



Community  
Matters

*Empowering Youth  
Transforming Communities*

# Achieving Safer Schools From the “Inside-Out”: A Youth Empowerment Strategy

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**[www.community-matters.org](http://www.community-matters.org)**

# Community Matters Mission

*“To wake up the courage of students and adults to create schools that are safe, welcoming and inclusive.”*



# The Student Determinant of Whole School Climate



# School Safety: The Changing Landscape

- **School Shootings (1995 – 99)**
- **Violence, Bullying (2000 – 09)**



# School Safety: The Changing Landscape

- School Shootings (1995 – 99)
- Violence / Bullying (2000 – 09)

(2009 – present)

**Cyber-Bullying**  
**Relational Aggression**  
**Indifference**



# Intolerance & Incivility

It's not your typical playground bully anymore...



**Younger**

**Meaner**

**More Pervasive**

**Harder to Identify**

**24/7 On & Off Campus**



**Other's Pain as "Entertainment"**

**More Accepted as Normal**





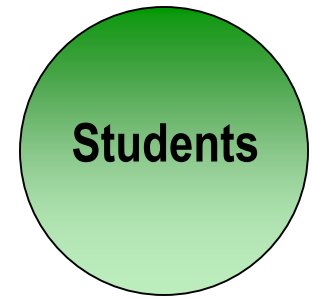
**Fights**  
**Weapons**  
**Gangs**  
**Physical bullying**

**Reactive**  
**Catch**  
**Discipline**  
**Suspend**  
**Expel**

***Unwanted contact***  
***Relational aggression***  
***Exclusion***  
***Put-downs***  
***Rumors***  
***Cyberbullying***  
***Harassment***

***Pro-active***  
***Prevent***  
***Intervene***  
***De-escalate***

# Leveraging the Power & Potential of Students



- See, hear and know things adults don't
  - (In 88% of bullying incidents, peers are present)
- Can effectively intervene in ways adults can't
- First to arrive on the scene of mistreatment
- Set the tone and social norms on campus



