

Program Report Spring 2015 for Peekskill 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 March.

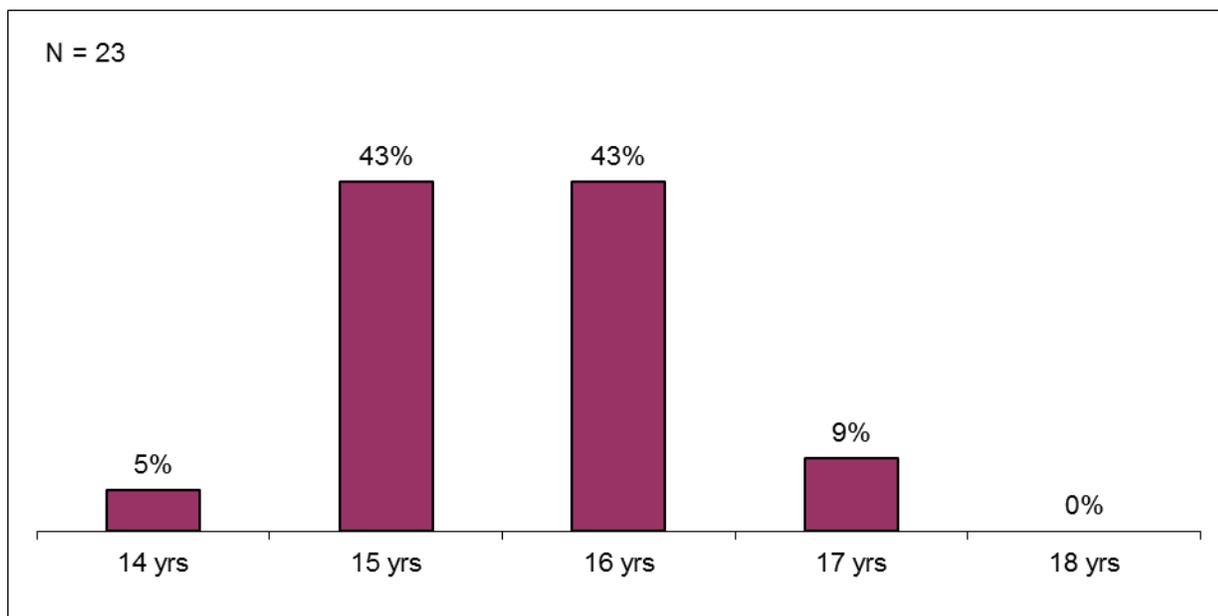
Program Description

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

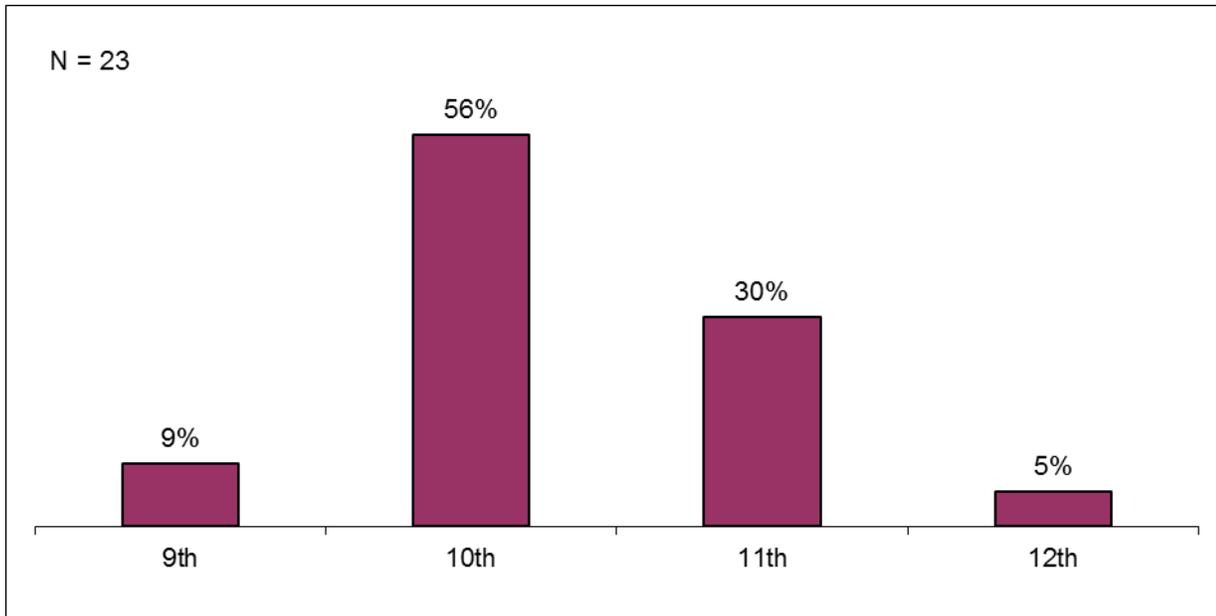
There were 23 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 14 boys (61%) and 9 girls (39%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 14 – 17. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



