

Project REACH

Yearbook

July 2021 - June 2022

EMPOWER
EDUCATE
MOTIVATE

THIS IS DEDICATED...

To the Students

in our programs who inspire us with their energy, hopes, dreams and goals for the future.

To Our Health Partners

who provide important clinic and prevention services that help our teens learn how to protect their health and safety.

Thank You!

To Parents

and other caring adults who are important influences as role models, mentors and sources of trusted advice to the young people in their lives.

To Our School Partners

who are so very dedicated to providing the best educational experience possible for your students to help them thrive.

Project REACH

June 30, 2022

Year-in-Review Highlights

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Yearbook Team

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Healthy Teens OK!	Sharon Rodine
Designer	Emily Garman

What do **TEEN BIRTHS** have to do with

Community Health?

Everything. Births to teens is a key indicator of a community's health and well-being. It is not an isolated issue, but influences a wide array of other critical health, education, economic, family stability and quality of life issues – often impacting these areas for a lifetime.

Project REACH, a three-year school and community partnership, provides middle and high school models of quality sexual health education connected to teen health services and community resources.

The project, funded by the HHS/Office of Population Affairs (OPA), helps young people gain the information, skills and motivation to make healthy choices that will protect their health and safety and avoid unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

This year, Teen emPower! and Variety Care Health Centers presented health education programs in seven middle schools and four high schools in three public school districts: Oklahoma City, Mid-Del and Crooked Oak.

The Oklahoma City-County Health Department coordinated the project, led by Linsey Garlington, MS, TPP Programs Supervisor. Evaluation was conducted by Karla Finnell, JD, PhD, Assistant Professor, Health Promotion Sciences Department at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Hudson College of Public Health.

This year-in-review shares program highlights from the 2021-22 school year as our schools emerged from the challenges of the pandemic. It was a very successful year, and we are grateful that our community is part of this important national adolescent health initiative.



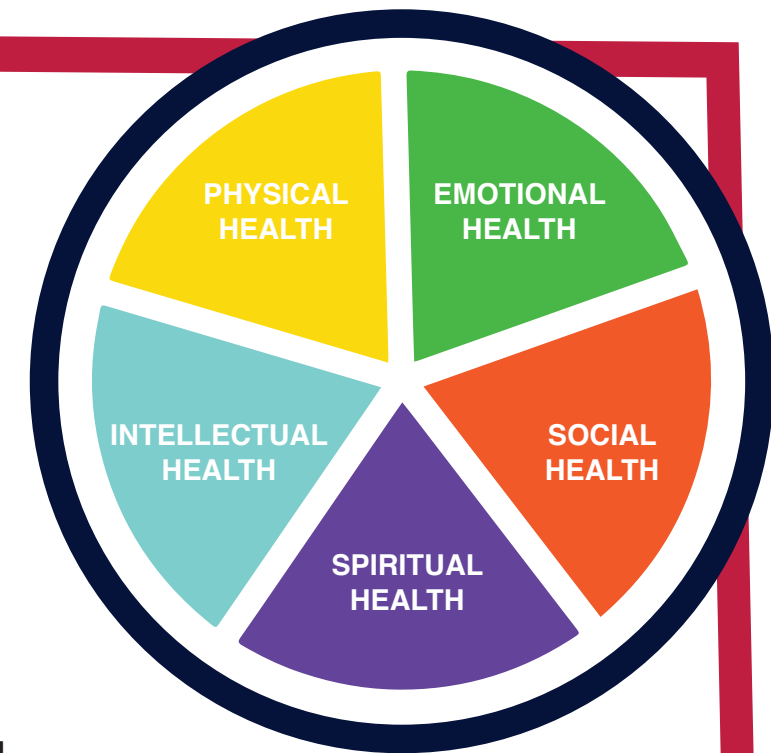
Today's adolescents go through the same developmental stages as previous generations, but live in a vastly different, rapidly-changing world. The daily exposure to the internet, media and social pressures saturates their lives with sexually explicit images and messages at younger and younger ages. Their need for accurate information and quality health programs is greater than ever.

Optimal Health: Living Your Best Life

Achieving optimal health involves **physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual health**. Project REACH works with students, parents, schools and the community to promote optimal health for all youth, encouraging each of them to work toward their "personal best" health during their teenage years.

Sexual Health: An Essential Part of Optimal Health

Quality sexual health education is important for teens to achieve optimal health, helping them learn how to be careful and respectful of themselves and others as they experience new situations and relationships. Project REACH provides the information, skills and motivation that prepares young people to make informed decisions that protect their health, safety and well-being for a lifetime.



References

Importance of Sexual Health; <https://familydoctor.org/importance-of-sexual-health/>

For more information on Optimal Adolescent Health, check: <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/25552/interactive/>

Pie chart source: *Promoting Positive Adolescent Health Behaviors and Outcomes*, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/25552/interactive/>

ADOLESCENCE:

A TIME OF GROWTH AND CHANGE

Teen emPower!
empowers, educates
and motivates
adolescents to make
informed decisions for
their sexual health.



