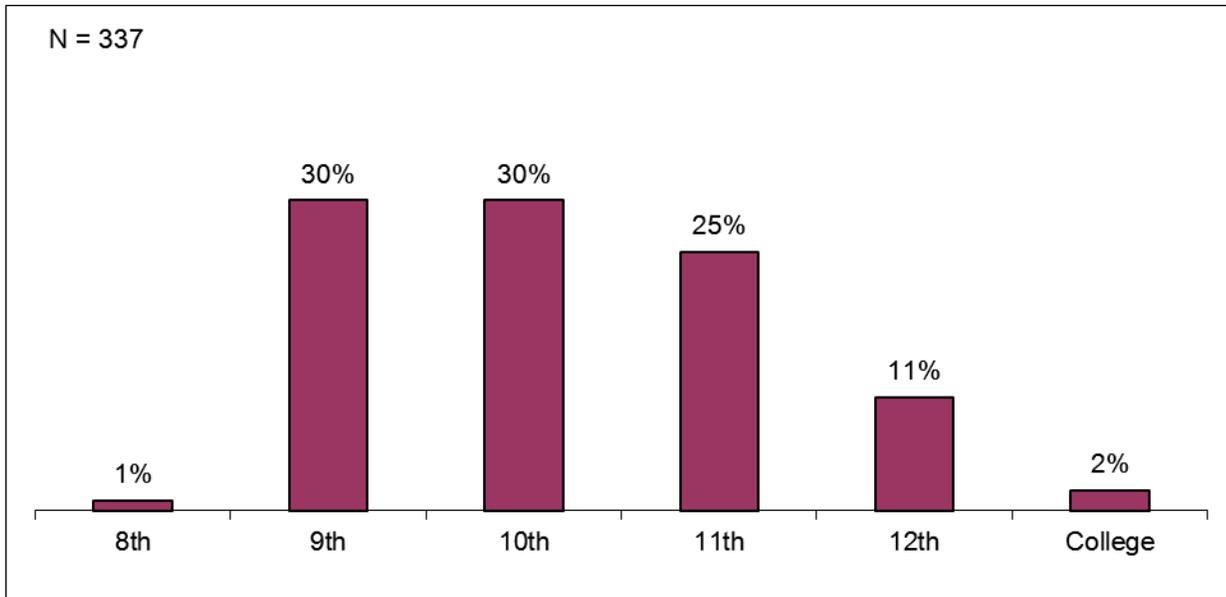
There were 337 students who participated in the Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 147 boys (44%) and 190 girls (56%) in grades 8 through college and ranged in age from 14 – 20. Distributions for ethnicity, age, grades, sites and participation are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



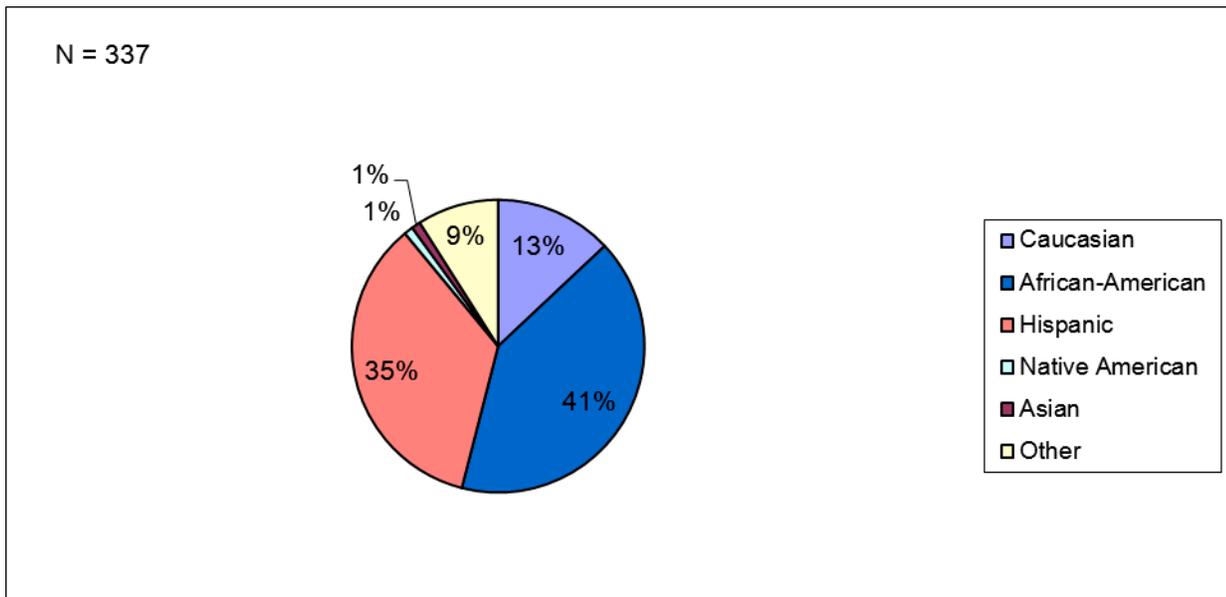
Over half of the participants were ages 15 yrs and 16 yrs (just under one-third each (31% and 29%) respectively).