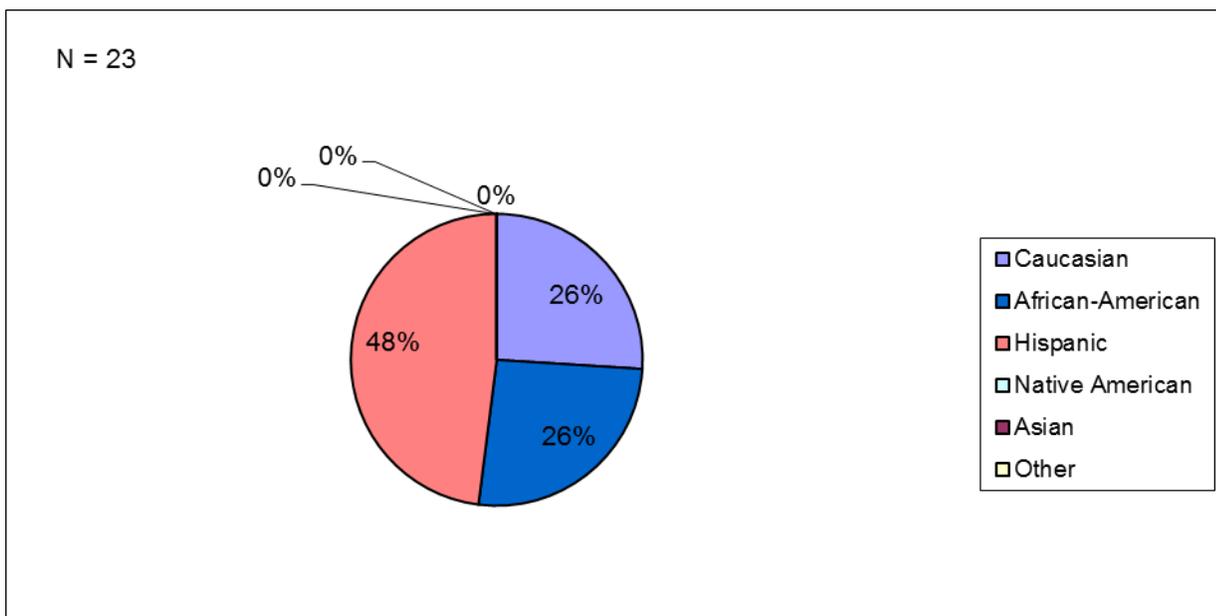
Nearly half the participants were either 15 or 16 years of age.

Grade



Over half (56%) of participants were in the 10th grade, followed by nearly one-third (30%) in the 11th grade.

Ethnicity



Nearly half (48%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Hispanic, followed by just over a quarter who identified their ethnicity as either Caucasian (26%) or African-American (26%) respectively.

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 23 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.”

