



strategies against violence everywhere

Media Violence Education Project Feb 2007- Jan 2008 Annual Report

Project Description

The Media Violence Education Project (MVEP) is a program for youth designed to teach media literacy, enhance the skills necessary to critique media, and advocate for nonviolent media. The program participants targeted reside primarily within Columbus and within Franklin County.

Geographic Service Area

- 95% Served within Columbus and Franklin county
- Out of 257 youth participants served, 244 lived, attended school, or belonged to a youth service organization within the City of Columbus and Franklin County.

Program Target

The MVEP primarily targeted schools within the City of Columbus, after school programs and youth social service programs.

Special attention was given to culturally diverse communities within targeted demographics.

- 80% of the youth served are from the African American population.
- 18% of the youth served are from the Caucasian population.
- 2% of the youth served are listed in another race or ethnicity.

Date	Program Group	Grade	# Attended
11/5/07	Deshler Elementary School	3-5	26
11/9/07	Heyl Elementary School	3-5	27
12/2/07	Columbus Arts and Technology Academy Godman Guild-ACES After School Program	3-12	106

	Horizon Science		
	PAVE		
	SAVESNet @ Deshler Elementary		
	SAVESNet @ Heyl Elementary		
	SAVESNet @ Linden McKinley High School		
	SAVESNet @ South High School		
	UMADAOP Champion		
	West Broad		
12/17/07	Linden McKinley High School	9-12	50
1/27/08	Northside Community Church	6-12	14
1/30/08	Franklin County Juvenile Detention Ctr	9-12	34

Need for Program

Evidence of the growing impact of media violence nationwide resulted in the death of a seven year-old Colorado girl who was beaten to death by two teens who used wrestling and fighting moves adopted from the video game "Mortal Kombat" they had played prior to the attack.

The City of Columbus and Franklin County experiences its fair share of juvenile crime with related cases in 2007 reaching 22,461 as compared to 20,837 in 2006¹. Among the groups visited during the program year, the Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center gave a visual representation that confirmed the violent impact of the media in our community. By a show of hands, 98% of the inmates were incarcerated as a result of a violent crime or had been involved in a violent crime. Out of this number, 100% admitted to spending more than three hours per day watching violent imagery on television and/or listening to violently graphic music.

Also of note is the increasing popularity of cyber bullying, which is sending harassing messages using email, text messaging and websites. Most cyber bullying occurs from internet social communities such as MySpace that act as extensions of school and neighborhood relationships. Out of all groups receiving the Media Violence Education Project presentation, at least 70% of youth were either aware of various internet social communities and were involved in one or more of them. This same number of youth admitted to having had witnessed someone they know personally being harassed on the internet or they themselves had used violent language or behavior on the internet toward someone else.

¹ Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations and Juvenile Branch. 12 March 2008. <http://www.fccourts.org/drj/PDF/2007AnnualReport.pdf>.

Program Outcomes and Measurements

The MVEP outcomes and measurements were designed to reflect the knowledge acquired in the workshop. The MVEP questionnaire surveyed youth in the following areas: Media Literacy, Media Violence Critique, and Advocacy. Youth were asked to give responses based on their skills, knowledge and awareness acquired during the workshop.

- 88% of youth were able to recognize that the media is always trying to tell us and sell us something.
- 73% of youth agreed that when violence on TV is portrayed as something to be laughed at, it is called funny violence.
- 87% of youth could positively identify the definition of media is a group of electronic communications that reach out to the masses included radio, TV, newspapers and the internet.
- 79% of youth recognized that the media makes money through commercials and advertisements.
- 89% of youth learned that sending harassing messages using email, text messaging and websites is called cyber bullying.
- 86% of youth understood that the goal of the media is to make money.
- 81% of youth correctly identified the definition of media violence to be verbal, non-verbal, or physical force used to cause harm, damage or abuse through the use of television, radio, newspaper or magazine influence.
- 95% of youth felt more confident about how to recognize media violence after receiving the training.

Group Advisor Outcomes and Measurements

The group advisors were given a Satisfaction Survey with a series of questions based on program and facilitator effectiveness, material presented, idea sharing, improvements needed, and what was most liked about the presentation. The MVEP was proven to be a highly successful, culturally and age appropriate program.

