

PROJECT ANTI-VIOLENCE EDUCATION

P.A.V.E. THE WAY

CASE STUDY

Project Anti-Violence Education (P.A.V.E. the Way) grants contribute to the healthy development of girls ages 5–17 by providing funding to Girl Scout councils to create programs that help girls learn how to stay safe, reduce vulnerability to crime, and/or decrease their risk of becoming perpetrators of violence against themselves or others. In October 2000, P.A.V.E. the Way began operation in 17 Girl Scout councils with funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service. Today 18 councils offer the program, with funding provided by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. By December 2006 the number of councils offering P.A.V.E. the way will increase to 25.



P.A.V.E. the Way in Action

Facilitators Kristy and Leroy couldn't help but notice that Lindley was upset when she walked into the room at the start of the *P.A.V.E. the Way* session. The huge scowl on her face and her choice to sit at a table a distance apart from the 10 other girls in the class were a dead give away. Leroy went over and said, "Hey Lindley, you seem kind of upset. Is everything OK?" "Yeah, I'm OK," Lindley replied. "I'm taking a time out to get myself together." Leroy smiled and said, "It's great that you're taking care of yourself, Lindley, and using your anger management skills. I'll be around after the session if you want to talk about anything."

These facilitators are not teachers—they are outreach youth workers employed by Girl Scouts, Land of Lincoln Council in Springfield, Illinois, and they are partnering with Pleasant Hills Elementary School to implement *P.A.V.E.* Before the year ends, the vast majority of the girls in grades 1 – 5 will have participated in a school where more than two-thirds of the students in the school are classified as low-income; 66% are White and 33% are Black.

Kristy greeted the 5th grade girls and reminded them of the code of conduct they had established four weeks earlier at their first session. Then she asked: “What does it mean to be a bully?” The girls shot back some responses:

“Someone who picks on you or calls you names.”

“Someone who is showing off.”

“Someone who is trying to get a reaction out of you.”

“Someone who has a lot of stress and anger.”

Over the next 10 minutes, the girls discussed why people bully, the characteristics of a bully, how bullying affects people, and ways to respond to a bully. Having built a high level of trust with the facilitators and each other, the girls talked comfortably about their experiences. All of them had been teased or called names at one time or another. The facilitators helped the girls see that spreading rumors about someone or excluding an ex-friend from an activity are actually forms of bullying. The girls were interested to discover that they might have bullied other girls without even realizing it.



“We’ve found that girls are meaner toward each other these days. Some students don’t want to go to school because of bullying. The teachers want help because they can see the magnitude of the problem, but they don’t have the time to teach about it.”

Erin Robinson, Membership Program Specialist, Land of Lincoln Council

Leroy and Kristy have learned to keep the pace of the program fairly brisk—they have a lot to accomplish each week in one short hour. The two facilitators presented a brief role-play about a confrontation with a bully. The girls seemed to enjoy seeing their facilitators “act” in this manner and even Lindley was fully engaged. When the girls got into small groups to devise their own role-play scenarios, the energy in the room exploded. Four different role-plays were happening at once and Lindley’s group decided to act out a situation involving teasing and put downs. Lindley volunteered to stand up to the bully in her group’s skit and Leroy noted that she was using some of the strategies she had learned in *P.A.V.E.* Instead of looking the bully in the eye, for example, she stared at the girl’s forehead and her posture was very tall and assertive. At the end of the session, the girls signed a pledge stating that they would not bully anyone else for a period of time they believed they could honor.

Key Components

In 2000 Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. (GSUSA) received a \$5 million grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service to fund a countrywide anti-violence initiative—this was the largest federal grant in the organization’s history. Land of Lincoln was one of 36 councils to receive funding, the following year, for the second round of *P.A.V.E.* programs. When applying to become a *P.A.V.E.* site, councils are expected to:

- Outline a plan for their violence prevention project based on the specific needs of the local community;
- Hire or assign a full-time staff person, rather than a volunteer, to direct the project;
- Target those girls who are most at risk for violence, and reach beyond their existing membership base;
- Consider girls who are perpetrators, as well as victims, of violence;
- Collaborate with one or more official partners, such as community-based organizations, schools, juvenile justice facilities.

