



Youth Summit: *Increasing Youth Voice and Improving School Climate*

The Need:

Violence in schools and threats to school safety have increased in recent years. Many youth are reluctant to come forward with information, resistant to asking for help from or reporting dangerous situations to adults, or unable to take effective action. These factors are significant contributors to the growing public health risks of school bullying and violence.

However, when youth are engaged, equipped and empowered for taking action, youth WILL break the "code of silence" and work to reduce violence in schools in collaboration with adults. We must provide avenues for the youth voice to be heard, for them to be involved and equipped with skills of observation and intervention to help make their schools and communities safer for all.

The Youth Summit:

The Youth Summit can be a half- or full-day event for student leaders and/or Safe School Ambassadors from the high and/or middle schools in a district or county. Diverse student leaders meet to develop strategies to break the "code of silence" and reduce the acceptance of youth violence that pervade the youth culture. This event provides a forum for youth to express their views on the causes of and solutions for youth violence.

Summit activities help to defuse tensions and build alliances among cliques and gangs, identify problems and formulate strategies for reducing mistreatment and violence, and foster improved communication between youth and adults.

Benefits of the Youth Summit:

When we see and utilize youth as valuable and active contributors rather than passive consumers, they can become powerful change-agents in creating more peaceful schools and communities.

Youth have the unique ability to step up, stand up, and speak up for their peers and to bring information forward to adults – information that will transform their schools and save lives.

Participants: One or multiple schools – up to 65 students and 8-10 adults.

Cost: \$1,000 - \$2,500 (plus Facilitator's travel expenses)