

Program Report Spring 2015 for New Lebanon High School

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 2015 are presented in this report. The implementation of the program took place in one cycle during the month of February.

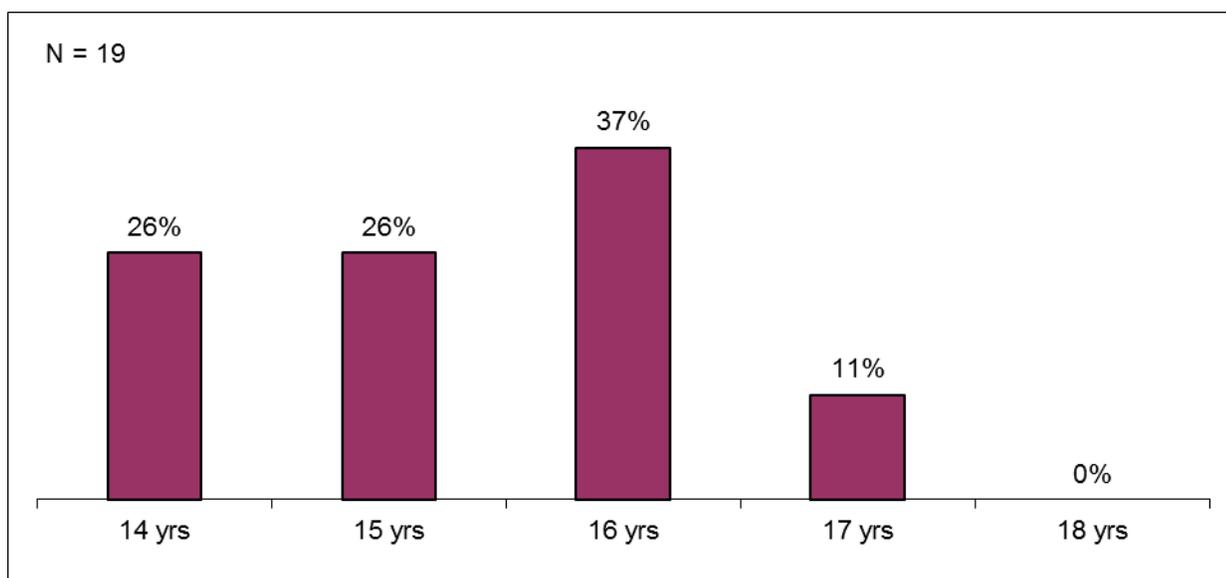
Program Description

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

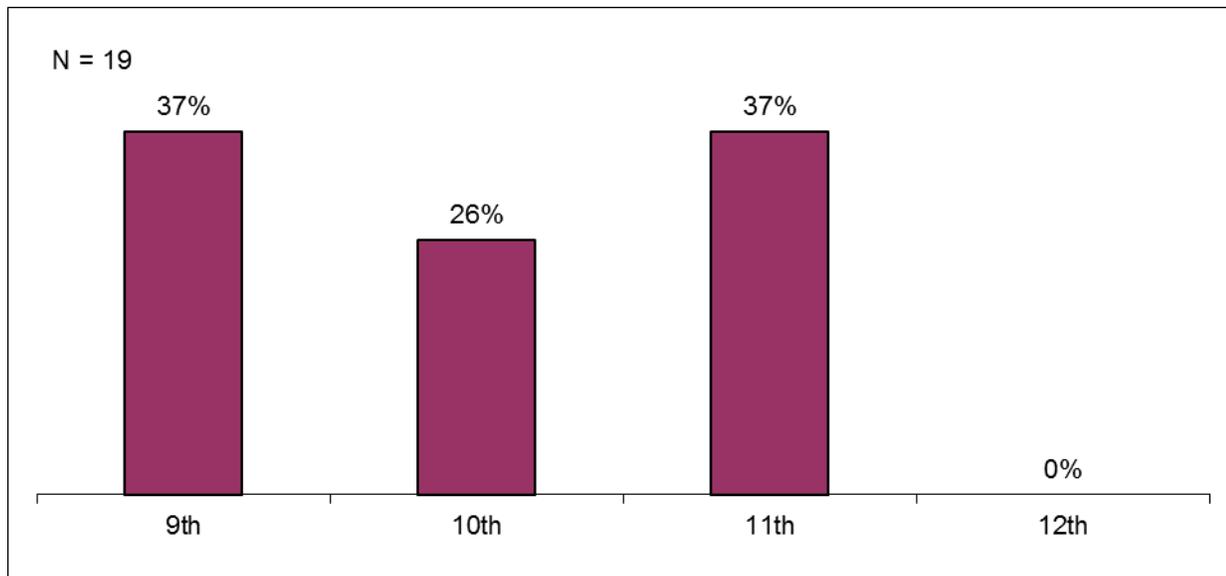
There were 19 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 6 boys (32%) and 13 girls (68%) in grades 9 through 11 and ranging in age from 14 – 17. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



