

Program Report Spring 2015 for Palisades Prep Middle 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 March.

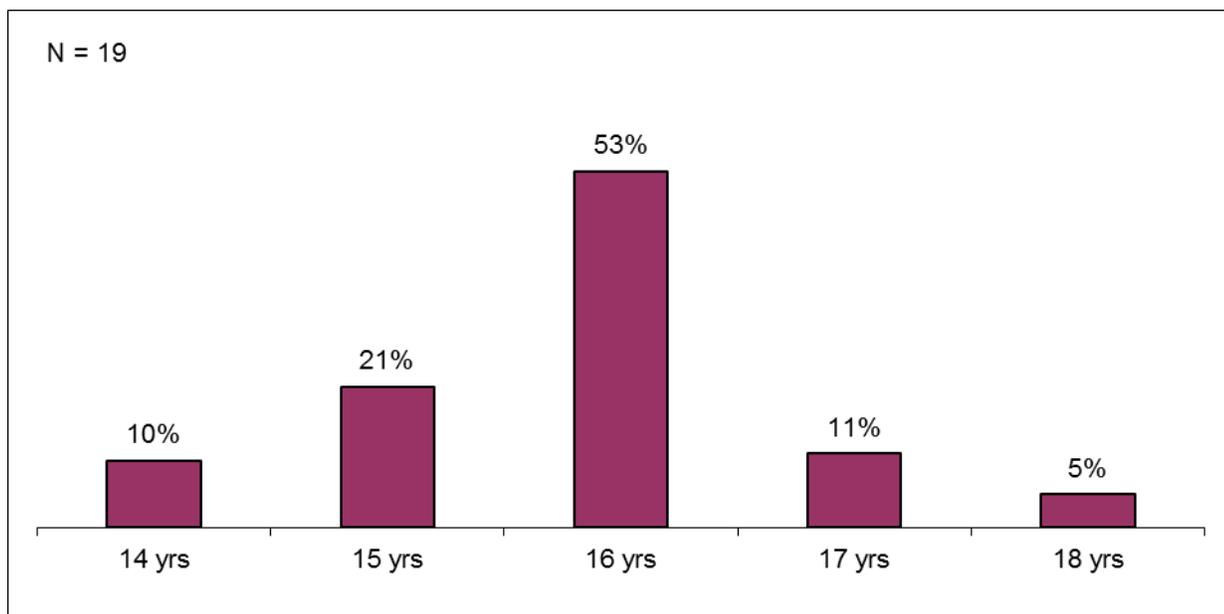
Program Description

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

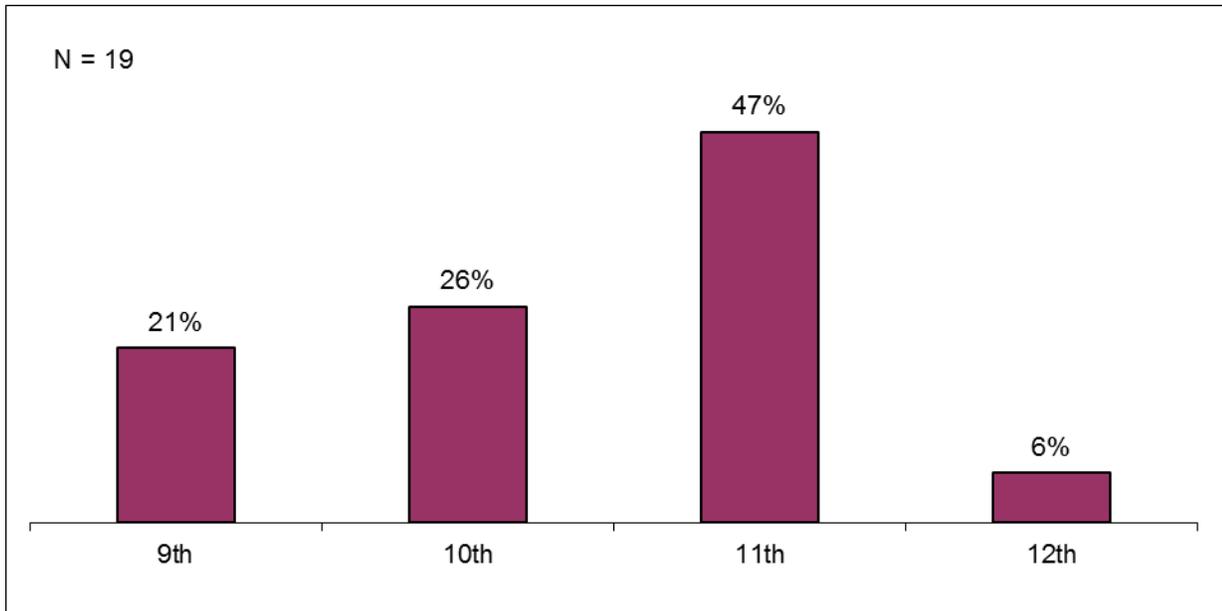
There were 19 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 7 boys (37%) and 12 girls (63%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 14 – 18. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



