

Program Report 2014 for Hudson High School

Introduction

Michael Arterberry, the Founder and Executive Director of the Youth Voices Center, Inc., a non-profit organization that 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 2014 are presented in this report. The implementation of the program took place in twelve cycles (up from three cycles in 2013) during the course of the year.

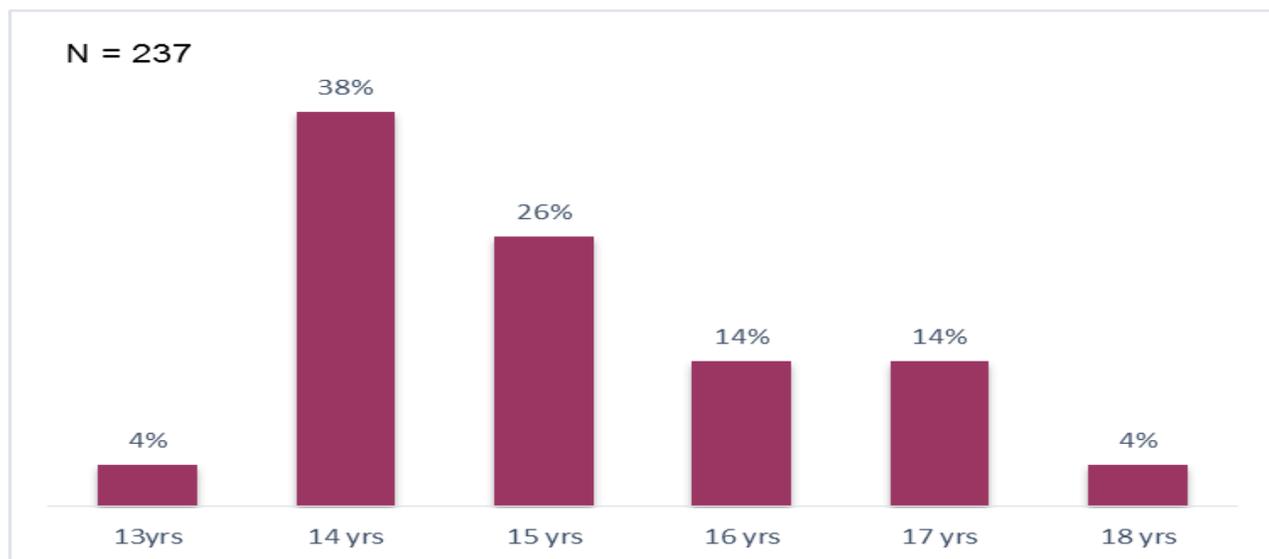
Program Description

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

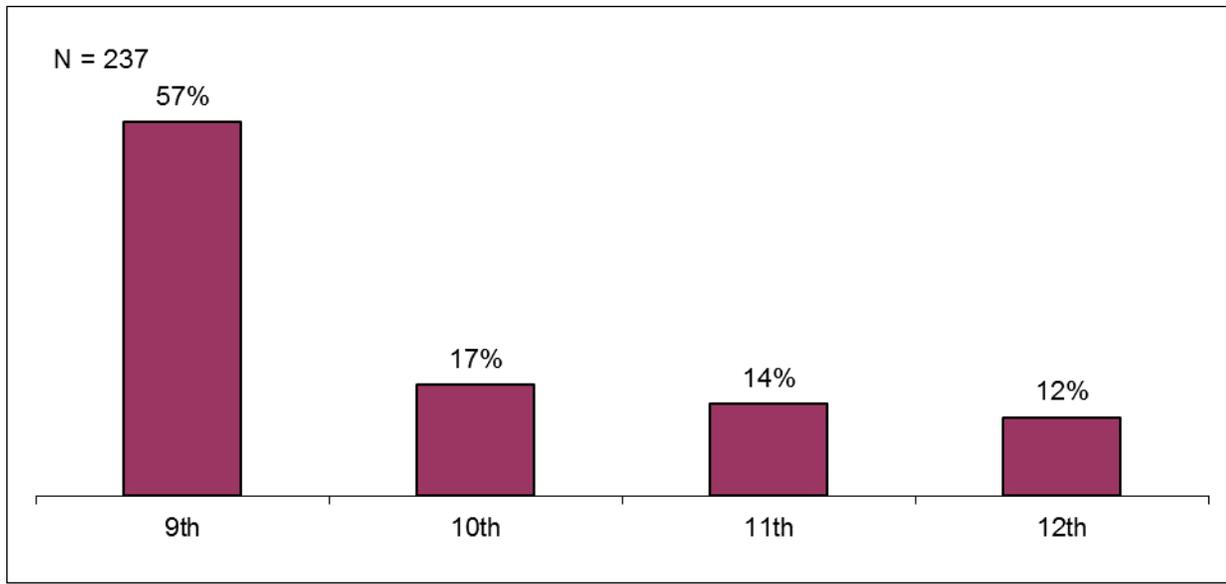
There were 237 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 133 boys (56%) and 104 girls (44%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 13 – 18. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