The primary component of Land of Lincoln’s P.A.V.E. program is the Working it Out curriculum,

developed by the Girl Scouts, Illinois Crossroads Council, Inc. Because the curriculum was a “one size fits all” model, Land of Lincoln staff adapted it to address the needs of three different age groups (5 – 8, 9 – 12, and 13 – 17 years). They also modified some of the content to focus more on bullying and anger management. Sessions vary from a half-hour to an hour, depending on the age of the participants. The following topics are covered:

- Session 1: Stress Management
- Session 2: Anger Management
- Session 3: Conflict Resolution
- Session 4: Cliques in the Girls’ World
- Session 5: Bullies
- Session 6: Self-Esteem

A typical session includes discussion of a *P.A.V.E.* topic, journal writing, a role-play or craft activity, and snack time. All program supplies, refreshments, and any registration dues are paid for by Girl Scouts, Land of Lincoln Council.

Girls are recruited through programs in which they are already involved—schools, juvenile probation, summer park programs, faith-based agencies, and other community organizations. Coordinators at the partnering agencies identify girls they perceive to be “high-risk” and in need of *P.A.V.E.* In addition, high school and college students have been recruited and trained to serve as mentors to younger girls.

In one instance of community service, participants decorated about 400 grocery bags with awareness messages and returned them to the grocer. The bags were then distributed to customers by a local grocery store in October, for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and in April, for Violence Prevention Awareness Week.

What's unique about P.A.V.E.?

According to Dr. James Riedel, Senior Researcher at Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI), *P.A.V.E.* is unique and exciting in numerous ways:

- It allows local councils maximum flexibility in defining “at-risk” populations, devising anti-violence programs, and tailoring the programs to meet the specific needs of their community.
- It has been implemented in a wide variety of populations— Girl Scout troops, schools, camps, detention centers, shelters for homeless families and victims of domestic violence, foster care systems, and community-based organizations—and has utilized several different program formats, including teen-to-teen models and curriculum-based sessions led by adult facilitators.
- Since the project’s inception, individual programs have been both sustained and replicated. Approximately 10 of the councils that participated in the original project have continued to implement *P.A.V.E.*, and new councils have applied for every subsequent round of funding.
- In communities with few structures in place for dealing with the problems of youth violence, *P.A.V.E.* brings the issues to the forefront and offers productive strategies around prevention and intervention.



P.A.V.E.'s approach to anti-violence is also unique in that it is grounded in the philosophy of Girl Scouting. As much as possible, *P.A.V.E.* facilitators use concepts such as “I will do my best to be a sister to every Girl Scout,” drawn from the Girl Scout promise and law, in order to drive home some of the violence prevention messages.

“Having that level of funding and technical assistance from GSUSA boosted our reputations in the community. Suddenly we weren't just the cookie ladies, and people wanted to collaborate with us around violence prevention.”

Rene Brethorst, Assistant CEO, Land of Lincoln Girl Scout Council

Goals and Desired Outcomes

- To increase girls' anger management, conflict resolution, decision making, and communication skills.
- To increase girls' feelings of empowerment through community service.
- To increase peer mentors' personal awareness and their leadership skills.
- To increase girls' awareness of violence prevention and intervention strategies.
- To help girls develop strong peer bonds and positive relationships with adult role models.

As of December 2002, 75 of our female students ages 5-11 had participated in the P.A.V.E. program. These participants had been identified as top offenders, due to the following infractions: severe fighting, threats to others, malicious misconduct, flagrant disrespect, stealing, and vandalism. After 9 weeks of participation in P.A.V.E., the number of referrals involving these students declined by 30%.