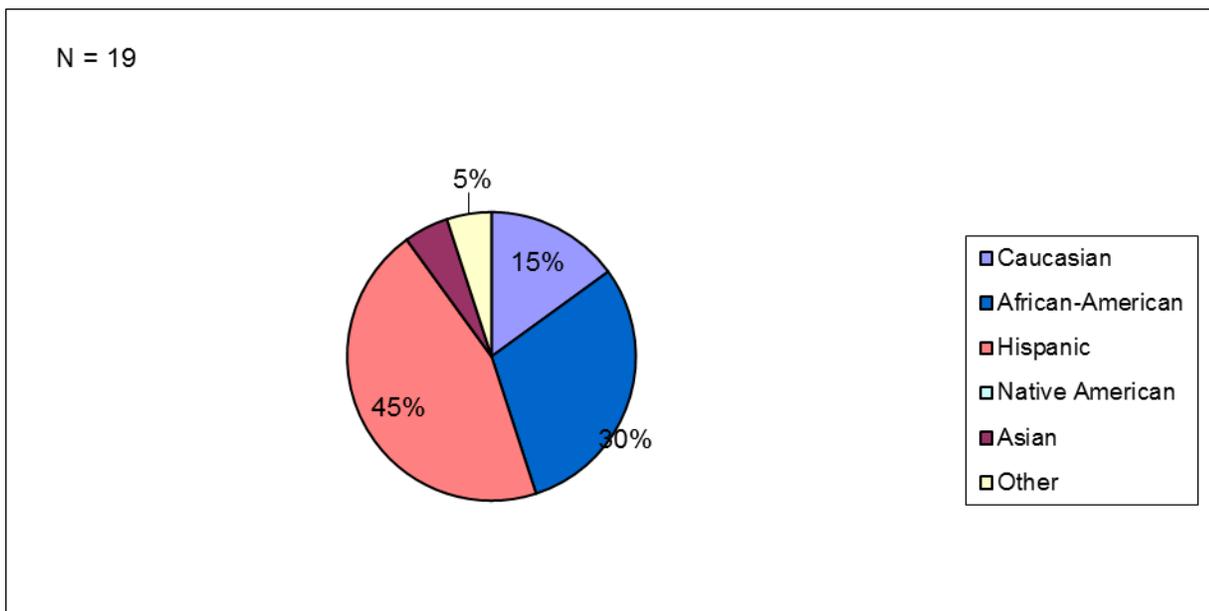
Just over half (53%) of the participants were 16 years of age.

Grade



Nearly half (47%) of participants were in the 11th grade.

Ethnicity



Nearly half (45%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Hispanic, followed by just under one third identified their ethnicity African-American (30%).

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.”

