



# CHILDREN & YOUTH COMMUNITY PLAN (CYCP) REPORT CARD



ALEXANDRIA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ENSURING EVERY CHILD SUCCEEDS TODAY AND TOMORROW

## VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

This issue reports the progress made on preventing sexual and domestic violence and building healthy relationships between April 2021 - March 2023

## CYCP GOAL

All Children, Youth, and Families will be Physically Safe and Healthy

## YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

This Report Card celebrates the work of the Keep It 360 Peer Advocates! The Peer Advocates are: **Yaerelin** (student at Northern VA Community College), **Amel** (Senior at ACHS), **Nathan** (Senior at ACHS), **Chelsea** (Senior at ACHS), **Yanelvis** (Senior at ACHS), **Alayit** (Senior at ACHS), **Lenhle** (Senior at ACHS), **Andrea** (Senior at ACHS), and **Chloe** (Junior at ACHS).

Through a partnership between the Sexual Assault Center (SAC), Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP), and the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA), the Peer Advocates were hired and trained to educate their peers on making healthy life choices.

Each month, they present workshops to middle and high school students at LINK Club after-school programs at Francis Hammond Middle School, George Washington Middle School, Jefferson Houston, and Community Lodgings. All workshops focus on prevention topics, such as healthy relationships, substance abuse prevention, anti-bullying, dating violence prevention, goal setting and visioning, cyber safety and social media boundaries. Since September 2022, they have delivered 18 workshops to the same 135 students across the City.

They have also been on the planning committee and presented to youth at the annual Youth Leadership Conference in Alexandria, served on panels, and serve on several of the City's boards and commissions. All nine Advocates report that they have grown as a leader and a presenter since becoming a Peer Advocate. When asked if they feel more connected to and valued by the Alexandria community since they started working as a Peer Advocate, almost all Peer Advocates said yes (8 said yes; 1 said maybe).



100% OF THE PEER ADVOCATES REPORT THAT THEY HAVE GROWN AS A LEADER BECAUSE OF THE PROGRAM



## What do you like best about being a Peer Advocate?

"I love the people I work with!! The other youth are great and I'm so glad to have met them and become friends! And all of the adults we work with are great inspirations to me because they're so intelligent, caring, and fun to be around."

"Having such an amazing team to be honest. We are such good friends that it makes everything so fun."

"I have created strong relationships with my coworkers and even reconnected to my inner child in having to work one on one with amazing kids! I hope Keep It 360 Peer Advocates receive more attention for future Peer Advocates."

"I really love being a peer advocate and wish I had started sooner."

"I love this program."



# RESULT

All young people live healthy lives and violence-free

## WHY THIS MATTERS

During adolescence, young people learn how to form safe and healthy relationships with friends, parents, caregivers, teachers, and romantic partners. Healthy relationships are ones where each person's independence is respected, decisions are made without fear of retribution or retaliation, arguments remain calm, and there is mutual trust, good communication, and consent.



Healthy dating during adolescence can be an important way to develop social-emotional skills and build positive relationships in other areas, such as in school and at work.