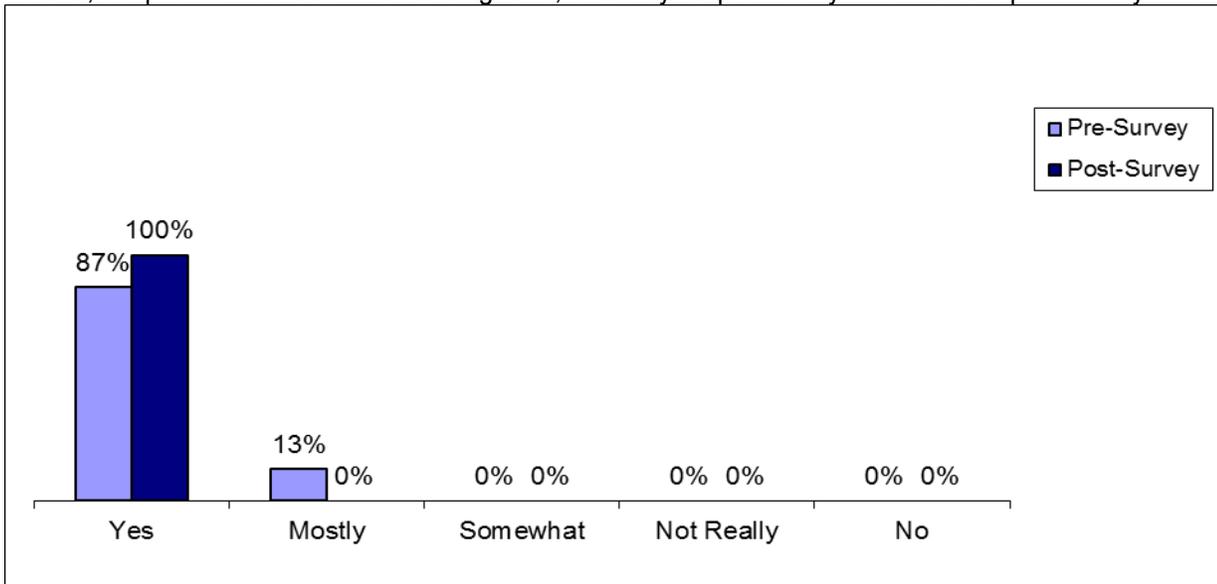
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

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 = 23.

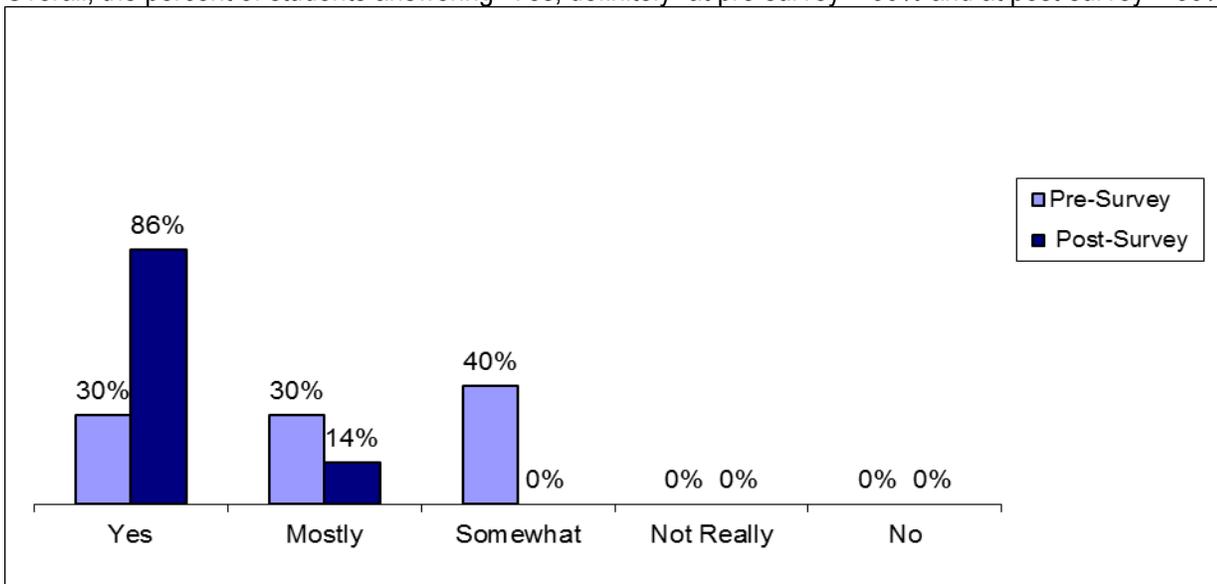
Item 1: I respect myself.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 87% and at post-survey = 100%.