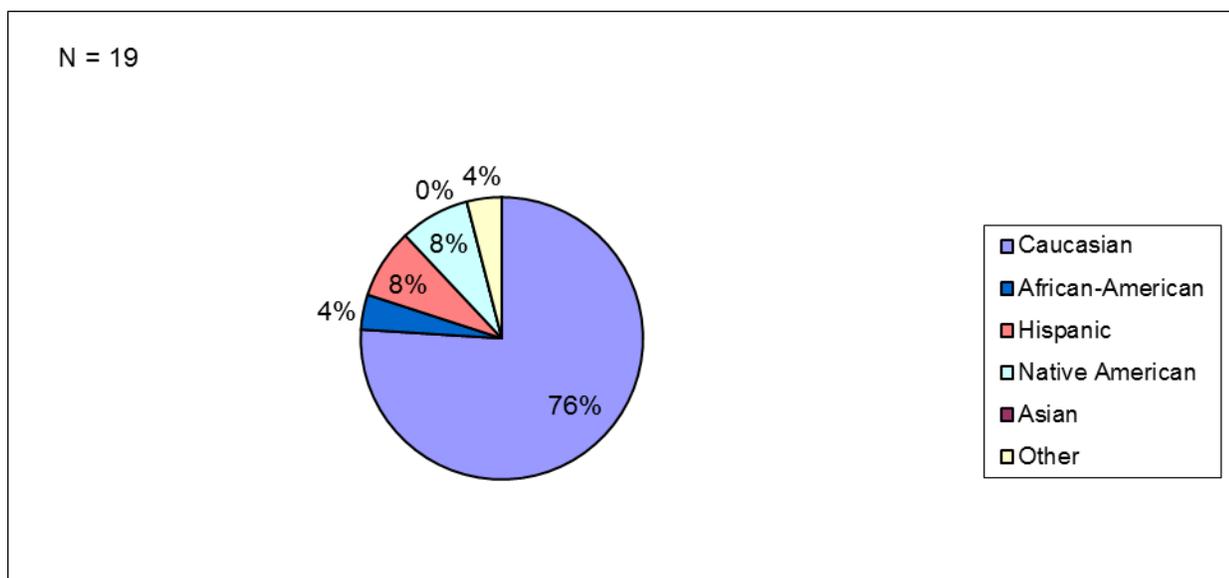
Just over a third (37%) of the participants were 16 years of age followed by just over a quarter (26%) of participants ages 14 and 15 respectively.

Grade



Just over one-third (37%) of participants were in the 9th and 11th grades respectively.

Ethnicity



Just over three quarters (76%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Caucasian.

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 19 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."