## The Dynamic of Bullying & Other Mistreatment

**Targets**

**Aggressors**

**Bystanders = 85%**  
**The Passive Majority**



# **Why Don't Bystanders Get Involved?**

**Fear of retaliation**

**Afraid they'll make things worse**

**Worry about losing social status**

**Belief that adults won't listen**

**Don't know what to do or say**

# Empowering Youth: The Formula

## The 3 “P’s”

*(Purpose, Power and Place)*

+

## The 3 “E’s”

*(Engage, Equip, and Empower)*

=

## The 3 “C’s”

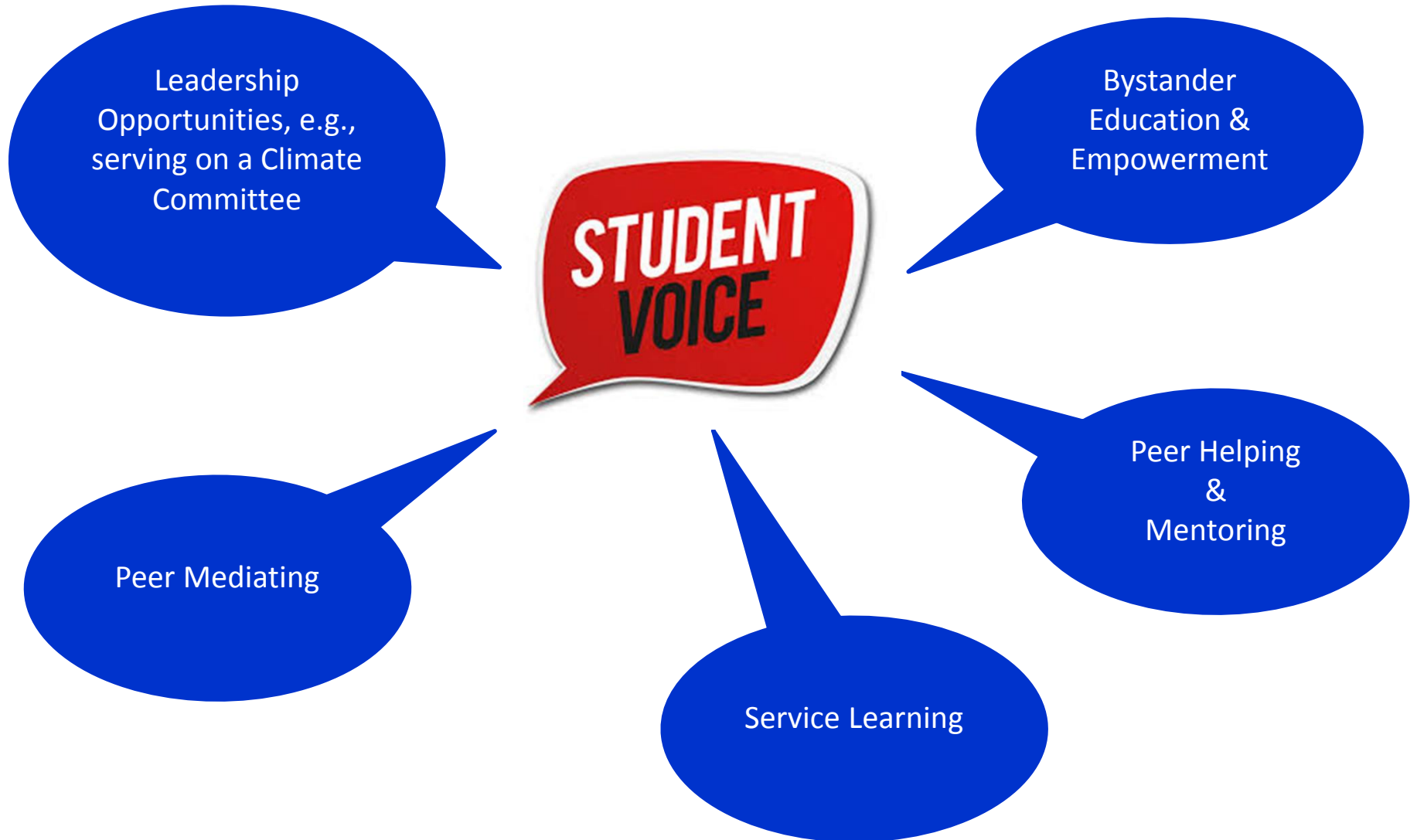
*(Competent, Caring and Contributing)*

# Criteria for Strong Youth Development Programs

1. Enroll diverse student leaders
2. Equip students with skills
3. Provide staff support and guidance
4. Collect data and measure impact
5. Celebrate successes

# Increasing Student Voice

(in both formal & informal settings)



# Safe School Ambassadors®



A SAMHSA NREPP Listed, evidenced-based, field-tested program that engages, equips and empowers student bystanders to reduce bullying and other forms of mistreatment.