SHAPE PEER EDUCATORS

21,000

Local Youth Served Since 2004

**Teen
emPower!**



www.teenempower.org

Helping young people make
healthy life choices.

Teen emPower! (TEI) is the only direct service non-profit in the Oklahoma City metro focused solely on providing high-quality sexual health education for middle and high school youth. SHAPE (Sexual Health And Peer Education) is TEI's innovative program that trains high school teens to present lessons to middle school students about ways to manage peer pressure and media messages. Since 2004, TEI has presented sexual health education programs to nearly 21,000 local youth.

As part of Project REACH, TEI presented sexual health education programs to over 3,000 students in five middle schools and two high schools in the OKCPS, Mid-Del and Crooked Oak districts during the 2021-22 school year.

Empower

We give young people knowledge,
skills and confidence.

Educate

We provide education without
judgment, shame, blame or guilt.

Motivate

We inspire young people to make
informed decisions about their
sexual health.

TEEN CLINIC



"Project REACH has been paramount in giving youth an opportunity to use their voice to improve access and quality of services for our Teen Clinic."

- Kali Parks,
Director of Adolescent Health Education &
Teen Clinic Services, Variety Care

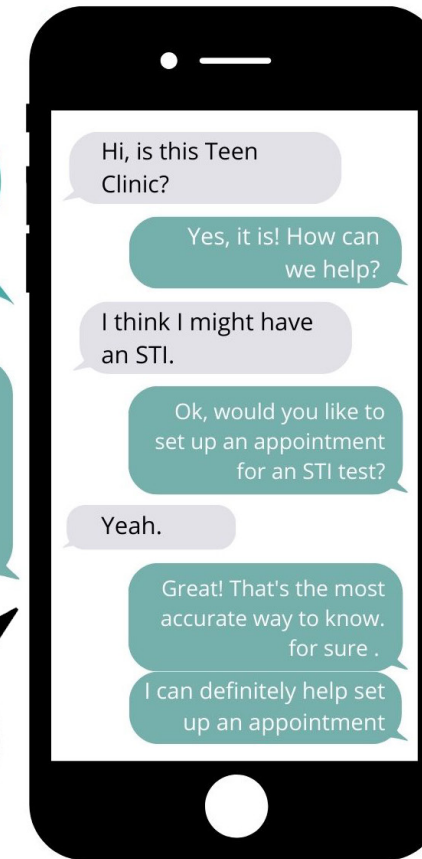


For more information about Teen Clinic, check: <https://varietycare.org/services/teen-clinic>

Our 24/7 text line is offered in both English and Spanish..

1857
Goodie Bags were distributed across 13 Variety Care locations.

TC has utilized multiple social media platforms to increase access to information for teens.



TC Hotline allows us to build connection and rapport with teens while protecting confidentiality.

130
provider appts booked via the hotline in 2021

390
Teens seen by a provider via TC services and events in 2021

EDUCATION

Teen Clinic by Variety Care provides evidence-based reproductive and sexual health education programs for students in two middle schools and two high schools in OKCPS as part of Project REACH, and to other schools across the metro area. Health education programs are provided in both English and Spanish to help reduce barriers in accessing accurate medical information.

CLINICAL SERVICES

Teen Clinic provides after school clinic events twice a month at select Variety Care locations for youth ages 13-19. Teens can walk-in or schedule appointments for health services with teen-friendly providers during and outside of event times using the Teen Clinic 24/7 text line.

TEEN PARENT COORDINATORS

In partnership with OKCPS, Variety Care provides Coordinators who offer health and academic support services for pregnant and parenting students to help them complete their education while handling the responsibilities of parenthood. They assist the students in accessing community resources, and also provide health education and academic guidance.

During middle school, students experience many physical and emotional changes and may find themselves in situations that involve risks. Thanks to the health programs provided by Variety Care Teen Clinic educators, students learned about the risks of early sexual involvement and ways to manage pressures to become sexually active.



"I learned to talk to a trusted adult if I ever have questions."

- 6th grade student at Wheeler Middle School



WHEELER MIDDLE SCHOOL

"THE BEST THING I LIKED FROM MY EDUCATOR WAS THAT SHE EXPLAINED THINGS IN AN EASY WAY FOR ME TO UNDERSTAND, AND SHE WAS ALSO VERY UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECTFUL. SHE WAS AMAZING."

6th-grade student at Capitol Hill MS

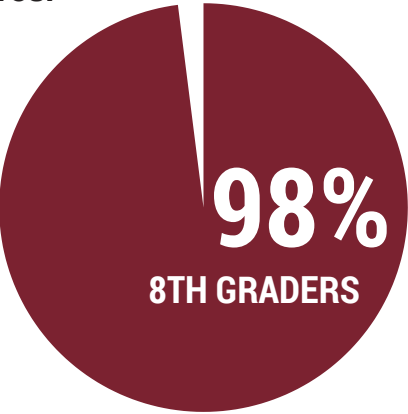


CAPITOL HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL

We are the future.