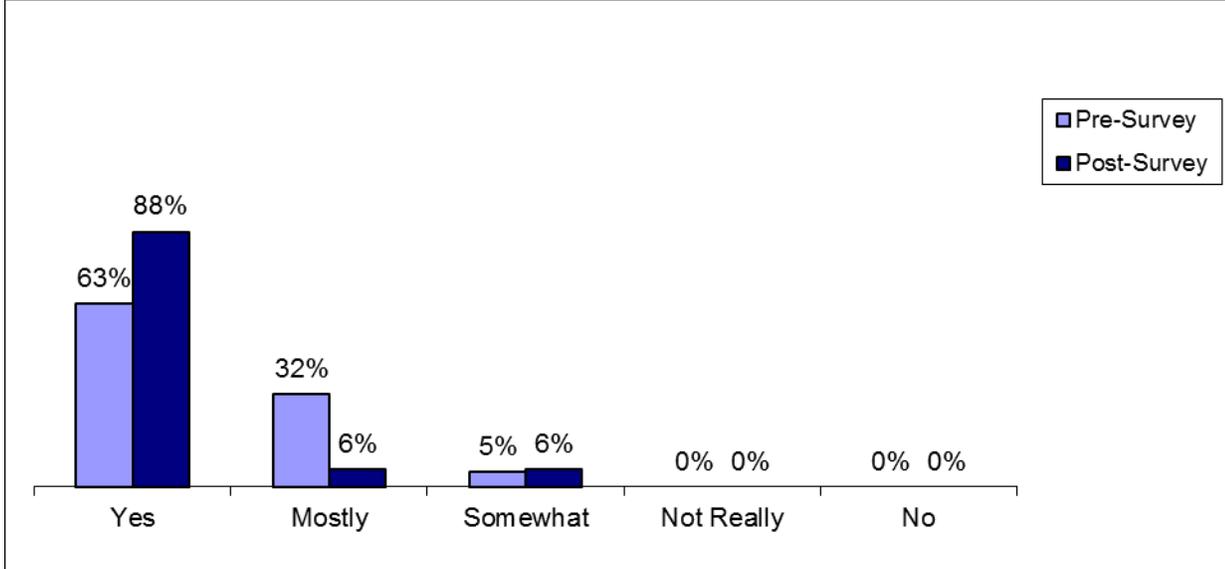
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, positive changes in attitudes were seen on four of the six items. Data were unable to be analyzed using t-tests to compare pre-survey responses with post-survey responses due to the small N = 19.

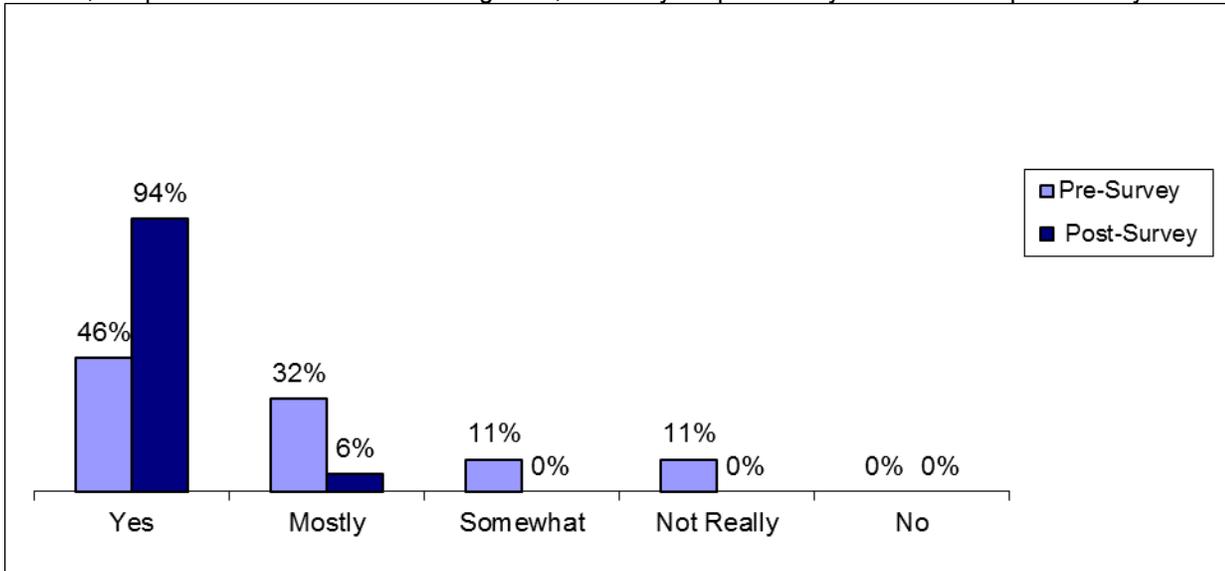
Item 1: I respect myself.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 63% and at post-survey = 88%.



