Students Reaching Out Present Survey Results

(From the Elk Grove Unified School District Newsletter)

On September 24 and 25, students in the Students Reaching Out (SRO) program at Valley High School and Samuel Jackman Middle School gave presentations highlighting the results of a survey distributed to Valley Hi residents during the summer. These students are also members of the Valley Hi Youth and Adult Coalition (VHYAC). The survey gave Valley Hi residents a chance to highlight community needs.

"I was very impressed with the hard work that the SRO students put into this high quality research project," said Tami Silvera, a project implementer for the district. "I am excited by their recommendations and the potential for real positive community change."

The students also presented recommendations to improve the Valley Hi community. They recommended that the community center have fun extracurricular activities, tutoring programs after-school, a swimming facility, skate park, music room and teen center. Students also recommended that future research focus on the situation of gangs in the Valley Hi area, determine the proper prevention programs for the area, find out what parents can do to help prevent youth violence and investigate what other communities have done in similar situations. Students Reaching Out is a program facilitated by People Reaching Out (PRO). In SRO, middle and high school students are recruited to lead prevention councils where they design community and media campaigns aimed at addressing alcohol, tobacco and other drug issues. More on Page 4.

Quote of the Month

Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass... It is about learning to dance in the rain.

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Parent-Teen Series Success Story

Kathy Green, our Counseling Manager, shared an email from a parent who has taken our parenting classes. Her son was referred to us but declined services at first, as he "didn't want to give up drugs". Mom was ready to send him to a residential treatment facility before finally getting him to agree to participate in the Parenting For Prevention - Parent Teen Series. This is the update on the son after completing the series: "We had a few really rough weeks at first, trying to get him off the marijuana and a clean drug test. Well, it paid off. He is working and has been for about a month now. He loves it and they just love him. He has gotten 2 awards for his attitude, work ethic, etc. We couldn't be prouder. He is staying away from those kids he was hanging out with too. He even joined the Volunteer Fire Department. You (Kathy) always know what to tell me to say to him and it always pays off and I'm extremely thankful for you and the classes."
Executive Director Report

PRO has been awarded a $35,000 grant from AT&T to partner with West Sacramento’s River City High School in providing a new program called FRESH START. The FRESH START program is a drop-out prevention program that was developed in response to River City High School’s 15.7% drop-out rate. People Reaching Out will provide a counselor on school site three times a week to work in partnership with the Fresh Start at-risk Specialist to effectively diagnose the needs and strengths of the students and their families.

PRO received a $5,000 grant from CPS Human Resources to support the PROHire Program.

Staci Anderson and Kathy Green participated in a two day Yolo County Youth Substance Abuse Summit put on by the Yolo County Health Council and the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. The summit was designed to: 1) Raise awareness of youth substance abuse in the county; 2) Set up multi disciplinary teams from each Yolo community to work on solutions for their specific community; and 3) For policy makers to make declarations of specific actions they would take to further support the work the community teams would be doing. Staci is part of the West Sacramento work team and Kathy is part of the Woodland work team.

PRO After School

PRO After School returned to all school sites for the current school year 2008-09. Additionally, we have expanded to Pleasant Grove High School mentoring at Albiani Middle School. Currently we are serving 16 school sites with the goal of reaching over 300 youth this year.

During September the program staff has been on the school campuses recruiting new students into the program. Recruitment strategies include classroom presentations, lunchtime tables and back to school night.

Last school year program students were surveyed about topics they would like to learn more about in the weekly mentor meetings. Those topics were incorporated into the new and improved student training manual. The new topics include communication, resume writing, addiction, coping and stress, healthy relationships and preparing for college.

High school mentors will be matched with their mentees in October and begin mentoring. Mentors that were in the program last school year will continue to meet with their same mentees, sustaining their relationship for two school years.

PRO Hire

This fall, the Communications Department has been actively recruiting employers to take on students who have completed the PRO Hire training program. Relationships have been developed with many local businesses. One example is Farmers Insurance Group who is willing to take on 1-2 students in a customers sales representative/telemarketing position. This is a wonderful job opportunity for our students and we hope the next update will contain our first of many PRO Hire success stories. Although progress has been made, we still need any and all help we can get identifying potential employers.