Grade



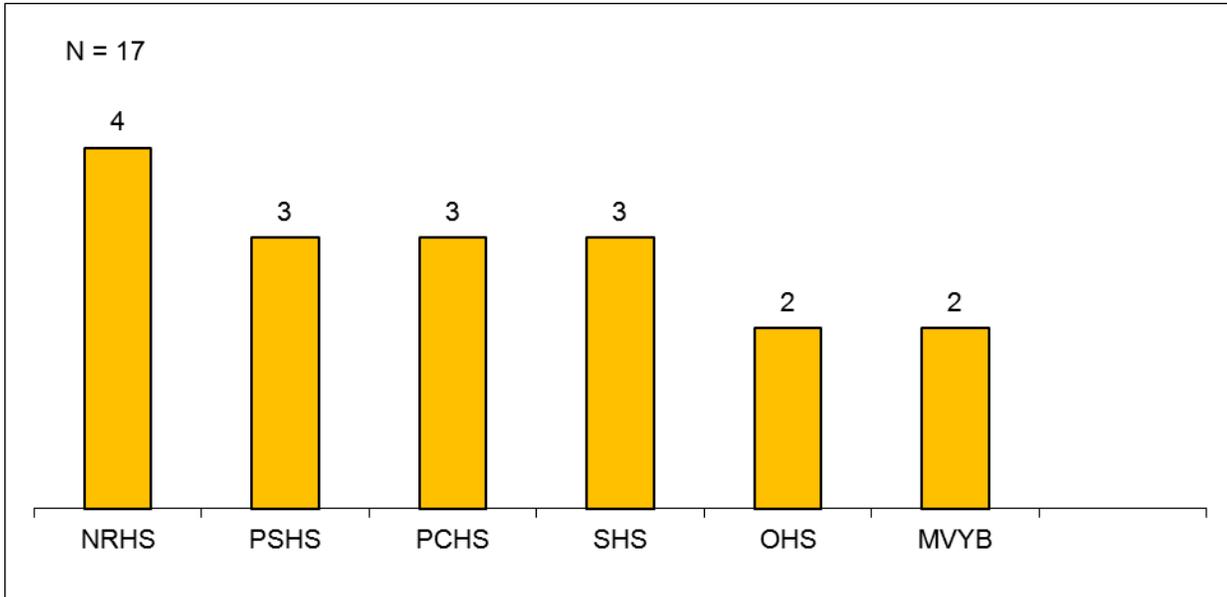
Over half (60%) of the participants were in the 9th & 10th grades combined, while on quarter were in the 11th grade.

