



Youth in action

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Hands Without Guns

by *Shannon Pete*

Hands Without Guns is a public health and education campaign of the Educational Fund to End Handgun Violence (EFEHV), developed in partnership with 2 PM poesia per musica, a communications firm, to combat gun violence by providing a forum for positive youth voices. Building on the model of positive youth development, the campaign engages young people as violence prevention advocates in their communities.

The media sometimes portray young people as criminals, ignoring the positive work of many and publicizing the violence of a few. Hands Without Guns encourages youth involvement in violence prevention by highlighting the hands that are without guns, thus breaking the cycle of fear that leads youth to carry guns.

Hands Without Guns has been implemented successfully in

Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Holland, MI; Norfolk, Richmond, and Virginia Beach, VA; and Washington, DC. EFEHV is working with the Child Welfare League of America, the National Education Association, and others to develop additional Hands Without Guns campaigns.

Through its media outreach, Hands Without Guns seeks to reduce the demand for guns among youth. Through in-school and afterschool workshops, Hands Without Guns provides young people with the tools they need to be involved in all aspects of the media campaign, including the development and production of antiviolence materials.

Hands Without Guns—DC has developed three outlines to be used as guides for the workshop process. These workshops, which can be adapted to reach young people in any community, provide youth a platform from which to address

gun violence and offer them opportunities to take part in positive social activities. Young people leave the workshops with a better understanding of how gun violence affects them, their families, and their communities, and with a strategy for combating such violence.

The initial workshop introduces Hands Without Guns as a program through which youth can work to create positive change. In the second workshop, young people review comments from the first workshop and begin to plan and develop antiviolence projects. In the third workshop, youth review the discussions from the previous workshops and develop and discuss how to implement projects that promote the positive activities of youth within their communities.

Participants in Hands Without Guns have developed radio and television public service announcements and newspaper, billboard, and bus advertisements—not to

mention stickers, postcards, buttons, and banners. They have also organized a march against violence, a toy gun buyback, and a community art festival.

Hands Without Guns also offers a workshop for adults. This workshop focuses on ways for adults to support young people's efforts to avoid guns and violence and on ways they can encourage other adults to do the same. Hands Without Guns believes that it is essential for adults to work hand in hand with youth as partners to create positive change.

A critical aspect of the workshops is teaching youth and adults how to build positive relationships with young people. The workshops and media component establish youth as positive forces in their communities.

In Washington, DC, pre- and postcampaign surveys were administered to elementary and high school students to evaluate the effect of Hands Without Guns on youth and gun violence. The surveys found that 38 percent of the more than 400 young people

who had taken the postcampaign survey could identify the program. Of those students who could identify the program, 1.3 percent had carried a gun; of those who could not identify the program, 10.3 percent had carried a gun.

Hands Without Guns believes that no one can convey solutions to guns and violence to America's youth more effectively than their peers. In the words of one Youth Advisory Board member, "If you could promote peace, violence wouldn't be around."

For Further Information

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The National Youth Network, founded and managed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, consists of diverse youth leaders from across the Nation who are sponsored by youth-serving organizations. The goal of the Network is to recognize and build upon the power and importance of youth leadership by uniting young people and adults, through communication and action, to enable youth organizations and nonaffiliated youth to have a positive, formidable impact in our communities and throughout our Nation.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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Youth in Action Fact Sheet



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