



PARTNERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRINCETON CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING

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NEWARK PARTNERSHIP REAPS BENEFITS

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES LAUNCHED

Secondary school leaders in the Newark Public School District are on a mission: to transform their high schools into professional learning communities that are more personalized and academically rigorous — for both students and teachers alike. A team of PCLT staff and consultants have joined forces with central office leaders from SLT II, Teaching and Learning, and the Office of Professional Development to support school principals and teaching teams in all fourteen high schools.

Beginning with a two-day kick-off Leadership Conference in August, priorities for the year were established. Large high schools are finding ways to form

smaller learning communities, and teams of faculty are meeting regularly during their common planning time to improve instruction, examine student work, and create more personalized, welcoming environments for their students.

At monthly Principals Meetings led by Dr. Russell Garris, the SLT II Assistant Superintendent, building principals share their successes and challenges with making significant schools changes. At a recent meeting, Otis Brown, the dynamic principal of West Side Ninth Grade Success Academy, described how his school is tackling the personalization challenge by forming an Advisory Program. He believes that by creating this more formalized structure of support for all 450 freshmen, relationships between teachers and students and among students themselves will be built on trust, respect and greater rapport.



Otis Brown, principal at West Side Ninth Grade Success Academy, leads a discussion with colleagues.



Newark Central Office staff and high school administrators were able to discuss and set their educational priorities for the 2005-06 school year at the August 2005 Leadership Conference facilitated by PCLT staff.

PCLT is working with Brown and his staff to develop an advisory curriculum that encourages active student discourse on topics of friendship, peer pressure, and community safety. Staff are receiving training and technical assistance support during this pioneering effort to transform their school's climate.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PCLT'S INVESTMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS PAYS OFF

In 2006, PCLT is blessed to have partnerships with dynamic, intelligent, committed educators from schools all over New Jersey. Whether school leaders are focused on developing professional learning teams for faculty, creating advisory programs for students, or training students as peer leaders — it's about partnerships.

It's about building on the strengths each partner brings to the table. It's about dreaming big, visioning wide, and developing practical, well-thought-out structures that can reinforce the goals of key stakeholders.

In addition to school partnerships, PCLT is also collaborating with other like-minded groups. This spring, we are teaming up with the New Jersey Psychological Association Foundation and the New York Giants to conduct an important event entitled *Putting an End to Sexual Violence: Athletes Take Action*.

This conference will provide an exciting experience for teams of five representatives from up to 60 high schools, as well as a simple and effective take-home approach to teaching student-athletes about their power and responsibility when it comes to ending sexual violence. *(Read more about this conference on the back page of this newsletter.)*

As 2006 gets underway, all of us at PCLT wish you a year of positive change and continued learning. And if we can partner with you to help you realize your goals this next year, please call.



Sharon Rose Powell

Sharon Rose Powell, Ed.D.
President

PRUDENTIAL FOUNDATION & NJ TEEN PEP TEAM UP

THREE NEWARK HIGH SCHOOLS BENEFACTORS OF NEWEST PARTNERSHIP

Too little, too late. This is how teens often report their access to sexual health information. The Prudential Foundation has made a commitment to do something about this and is partnering with the Newark School District to implement the New Jersey Teen Prevention Education Program (Teen PEP) for three years in three Newark high schools — Central, Technology, and Weequahic. After a year of planning and training, Teen PEP began in September 2005. A team of advisors from each school has begun co-teaching a year-long sexual health education course to a group of selected juniors and seniors. These students are learning to become knowledgeable and effective peer educators.

Teen PEP has helped me to understand my body and the changes it has gone through.

~ Student,
Weequahic High School

Throughout the school year, these peer educators will use the skills gained through the Teen PEP course to conduct workshops with freshmen that address a wide range of teen sexual health topics. Peer educators provide a safe space for their younger peers to ask questions and come to their own understanding about how to make healthy decisions for themselves. In the words of one peer educator, "Teen PEP helps students set standards for themselves and make healthy choices."

Teen PEP is a collaboration among the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, HiTOPS, Inc., and PCLT.

