

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since 2000, Safe School Ambassadors programs have been implemented in over **850** schools, training over **28,000** students and over **4,400** adults in **30** US states and in **2** Canadian provinces.

### Impact of the Safe School Ambassadors program:

- Reduces bullying, including cyberbullying
- Increases student reporting to adults
- Reduces put-downs, harassment and fighting
- Improves school climate and student retention
- Reduces gang involvement and activity

### The Safe School Ambassadors program is:

- A research-based, field-tested, logic model
- A proven anti-bullying and violence-prevention program
- Student-centered
- Focused on social norms change
- Cost-effective

The program identifies and selects student leaders from diverse groups across the campus and forms them into a team of Safe School Ambassadors. Ambassadors are trained in the skills of nonviolent communication to stop bullying and violence.

### Why the Safe School Ambassadors program is student-centered:

- Students see, hear and know things that adults don't
- Students can intervene in ways adults can't
- Students are often the first to arrive on the scenes of most incidents before adults even know about the incidents
- Students determine the social norms—what's OK and what's not—while adults set the rules, policies and consequences

### Safe School Ambassadors have:

- High social status and influence in their peer groups
- Strong communication skills and an outgoing personality
- Empathy and compassion
- A history of standing up for their friends and peers



“The Safe School Ambassadors program has provided us with a well-designed student-to-student initiative that has made a positive difference in over 30 of our district’s schools.”

—Alison Adler, Ed.D., Chief, Safety & Learning Environment,  
School District of Palm Beach County, Florida

### How the Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) program empowers youth:

Few schools have fully engaged, equipped and empowered their students as peacemakers to improve school climate. As a result, students believe that they have only *two options*:

- to be a bystander and condone the hurtful acts they see, or
- to “tell” on their peers

The SSA program provides Ambassadors with the motivation, skills and support to know they have a *better option*:

### Ambassadors are taught to intervene to prevent or stop the mistreatment they see.

“We learned how to defuse conflicts that arise in everyday life and how to create a community of peace and unity.”

—Dani, 16, Safe School Ambassador, northern California

### Safe School Ambassadors is designed for students 4th–12th grades.

## What Community Matters provides:

### 1) *Introductory materials and DVD to:*

- Explain program elements and steps for implementation
- Help secure administrative and staff buy-in
- Identify, recruit and select appropriate adults and students to be trained
- Prepare for the training

### 2) *Two days of interactive training at school site for selected students and adults, so that:*

- Students develop essential skills: observation, intervention, negotiation, reporting, and referral
- Adults learn how to facilitate ongoing small (Family) group meetings that provide Ambassadors with supervision, skill development and support

### 3) *Program implementation materials and coaching:*

- Principal's and Program Advisor's Handbooks, for the administrator and site coordinator, include timelines, checklists, strategies, guidelines, tips, activities, and resources
- Family Group Facilitators' Guidebook, for adults leading Family groups, includes meeting agendas, activities, strategies, and forms
- Student Ambassador's Guidebook includes vocabulary, definitions, skills, activities, reflection journals and intervention tips
- Electronic bulletins, newsletters, and reminders, with best practices from active programs
- Web-based resources, with downloadable forms and letters, a searchable help desk, and a data management portal. (For more information, go to our website.)
- Individualized coaching and support via email and phone

### 4) *Program Measurement and Assessment:*

#### **Included in the SSA program model are...**

- Two Action "Snapshot" Campaigns, measuring Ambassadors' activity
- Mid- and Year-End Discipline Data Analysis forms and coaching, measuring program impact on school climate
- Year-End Surveys (online or paper) of Ambassadors and program adults, measuring Ambassadors' activity and program impact on Ambassadors and school climate

#### **Optional SSA program Assessment Tools...**

##### **Pre- and Post-SSA Training Surveys**

- School Climate Survey
- Key Adults Survey



## How does the Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) program complement other school climate efforts?

The SSA program functions as a stand-alone program. It is also an excellent complement to peer education, diversity education, conflict mediation, and other student empowerment, character education and safe school programs. On its own or with other programs, the SSA program improves school climate and fosters safer schools.

## What the Safe School Ambassadors program costs:

For the materials, training, pre/post program support and coaching, a school site invests about \$125 per student trained:

\$4,300\* for program, elementary, middle or high school levels PLUS an estimated \$500-\$1300 travel and accommodations costs in addition to the program cost, depending on where the school is located and which trainer is assigned.

\*Check website for discounts and SSA program sustainability options.

**We also provide Parent/Guardian Education Workshops and Staff Development Trainings: [www.community-matters.org](http://www.community-matters.org)**

## Where can I find funding for the Safe School Ambassadors program?

Schools have found funding: through state laws that fund bullying-prevention and school climate; Titles I and IV; principal's discretionary fund; funds for student activities; PTA/O or PFC; district funds; site councils; state and federal grants for safe schools and prevention; and other sources, such as police departments, businesses, service clubs, hospitals, local/community foundations, private donors and community fundraising. We have tools and resources to help schools find funding. Ask us!

"Safe School Ambassadors save lives!"

—Neil Williamson, Dean of Students  
Belmont High School, Los Angeles, CA