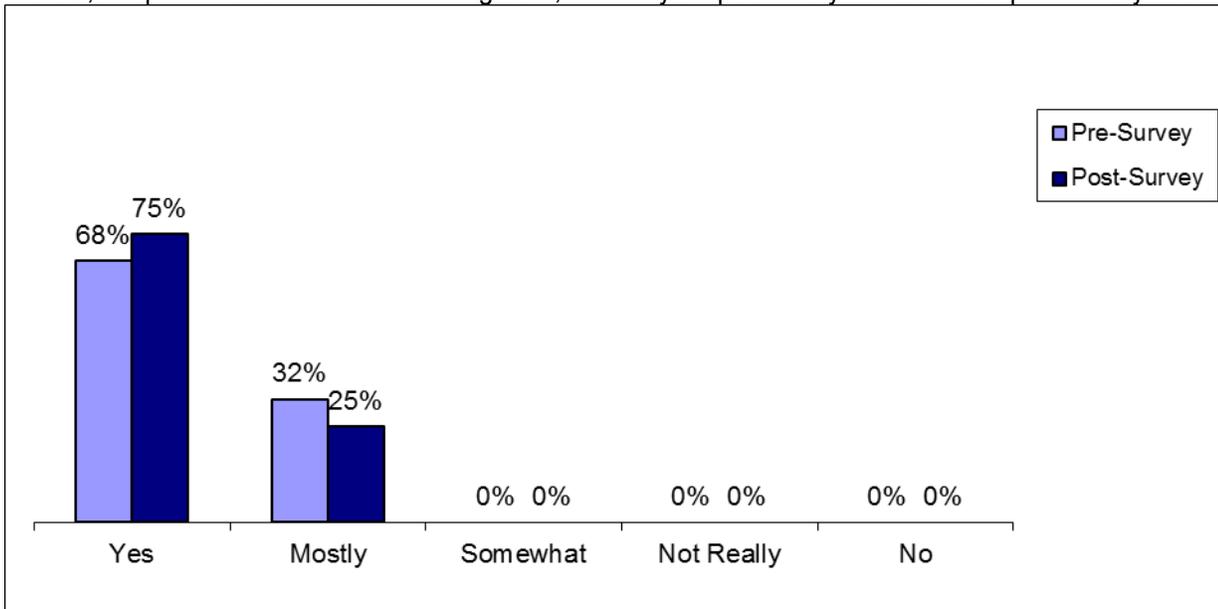
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

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.

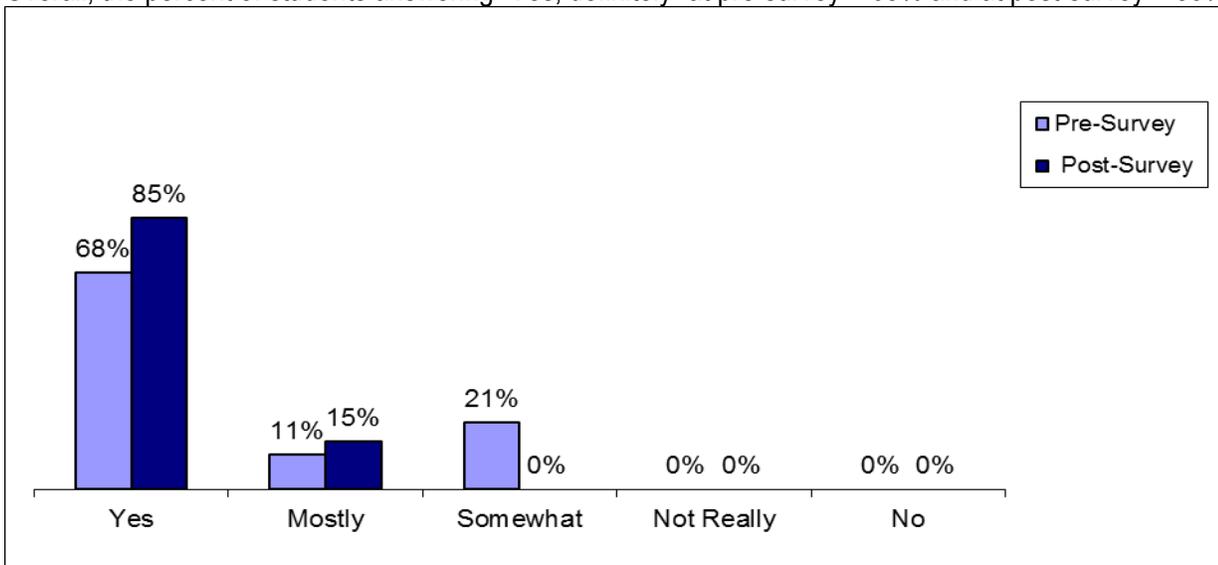
Item 1: I respect myself.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 68% and at post-survey = 75%.