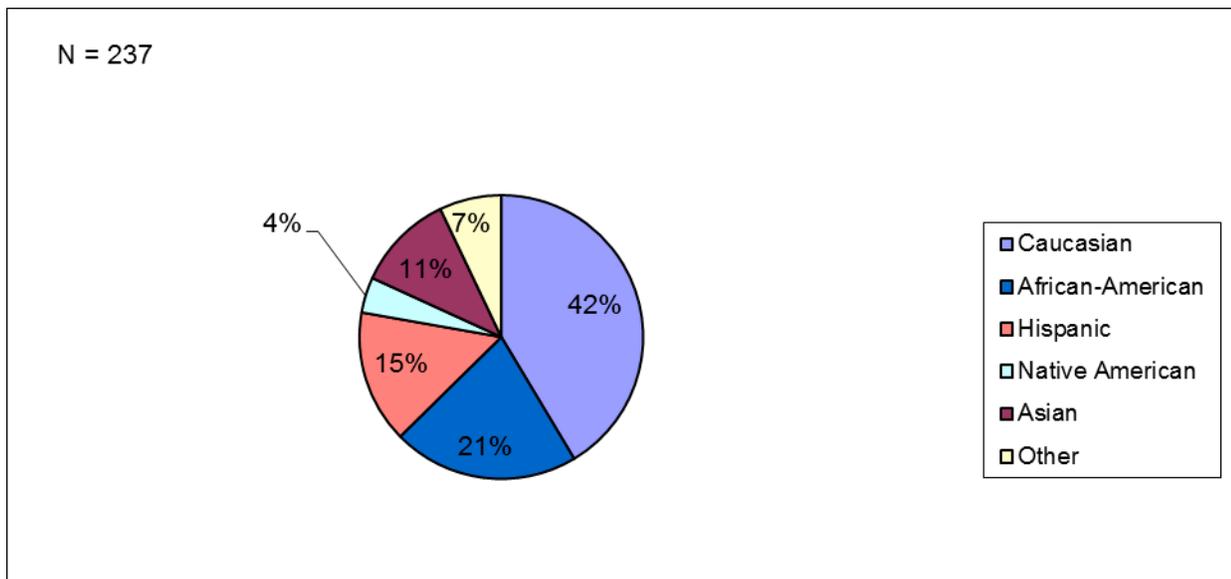
Just over one third (38%) of the participants were 14 years of age, followed by just over one quarter (26%) of participants 15 years of age.

Grade



The majority, over half (57%) of participants were in the 9th grade.

Ethnicity



Nearly half (42%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Caucasian, followed by just under one quarter identified their ethnicity as African-American (21%).

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 237 participants, 100% completed both the pre-survey and 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."