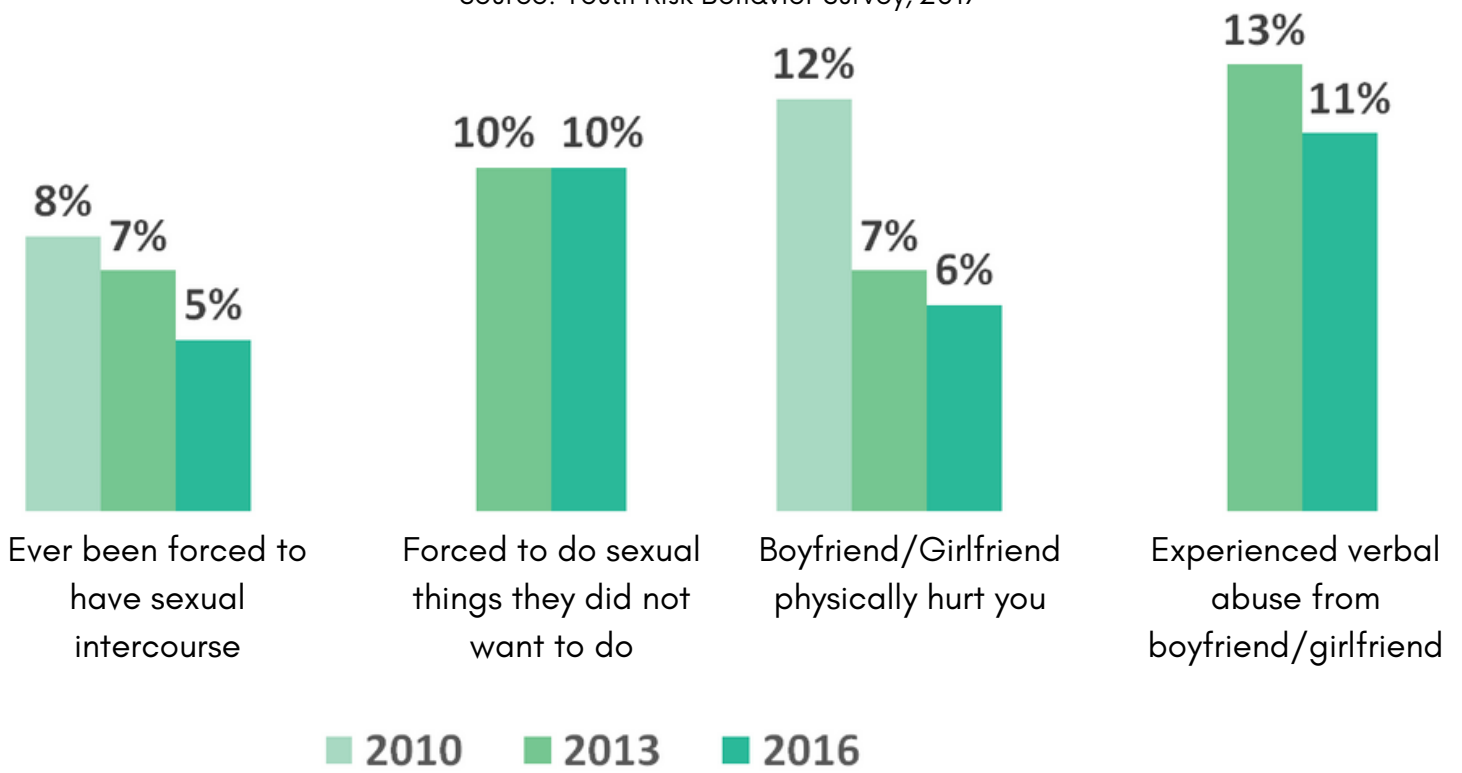
Unhealthy relationships, on the other hand, usually have an imbalance of power. Some unhealthy relationships become physically, emotionally, or sexually violent. Youth who experience dating violence are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety, engage in unhealthy behaviors, and think about suicide. Sexual and domestic violence are serious societal problems that can have lasting, harmful effects on victims and their family, friends, and communities.

Youth in Alexandria are experiencing violence as we speak. In 2022, the Sexual Assault Center and Domestic Violence Program served 123 youth who experienced sexual and domestic violence. This is why we need effective intervention services to respond to violence and why we must focus on prevention work at the same time. Creating and nurturing healthy identity development and healthy relationships among youth are effective strategies to prevent interpersonal violence and inter-generational violence.

## HOW WE ARE DOING

### Dating/Relationship Violence\*

Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2017



\*Obtaining accurate data on sexual violence is inherently difficult because it is understandably under-reported. The numbers are more a reflection of whether our community is a place where students feel comfortable reporting the incidents.