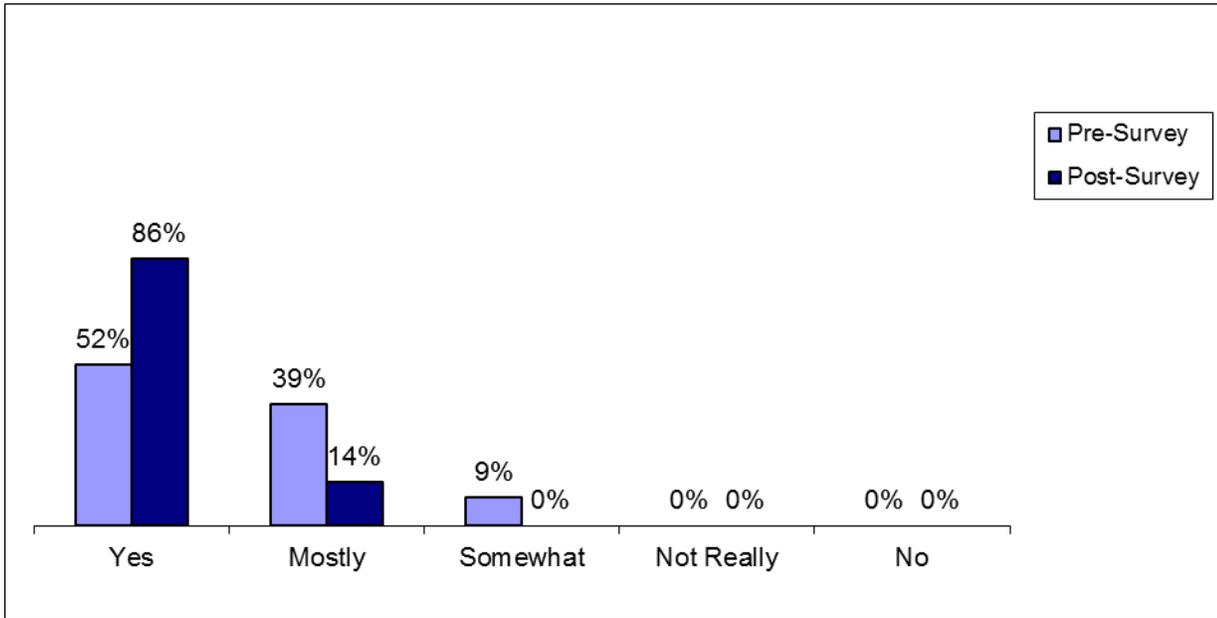
Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 30% and at post-survey = 86%.



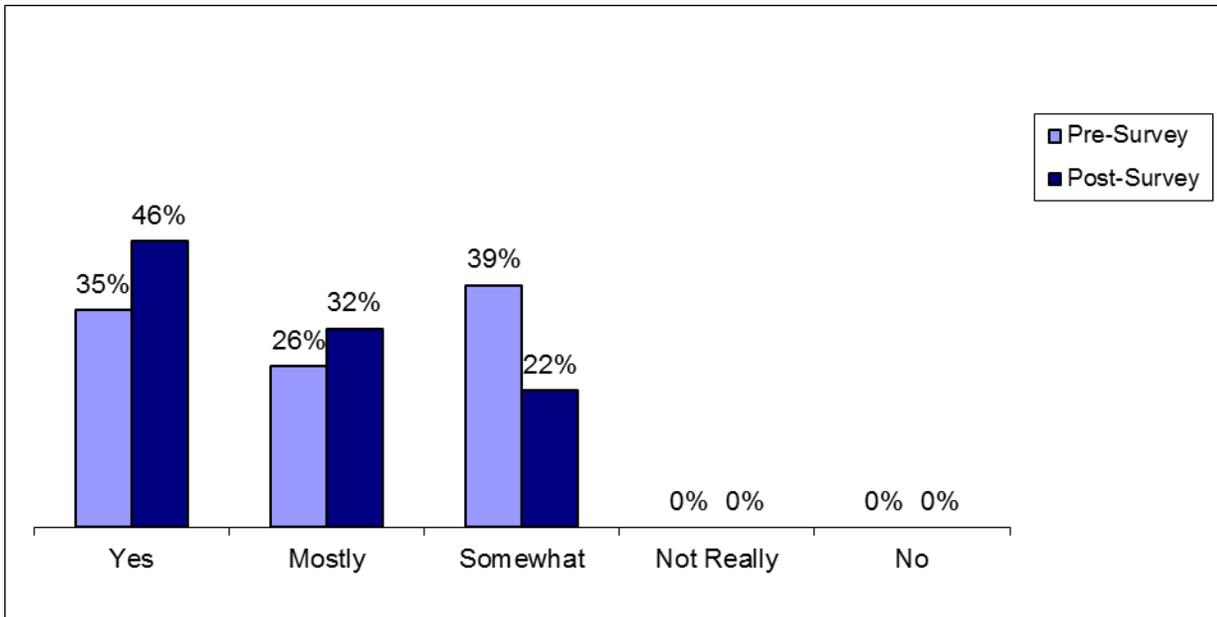
Item 3: I respect students different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 52% and at post-survey = 86%.