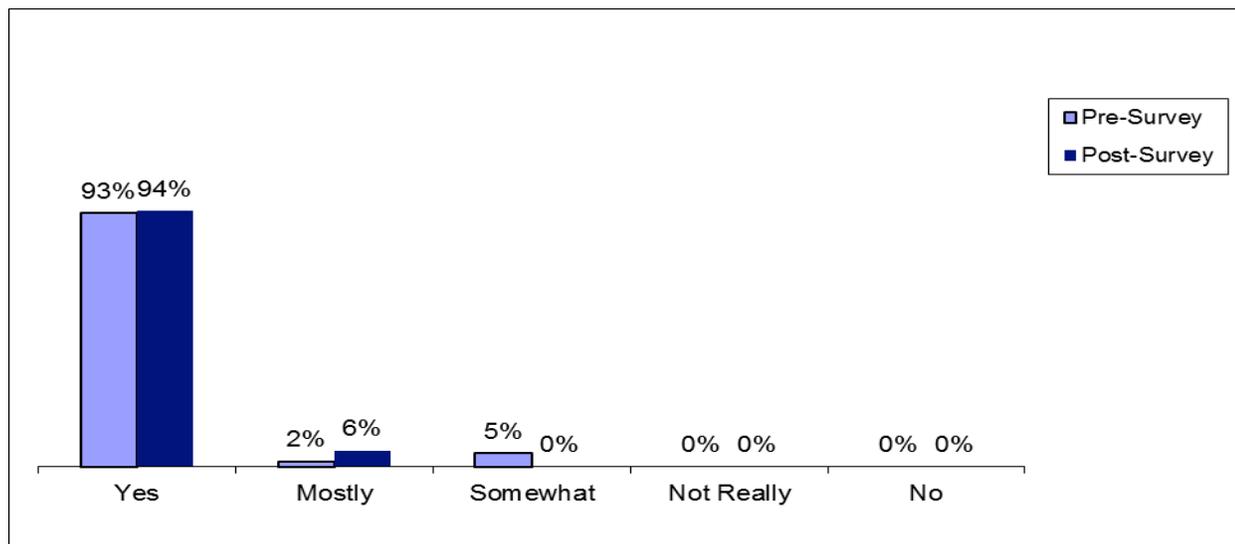
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, statistically significant ($p < .0001 - p < .005$) positive changes in attitudes were seen across the board on all six items. Data were analyzed using t-tests comparing pre-survey responses with post-survey responses.

Item 1: I respect myself.

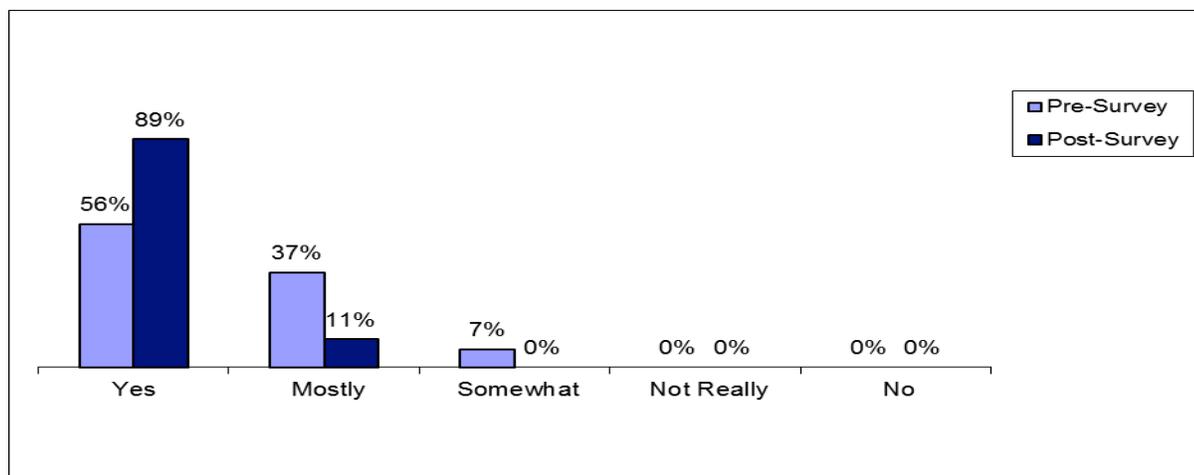
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 93% and at post-survey = 94%.



