



PARTNERS

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INAUGURAL REBEL 2 STATEWIDE SUMMIT HELD

NEW JERSEY'S MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

It began as a small speck high above the ballroom floor. Throughout the morning, *it* grew and began to come alive. By the end of the day, *it* covered the entire ballroom wall with pink hearts, purple triangles, red blocks, yellow circles, blue skies, and green fields. What is *it*? A spilled bowl of Lucky Charms? No, *it* is a quilt created by the 400 middle school students who attended the visioning workshop at the inaugural REBEL 2 Statewide Summit held on April 29th at the Princeton Marriott. REBEL 2 is a new, tobacco prevention, after-school club sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services with 45 school and county chapters throughout the state. REBEL 2 integrates middle school students into the youth-led, statewide movement for high school students known as REBEL (*Reaching Everyone By Exposing Lies*), active in every county in New Jersey.

At the visioning workshop, students were invited to explore their idea of what New Jersey would look like if REBEL 2 is successful in its fight against tobacco. Their visions were then brought to life using bright

pieces of foam, colored markers, and youthful imagination. Themes emerged as the students took ownership of REBEL 2: *Unity — together as one, accomplishing goals; REBEL 2 shines on the truth.*



The REBEL 2 visioning quilt towers over two REBEL 2 Summit participants as they hang their chapter's piece of the quilt. (photo courtesy of Jeff Zelevansky Photography)

The quilt was one of three workshops at the Summit. At the second workshop, students learned an interactive presentation, *On the Spot*, that each chapter will present to elementary students in their communities. Through role play, REBEL 2 students will teach their younger peers how to say "No!" to tobacco and other unhealthy situations. During the third workshop, students responded enthusiastically to Sandy Queen, Director of Lifeworks, who encouraged them to follow their dreams and be that "one voice that stands up for what is right."

By the end of the day, the students were ready to conquer their world to stop tobacco use. Everyone within earshot could hear their resounding cheer — **We Make A Difference!** To join the REBEL 2 network, contact Dr. Abby Attias at 609-252-9300, extension 103, or Aattias@princetonleadership.org.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CREATING A HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS

Whole School Reform has different meanings for teachers and administrators in New Jersey's schools. But whatever the primary focus of reform efforts, there is a universal desire to create a more positive, healthy climate in which to teach and learn. At the Princeton Center, we help to build the capacity of school-based leadership or management teams to drive these change initiatives.

A shared leadership approach that includes teachers, parents and administrators working together is a model presently being mandated in New Jersey's Abbott districts, and many suburban districts are turning to a collaborative model as well. The problem is that we come to the table well-

intentioned, but without the skills to communicate effectively, to run productive meetings, or to organize and conduct large group forums that involve the rest of the faculty and parent body.

First and foremost, members of a leadership team must develop a common vision for how instruction will improve and how relationships among teachers, administrators, parents, and students can be strengthened. Secondly, team members must learn and agree to use a process for communicating that includes (1) a check-in procedure, (2) active listening and straight talk, (3) an action planning format, and (4) time for reflection and 360° feedback. Finally, team members need regularly scheduled retreats for team building, planning, developing new skills, and ongoing reflective practice.

At PCLT we welcome the opportunity to partner with school districts that want to form and strengthen the autonomy of school-based teams to lead Whole School Reform.

Sharon Rose Powell

Sharon Rose Powell, Ed.D.
President

MARCHING ON TOWARD INCREASED RESPECT

Young people under the age of 20 commit the majority of hate crimes in the United States, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). An alarming statistic – but one that can be reversed through education. In a joint campaign with Barnes & Noble, Inc., entitled *Close the Book on Hate*, the ADL offers 101 ways to teach students how to accept and celebrate diversity. Suggestions include:

- write original songs/raps that celebrate diversity
- develop skits that break down stereotypes and promote respect
- establish school exchanges to bring youth of different backgrounds closer together

On April 10th and 15th, over 600 New Jersey Peer to Peer (NJPTP) student leaders and adult mentors from



NJPTP peer leaders explore issues of diversity, respect, and community at the "Marches On" workshop.