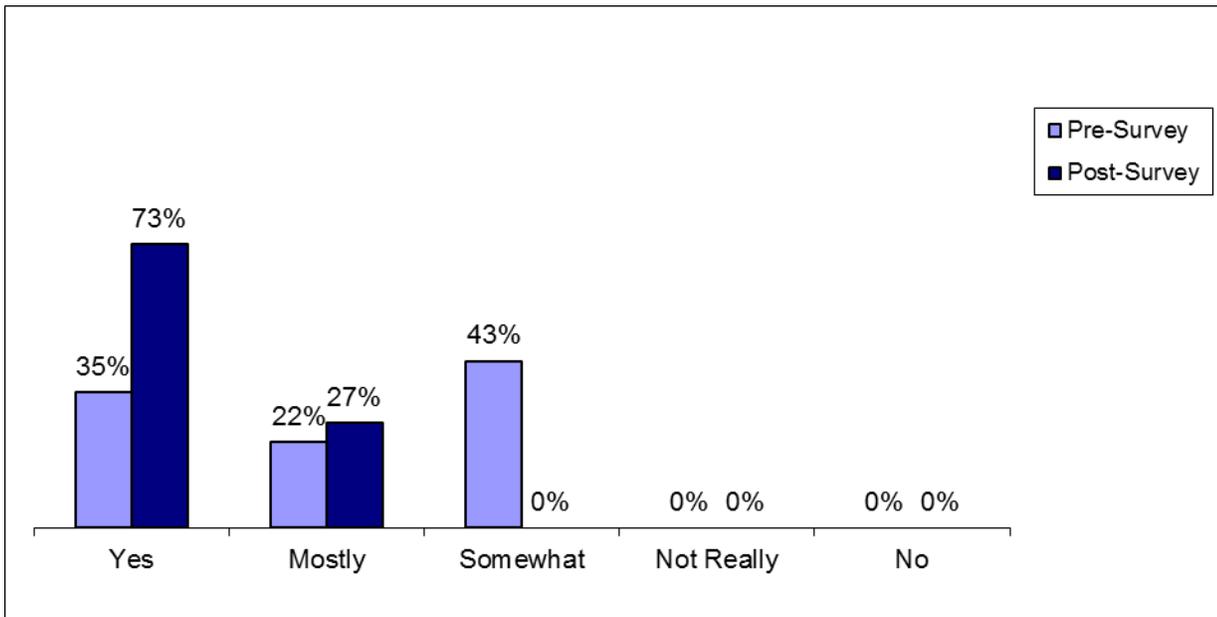
Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 35% and at post-survey = 46%.



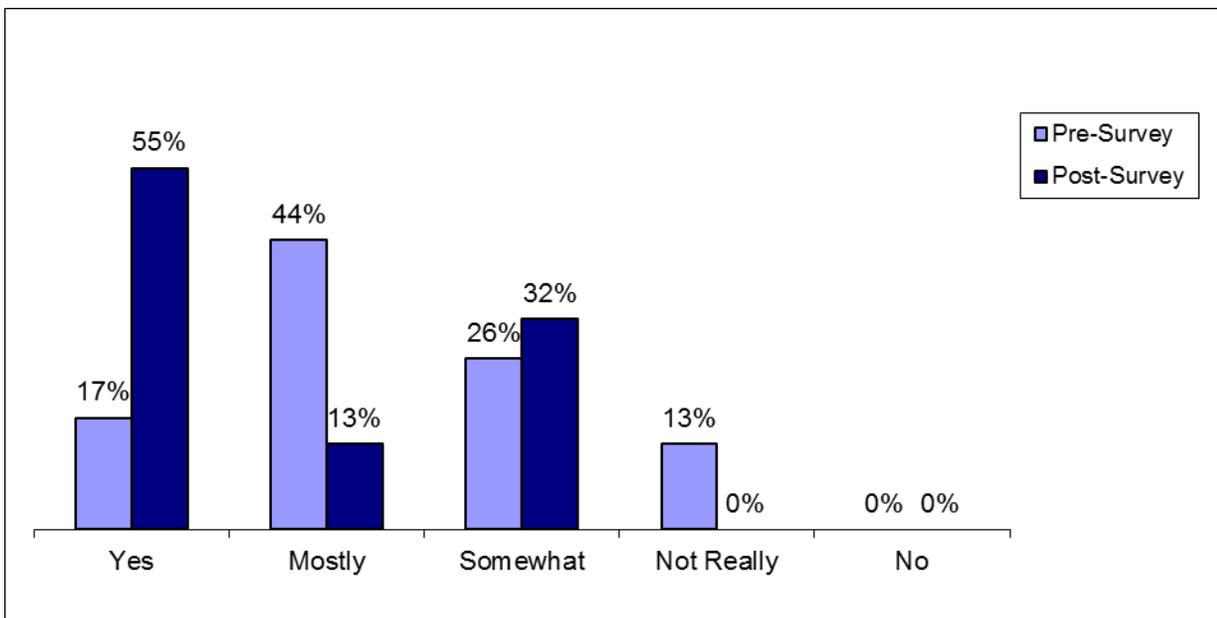
Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 35% and at post-survey = 73%.



