



“Respectful Relationships” (R+R) Youth Team: Youth Feedback from the 2008-2009 School Year

This report highlights the feedback gathered from 27 youth who participated in the R+R Youth Team during the 2008-2009 school year.

For: SWOVA

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May 2009

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What is the R+R Program?

The R+R program is a twelve session, multi-year, classroom-based program designed to assist youth in the development of healthy relationships with the overall goal of promoting social justice. The program is implemented through a school-community partnership wherein a male and female facilitation team work with classrooms of youth in grades 7-11 by engaging them in discussions and experiential activities in order to meet R+R program goals. In addition to the facilitation team, there are opportunities for youth, interested in social justice issues, to be part of a “youth team.” By being part of this team, youth are then able to take on a leadership role and assist in the delivery of specific aspects of the program.

Each youth team is comprised of a small number of youth who are trained and supported by the facilitators and the R+R community coordinator. In the 2008-2009 school year, six of the seven R+R communities had a youth team. This report presents the feedback from four of these six teams.

Youth Team Feedback Participants

27 youth (17 female; 9 male; 1 multi-faceted gender) provided feedback as to their experiences on the youth team. They ranged from grades eight to twelve (one grade eight and nine; six grade 10s; 5 grade 11s and 14 grade 12s). 23 of the youth indicated that it was their first year on the youth team and 4 youth were returning members (for 2 of the youth it was their second year and for 2 it was their third year).

Feedback Format

Feedback was gathered through a survey which youth team members were asked to complete in February 2009. The majority of questions were qualitative and answers were coded into themes for each question in order to highlight key thoughts and opinions of the youth. What follows are the responses from the youth for each question of the survey.

Reasons for Joining the Team

Reasons for joining the team	Number of youth indicating this response	Examples of Comments
To contribute and give back	15	Help people become better people; Help people who are in an abusive relationship to acknowledge others who are willing to help them; Help kids who are seeking help; To be able to work with and offer advice to other youth; Good opportunity to get more involved with the community.
New Experience	8	To take a risk and get out of the comfort zone.
To impart knowledge gained from R+R	5	Wanted to be involved in teaching kids about R+R; To teach kids what goes in society; Help spread information to others; Acknowledgement of how abusive relationships are common; Help people realize the importance of respectful relationships.
Recommended by peers	4	Heard good comments from friends about youth team.
Gain other skills	3	Delving deeper into the role of a facilitator.
Learn more about social justice	2	Learn about what effects others.
To be more confident in myself	2	More confident to voice personal opinions.
SWOVA should be mandatory in school programs	2	SWOVA life skills are something that will be used forever.
Enjoyed session in class during peer helping retreat	1	
Resume purposes	1	R+R looks great on a resume.

Best Part of Being on the Youth Team

Best parts of being on the team	Number of youth indicating this response	Examples of Comments
Learning about oneself	12	Discovering what I want to do in life after finishing school; Being able to speak and listen; Being able to see my skills being used with a group of younger students; "Check-ins": being able to check with ourselves; Listening to others; Personal learning; Personal growth; Sense of being more assertive; Learning ways to help ourselves.
Participating in the classrooms	8	Being in the classroom with students; Experiencing different topics with students similar in age who I don't really know; Facilitating gr. 9 + 10 workshops has been great!
Workshops and Guest speakers	7	Workshops on facilitation and leadership skills; Provincial learning workshops (weeklong); Evelyn White came in to talk about racism; "Captain" came in to talk about being a transgendered person; Meeting the McBride people; Robert.
Learning experience	5	Fun learning experience.
Planning other projects/ meeting together as a team	4	Working on group ideas to get the message out; Enjoyed weekly Youth Facilitator meetings; Group discussion.
Feeling that I am making a difference	4	Feeling that we are making a difference; Seeing the change I can make and being a better person for it; Common desire to change the world for the better.
Snacks	3	
Games	1	
Being a role model	1	
Films	1	Seeing controversial films - Feminism: breaking down the word.

Most Challenging Part of Being on the Team

Most Challenging Part	Number of youth indicating this response	Examples of Comments
Busy schedule	7	Giving time up after school; Making time in school and personal schedule; Monday commitments.
Sharing personal things	7	Talking and sharing personal things with people whom I normally wouldn't; Listening to others opening up and sharing family problems; Program is very emotional, thus sometimes I felt like I didn't want to go into the classroom because topics were too touchy and personal; Talking to the team about personal information because I don't talk to people about my emotions; Don't trust some of the team members which makes it hard when sharing intimate things; Trusting everyone; Listen to others in classroom admit things hard to say; Filtering what I say.
Facilitating/speaking in a crowd	7	Terrified of facilitating, but youth team has helped improve this skills; Get shaky when speaking in a crowd but program has helped me overcome some of it; Being effective and well understood when working in classrooms; Being looked up to by younger students can be intimidating; Having to do role plays in front of a larger crowd.
Developing projects and strategies to reach others	2	Finding projects that people would like to get involved with.
Motivating people to participate.	2	Motivating people to open up. Getting classes to be quiet to build appropriate mood for people to open up.
Sense of boredom/sense of wanting more	2	Need new challenges; Need to use my resources and experience more through this team.
Sharing ideas opposed to SWOVA's.	1	Sharing controversial ideas that may oppose SWOVA.
Journals	1	Remembering to write in journals.