PGC LAUNCHED IN UNION CITY

16 EMERSON HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS COMMITTED TO HELPING FRESHMEN

This fall, Emerson High School (EHS) in Union City opened its doors to Peer Group Connection (PGC). A team of dedicated administrators, three energetic and dynamic faculty advisors, and 16 committed seniors set out to make a difference in the lives of over 100 freshmen at EHS. According to David Vicuna, a peer leader at EHS, “We are helping to lead the way for the freshmen, setting standards and helping them negotiate their way to a successful future.” The faculty advisors, who are leading the seniors through an intensive, 5-day-per-week leadership class, were trained by PCLT staff over the summer. These 16 seniors then guide groups of freshmen through their first year at EHS at weekly interactive outreach sessions.

extraordinary dedication when they agreed to partner with PCLT and Rutgers University for a comprehensive evaluation of PGC. One element of this partnership entails weekly observation of EHS faculty and students by PCLT and Rutgers University staff. Intensive data on every aspect of their program is being collected.



A peer leader at Emerson High School conducts an activity with parents at Family Night.

The high level of hard work and dedication among the three faculty advisors has been passed along to their class of senior peer leaders. These seniors know the work they are doing is important and are motivated to keep their freshmen in school.

They also know that the rate of high school graduation in their community is low. With this knowledge, they have created a vision of providing a foundation of support for freshmen so that they will have the critical problem-solving skills they need to negotiate the obstacles leading to graduation.

Principal Fazio recognizes that this is the beginning of a change in Emerson’s school culture and has a high level of regard for the hard work that the students are doing. “This could be the most important course in high school,” adds faculty advisor Beverly Grady, “because it builds the foundation of being a good person.”

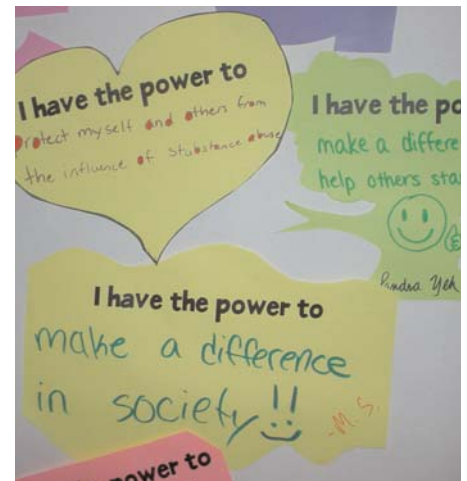
Helping others helps yourself. You start to learn that not everyone’s perfect and through this class you start to see how you can make good choices.

~ José Tola
Emerson Peer Leader

Establishing an intensive prevention program in a school requires great commitment from key stakeholders. Both the faculty and the administrators of EHS, led by Principal Robert Fazio, demonstrated



Students at a recent New Jersey Peer to Peer Day of Learning created Power Messages. These messages were reflections on all they had experienced throughout the day. Students then placed their individual messages on a banner (see photo on the left), symbolizing the collective power peer leaders share! Some of the students’ messages are shown in the photo on the right.





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ATTENTION ALL NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOLS

You are invited to attend a conference you won't want to miss!

WHAT? PUTTING AN END TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE: ATHLETES TAKE ACTION

WHEN? Friday, March 17, 2006

WHERE? The College of New Jersey, Trenton

WHO? High schools can send 5 representatives: a principal or administrator, an athletic director or coach, a health educator, and 2 student athletes

- **Hear TIKI BARBER, conference chair, and JACKSON KATZ, one of America's leading anti-sexist male activists, speak on the topic of sexual violence**
- **See SCREAM, a presentation by Rutgers University athlete-actors**
- **Participate in an engaging training exercise in sexual violence prevention**
- **Receive a simple, effective design for educating student-athletes at your school**

Co-sponsored by the New Jersey Psychological Association Foundation, PCLT, and the New York Giants with support from the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey and in association with the NJ State Interscholastic Athletic Association and the Directors of Athletics Association of NJ .

Don't miss this exceptional opportunity! Call 973-243-9800 for more information.