Ethnicity



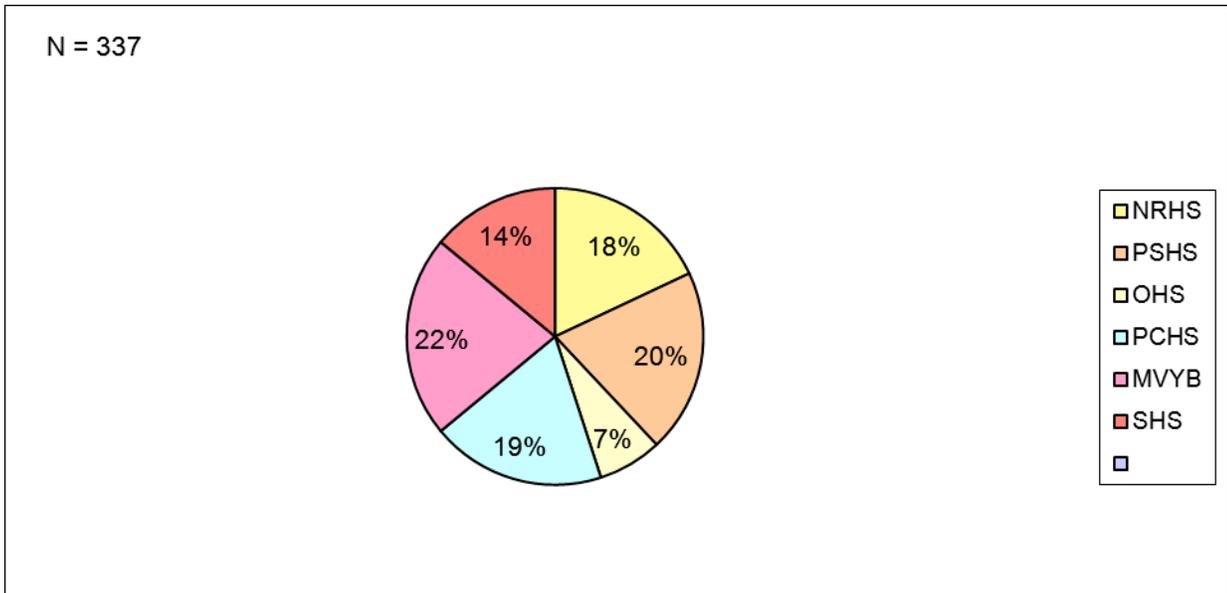
Over three quarters (76%) of the participants self-identified their ethnicity as other than Caucasian with the greatest number just under one half (41%) indicating African-American followed by just over one third (35%) indicating Hispanic.

Number of Power of Peace Cycles by Site



In 2012, New Rochelle High School (NRHS) led the way holding 4 of the 17 cycles of Power of Peace, followed by Peekskill High School (PSHS), Port Chester High School (PCHS), and Schenectady High School (SHS), each holding 3 cycles. Ossining High School (OHS) and Mount Vernon Youth Bureau (MVYB) each held 2 cycles of Power of Peace in 2012.

Percentage of Participants by Site



The distribution of participation, representing approximately one fifth each, for Mount Vernon Youth Bureau (22% - 75 participants), Peekskill High School (20% - 65 participants), Port Chester High School (19% - 64 participants), and New Rochelle High School (18% - 62 participants), was relatively even, for a combined total of 79%. The remaining fifth (21%) is represented by Schenectady High School (14% - 48 participants) and Ossining High School (7% - 23 participants).

Program Evaluation

A six statement pre-survey and a seven statement post-survey, designed by Creative Solutions Consultation Services, LLC, 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 337 participants, 100% completed the pre-survey and 96% (325) 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."