***Developed by***



Community  
Matters

Empowering Youth  
Transforming Communities

# Empowering the Bystanders



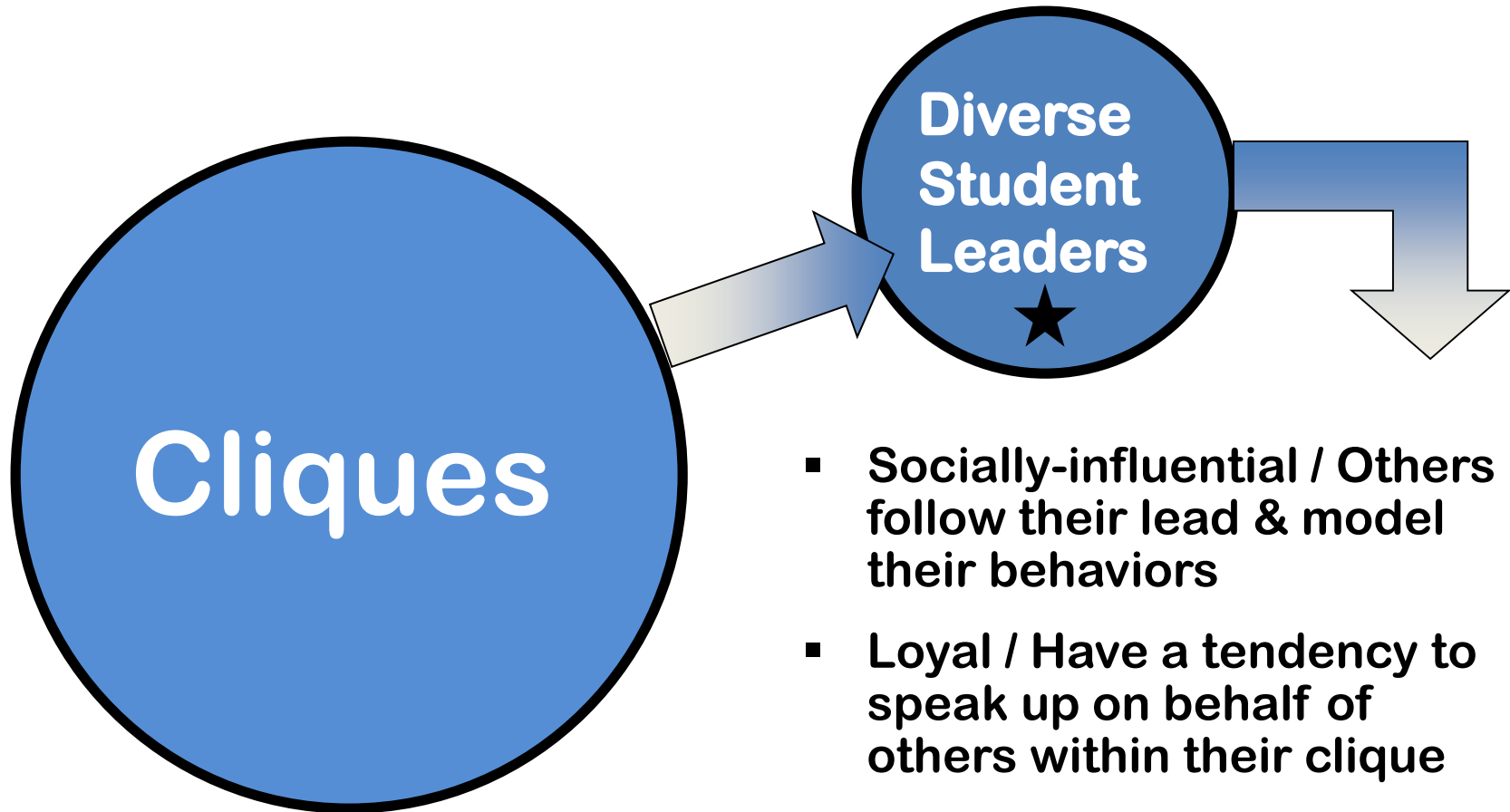
Wake up **Courage**

Foster **Empathy**

Teach Skills to Gain **Competence**

...to intervene safely and effectively

# “Alpha” Students



- **Socially-influential / Others follow their lead & model their behaviors**
- **Loyal / Have a tendency to speak up on behalf of others within their clique**
- **Outgoing by nature / Highly verbal**



# Identifying the “Alpha” Leaders

## Student and Adult Surveys



# Safe School Ambassadors<sup>®</sup>

## Program Orientation



- **Introduce potential Ambassadors to the program**
- **Appeal to their self-interest**
- **Acknowledge their status as social leaders**
- **Give them the opportunity to CHOOSE**

# Safe School Ambassadors® Training



- **Two Days**
- **On- or Off-Site**
- **30 to 40 Diverse Student Leaders**
- **4 to 8 Adults**

# SSA 2 Day Training Flow

## DAY 1

1. **Foundation & Community Building**
2. **Understanding the Problem of Mistreatment**
3. **Ambassador's Job**
4. **Actions: Overview & Practice**
  1. Balancing
  2. Supporting
  3. Reasoning
  4. Distracting
  5. Directing
5. **Meet with adults**

## DAY 2

6. **Welcome & Launch**
7. **Review**
8. **More Amb Actions**
  1. Listening
  2. Getting Help
9. **Actions: Overview & Practice**
10. **Implementation: Safe School Ambassador Program Operation**
11. **Closure**
12. **Meet with adults**

# 5 Types of Mistreatment

1. **Exclusion**
2. **Put-downs**
3. **Bullying/cyber-bullying**
4. **Unwanted physical touch**
5. **Acts against campus**