98% of 8th graders in the program believe they can use this information in their lives.



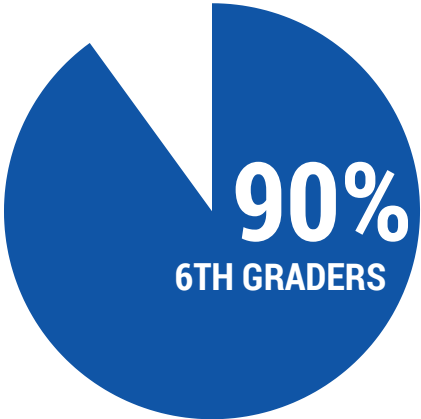
"EVERYTHING [MY EDUCATOR] TOLD ME, I AM GOING TO TELL MY FRIENDS."

6th-grade student at Capitol Hill MS



Home of the TIGERS

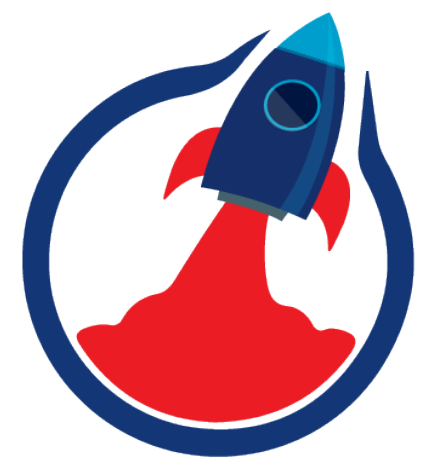
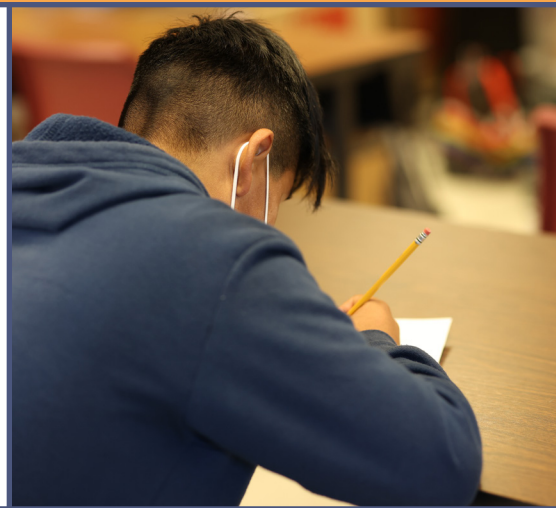
Learning effective communication skills enables young teens to build positive relationships with friends, peers and adults. The health programs Variety Care's Teen Clinic educators presented helped the students learn how to develop healthy relationships that will support their personal growth and well-being.



Over 90% of 6th grade students said that their educator was understanding and respectful.

TAFT MIDDLE SCHOOL

It's important that middle school students understand the changes that normally occur during puberty and adolescence, to learn how to protect their health and well-being.



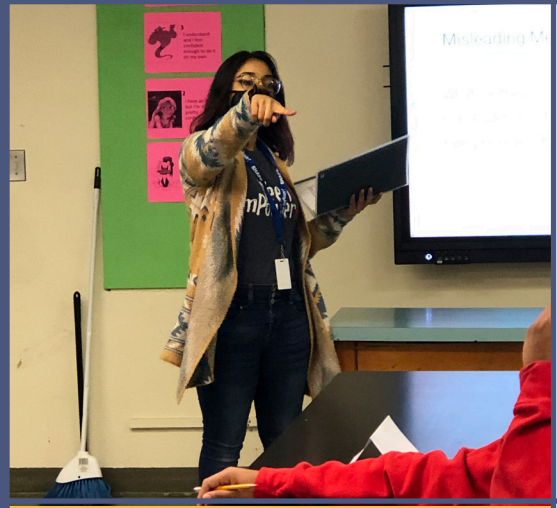
"When students are treated with respect, they feel valued. That creates a space where they feel comfortable voicing their opinions."
- Cristina Flores, Teen emPower! Educator, 6th grade Classes

The programs Teen emPower! presented helped students develop a stronger sense of self and a greater awareness about the impact that good health and healthy relationships can have on their future.