$t = 2.77, df = 473, p < .005 = \text{very statistically significant}$

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

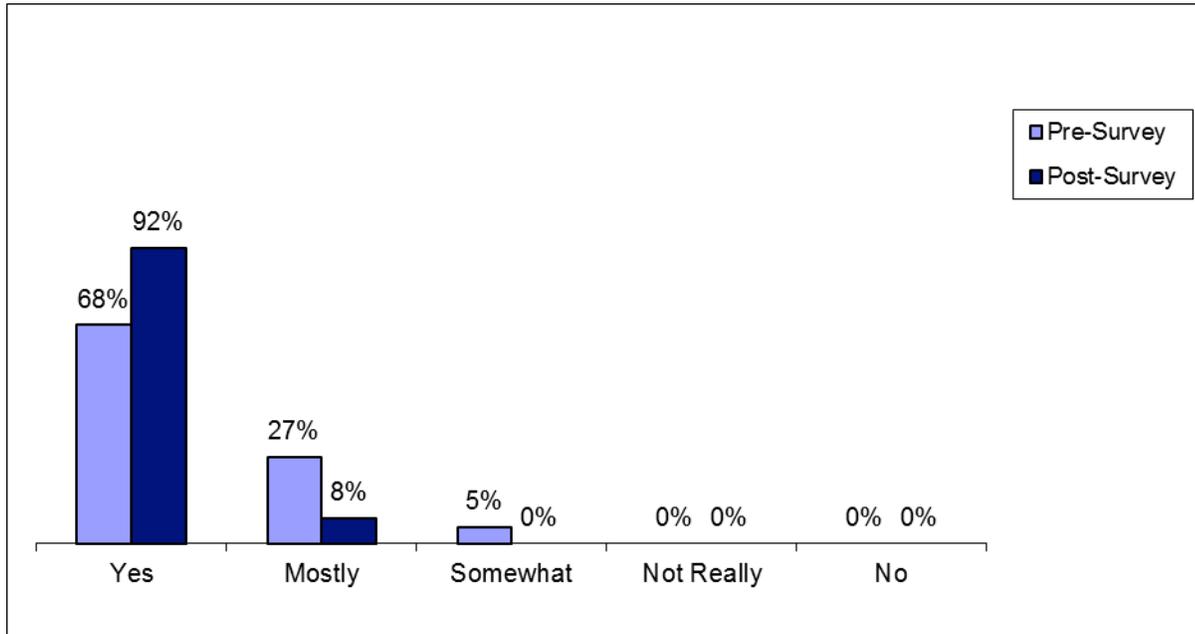
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 56% and at post-survey = 89%.



$t = 9.07, df = 470, p < .0001 = \text{extremely statistically significant}$

Item 3: I respect students different from me.