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

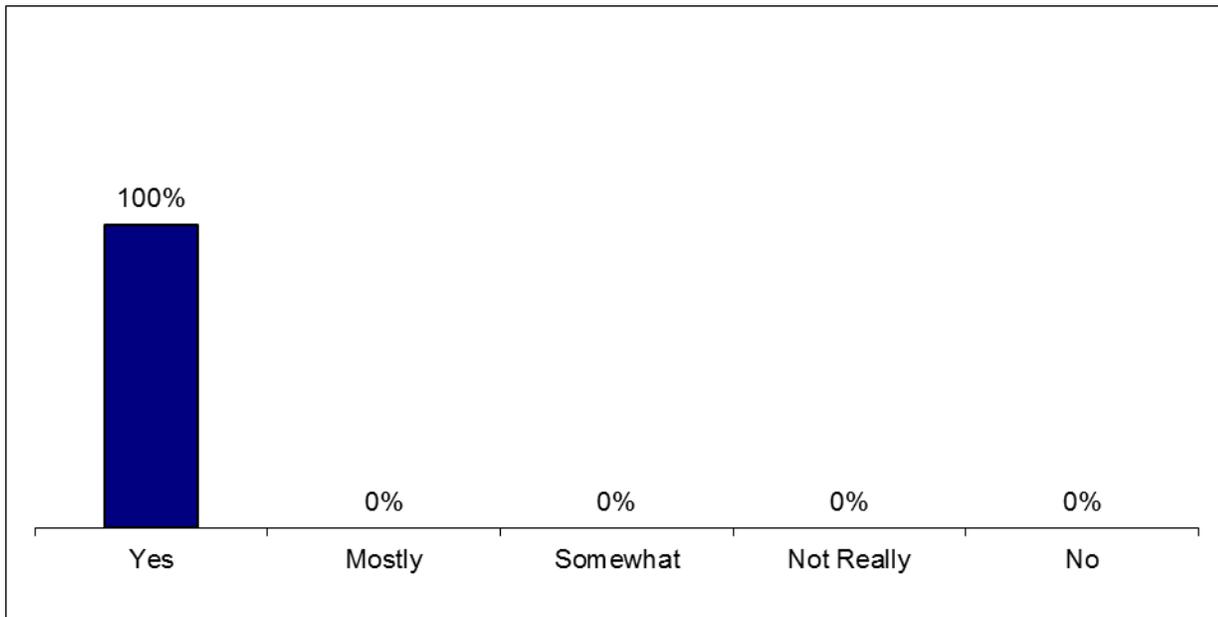
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 17% and at post-survey = 55%.



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.

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



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

Of the twenty-three students who completed the post-survey, 78% 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: awesome, life changing, and beneficial.

Quotes from participants include:

- *The Power of Peace helped me express my feelings*
- *It's a good program to teach kids about them and their classmates that they are not the only ones with problems*
- *I normally talk to no one and the last 2 days, I opened up a lot*
- *I feel like Power of Peace is a place where students come to learn how to interact with other students!*
- *I feel like it could really help you if you try to open up while you're here to let all the bad things go. It's like a new start*
- *I feel Power of Peace was an amazing experience and am glad I got to open up to people I don't even say hello to*
- *It makes you view life from a different perspective*
- *I feel like I don't have to hide things from everyone because everyone has been through something*
- *It's a remarkable opportunity to engage students to raise awareness about each other and everyone's individual backgrounds. (Adult participant)*
- *I think the program is a great way for students to get to open up to their peers and make connections. It was definitely helpful at breaking down barriers. (Adult participant)*

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

Of the twenty-three students who completed the post-survey, 50% 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:

- Give an example from what they experienced to help others
- Split up friend groups as much as possible

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 56%). The one statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey: Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict (an increase of 11%).

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.