



Peer Advocacy: Innovative Strategies for Working with Latino/a Youth around Dating and Sexual Violence

The LA VIDA Partnership

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The LA VIDA Partnership

- The LA VIDA Partnership is a community program of the Community Health and Social Services Center (CHASS).
- CHASS is a Federally Qualified Health Center serving residents of Detroit, MI, with emphasis on underserved African Americans and Latinos.
- Provides a safe space for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to seek services.
- Collaborations include annual trainings, LA VIDA referrals, and working on sustainability efforts of the project.



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CHASS Southwest Center Detroit, Michigan



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Program Services

- Culturally and linguistically appropriate short term counseling and safety planning
- Legal advocacy services for survivors
- Financial stability education for clients
- Individual counseling for children who have witnessed violence or been victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual abuse, dating violence or stalking at four local schools and at CHASS Center
- Prevention services for youth
- Community outreach
- Support group in Spanish for women, called *Amigas*
- Youth development and peer education programs



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Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) Youth Grant

- Program supports children, youth, and young adults who have been exposed to or a victim of domestic/dating violence and/or sexual assault
- Individual counseling for youth ages 5-24 who are direct victims of dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking or who have witnessed domestic violence
- Youth Advisory Board that participates in community prevention and outreach activities and provides a youth voice for LA VIDA programming
- Prevention programming onsite and at local community schools
- Community outreach training for Southwest Detroit service providers to increase community capacity related to understanding, supporting, and responding to youth survivor needs
- Awareness raising activities targeting young adults at local colleges and universities



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Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking among Youth

- Youth are at high risk for experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking
- Often, youth are afraid to tell their parents when they are assaulted due to fears of being blamed for the abuse (i.e. the youth was not supposed to be dating, at a party, etc.)
- Types of abuse often encountered youth include digital abuse, particularly around the taking and dissemination of ‘sexting’ pictures without consent of the individual involved and abuse over social media



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Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking among Latinas

- Latino/as comprise at least 57.2% of Southwest Detroit residents.
- Often in the Latino/a community, immigration status and lack of knowledge about the laws and customs of the United States are used against victims of domestic violence.
- Abusers will threaten immigrants with their immigration status in order to maintain power and control over their partners.
- Recent immigrants are less likely to drive or to speak English and these are additional barriers to seeking services and leaving relationships
- Children are often asked to interpret for their parents and this causes significant trauma and harm to children in discussing crimes of domestic and sexual violence.
- Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking could be eligible for immigration relief through the VAWA and U-Visa programs.

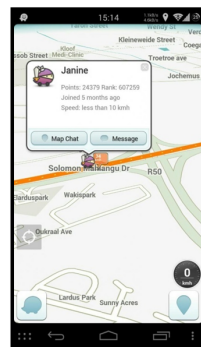


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Digital Abuse

Using technology such as texting, GPS, or social networking to bully, harass, threaten, stalk, or intimidate a partner.

Loveisrespect.org



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LA VIDA Peer Advocacy Training



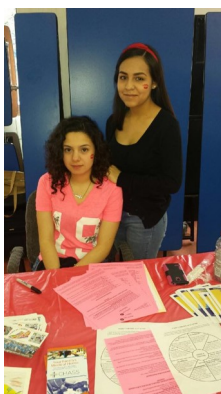
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LA VIDA Youth Board



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LA VIDA Youth Board Awareness Campaigns



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Successes

- Through our Services to Engage and Advocate for Youth Grant, 263 youth victims of dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sexual abuse received supportive counseling and advocacy services at five local schools
- To date, 83 Southwest Detroit young people have participated in the Youth Advisory Board, providing critical input into the direction of our program and taking on leadership responsibility in raising awareness and reaching out to young survivors of sexual and domestic abuse
- LA VIDA's Youth Board members have planned, recruited, implemented and facilitated four Peer Advocacy Trainings to between 25 and 47 of their peers
- LA VIDA staff has been implementing comprehensive domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programming at local schools in Southwest Detroit continuously for over thirteen years



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Lessons Learned

- Youth leaders are experts in their peer groups and must be engaged and integrated into multiple aspects of all program development
- Developing strong policies that clearly delineate the role and scope of youth leaders is critical
- It is essential to address confidentiality in comprehensive and broad ways and to revisit confidentiality frequently
- Youth culture changes at a rapid pace and materials need to be updated regularly to address this evolution
- Be prepared for systematic changes in school and agency landscape in order to effectively continue programming



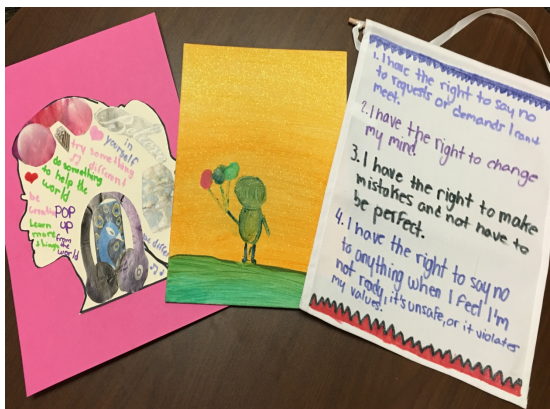
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Prevention Programs

Community Engagement

Summer Program

Leadership Development



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Youth Outreach

Conduct outreach at 5 local collages

Create community collaborations

Facilitate youth board meetings and assist with community campaigns/projects



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Personal Statements



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Youth Tips for Working with Teens

“Start off with an ice breaker/something fun and engaging to get them to participate/feel comfortable.”

“Stay up to date with current trends. It's always better to relate to things happening now, rather than how things were when you were their age.”

“Don't be afraid to interact with them! Let them know that you are really interested and willing to be there for them.”



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Success Stories

“This youth board has opened up many doors for me, I have been able to give presentations, share my opinion, and gain confidence ... I think that the youth board is more than just a fun time, it educates you and helps you gain a lot of confidence.” – Analisa

“...If someone ever needs some advice from me I can be there for them.” – Elizabeth

“[I’ve learned] more about topics that are not discussed at school or home. It’s showed me what I’m worth and how I should be treated. LA VIDA has helped me express my feelings and not hold things in. Last but not least, it has started some friendships and memories I will never forget.” – Alondra

“I pretty much use what I learn every day by helping a friend” – Arely

“I feel like coming here has helped me think differently; think smarter” – Julissa

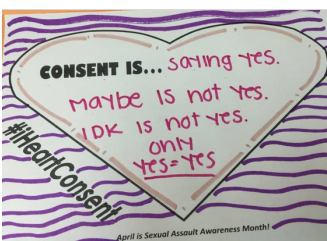
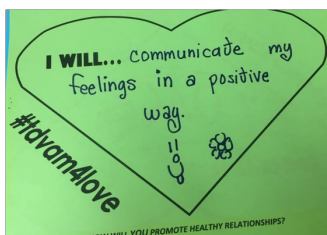


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Día de los Muertos

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2016 Student Leadership Summit



Contact Information



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Questions? Thank you!

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