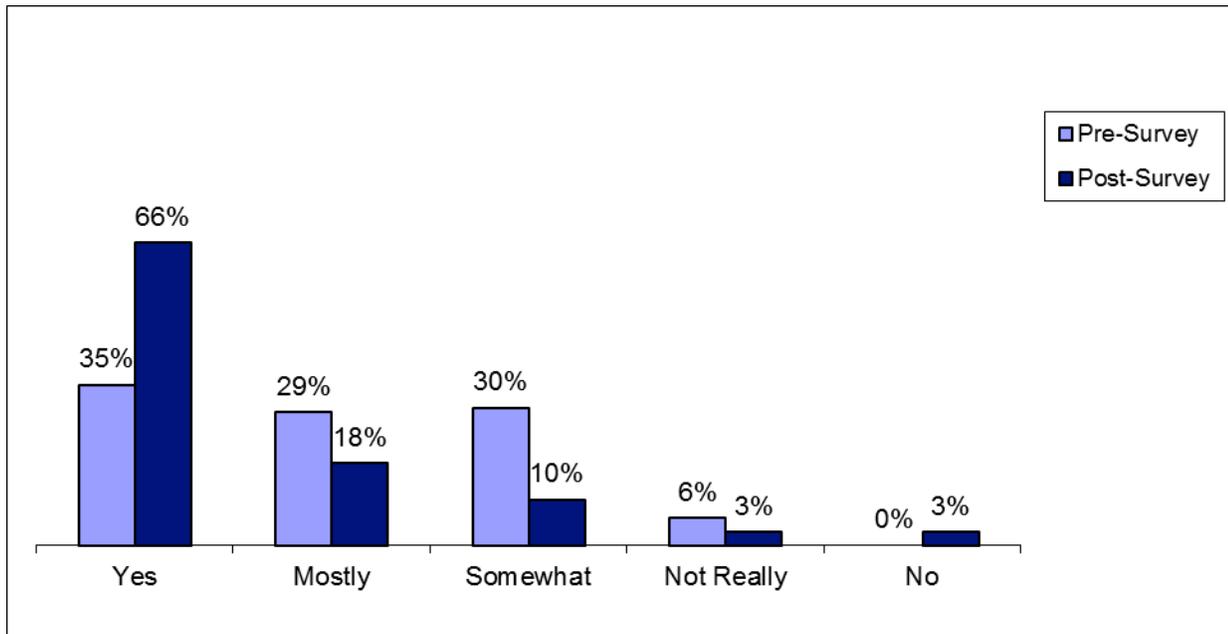
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 68% and at post-survey = 92%.



t = 6.37, df = 473, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant

Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

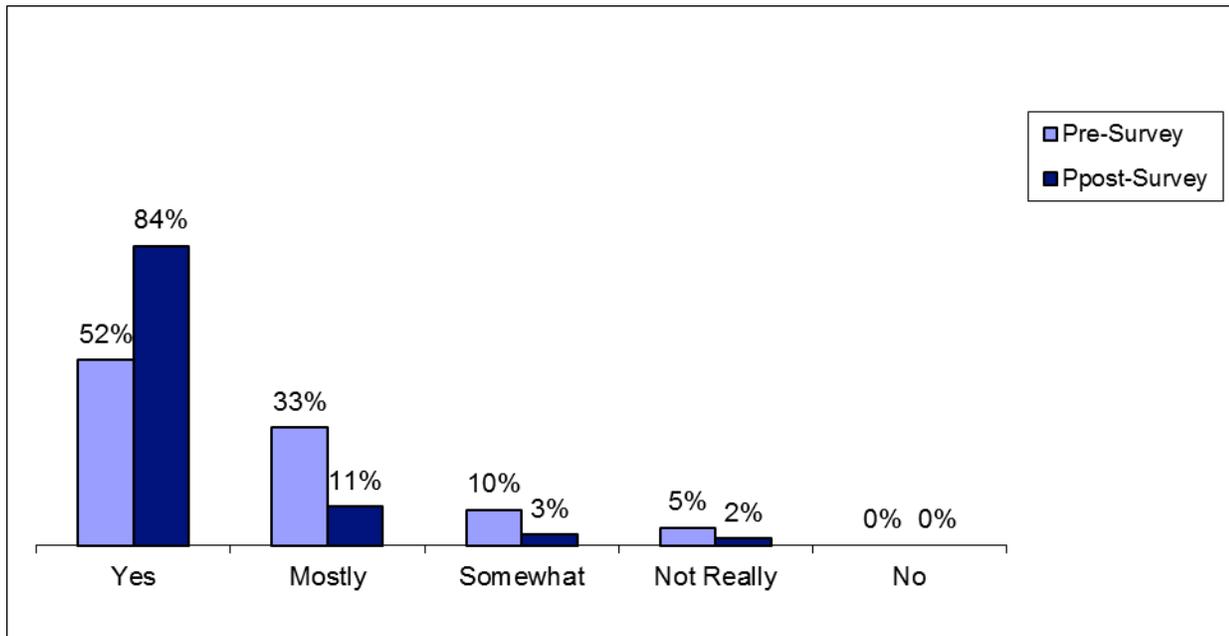
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 35% and at post-survey = 66%.