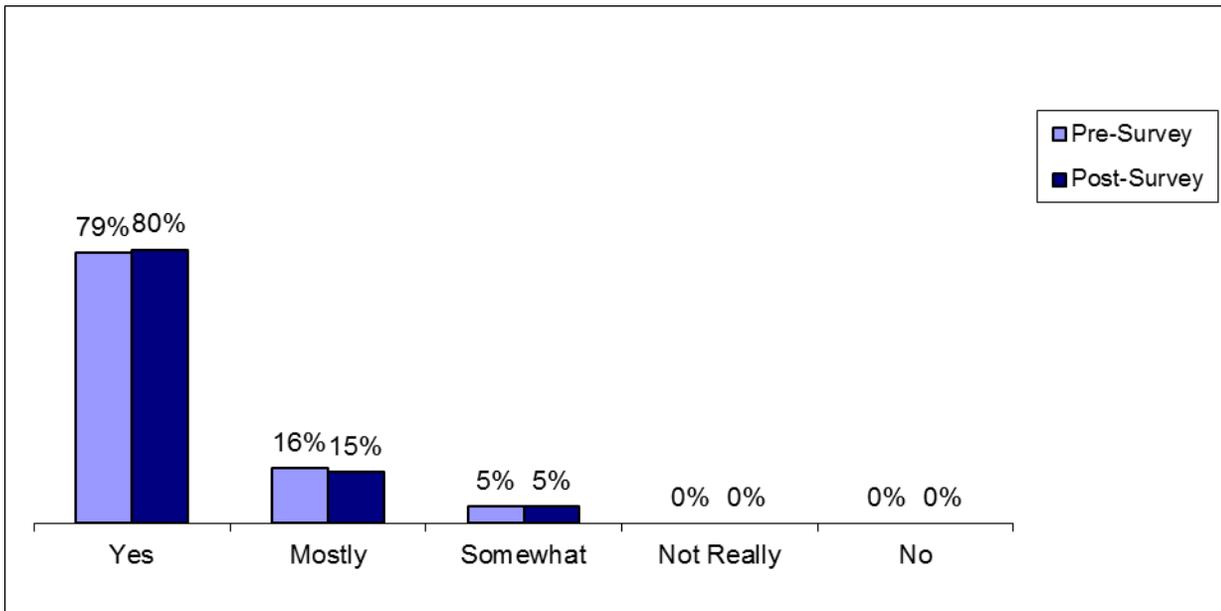
Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 68% and at post-survey = 86%.