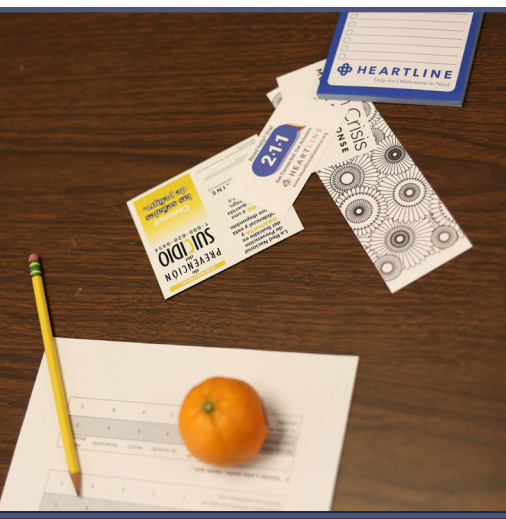
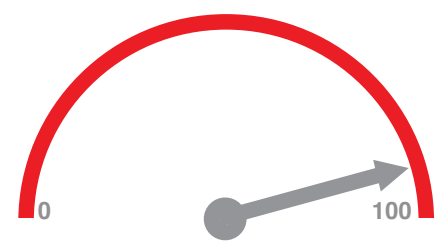


"Our lessons taught us about life choices and the rewards or consequences that come from them."
- 6th grade students at Taft Middle School

GO ROCKETS



96% of 8th grade students in our program believe they can use this information in their lives.



84% of the students believe they can use this information in their own lives.



Students practiced building their communication and decision-making skills through role-play as part of the health education programs presented by Teen emPower! They learned how to feel more confident in expressing their views when experiencing peer pressure.

MARY GOLDA ROSS MIDDLE SCHOOL

"Sixth grade students were especially interested in the lesson that covered pregnancy. They learned about abstinence as an effective method of prevention, which many students didn't realize was an option. They also learn about setting boundaries and goals."
- Lillian Bocquin, Health Educator



Igniting a passion for learning.

"I learned about how to get ready to make the right choices in life."
- 6th grade student at Ross Middle School



DEL CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL

"While discussing our favorite things we learned, one student said that they learned they could say 'no'. I am so grateful that I was able to create that safe space for them."

- Aicha Diop, Teen emPower! Health Educator



Teen emPower! health educators asked the students to think about their future. Questions included: How will my actions affect the rest of my life? Do I know how to keep myself safe? What are the steps I need to take to live my very best life?

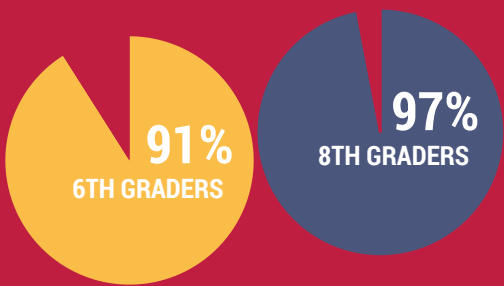
Taking time to thoughtfully answer these questions helped increase the students' awareness about responsible decision-making.

MWC MIDDLE SCHOOL

"I love seeing the transformation in my students. The first couple of days that Teen emPower! is in the classroom, they are squirmy and awkward, but then they transform into more mature students and are able to use proper terminology."

- Ashley Hanne, Del City Middle School 6th Grade Teacher

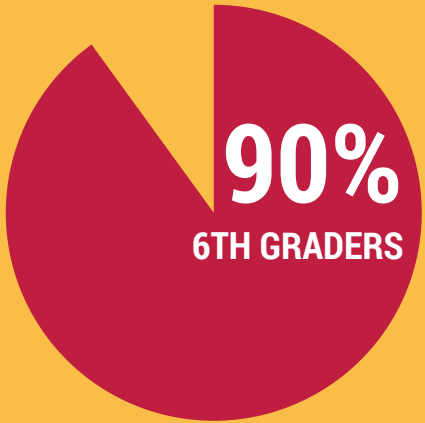
Over 91% of 6th grade students and over 97% of 8th grade students believe that they will use this information outside of the classroom.



The relationship that Teen emPower! has developed with the teachers at their partner schools has been critical.

They facilitate a positive learning experience by creating a space where all students feel comfortable engaging in the activities and discussions, knowing the information will help their students in school and in life.

Over 90% of 6th grade students in the program said that this information is important for people their age to learn.



"I liked that we get to learn about this at our age, so we can make good choices in the future."

- 6th grade student at MWC MS



"I was fortunate to teach the entire MWC eighth grade. All three host teachers were very gracious and helpful, and the students were quite receptive to the information."

- Clayton Bell, Teen emPower! Health Educator

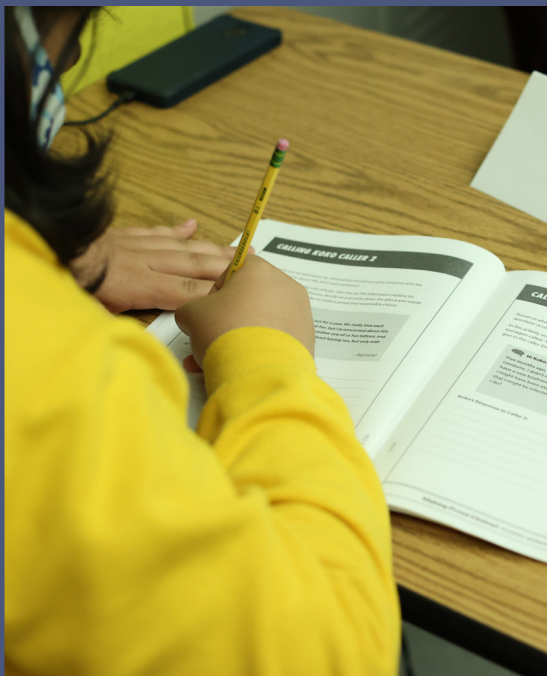




The sexual health education classes provided by Teen emPower! helped the students build important life skills, including good health practices, communicating effectively with peers and adults, developing successful time management, managing peer and social pressures and making responsible decisions.