t = 5.54, df = 469, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant

Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

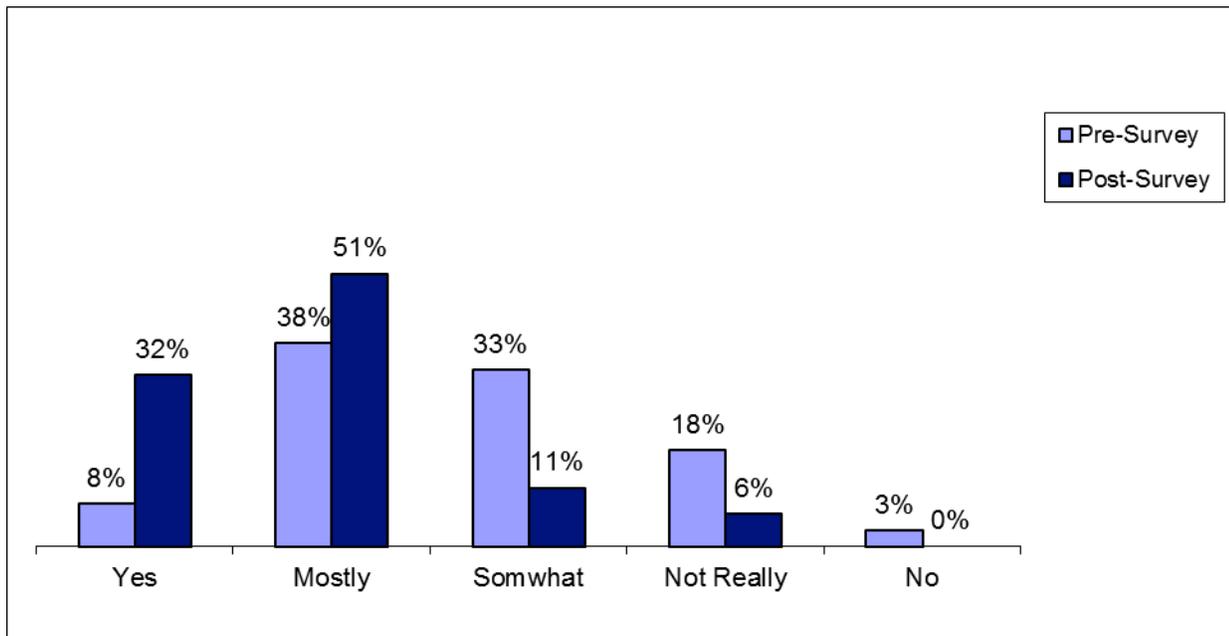
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 52% and at post-survey = 84%.



t = 6.61, df = 472, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant

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

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 8% and at post-survey = 32%.