If you have suggestions or ideas, please contact Cole Forstedt, 916-576-3300 ext. 322.
Community Outreach

The end of summer and beginning of fall has consisted of an abundance of outreach efforts to create awareness of People Reaching Out. In addition to community, school district and non-profit networking/connection meetings throughout the Sacramento region, we have also been hard at work speaking and representing People Reaching Out at an information table at United Way and California State Employee Charitable Campaign events at multiple locations. In the month of September alone, we have spoken with over 1,158 people in a large number of venues including the Kick-Off of the State employee campaign at the Sacramento Convention Center and other state offices including CalPERS, Employment Development, and the DMV. We also have visited and spoken with employees in large and small office agency fairs such as Allied Insurance, ATT, USAA, Target, Wells Fargo amongst many others. Our goal during these times is to create awareness about People Reaching Out, disseminate helpful prevention information to parents and families and inform people about the option to give to PRO through United Way. On top of everything else, we have attended multiple Community Health and Wellness Fairs to provide the same useful information.

People Reaching Out Event News

Art of the Kitchen

People Reaching Out had its first planning meeting with consultant, Joe Wilson, who was hired to oversee the “Art of the Kitchen” event scheduled for April ’10. Joe has reached out to the community and is getting positive feedback on donations and opportunities for the event. He is also solidifying potential media sponsors. The next planning meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, October 15, 2008.

Volunteers

In partnership with the Community Engagement Center, 22 Service Learning Students from Sacramento State majoring in Sociology, Child Development, Recreation, Parks & Tourism Administration, Social Work, and Family and Consumer Science have been recruited and trained in our programs. Throughout the fall semester, we anticipate the completion of over 700 hours of service to the organization with students working in PRO After School, Students Reaching Out and the Parenting for Prevention programs.

Walk ‘N Rock for Kids

Hope Productions “Walk ‘N Rock for Kids” held its first planning/training meeting in September. The first meeting included a presentation on fundraising 101 and sharing our “elevator” speeches. The final event date was announced as Saturday, May 23, 2009 (Memorial Day Weekend). The next meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, October 29, 2008 and the team hopes to be able to announce the name of the artist/musician that will participate in the event.

We welcome the following Service Learning Students, listed by major:

Sociology
Erin Tejeras, Dana Fleischman, Jane Portlock, Laura Dean, Danielle Castaneda, Cori Duncan, Yolanda Valenzuela

Social Work
Katie Giugini, Marisol Arroyo, Rochelle Johnson, Kathryn Steblay, Katherine McDonald, Lisa Harris, Yvonne Flores, LaQreshea Acox, Mayra Santiago

Recreation, Parks and Tourism Admin.
Joann Struebing, Lauren Gong, Ashley Skaggs

Child Development
Glennielynn Pacheco, Gabe Tagatac

Family and Consumer Science
Elizabeth Martinez
Valley Hi Community Violence Prevention Needs Assessment: During the month of August, 7 SRO students met each week to analyze the results of the over 400 surveys collected the previous month. The students reviewed the data and analyzed the results while looking for themes and trends in the responses. Once the data analysis was complete, the students, with the guidance of the SRO Coordinator, created a PowerPoint presentation to be introduced at the two community meetings. As trained youth researchers, the students surveyed over 400 youth and adults that live and work in the community. Of the collected surveys, 218 youth surveys and 178 adult surveys were used.

Two community meetings were held to present the results of the survey. A press release was sent out from PRO to multiple news and radio stations. The first meeting at Samuel Jackman Middle School included over 40 participants such as City Councilman Robbie Waters, Sacramento County Supervisor Jimmie Yee, Elk Grove Unified School District Superintendent Steven Ladd, Elk Grove Unified School District Board of Education President Brian Meyers, Police and Sheriff Department representatives, community members, youth, school staff, and Coalition members. The second meeting at Valley Hi Covenant Church included over 20 participants such as a representative from the project funder California Endowment, representatives from Coalition funder Kaiser Permanente, a reporter from KFBK, youth, and Coalition members. Overall the students, with coaching from Youth in Focus and the SRO Coordinator Lucia Kimble, did a fantastic job and impressed all of the participants with the amount of work they completed on the project and their insightful recommendations for further violence prevention activities. A report that details their experience with the project and the recommendations is in progress and will be posted to the PRO website as well used for additional funding opportunities.

Recruitment is in full swing for the 2008/2009 SRO school year. The goal of the SRO program is to recruit 30-40 middle and high school age youth to participate in the program.