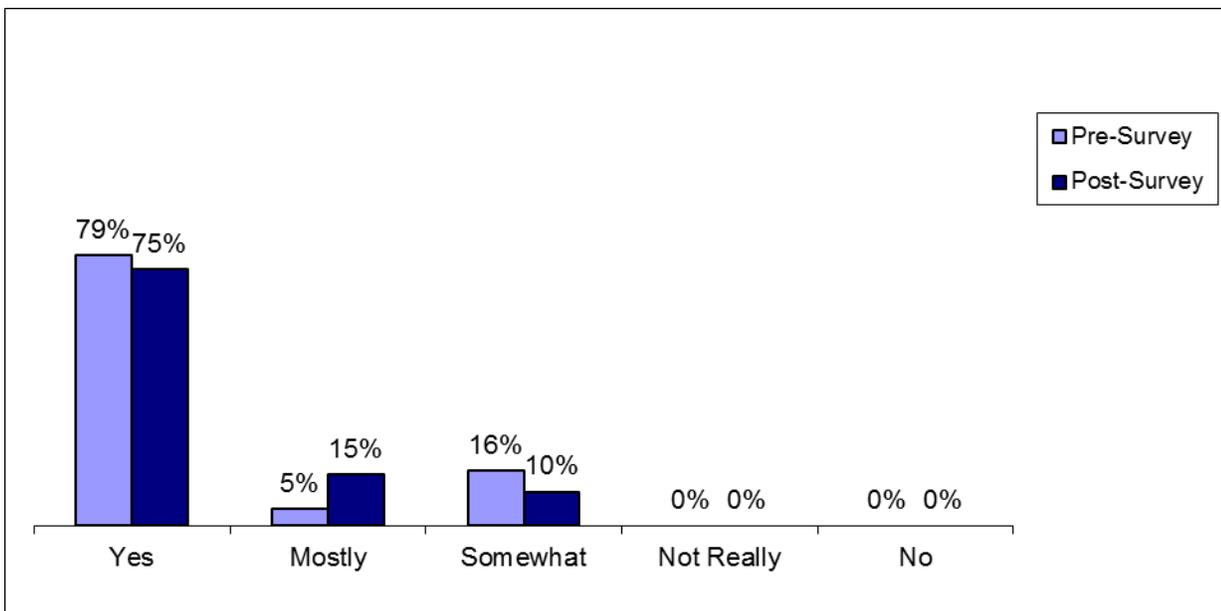
Item 3: I respect students different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 79% and at post-survey = 80%.



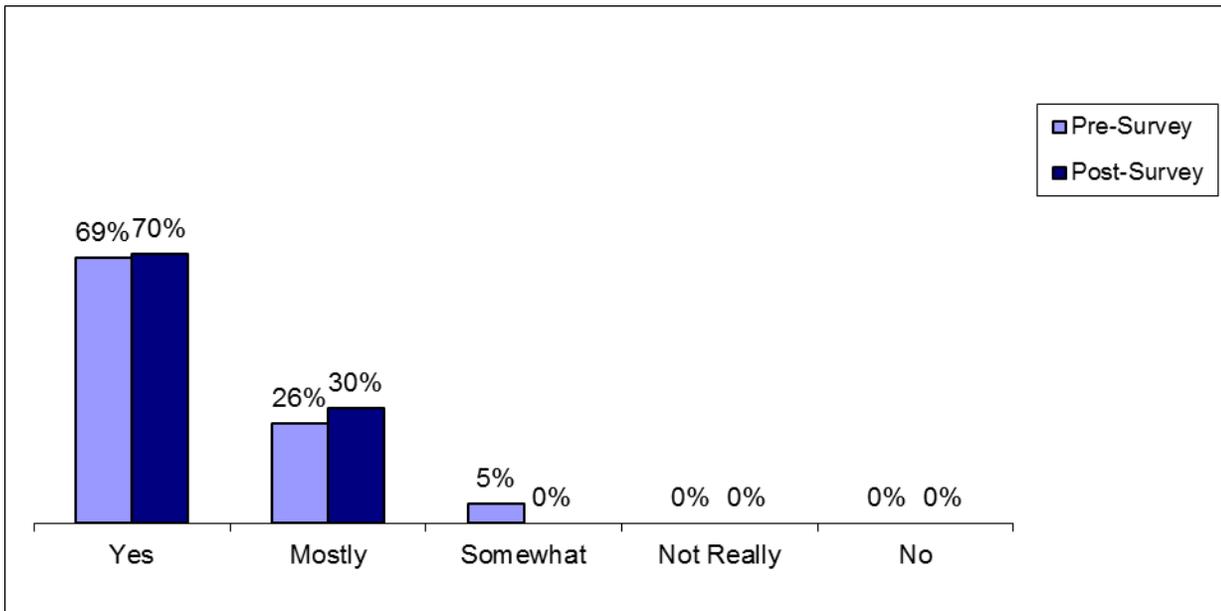
Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 79% and at post-survey = 75%.



