

Peer Solutions

UNITING SCHOOLS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES WITH A MESSAGE OF RESPECT

Peer Solutions is an Arizona-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1996 to cultivate positive social change by promoting respect and actively addressing the underlying causes of harmful behaviors.

Vision: That we internalize respect in thought, reflect it in action, and spread it to others, resulting in an increase of peace in our hearts, homes, schools, workplaces and communities.

Mission: To cultivate positive social change by uniting schools, families and communities through STAND & SERVE, an asset-based, peer-facilitated, initiative fostering respect, empathy and ownership of the solution.



STAND & SERVE (S&S) programs strive to promote respect and prevent harm to others and/or self by cultivating school, family and community ownership of the solutions. We actively address issues we are all affected by including sexual, dating, family, gang, gun and school violence, harassment, self-injury, suicide, depression, oppression, substance abuse, eating disorders, teen pregnancy, poor school performance, child abuse, homelessness and more. **S&S** participants learn and practice empathy, intuition, communication, safe bystander responsibility, cultural/identity respect and resource referral skills. **S&S** is offered to individuals who witness negative behavior so that they may identify and practice healthy behaviors. **S&S** replaces false norms—with accurate information, highlighting and encouraging the positive qualities of today's youth and adults. When participants learn that *respect, not violence is the norm*, they will be more likely to resist negative behaviors and therefore interrupt the cycle of harm. **S&S** offers students interactive, fun activities with opportunities to encourage safe and healthy behaviors while *Demonstrating Respect as the Norm*.



OUR HISTORY

Peer Solutions piloted the STAND & SERVE program in 1997 at Tempe High School with assistance from the Arizona Department of Health Services. Peer Solutions now provides on-going services to all high schools in the Tempe Union District and North High School in Phoenix, as well as all middle schools in the Tempe Elementary School District and three elementary schools: Thomas J. Pappas and Evans in Tempe and William T. Machan School (K-8) in Phoenix. In 2006, Peer Solutions facilitated activities with 6 high schools, 6 middle schools, 3 elementary schools and ASU with the support of 20 community partners. Approximately 25,000 students, staff, family and community members are exposed to activities annually.

A Promising Practice Model

Evidence confirms that peer-facilitated school, family and community programs foster positive social change, prevent harm and are significantly more cost-effective than addressing the problem after the fact. According to Dr. Victor LaCerva, author of *Pathways to Peace*, 90% of behavior is learned from modeling. Teaching others to model positive behaviors to their peers is a most powerful way to change long-term youth behaviors, and creates a strong ripple effect that reaches far beyond the parameters of our program.

Over the years, S&S has earned support and awards from school districts and city administrators, including the City of Tempe's Diversity Award, Tempe Top Teen Awards, Don Carlos Award, and the 2005-2006 ICARECORPS Partnership Award from Creighton School District. There is currently a waiting list for other Phoenix area schools which have requested the program.

"I like the way we talked about things that can harm your life, and how to avoid those signs of depression, substance abuse, and suicide."

-S&S Participant

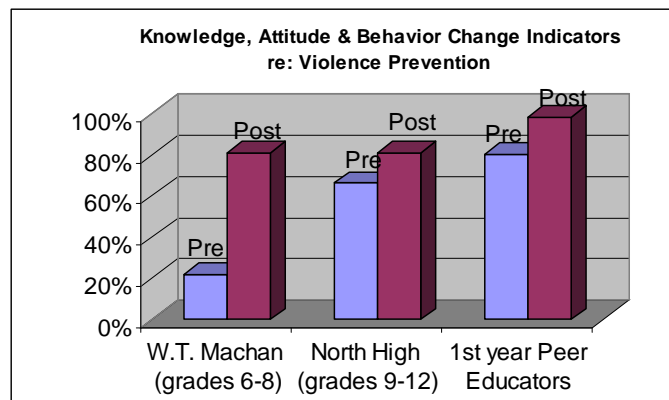
"By teaching other kids about violence and why it was wrong, as well as how to prevent it, I think we helped them to go out and help put an end to it."

- High School Peer Educator

"My daughter respects herself more and is learning the ability to stand up for herself. She uses examples from S&S at home when there are problems instead of getting mad."

- Parent

Because of our years of success with this asset driven, social norms, community development based model, Peer Solutions is now assisting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the development of National Sexual Violence Prevention Guidelines and is also participating in a panel for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Peer Solutions recently presented the model at the Harvard School of Public Health, and our Executive Director was chosen for the 2006 Kris Bell Award for her years of outstanding service to prevention in Arizona. In the summer of 2006, Peer Solutions presented the STAND & SERVE model to nonprofit and state-based agencies across the U.S. through CDC regional trainings and individual invitations.



A sample of recent Pre-/Post- evaluation results from S&S participants (2005-2006) shows that the program improves youths' understanding of violence, their respect for others, and their ability to resolve conflict and help others.

We are all Peers, We are all the Solution.

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