"I got to learn new things that I didn't know."
- 6th Grade student,
Crooked Oak Middle School

PROJECT REACH



"My students were especially interested in the consequences of being sexually active and learning about STI's - how they spread, how they can harm the body and how to avoid them."

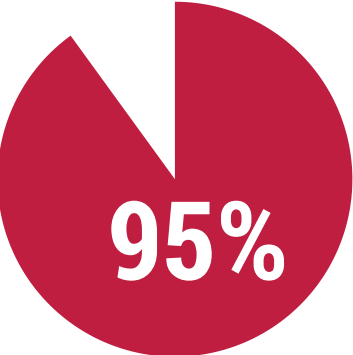
- Lillian Bocquin,
Teen emPower! Health Educator

CROOKED OAK MIDDLE SCHOOL

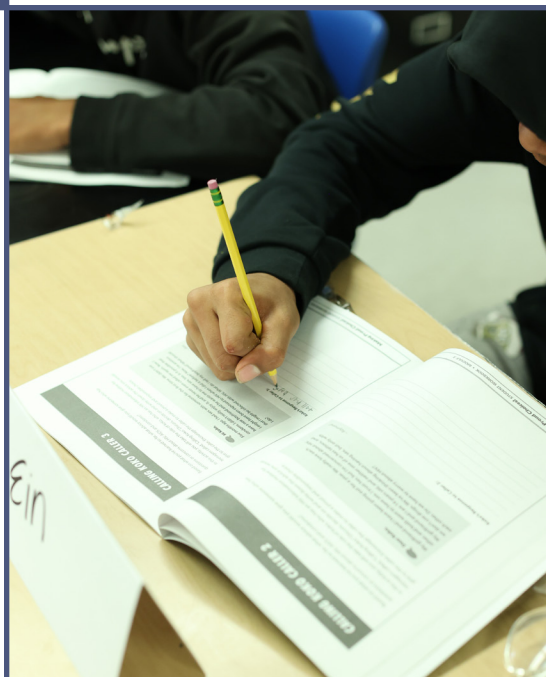
Empowering students with the skills necessary to be positive, contributing citizens



WE ARE HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE HEALTHY LIFE CHOICES.

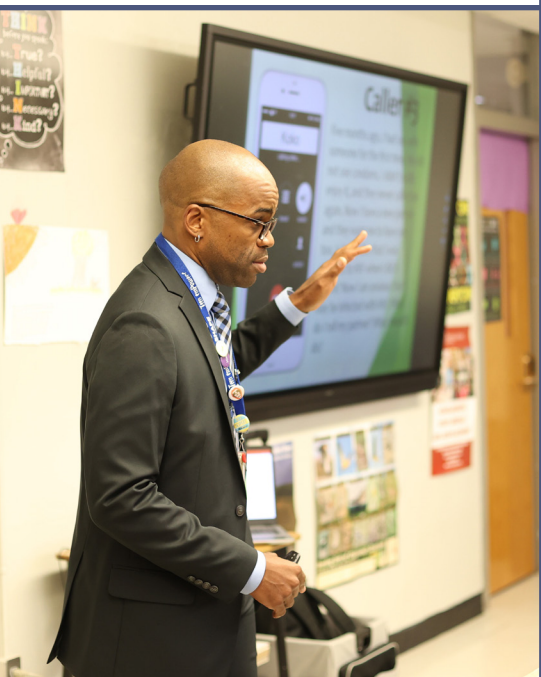
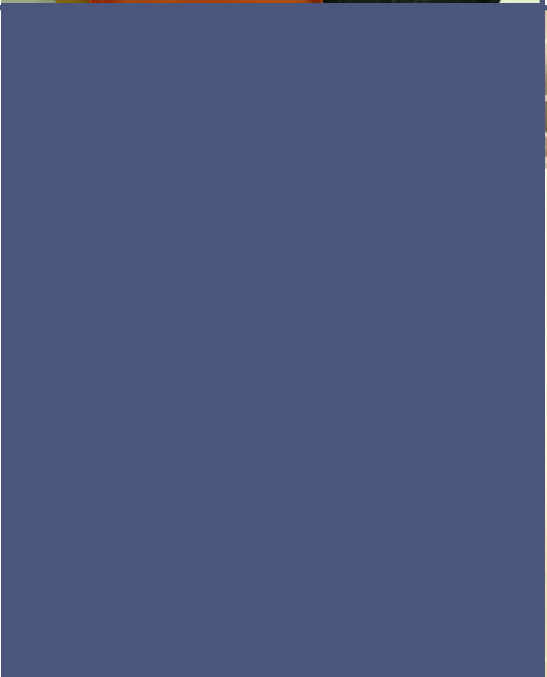


Over 95% of students in the program believe that what they learned in this program is important information for people their age to know.