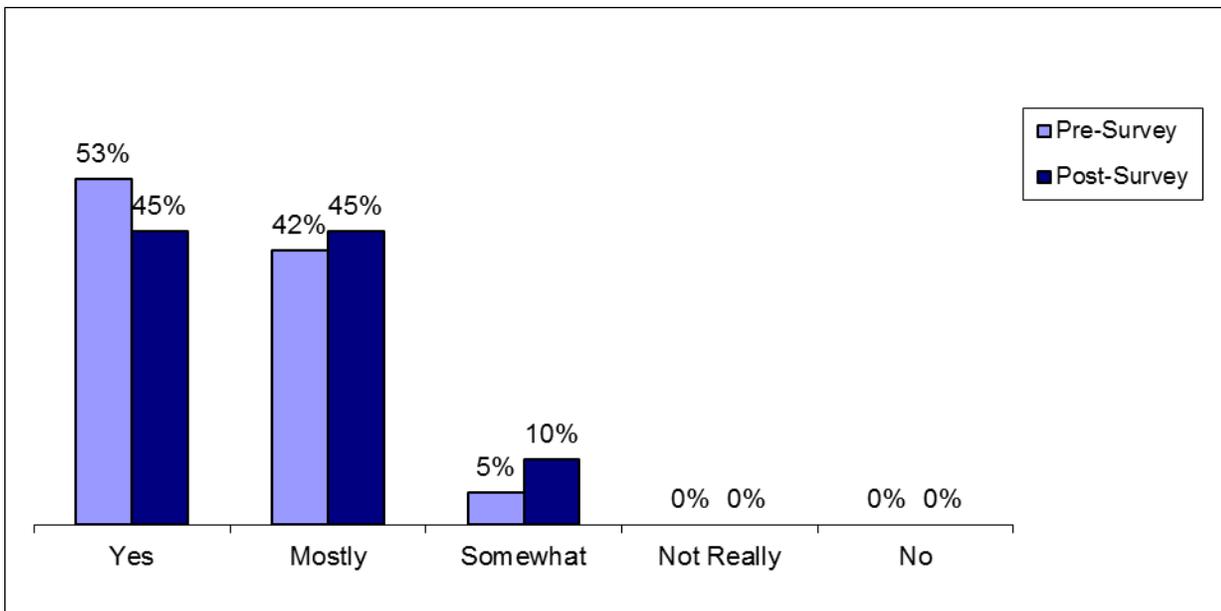
Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 69% and at post-survey = 70%.