35 middle schools across the state had the opportunity to try these suggestions at the third annual NJPTP *Marches On* events. This year's theme was exploring issues of diversity and community. Participants began by getting to know students and advisors from New Jersey's urban, suburban, and rural communities. In mixed school group discussions, they explored issues of ethnic, racial, and religious diversity, as well as sexual harassment and homophobia. They then worked together in small groups to develop creative presentations – posters, songs, skits, commercials, and cheers – that promote respect for diversity at school. Through workshops like this, students will be able to break the cycle of hate.

"It was most useful to work with others and learn not to judge people who are different from me."

NJPTP *Marches On*
participant

ANNUAL SEXUAL HEALTH CONFERENCE HELD

It isn't easy to navigate the pressures of being a teenager. But the 550 student leaders who attended the 7th annual *Day of Learning about Adolescent Health Issues* on May 2nd at the Princeton Marriott made a commitment to embrace this challenge by becoming positive role models, peer educators, and leaders in

"I learned the importance of safer sex, making good decisions, the consequences of unwise decisions, and how alcohol can hurt decision-making."

Teen PEP Day of Learning Peer Educator

sexual health education. Dr. George DiFerdinando, Deputy Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDOHSS), opened the day by thanking the student leaders for their commitment to educating their peers and creating a positive change in their schools. A riveting song and dance performance, *All I Need Is One Life*, was performed by the Franklin High School peer educators. The students had rewritten the lyrics to a popular song to educate their peers about the consequences of HIV.

Throughout the day, peer educators conducted interactive, engaging workshops addressing HIV/AIDS prevention, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), teen pregnancy, sexual harassment, dating violence, date rape, homophobia reduction, and other sexual health concerns.

The *Day of Learning* provides a firsthand look at the New Jersey Teen Prevention Education Program (Teen PEP), a peer leadership, sexual health promotion program in 31 New Jersey high schools. During the 2001-02 school year, 320 peer educators were trained in these schools. Throughout the year, they will reach more than 8,000 students with their prevention messages and skill-building workshops.

In September, ten new schools will be selected to join the statewide network. All New Jersey public high schools are eligible to participate in Teen PEP which is sponsored by NJDOHSS in collaboration with PCLT and Princeton HiTOPS, Inc. *For more information on Teen PEP, contact Dr. Sherry Barr at 609-252-9300 extension 117 or Sbarr@princetonleadership.org.*



PCLT Vice President Sherry Barr presents a certificate for a faculty inservice workshop valued at \$2,500 to Roger Fitzgerald, principal of Midland Park Junior/Senior High School. The drawing was held at an Administrators' Luncheon on February 12th with the theme, "Building Character Today: Strengthening Our Leaders for Tomorrow."



Pictured from left to right are Wendy Kerr, Kearny High School Teen PEP faculty advisor, Gary Steen and Jackie Almeida, Peer Educators, who were presented with a plaque for Kearny's award winning Family Night Event. The presentation was made at the 7th Annual Teen PEP Day of Learning. Family Night is an event where teens and adults participate in activities that stimulate communication about sexual health issues.



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CAMDEN FOCUSES ON INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

PRINCIPALS GATHER FOR DISTRICT-WIDE FORUMS

The Camden School District and the Princeton Center for Leadership Training have put together a series of

“This training always gives me new insight on situations in my everyday administering.”

Camden School District
Principal

district-wide forums for 35 principals and other central office administrators. The series is intended to build the capacity of each school’s School Management Team by first addressing the

unique role and challenges of principals as instructional leaders in their schools.

The forums have ranged from lively discussions with Steve Block from the Education Law Center and a representative group of parents in the district, to participation in a *Pressure Zone* simulation with time for principals to practice straight talk, negotiation, and refusal skills. The Princeton Center’s pragmatic approach to addressing everyday concerns drew this

observation from a principal: “This training allowed me to examine my leadership style and to improve in those areas that could be more relevant in my total interactions with others.”



Camden principals working together at a leadership forum conducted by the Princeton Center for Leadership Training.