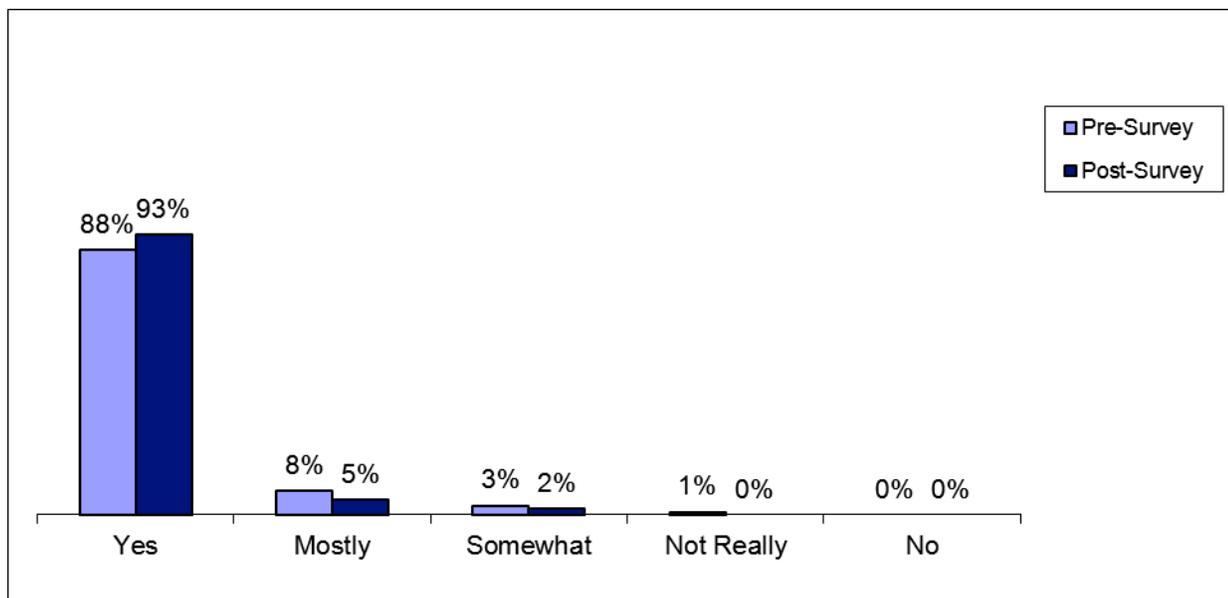
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included at the end of the post-survey only regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, statistically significant (at $p < .05$ and $p < .001$) positive changes in attitudes were seen across the board on all of the six items. Data were analyzed using t-tests comparing pre-survey responses with post-survey responses.

Item 1: I respect myself.

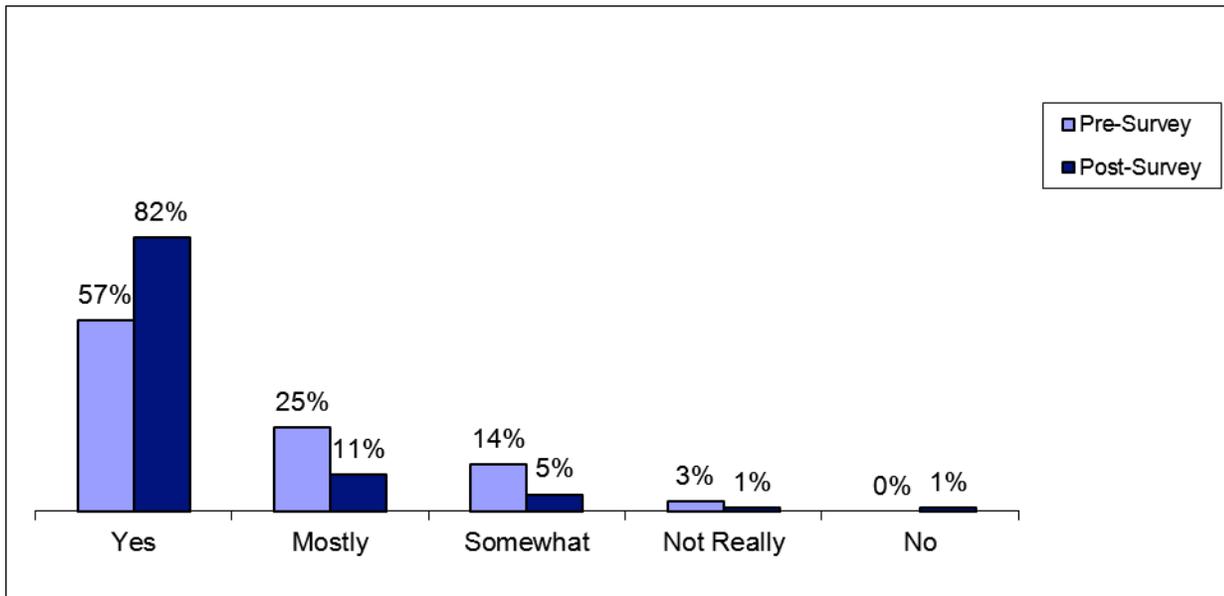
Overall, the percent of students answering "Yes, definitely" at pre-survey = 88% and at post-survey = 93%.