## STRATEGIES

17. Offer programs to empower youth, build self-confidence, and foster healthy relationships with a focus on attracting BIPOC youth participation
18. Support peer to peer education and advocacy through the Keep it 360 Peer Advocate program

## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

### Progress with preventing dating violence:

2 Strategies, 6 Action Steps,



50% are in progress or fully implemented

# CHAMPIONS

Alexandria Sexual Assault Center (SAC), Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP), and the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA)

# PARTNERS

- [ACPS 21st Century Grant - Link Club](#)
- [Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities](#)
- [Capital Youth Empowerment Program](#)
- [Mayor's Campaign to End Bullying](#)
- [Safe Space NOVA](#)

# WHAT DID WE DO?



## To advance strategy #18, the DCCHS - Sexual Assault Center has fully implemented:

- Collaborating to hire and train teen peer advocates in sexual and domestic violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, sexual health education, and general advocacy and presentation skills
- Empowered peer advocates to educate youth across Alexandria about healthy relationships and prevention through workshops, social media, and forums

## ...and is in the process of:

- Providing opportunities for peer advocates to engage with City service providers and leaders for exchange of information and perspectives



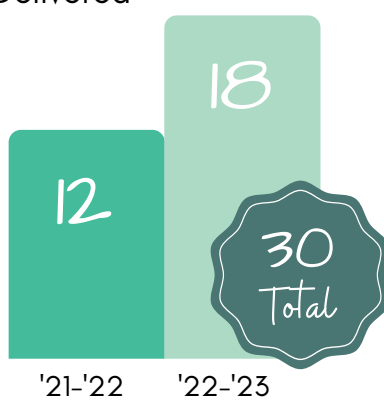
# HOW MUCH HAVE WE DONE?

## Prevention Efforts

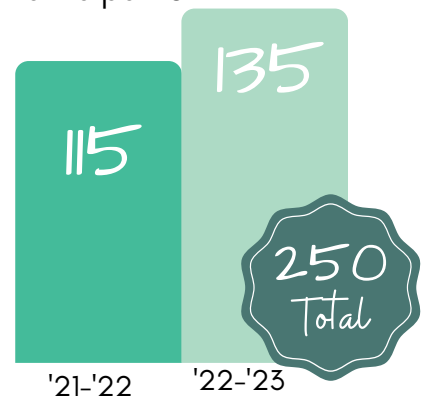
### 2022-2023

- 9 Keep It 360 Peer Advocates Hired & Trained to deliver prevention workshops
- 18 Workshops Delivered
- 135 Workshop Participants

# of Workshops Delivered

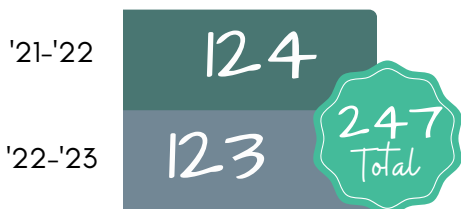


# of Workshop Participants

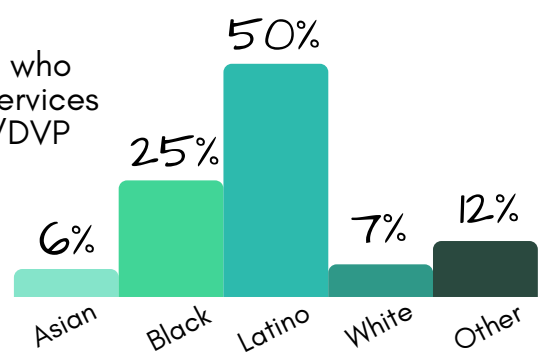


## Intervention Efforts

# of Alexandria youth who received services from the Sexual Assault Center (SAC) and Domestic Violence Program (DVP)



# of Youth who received services from SAC/DVP by Race/Ethnicity



# HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?



100% of Peer Advocate Positions Filled



100% of Peer Advocates were Satisfied with their Job



90% of students say the Peer Advocate facilitators did a good job

Middle School Students said the following when asked what they liked best about the workshops:

"I like how we all get to have fun while we are learning."