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

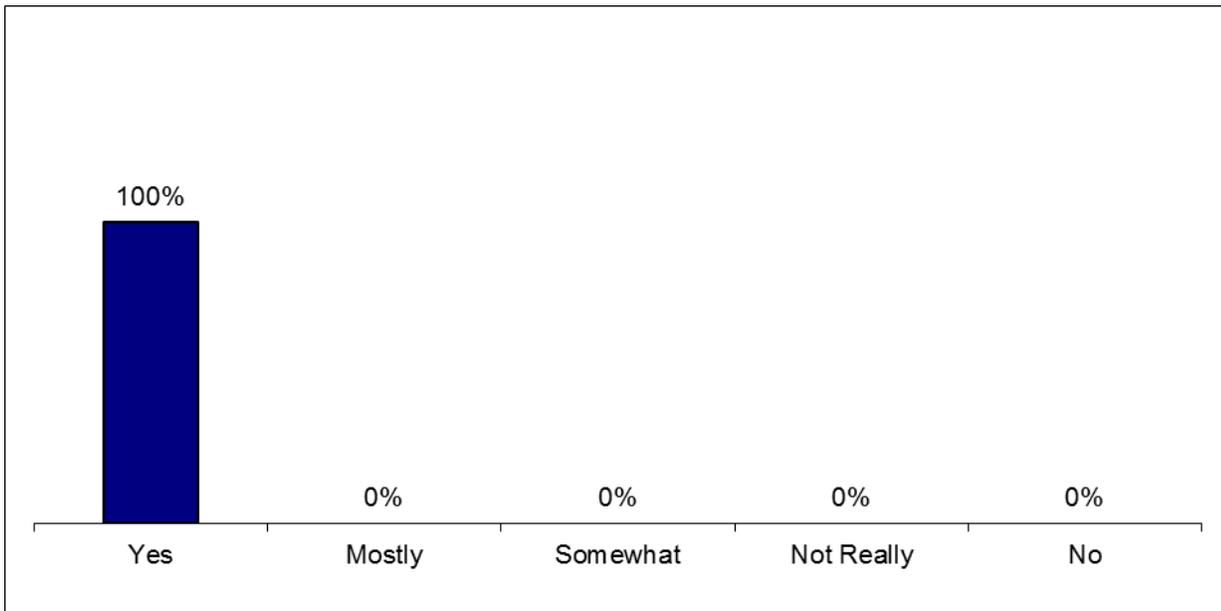
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 53% and at post-survey = 45%.



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 nineteen students who completed the post-survey, 100% 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 healing, helpful, calming, eye-opening, thought provoking, and an endless ripple of peace.

Quotes from participants include:

- *I was able to be more open and honest with people I never met*
- *It makes people trust and feel comfortable around others. I feel like Power of Peace can make everyone unit for a better community*
- *It helped me to become a great person and to open up to others*
- *It brought a weight off my shoulders. It made me happy for people to understand me and them.*
- *It was beyond amazing*
- *Everyone was able to open up and respect each other*
- *To me that's really important and I appreciated the confidentiality*
- *The Power of Peace taught me that I need to take control of myself and drive my own car*
- *I feel that I have learned a lot and change my thoughts about how people view me and how I view others*
- *It showed that even good kids that don't act out have issues, it's that some just can handle it*
- *The program gave me the knowledge to overcome the difficulties of life*
- *I like it because it helps people both look at others and themselves and get to know one another*
- *This group definitely opened my eyes to the kids in my school*
- *I met new people and understood their slang*
- *It was nice to be in an environment where everyone listened*
- *It allowed everyone to express our emotions and become vulnerable without judgement*

- *The Power of Peace was able to bring what teens needed...a method of expression, healing and connection (Adult participant)*
- *Very positive. The instructors were enthusiastic and open, which ideally set the tone. I was most impressed that some students were able to answer so honestly. I'm confident that this has improved student-police relations (Adult participant - Yonkers PD)*
- *I think this was an amazing opportunity for our students. The presenters were dynamic, readily established rapport with some of our most defensive students. I thought involved the police officers added an invaluable lens and opened the students to different perspectives. I feel that the students have grown and evolved through this experience (Adult participant)*
- *I feel that the Power of Peace really brought the police and the community together. I really felt that you found a way to allow the youth to open up where in other situations they wouldn't (Adult participant - Yonkers PD)*
- *I like the way the kids opened up. The program could be useful in getting kids together that may not normally hang out with one another (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, 100% 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:

- *Make sure everyone who needs help can join. Make Power of Peace get around for all generations*
- *Invite more students*
- *Come back for a second round to see any improvement would be great*
- *Make smaller groups and smaller settings and people will have a better experience*
- *Go back to the same schools and continue*
- *Get into more schools*
- *Extending the service to the school regularly*
- *Teens need this*
- *A few students continually interrupted others with joking, unnecessary questions and snide remarks. Please cut them off sooner. Also, our group was too big for the blanket game.*

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 17%). There were two statements indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey: Item 3: I respect students different from me (an increase of 1%), and Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence (an increase of 1%).

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.