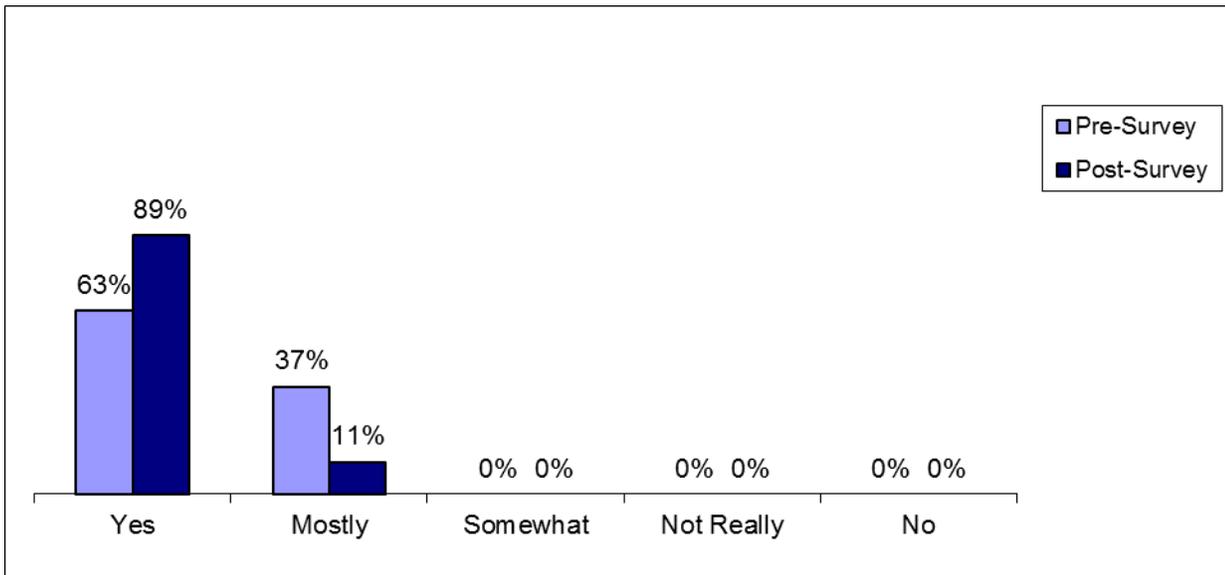
Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 46% and at post-survey = 94%.



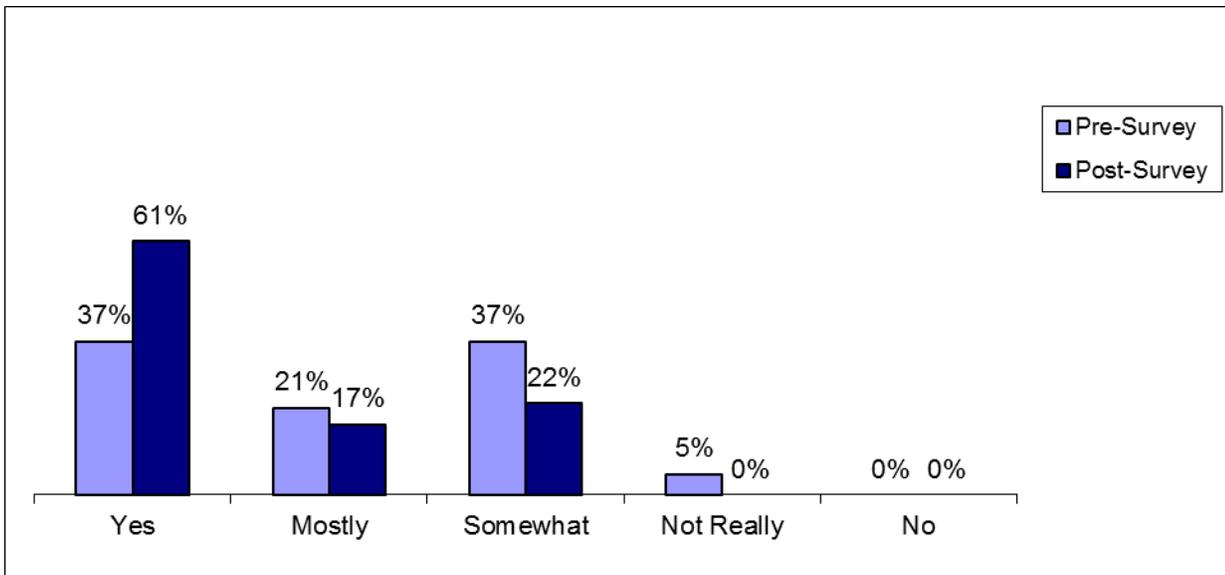
Item 3: I respect students different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 63% and at post-survey = 89%.