HOME OF THE

RUF-NEX





"The SHAPE program is incredible and so supportive of both the peer educators and the students they work with. I'm honored to have been a small part in such an innovative and successful program and week-long engagement with young people!"

- Guest Facilitator
during the SHAPE retreat



"The students listen to peer educators in a way that they listen to no one else. That is why the SHAPE program is so important."

- SHAPE Team Lead

"TEACHING THIS YEAR WAS VERY ENLIGHTENING TO ME BECAUSE EACH CLASS I TAUGHT, I SAW A SET OF NEW, CURIOUS NAIVE EYES; EYES OF VERY IMPRESSIONABLE TEENS."

- 2021-22 Peer Educator



"I wish I had the chance to take a program as effective as SHAPE. It would have helped instill in me the knowledge and self confidence that I can take power over my sexual health."

- 7th grade Teacher,
Taft Middle School, Oklahoma City

SHAPE

Sexual Health And Peer Education



Teen emPower! uses one of the most effective strategies for teaching adolescents and influencing their behavior: their peers. Our successful peer education program, SHAPE, uses high school volunteers to present a health education program to 7th grade students. It is the major youth leadership part of Project REACH.

This year, Teen emPower! recruited and trained 31 high school students as peer educators. The students attended two multi-day training retreats and had ongoing training, leadership development and volunteer service activities during the year.

The peer educators presented a four-part series on healthy relationships, social and peer pressures, media messages and assertiveness skills. Each class is facilitated by two+ peer educators using a guided discussion script, with the assistance of Teen emPower! adult Team Leads.

This school year, SHAPE peer educators presented a total of 36 sessions to 789 seventh grade students in Crooked Oak, Del City, Midwest City, and Taft Middle Schools.

For more information on SHAPE, check: <https://teenempower.org/peer-ed/>

"A group of students from the 9th grade class expressed how much they had learned, and how they cannot wait until 12th grade to learn more."

- Aisosa Asemota,
Teen Clinic Adolescent
Health Specialist



U.S. GRANT HIGH SCHOOL

Young people have questions – lots of them. Variety Care’s Teen Clinic educators facilitated Love Notes, a program that combines relationship skills-building and pregnancy prevention information with lessons on how to make wise choices about relationships and sexual health. During the program, students envisioned how a successful future for themselves might look.

“The teens had some thought-provoking questions. I enjoy the way these lessons allowed the teens to self-reflect.”

- Rebekah Baker, Teen Clinic
Adolescent Health Specialist

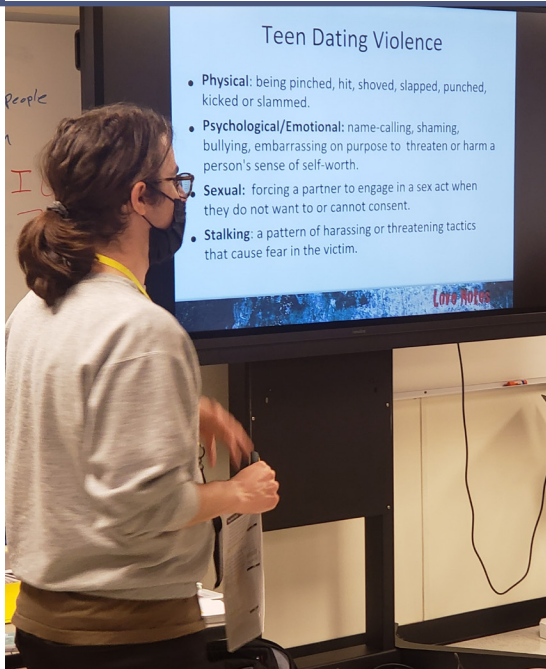
"This program showed us that we are not alone."

-12th grade student,
Capitol Hill High School

The transition from middle school to high school is a big one. The 9th grade health programs provided by Variety Care’s Teen Clinic health educators helped students make that transition more successfully, while their 12th grade program prepared students for another big transition when they leave high school. The students in both grades expressed how much they learned and how grateful they were to have these programs.