$t(656) = 1.98, p < .05$, statistically significant

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

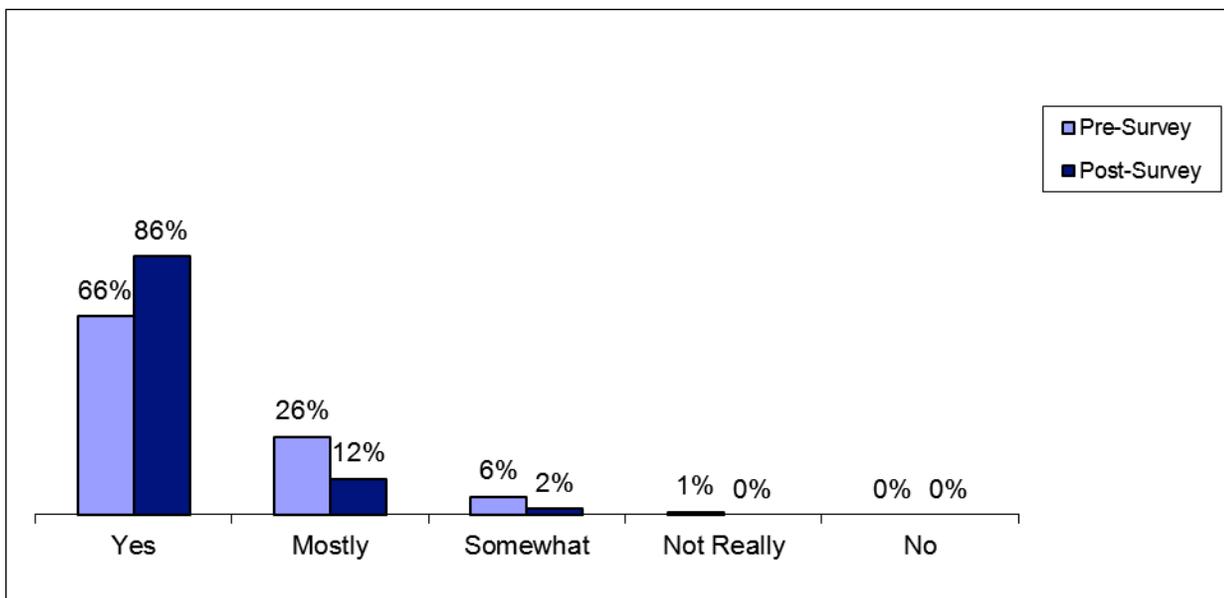
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 57% and at post-survey = 82%.



$t(655) = 6.15, p < .001$, statistically significant

Item 3: I respect students different from me.