Alicia Miller, Student Support Manager, Feitshans Edison Magnet School

The Research Design

The evaluation of GSUSA's violence intervention initiative was conducted by Development Associates for round one programs, and by CSR, Incorporated for programs in the second round. In devising the evaluation, the first step was to develop logic models for each of the programs. The purpose was to obtain a basic understanding of the components of each program, to identify clusters of similar programs, and to determine what data should be collected to measure impact. The goals of the evaluations were to conduct both process and outcome studies in order to identify useful practices related to the design and implementation of P.A.V.E. to extract lessons learned, and to get a first look at its effectiveness.

After the logic models were completed, a pre and post survey was developed to measure: 1) attitudes about aggressive behavior; 2) intentions to use non-violent strategies to control anger and aggression; and 3) likelihood of engaging in violence and other high-risk behavior. Other clusters of items included self-esteem, risk of violence in daily life, attitudes toward gangs, and acceptance of differences among people.



In the second round of funding, new questionnaires were developed. Emphasis was placed on issues pertaining to special settings and populations, recruitment, parental involvement, and ways in which P.A.V.E. differed from traditional Girl Scout programming. The outcome measurements were intended to assess violence prevention, conflict resolution, coping, and anger management skills.

Not inappropriately for the start-up of a new program, the evaluation included process-oriented and qualitative methods, relying on site visits to each program which included: 1) interviews with program staff, collaborating agency staff, and adult volunteers; 2) observations of program activities; and 3) group interviews with participants.

Making a Difference!

“P.A.V.E. helps you deal with your anger.”

“P.A.V.E. helps you not take out your anger on other people.”

“When my mom argues with me or I feel stressed, I think about the things I've learned at P.A.V.E. and it helps me.”

“When my grandpa was sick and I felt stressed, I cried instead of taking it out on my mom.”

Fifth-grade P.A.V.E. Participants

Land of Lincoln's P.A.V.E. the Way program has demonstrated the following outcomes:

- Sixty-four percent of the participants at one site reported increased ability to deal with a bully, and almost half of the participants reported higher self-esteem.



- A total of 834 girls and young women (and 174 boys) participated in the violence awareness and prevention curriculum. Almost half of the girls were enrolled in Girl Scouts through this program.
- Six adult/teen mentors have been trained and now work in various capacities within the program.
- Council staff observed that: girls exposed to mentoring training have demonstrated the ability to take charge of a situation and to care for the younger girls. They report as well that young women who mentor the younger girls have experienced an increase in personal awareness and leadership skills.