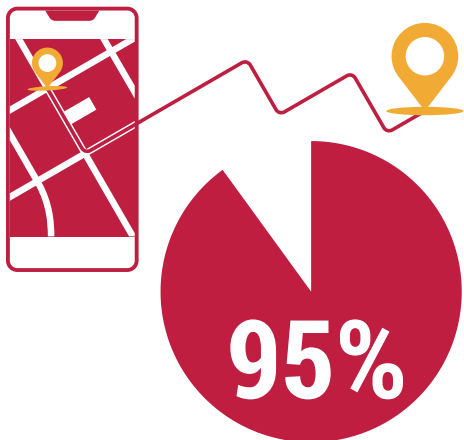
"I LEARNED HOW TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM AN STI AND WHAT A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP LOOKS LIKE."

- 9th Grade student,
Capitol Hill High School



Growing lifelong learners who are future-ready.

Over 95% of Capitol Hill High School Seniors know how to locate a health clinic if needed.

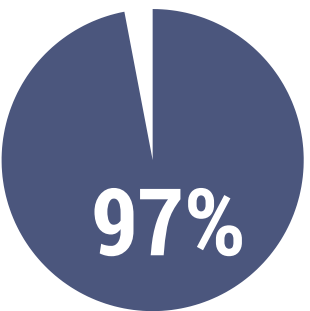


"I like that they showed us what an actual healthy relationship looks like."

- 9th grade student,
US Grant High School



Over 97% of 12th grade students at US Grant feel the information was easy to understand thanks to the educator who presented it.





"The students added a lot of really great input to the conversations and asked genuine questions. You could see the wheels turning in their heads as we went through each lesson."

- Hana Ahmad-Coleman,
Teen emPower! Health Educator



Becoming a physically, socially and emotionally healthy teen is influenced by the quality of a student's learning opportunities and relationships with caring adults.

Thanks to Project REACH, 9th grade students received both through a high-quality, 10-day sexual health education program that was presented by well-trained health educators from Teen emPower!



NORTHWEST CLASSEN HIGH SCHOOL

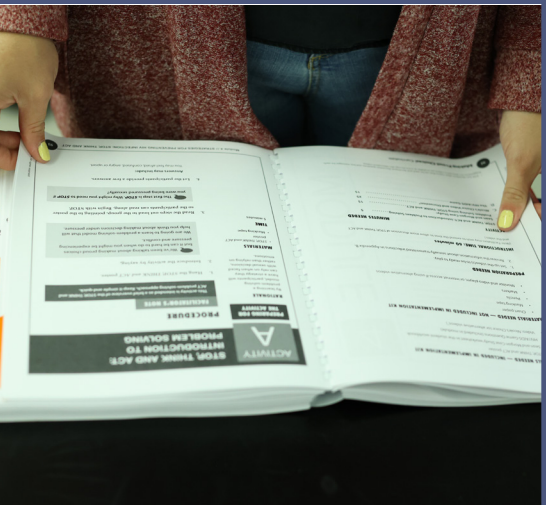


"My educator explained things really well and made it fun to learn about sexual health."

- 9th grade student
from Del City High School



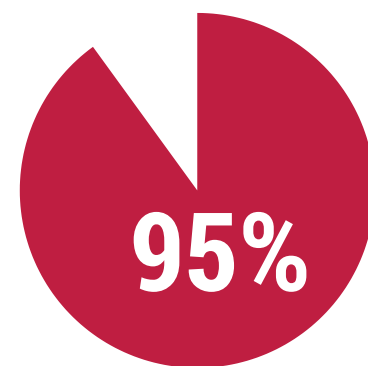
DEL CITY HIGH SCHOOL



This year Teen emPower! partnered with teachers to provide health education programs. The enthusiasm of the students was contagious. They knew that **planning for the future** gave them a better chance of achieving their goals for their education and in life.



Over **95%** of students believe the information they learned from this program will help them make healthy decisions throughout their lives.



"I was very thankful to have such great host teachers and students. The level of respect the students had for the teacher was remarkable."

- Clayton Bell,
Teen emPower! Health Educator



"They talked to us about the risks of having sex and how to prevent those risks."

- 9th grade student at NWC



Spanish speaking students at NWC high school improved their knowledge of sexual health information by over 24% after two weeks in our program.



Workshops For Teachers

Teen emPower! offered two-part workshops for teachers to increase their knowledge and skills related to adolescent sexual health education.

SHAPE Peer Educator Retreat, June 6-10, 2022

The peer educator retreat focused on team building, adolescent development, sexual and reproductive health, public speaking and classroom presentation skills. The special guest presenter, **Christina Eskridge, MPH**, taught the peer educators how to present health messages in creative, confident ways. She is the founder and Executive Director of the Elevate Theatre Company, which promotes health through relatable stories.

A Multifaceted Approach

Specialized trainings on adolescent sexual health topics were provided for teachers, Teen Clinic staff, and SHAPE peer educators working with Project REACH.

In-House Training

Variety Care Teen Clinic provided ONE KEY QUESTION training for clinic staff that was offered by the Power To Decide in a self-paced, virtual format.



TRAINING

For Learning and Leading



Project REACH aims to reduce adolescent sexual risk behaviors, while also increasing protective factors, promoting optimal health and providing quality health education and health services for middle and high school youth. Well-prepared, knowledgeable, confident and trusted adult educators are essential to the success of this effort.