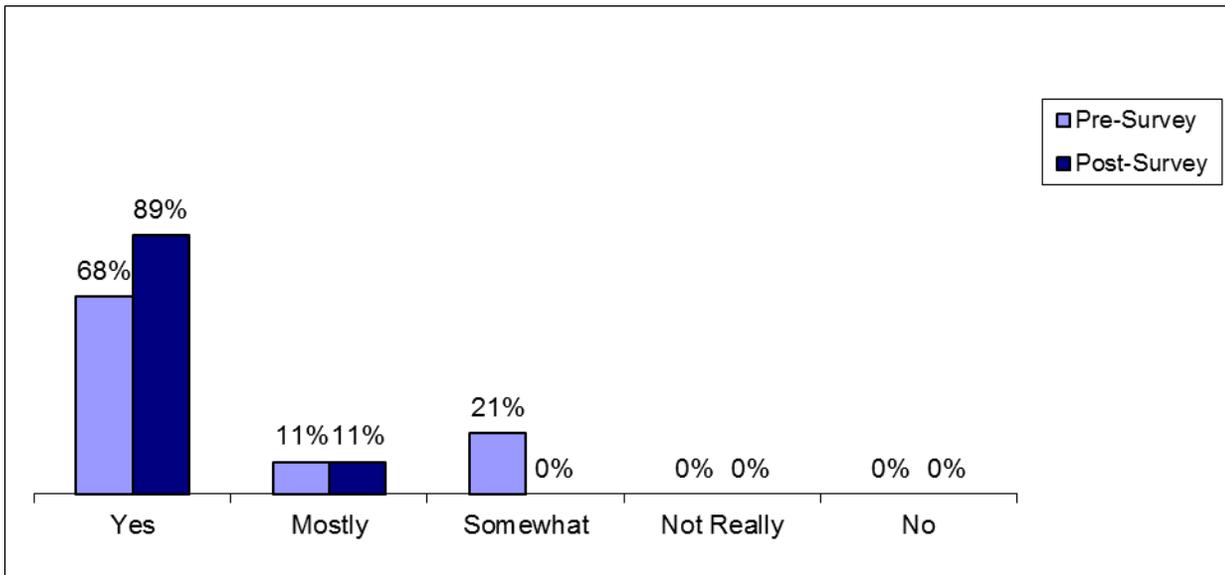
Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 37% and at post-survey = 61%.



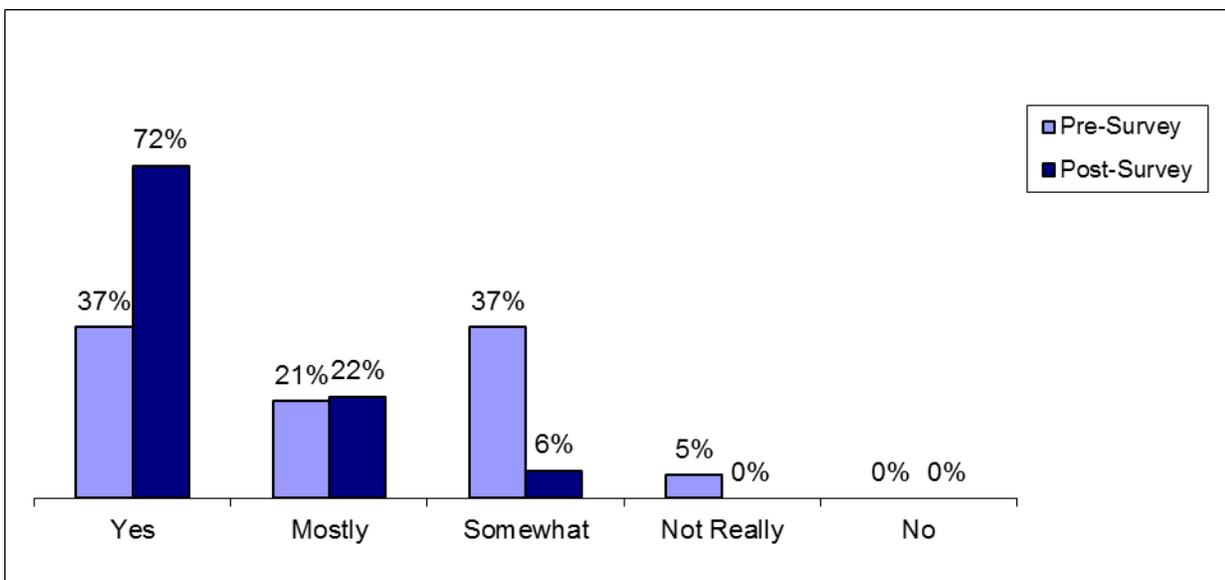
Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 68% and at post-survey = 89%.