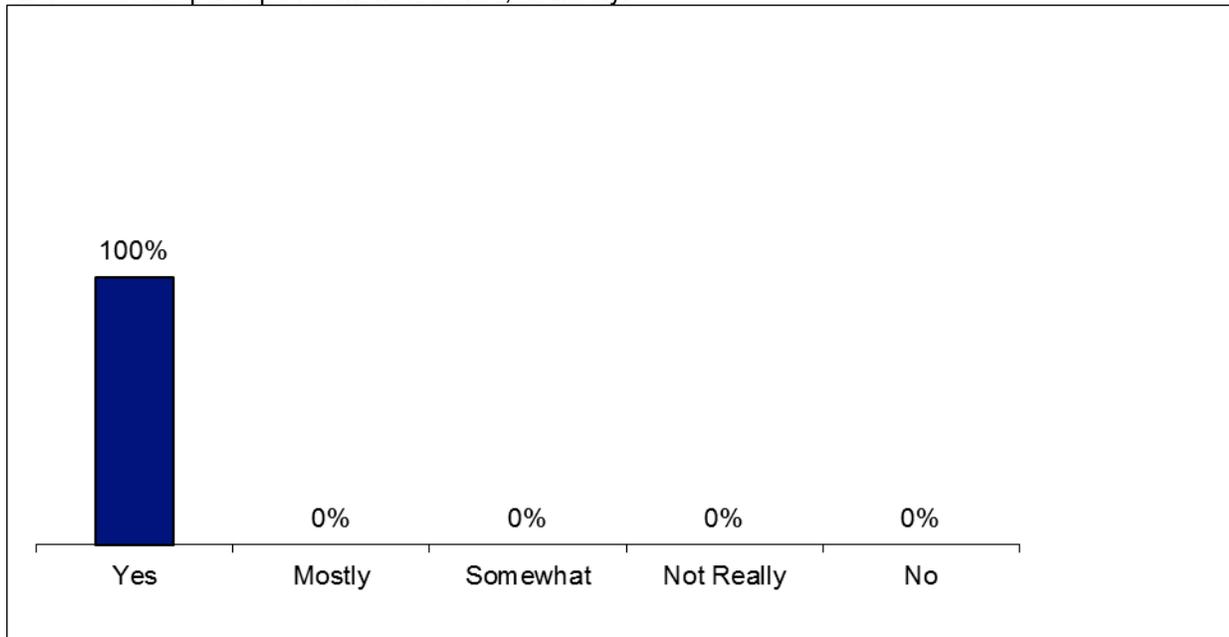


t = 7.39, df = 472, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant

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.

All 100% of the participants answered "Yes, definitely."



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

Of the 237 students who completed the post-survey, 95% of them took the time to comment on how that 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 amazing, well rounded, eye opening, fun, inspirational, excellent, uplifting and empowering.

Quotes from participants include:

- Power of Peace helps students to bond.*
- I am very proud to be a part of the Power of Peace program.*
- It opens our eyes to other people and how everyone is different but still we have similar struggles.*
- I would like to do this type of work when I graduate.*
- I think it should be mandatory for all students before they graduate.*
- Power of Peace felt like a safe place to express my thoughts and feelings.*
- I hope we will have the opportunity to take Level II workshops.*
- It has given me the ambition to be positive about myself.*
- I learned a lot about people that I never expected to get to know.*
- It gives you the opportunity to let people see you for who you really are and that feels good.*
- Power of Peace gives people hope for the future.*
- It teaches us how to respect ourselves and other people.*
- This program is such a blessing!*
- It was a great experience and changed my views on a lot of things.*
- Power of Peace help people to see the good in others.*
- Power of Peace helps people to express emotions.*
- Everyone has a story and it is important to get to know people instead of judging them.*
- Power of Peace teaches trust and respect.*
- I think this program could save lives across the country.*

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

Of the 237 students who completed the post-survey, 96% of them took the time to comment on improving the Power of Peace experience. The majority, over 94% 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:

- add more sessions
- implement the program school wide
- more games and activities
- fewer uncomfortable subjects
- provide a kit of materials so students and teachers can reconnect occasionally during the school year
- make it into a school group or club, make it longer
- make it an afterschool program
- arrange follow up for some of the serious issues raised by students

Discussion

The one statement indicating the highest change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me (an increase of 33% from 56% to 89%). The statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 1: I respect myself (an increase of 1% from 93% to 94%).

Conclusion

The results presented in this report indicate that the Power of Peace program did have a statistically significant positive effect in changing student attitudes in from pre-survey to post-survey in all six areas.

- I respect myself.
- I am willing to talk to a student different from me.
- I respect students different from me.
- I believe violence will not resolve conflict.
- I am aware of alternatives to violence.
- I think I know how other people see me.

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.