Teen emPower! and Variety Care Teen Clinic educators received extensive training on adolescent development and evidence-based programs proven to have positive outcomes for youth. The relationship-focused programs included **Making a Difference, Making Proud Choices, Positive Prevention Plus (P3)** and **Love Notes**.

PROJECT REACH:

Need and Impact

Adolescence is a time of enormous change as young people grow physically, but also emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Youth build their critical thinking and decision-making skills, and relationships become more complex. Risk-taking is normal as they become more independent; some risks are positive, others are not.

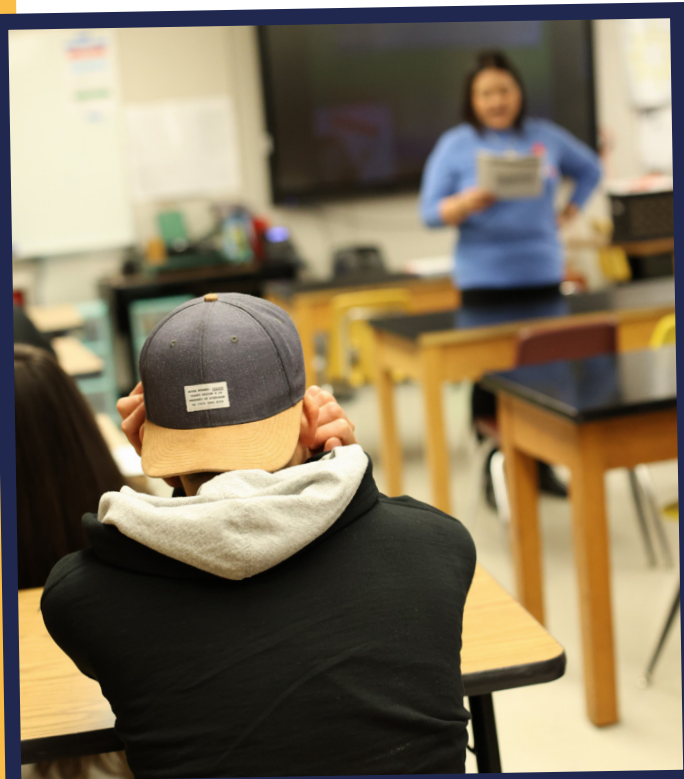
Quality Sexual Health Education

Sexual health education provides students with the knowledge and skills that promote good health and help them avoid unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. It also helps young people identify healthy relationships, manage peer and social pressures and avoid situations that could pose a risk to their health and safety. These are important skills during their teen years and beyond.

The Need is Clear

Births to teens have been reduced by 50% in the state and Oklahoma County over the last decade. Even so, Oklahoma’s teen birth rate for females aged 15-19 ranked 47th in 2020, with the fourth-highest teen birth rate in the nation.

Oklahoma County, the most populous and diverse county, has the largest number of births to teens each year. The need for Project REACH is clear, and thanks to our strong collaboration that has been resilient and resourceful in the midst of a pandemic, it is making a big impact!



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

During the 2021-22 school year, the Project REACH health education programs presented by Teen emPower! and Variety Care reached the following:

5,186 Middle and high school students participated in health education programs. Of those...

789 7th graders participated in the four SHAPE lessons presented by peer educators, which followed the adult-led lessons.

996 Students in 7th grade participated in the six SHAPE lessons provided by an adult health educator.

Evidence-based health education classes were provided for 6th, 8th, 9th and 12th grade students.

2,048

4,190

Students participated in a 10-15 day evidence-based teen pregnancy/STI prevention program in 6th, 8th, 9th or 12th grade.

Youth participated in Variety Care’s Teen Clinic programs and activities.

4,904

2,030 Volunteer service hours provided by the SHAPE peer educators.

EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation for Project REACH is being conducted by **Karla Finnell, JD, PhD**, Assistant Professor, Health Promotion Sciences Department, Hudson College of Public Health, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Other members of the research team included **Christine Joachims, MS**, Senior Staff Research Assistant; **Marco Rayos**, Graduate Research

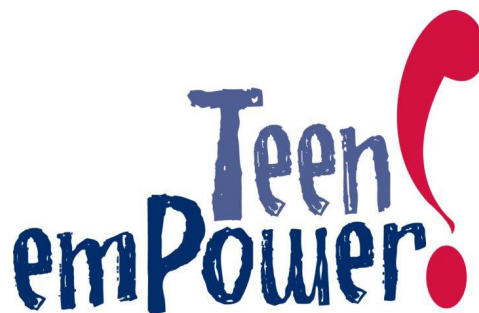
Assistant, and **Abigail Peters**, Graduate Research Assistant.

This Yearbook and future Project REACH evaluation summaries will be available on the Teen emPower! website:

<https://teenempower.org/our-impact/>

Thank You

to Project REACH partners for a successful year!



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