"The best thing I liked about the activity was how we all didn't stop talking which is what I really liked."

"Being able to share our opinions."

"I like how I was able to interact and relate to the staff."

"The positivity."

"I always learn something from them."

"The fact that everyone got to express themselves."

"The Peer Advocates helped me and it was great."

"The group facilitators were very nice."

# IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

**83%** of Workshop Participants (Alexandria Youth) plan to use this information in the future

**85%** of Workshop Participants say that what they learned was useful and important

**100%** of the Peer Advocates report that they have grown as a leader because of the Program

**100%** of Peer Advocates agree that their own knowledge of sexual and domestic violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, and sexual health education has increased since becoming a Peer Advocate



Feedback from the Peer Advocates:

"I feel like it's great that not only do we get to learn about all these really important things, but we get to share them with others."

"The extensive training we've received has definitely opened me up to learn about things I didn't know prior... It has prepared me to better educate youth in my community as well."

"I like that I get to collaborate with other youth in my community! It's so fun and has allowed me to build stronger relationships with them as peers."

"I like talking to kids and giving them interesting and informative workshops."

"I really like how involved I've been in my community and the people I got to meet."

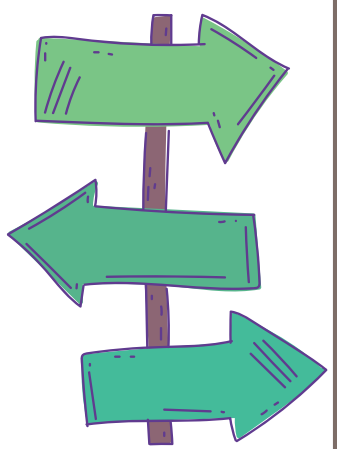
I love how supportive and engaging the community is to have our voices heard. I love educating individuals on preventative methods to achieve a healthier lifestyle as well as supporting my community any way I can. Community cookouts were also my favorite because we were able to collaborate with other city agencies and get to network along the way.

"Being a peer advocate has allowed me to network with individuals in power that I thought I would never be speaking to. It's taught me many skills, such as public speaking and being more empathetic. I am going to miss this so much when I go away for college."

# WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Between now and 2025, we will:

- Offer programs to empower youth, build self-confidence, and foster healthy relationships with a focus on attracting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth participation
- Partner with Safe Space NOVA to deliver two programs - one focused on healthy sexuality called [You + Me = We](#) and the other, called [LGBTQIA+ Youth Social Support Group](#), aims to be a place for youth to make new friends, find a support system, and build community. Both are funded through a grant from the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.
- Provide a support group for parents of LGBTQ+ youth through a violence prevention grant from the Virginia Department of Health.
- Partner with [Capital Youth Empowerment Program \(CYEP\)](#) to offer the Safe Dates curriculum to Alexandria youth through a grant from the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. CYEP focuses on serving Black/African American and Latino/Hispanic youth. The mission of CYEP is to level the playing field for the underserved.
- Serve as a resource to ACPS staff and teachers on domestic and sexual violence prevention and response (i.e. connecting students with safety resources, providing trainings on SV/DV and healthy relationships, etc.)



# RESOURCES

- **Raise Your Voice to Help Neighbors at Risk of Abuse:** How to recognize signs of abuse in children and adults. View or download the flyer in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Amharic](#) or [Arabic](#).
- If you are experiencing **sexual or intimate partner violence** or know someone who is, we are here 24/7 to help. Visit
  - <https://www.alexandriava.gov/SexualViolence>
  - <https://www.alexandriava.gov/DomesticViolence>
  - <https://www.alexandriava.gov/LGBTQ>
  - or call anytime day or night: 703-683-7273 or 703-746-4911
- For resources on **substance abuse**, visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/SAPCA>
- For resources on **healthy sexuality and pregnancy prevention**, visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/ACAP>
- Follow us on: (@alexandriateenlife) @AlexTeenLife