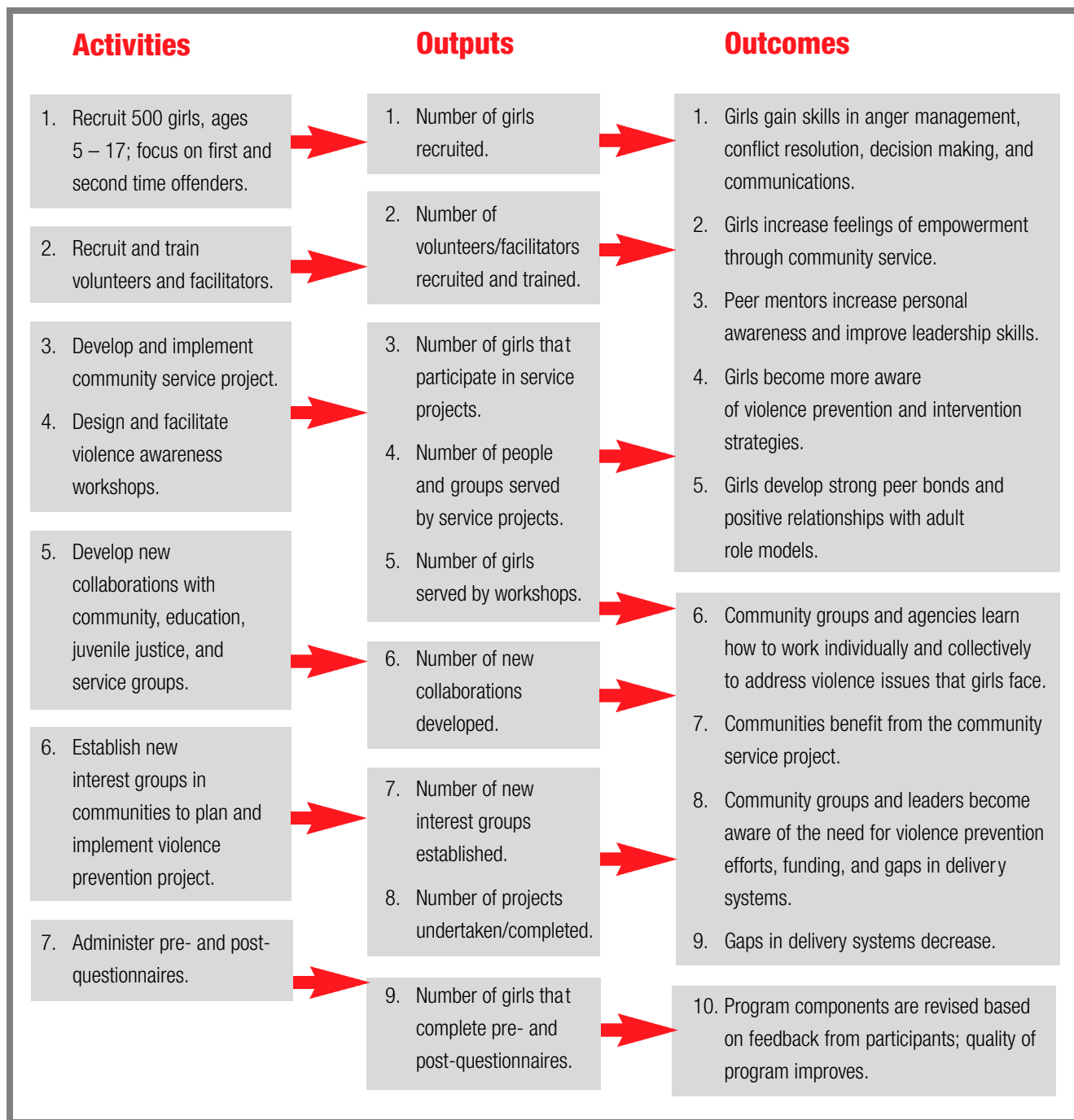
Program Tips

- Having two facilitators at each group session has been extremely beneficial for Land of Lincoln's *P.A.V.E. the Way* program. First, this allows for the acting out of role-play situations and makes the sessions more dynamic. Second, it is helpful to have two facilitators' insights into what is working and what needs to be revised. Third, if a girl needs individual attention during a session, one facilitator can attend to that situation. Fourth, facilitators report that they feel safer working as a team, especially when conducting evening sessions or working at juvenile detention centers.
- Land of Lincoln staff has identified several strategies for reducing discipline problems:
 - Limit the group to 12; 10 – 12 participants appears to be ideal group size for this program.
 - Have participants establish their own rules of conduct at the beginning of the program; then post the rules, and refer back to them as needed.
 - Recruit a more heterogeneous group of girls—a mix of those considered to be “at-risk” and those who are not.
- Be sensitive to participants' fears of stigma. Having community partners identify particular girls for participation at times led to girls feeling as if they were “troublemakers” who had been “singled out” for the anti-violence program.
- Recognize that it takes time for community-based organizations to create a working partnership with schools, especially when a particular school has had limited experience with this kind of intensive collaboration.

LOGIC MODEL:

Girl Scouts, Land of Lincoln Council: *P.A.V.E. the Way for Girls*

INPUTS: Youth Service Bureau; Juvenile Probation; Regional Office of Education; Girl Scouts–Illinois Crossroads Council; local schools; community-based organizations; staff; volunteers; funding.



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