100% of advisors agreed:

- The material presented was age appropriate and culturally appropriate
- The subject was clearly articulated by the facilitator
- The youth were treated with respect and their participation was valued

Below are more specific results from the Satisfaction Surveys:

- Heyl Elementary School advisor **STRONGLY AGREED** that the youth were able to share ideas easily with the facilitator. She commented that what she liked most about the presentation were the interactive games played with the group.
- Franklin County Juvenile Detention Facility advisor **STRONGLY AGREED** that she would recommend this training to other organizations. She is interested in the training being offered to additional incarcerated youth and stated that the presentation encouraged positive interaction and discussion.
- Deshler Elementary School advisor **AGREED** that the subject was clearly articulated. However, she disagreed that the youth were able to share ideas easily with the facilitator. The advisor pointed out the reason for this was that school group leaders needed to take an active disciplinary role with the group for the facilitator to maintain order. This advisor did comment that she liked the material and the interaction between the facilitator and the youth.
- Northside Community Church advisor **STRONGLY AGREED** that the youth were encouraged to think critically about the subject. She also commented that she liked the internet information distributed at the training.

Evidence of Successful Implementation

Media Violence Education Project Outcome Statement: Youth that participate in the Media Violence Education Project will become more knowledgeable about the effects of media and media violence on their thinking and behavior.

Performance Benchmark: 200 out of 250

Measurements: Youth Post Test, Advisor Satisfaction Survey

Summary: The Media Violence Education Project serviced 257 youth during the 2007-08 program year. Out of the youth served, 100% were funded by the City of Columbus SAVE Kids Network grant. The program successfully helped youth identify and link violent behavior and tendencies to media influences in their lives as well as how to make better media choices.

The Media Violence Education Project measurements centered on the level of awareness and knowledge gained by youth on how media is used to motivate and manipulate. During the 2007-08 program year, six educational institutions and youth serving organizations participated in the training.

Youth chose to participate in one of two advocacy projects. The first was a public service announcement recorded and made available for global viewing on the Strategies Against Violence Everywhere website. Youth participated by spreading the message of choice by acting out scenes and making posters. During the video, one youth expressed his understanding of funny violence, one of the most popular forms of media violence acceptable even to younger viewing audiences. He commented, "Funny violence is when something dangerous happens on TV to someone else and other people think that it's funny, but it's only funny until it happens to you."

Another option for advocacy was the Pledge for Peace form. These forms for advocacy were also ideal for groups that wanted to make a more personal impact. The pledge forms made active statements that youth chose to agree or disagree with. All youth completing pledge forms agreed to make the pledge statements in their entirety. The statements included ones such as, I promise to help my community seek strategies against violence everywhere; I will try my best to avoid watching any violent television, videotapes, DVDs and movies; I will try my best to make better choices by not listening to or buying violent music; and, I will commit to not using the internet or my cell phone as another form of media violence.

Advisor questionnaires measured age and cultural appropriateness as well as observation of critical thinking. We believe these components are the deciding factors in making the necessary changes or upgrades to the program curriculum. A combined 100% of advisors agree or strongly agree that the material presented was culturally appropriate. 100% of advisors agree or strongly agree that the material presented was age appropriate. 83% of advisors agree or strongly agree that the youth were encouraged to think critically about the subject. 100% of advisors agree or disagree that the subject was clearly articulated to the youth.

Looking Ahead to 2008-09:

Looking ahead to the next program year of 2008-09, it is imperative that we continue on a path that is developing and maintaining our core programs consistent with evolving societal change. To remain consistent and relevant, the Media Violence Education Project must take a methodical approach as SAVE continues to service the needs of the community, as it is our goal to empower youth and to promote healthy lifestyles by providing non-violent alternatives and innovating peaceful outcomes.

The following developments are ideas and practices that are in place for the 2009 program season:

- Develop stand alone components of media violence topics that assembled together to form multiple hours of media violence training.
- Expand the media library to include more music, a variety of music videos and print media.
- Collaborate with businesses such as Time Warner for media support and resources.