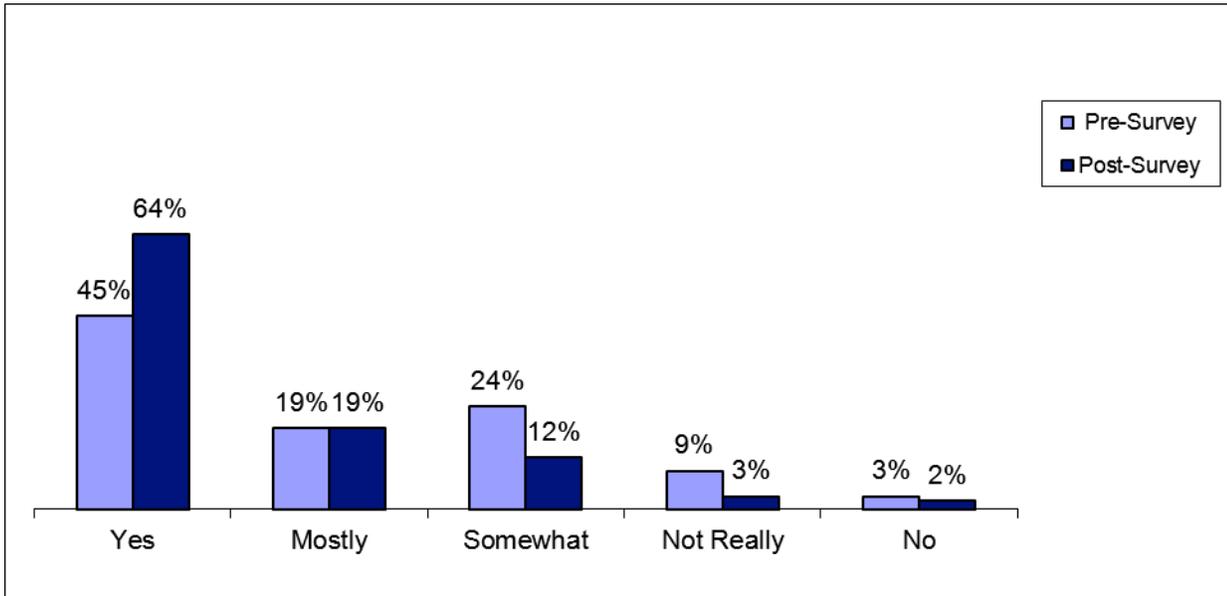
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 66% and at post-survey = 86%.



$t(654) = 6.05, p < .001$, statistically significant

Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

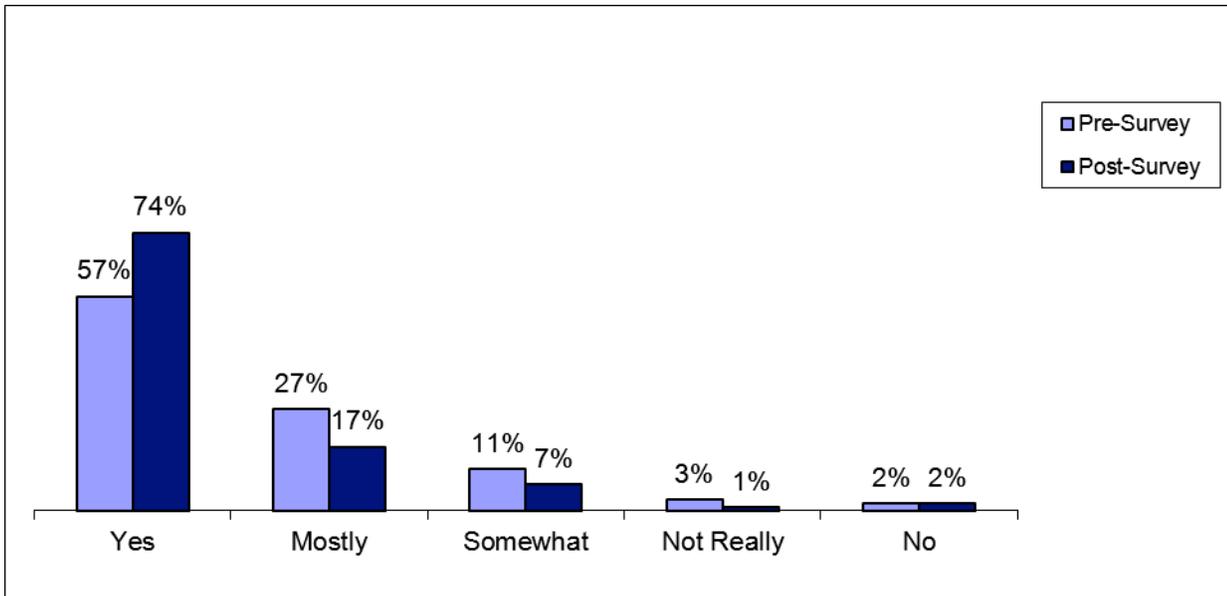
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 45% and at post-survey = 64%.