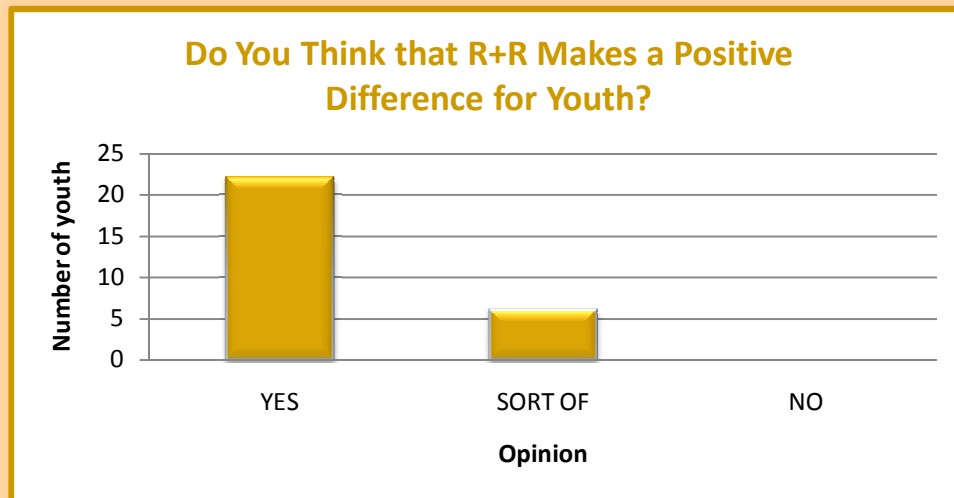
Skills Gained From Being on the Team

Skills Gained from being on the team	Number of youth indicating this response	Examples of Comments
Learning about social justice issues, relationships and key underlying social competence skills	15	Learned more about violence prevention; Learned about recognizing early signs of problematic and potentially abusive relationships; Learned not to be judgmental; Be more respectful; Awareness; Standing up for others; Accepting differences; Domino affect (bully triangle); How to be there for someone.
Learned about facilitation skills/public speaking	14	Presenting to large groups; Confidence in presenting; How to go into a group of adults or kids and be able to facilitate workshops; How to feel comfortable in front of large crowds; group management.
Skills Related to Conflict Resolutions Skills	9	Listening and analyzing situation skills; Ways on how to control anger or deal with tough situations; Ways to deal with emotions; How to lead when process, reflection or action is needed; How to be a great listener; Patience; How to receive constructive criticism.
Sharing/ expressing personal opinions	6	Speak up and speak out!; The "I" statements were a challenge but effective; Learning to communicate with others about personal needs, desires and problems.
Self -confidence	5	Learned to feel empowered and comfortable in my own relationship with myself; Being more assertive.
Perspective-taking skills	3	Learned simple steps to put myself in other peoples' shoes.
Teamwork	2	
Being a positive role model	2	
Creativity	1	Taking a boring fact and making something fun out of it.

Level of Training

Have you received enough training?	Number of youth indicating this response	Examples of Comments
YES	24	Yes, although I know there is a lot more training I could take and learn. Would have liked to receive more training on topics such as sexual health, awkward situations and how to deal with them, etc.
NO	1	
YES AND NO	2	This year is different, because of the new facilitators and because most of the new members are in their first year; I feel like I could do/learn more. I learned more as I went more in the classrooms.