The VHYAC and SRO program have successfully concluded the first year of the community garden project funded by Kaiser Permanente. The Coalition was able to locate a prime space for the garden at the nearby Valley Hi Park; collaborate with the City of Sacramento Parks and Recreation Department to ensure garden sustainability; enlist the help of Master Gardener Bill Maynard; and participate in advocacy by learning how to petition the City Council to pass the garden as a part of a master revision plan of the Valley Hi park.

VHYAC has been working all summer to plan the upcoming Family Fun Day festival in Valley Hi on Saturday, October 18th from 10am to 1pm. It is a free event with no-cost activities including health screenings, entertainment, healthy lunches, arts and crafts, and school enrollment. Flyers have gone out to students at 6 school sites and their parents and families. The event goal is to have 300 or more participants attend. Both the Coalition and PRO will have booths at the event.

The VHYAC is currently reviewing potential candidates to assist with strategic planning. The goal of the Coalition is to identify long term goals and potential operating structures. The Coalition plans to start the strategic planning sessions in late fall 08/winter 09.

Recommendations By Students From Survey Results

Valley Hi Community Violence Prevention Needs Assessment

More Publicity For Current Youth Programs - According to our research, many youth are not aware of programs available to them. Only 22% of youth that responded to the survey were aware of current programs available in the community or at the schools.

A Documentary About Valley Hi - We would like to document how we view our community so others can see what living in Valley Hi means to us. There are good things about living in Valley Hi!

Counseling Services - We think there should be more opportunities for young people to receive personal counseling in addition to academic counseling, either in the community or on school campuses.

A Community Center - We need our OWN community center in the Valley Hi neighborhood so we can join in extracurricular classes and activities, after-school programs, tutoring services and a swimming pool!

Youth Involved In The Planning And Implementation Of Youth Serving Programs - We feel that if you want youth to participate in your program, you should have youth help you design it. Make us a part of your planning process and other youth will think it is cool to join!

Future Research - This survey was just the beginning since these questions have never been asked in Valley Hi. We want more research and information on gangs in the area; what prevention programs need to be successful in our community; what other communities have done; and how parents can support us.

The students are working with a team of professionals that include the VHYAC's Youth in Focus Coordinator, to develop a survey to assess community needs and identify long-term goals.

A Community Center - Valley Hi residents have expressed a need for a community center. The Coalition would like to work with Valley Hi residents to develop a community center.

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**Intervention—Family**

*Parenting for Prevention* is growing again! The 2008 Fall Parent-Teen Workshop Series is off to a good start in Woodland with a series presented in English on Tuesday evenings, and a series presented in Spanish on Friday evenings. The biggest news with the Parent-Teen Series is that it has expanded to Sacramento County! The Citrus Heights Police Department asked PRO to do a 10-week series for the families with teens in their Diversion Program. The parents and teens are mandated to attend and the first workshop started on October 1st. Detective Eric Gora, who runs the Diversion Program, is already talking about setting dates for a second series.

*The Counseling Program* recently received some much needed help from two grantors. PRO received funds from *First 5 Yolo* to continue services with the families who live in transitional housing centers in both Woodland and West Sac. The funds are being used for therapy for families with young children.

The Counseling Program received a second boost from a grant from *AT&T*. River City High School in West Sacramento identified 9th graders who have a less than acceptable grade point average. These students will receive help for issues, other than academic, that are impacting their school performance. The predicted outcome is higher grades. PRO has placed a Counselor onsite at River City High School three days a week. She will assess students referred for placement in an onsite Anger Management or Substance Abuse group, onsite individual therapy, or referral to one of our Graduate Student Trainees for individual or family therapy outside of school hours.

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**Dates to Remember**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>September 2008</th>
<th>October 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2, 2008 Tiffany Boyland’s Birthday!</td>
<td>October 16, 2008 Board of Directors Meeting 8:00 am—9:30 am PRO Office</td>
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<td>November 2008</td>
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<td>November 9, 2008 Patty Adler-Cartozian’s Birthday!</td>
<td>November 17, 2008 Doug Britt’s Birthday!</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 27-28, 2008 Thanksgiving Break</td>
<td>November 17, 2008 Doug Britt’s Birthday!</td>
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<td>December 2008</td>
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<td>December 4, 2008 Board of Director’s Strategic Planning Session 8:00 am—9:00 pm Sierra Health Foundation 9:00 am—4:00 pm 1321 Garden Highway, Sacramento</td>
<td>December 4, 2008 Mary Towne’s Birthday!</td>
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<td>December 7, 2008 Phyllis Deat’s Birthday!</td>
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