$t(656) = 5.60, p < .001$, statistically significant

Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

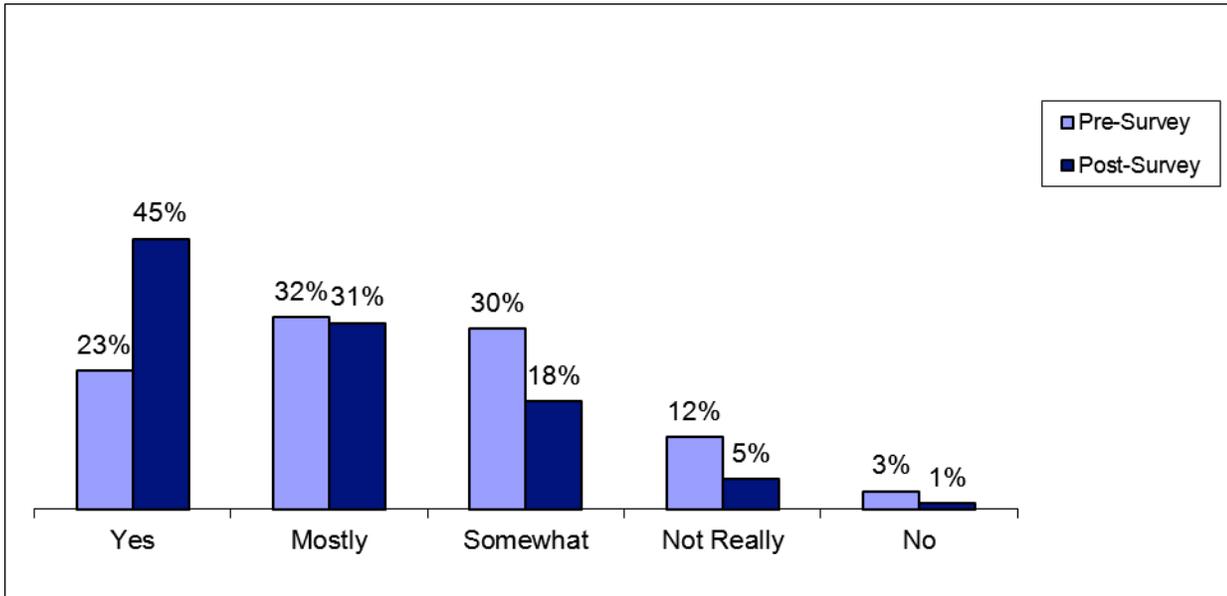
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 57% and at post-survey = 74%.



$t(655) = 3.55, p < .001$, statistically significant

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

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 23% and at post-survey = 45%.

