

HOME

WHO WE ARE

WHAT WE DO

OUR IMPACT

EVENTS

RESOURCES

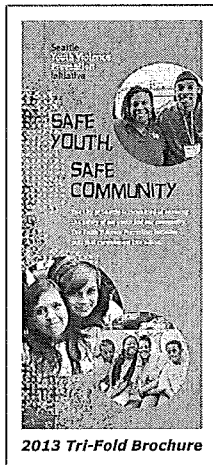
Search website... SEARCH

HOME » FEATURED STORIES » SCHOOL EMPHASIS OFFICERS: A POSITIVE INTERVENTION

SYVPI HISTORY
OUR PARTNERS
NEWS

REFER A YOUTH
E-NEWSLETTER
SYVPI ANNOUNCEMENTS
RECREATION
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYVPI-
ENROLLED YOUTH
CONTACT US

Enter your email below
and click enter to sign up
for our e-newsletter:



School Emphasis Officers: A Positive Intervention

Posted by Jennifer Mills on September 15, 2015



The School Emphasis Officer (SEO) program is unique in its approach to addressing youth violence. Local community-based agencies wanted something different from the School Resource Officer program that many police agencies were using to address the "school to prison pipeline," and were concerned about putting police officers in the schools. So community-based organizations, City departments, the school district and the Seattle Police Department produced a comprehensive collaborative governance model that included evidence-based practices contributed by each agency involved, and the School Emphasis Officer program was born.

As part of the Seattle Police Department's Youth Violence Prevention Unit, School Emphasis Officers are assigned to specific schools that had high truancy and suspension rates or were located in a community known for abnormally high levels of youth violence. They focus on building trust in communities of color, using school-based restorative justice practices, and connections to community-based networks.

Rather than employ law enforcement techniques, officers work closely with school staff on prevention and intervention services. This includes conducting mediations and home visits to address the most serious violent offense suspensions and chronic truancy offenders. The officers, who work with families as soon as issues arise, are trained to leverage community and City resources to address crisis situations. Using crisis intervention techniques, officers make referrals for youth most in need of services, and work with SYVPI Intake and Referral Specialists, Case Managers and a collaborative multi-disciplinary team to ensure the youth involved were receiving the right services.

To date since 2009 when SYVPI was established, School Emphasis Officers have contributed to over 913 mediations, 502 program referrals, 134 mental health case working referrals, and 429 home visits. And beyond the evidence of the officers' commitment to their assigned tasks is the fact that all of them are also involved in coaching programs, mentorship groups, teaching, and a variety of other school-related activities.

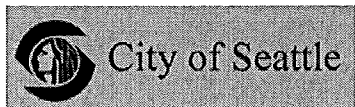
As a result of these efforts, there have been no arrests, and truancy and suspensions have been reduced in schools to which School Emphasis Officers have been assigned compared to schools with no officers. This reduction has been occurring during a period in which the student population has increased citywide.

Officials say the success of the SEO program flows from the strong collaborative relationship that has been built between the school district and the community-based agencies that are part of the Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative.

In 2014, the Youth Violence Prevention Unit began a process evaluation of its efforts with researchers from George Mason University, the University of Maryland and Lycoming College. Look for more information in a future edition of our newsletter when the report is published. For more information about how SPD and SYVPI support youth, visit Seattle Police Department's Youth Outreach webpage.



Categories: Featured Stories, News - Tags: Seattle Public Schools, SPD



Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative
Department of Education and Early Learning
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1640
Seattle, WA 98104

P: (206) 233-7915
F: (206) 233-5142
[Contact Us](#)
[Site Map](#)

Copyright © 2016 SafeYouthSeattle

[Admin Login](#)