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

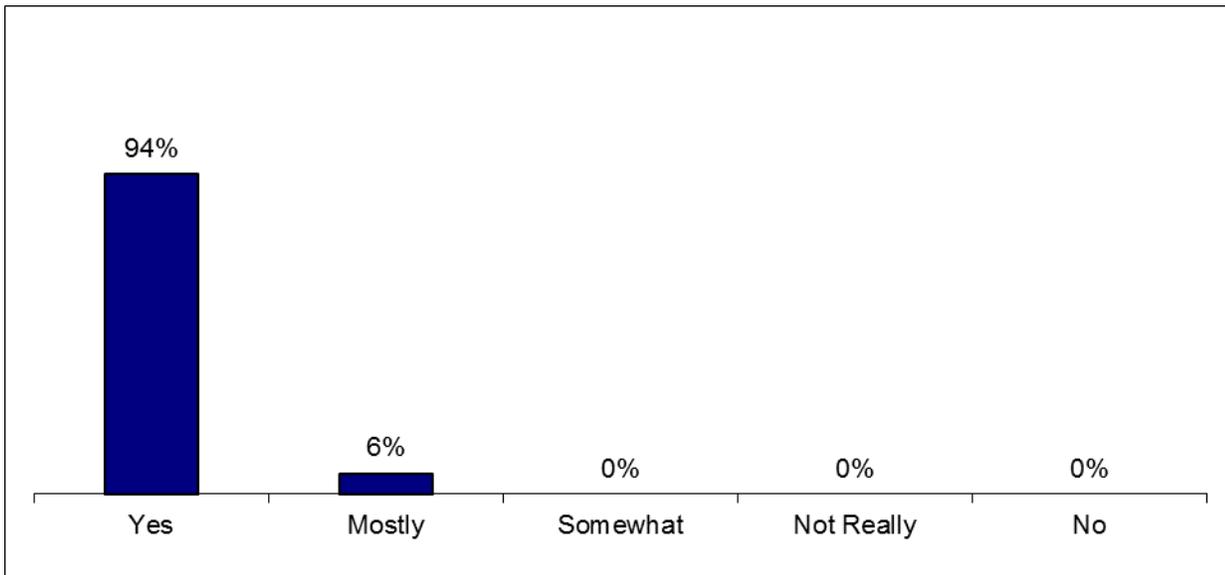
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 37% and at post-survey = 72%.



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 vast majority, 80% of the participants answered "Yes, definitely."



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

Of the nineteen 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: inspiring, powerful, eye opening and transformative.

Quotes from participants include:

- *I feel like it was an emotional roller coaster with fun activities*
- *Everyone should experience this!*
- *I honestly love and appreciate this so much and THANK YOU!*
- *The Power of Peace has made me realize how to find myself and how I can be a better person*
- *It has had a larger impact on me than I thought it would*
- *I think it's great to give kids opportunities to talk about the problems that they have*
- *Power of Peace was a very helpful program*
- *It's a great way for kids feeling down to pick themselves back up*
- *It gives kids a chance to speak without judgement*
- *Love, love, love! I wish we could do this once a month (Adult participant)*
- *I feel like it created a forum for kids to feel safe;*
- *It created an environment safe for students to express feelings (Adult participant)*
- *It is amazing to see the transformation of the students from the beginning of day 1 to the end of day 2 (Adult participant)*

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

Of the nineteen students who completed the post-survey, 90% of them took the time to comment on improving the Power of Peace experience. The majority 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:

- Focus more on the individual
- Make it longer than 2 days
- Everyone should have to take and be part of this powerful program. The world would be a better place.
- I think perhaps the role playing exercise could be more useful if the guidelines were more specific

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 48%). The one statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence (an increase of 21%).

Conclusion

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