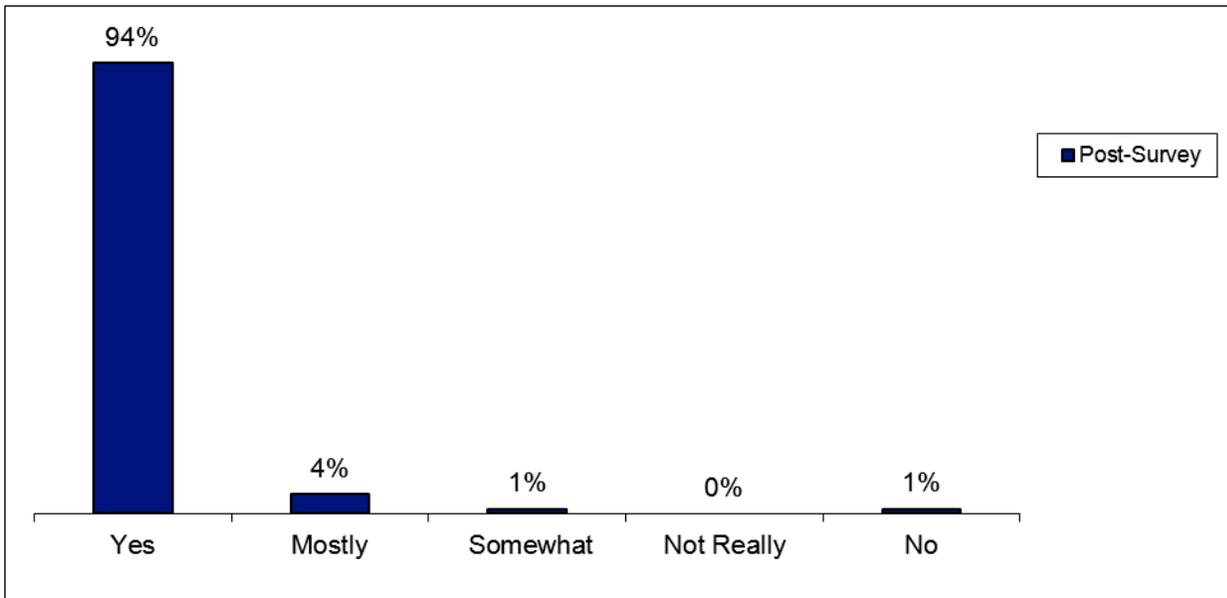


$t(653) = 7.08, p < .001$, statistically significant

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 321 students who completed the post-survey, 90% 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: incredible, awesome, fantastic, eye-opening, deep, enlightening, inspirational, awesome, the real deal, genuine, beautiful, worthwhile, life-changing and comfortable.

Quotes from participants include:

Power of Peace is a ...

- *gift that all students should get to attend.*
- *safe place to come to and feel free, loved, and welcomed.*
- *very touching experience that helps teens stop making bad decisions*
- *place where you can express yourself without being judged.*

Power of Peace helped me ...

- *learn about keep the peace socially and find peace within myself.*
- *feel empowered and gave me a whole new outlook about myself.*
- *break down barriers to better myself as a person.*
- *get in touch with myself and come to terms with who I am.*
- *evaluate my life and strengthen my mind and spirit.*
- *figure out there are better ways to resolve issues.*
- *feel better about myself because it made me realize that we are all alike in different ways.*
- *a lot with how to control my anger and be a peaceful person.*
- *see that everyone is going through something, not just me.*
- *stop and think about how making better choices in life can make a difference.*

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

Of the 321 students who completed the post-survey, 85% of them took the time to comment on how the Power of Peace program could be improved. Of that, the actual comments made by 75% 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 time to discuss more topics, make it longer than two days because for some people two days isn't enough time to open up, and publicize it more within all schools...*
- *more of a variety of different races of students in the same group, more physical activities and more often...*
- *more workshops, more 12th graders, more times per year, more stories, and more games ...*
- *smaller groups, more kids of different ages, more activities, more female facilitators, meet more often, and publicize the program...*
- *expand the program to reach more areas, more adult participation – especially telling their story, target kids who don't talk much to help them open up, and have the workshops year round...*

Discussion

The statement indicating the highest change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey (an increase of 25%) was Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me. The statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey (an increase of 5%) was Item 1: I respect myself (which moved from a high of 88% to 93%).

Conclusion

For a second consecutive year, 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. 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.