Impact of the "R+R" Program on Youth

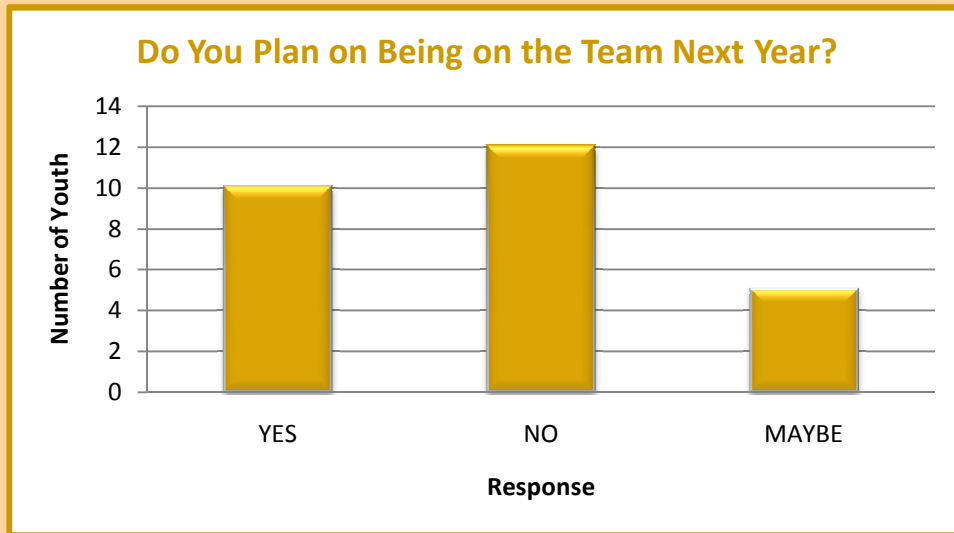


Comments from youth indicating "sort of"

"We can teach them and give them the resources but we can't force them to do the right thing."

"Not all people take the sessions seriously."

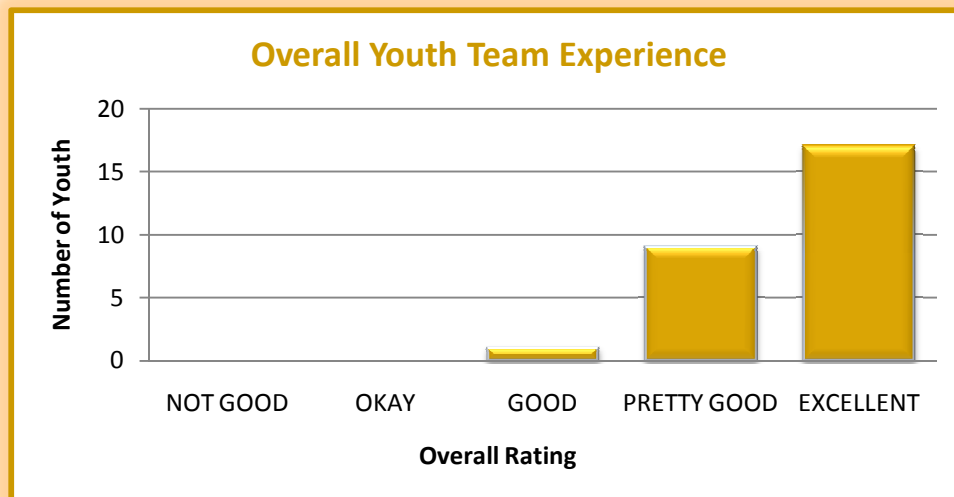
Youth Plans on Being on the Team in the 2009-2010 School Year



Among those youth who indicated “No”, the main reason cited was that they were graduating. One facilitator indicated a desire to become a facilitator rather than be on the youth team.

Further to this, youth were asked if they would recommend being on the team to other youth. All youth indicated that “YES”, they would recommend being on the team to others.

Overall Rating of Youth Team Experience



Two youth suggested that the program could have more guest speakers and learning opportunities for the youth team members.

Final Comments

"I wish it could go on all year round or for a longer period. I hope it could go beyond school."

"I had lots of fun. I hope it will be successful in the upcoming years!"

"It is an important program to teach people things that may seem obvious to some but not obvious for others."

"This was enlightening, and a great experience. I'm grateful for the opportunity!"

"I think this program has been a wonderful experience and hope that it continues in Ashcroft. It has changed my perspective on the way I talk and listen to others."

"This has been one of the greatest opportunities I've had - I took away so much understanding from it."

"I felt my experience in this program was 'pretty good' because I didn't experience it the same way as some of my Youth team did. I didn't get to interact with students the way I was hoping to. Meaning that I didn't feel that I was a life changing experience for them (maybe I'm wrong)."

"I'd love for there to be a more sessions directed towards developing a sense of intimacy between members of youth team."

"Love this program. I believe it is truly making a difference."

"I feel very grateful for the SWOVA program and the opportunity to be on the Youth team."

"SWOVA rocks my socks!"

"I just think this entire program is really cool in a way."

"I hope you get more funding."

"It was awesome Y'all."

"I think getting some Respectful Relationships are useful! Whoever started this group is smart and I recommend anyone to take part in this course!"

"I really liked the R+R experience."

"Excellent program, I hope it continues."

"Respectful Relationships is a good program, because if a parent doesn't guide, R+R provides that knowledge."

"It was sweet and I hope we get grants next year."

"R+R is the bee's knees."

"Had a good time."

"Grrrrreat."

"I think this is an important program for the kids involved in it."

"This program has really helped me and changed my life drastically. Thank you."