# Six Skills for Ambassadors

- **Balancing**



- **Supporting**



- **Reasoning**



- **Distracting**



- **Directing**

- **Getting Help**



**Ambassador in Action**

**Video: De Monte Smith**





# Ongoing Support & Supervision: Family Group Meetings

- **Connect & Inspire**
- **Regularly-Scheduled**
- **Deepen Skills**
- **Debrief Experience**
- **Collect Data**



# Safe School Ambassadors® Are Active

A minimum of  
2 “Actions” per week  
x 40 Ambassadors =  
**80 Actions per week**



34 Weeks x 80 Ambassador Actions =  
**More than 2,700 Actions per school year**



Click the “report” button to record an action log



Sprint 5:55 AM

Back Form 1 Next

unsubmitted report

Date

02/03/2014

Time

05:00 AM

Place of Incident

Please Select Done

**In the bathroom**

**In the hallway**

**In the parking lot**

Select one or more locations from the list by clicking on the phrase. Then click "Done"

Sprint 5:56 AM

Back Form 2 Next

unsubmitted report

# of Aggressors + Targets

1

# of Bystanders

1

Type of Mistreatment

Please Select Done

Physical (push, hit, etc.)

Act against Campus

Other

Select one or more Types of Mistreatments from the list by clicking on the phrase. Then click "Done". If you select "Other" a new text field will appear and you can type in a unique reply.

# SSA Impact Over Time

Healdsburg Junior High Discipline Data

## Safe School Ambassadors 2005-2013

	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	Decrease
Enrollment	446	584	498	499	448	452	450	424	-1%
Detentions	1366	1247	562	410	195	199	162	43	-97%
Suspensions	445	297	68	74	46	88	70	22	-95%
Office Referrals		631	562	614	291	368	280	149	-76%



# Safe School Ambassadors® Are Effective

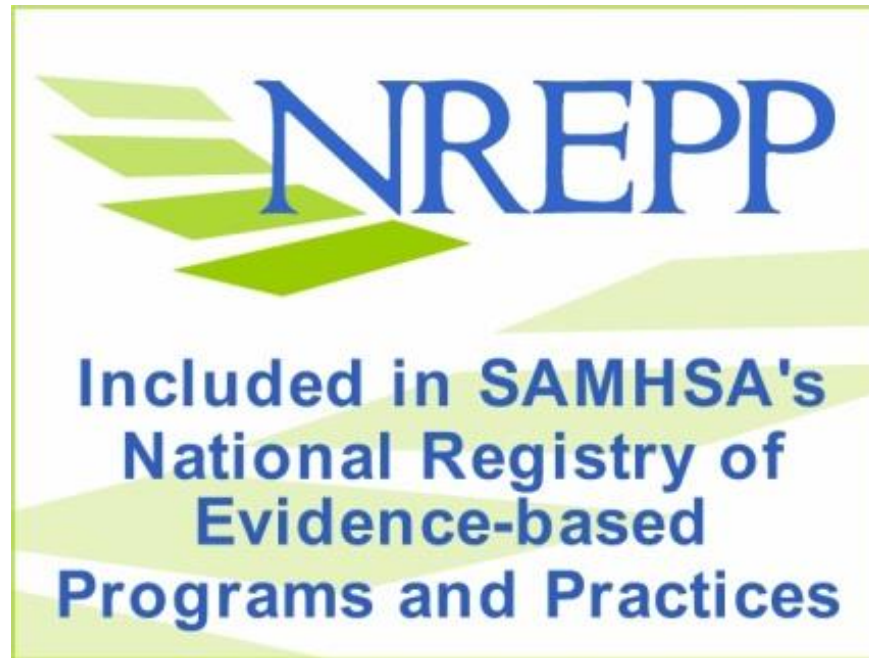
A two year study by two different universities found statistically significant evidence of positive impact:

**Suspension rates were 33% lower than prior to SSA implementation,**



**while suspension rates  
at demographically matched non-SSA control schools  
increased 10% in the same period.**

<http://www.communitymatters.org/downloads/EvaluationReportSSA2011.pdf>



Based on the results of the two-year study, the Safe School Ambassadors<sup>®</sup> Program is now listed in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices

<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=331>



“It’s easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”





Community Matters

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