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Final Project

Dr. Russ Vandenbroucke

PEAC 325

## Partnership with Flash 502: Young Poet Ambassadors

### **Idea:**

Use spoken word poetry in a high school setting to combat struggles such as stereotypes and bullying. By partnering with multiple high schools, multiple needs will be reached.

### **Who:**

For my final project I formed a partnership with Flash 502, a group started by several University of Louisville students. The goal of the organization is to create an environment where poetry and spoken word can be shared. Flash 502 in the past has hosted numerous poetry slams in numerous spots in Louisville. My partnership with Flash 502 will expand to high schools around the area as well. These high schools are seeking to start or expand existing poetry clubs. Flash 502 plans to help guide the students and partner with them to achieve these goals.

The high schools involved are: Central (Poets of Society)

Manual (InVoice: A Poetry Project)

North Oldham (The Notion Club)

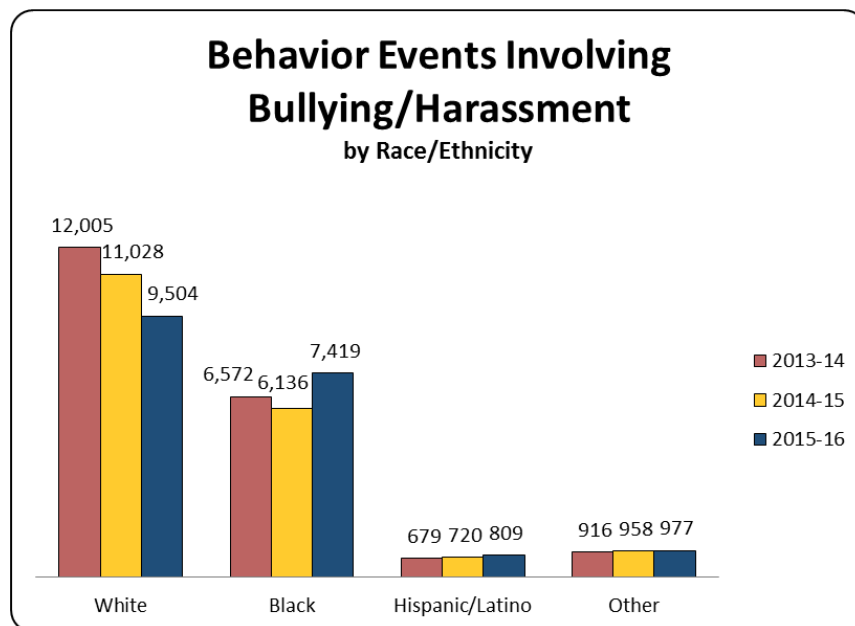
New Albany

## Explanation of the project's relationship to Peace Studies

The definition of peacebuilding includes "ensuring security, establishing nonviolent modes of resolving conflicts, fostering reconciliation, providing trauma healing services... As such, it also includes conflict prevention in the sense of preventing the recurrence of violence, as well as conflict management and post-conflict recovery."

For the definition of peacebuilding to be fulfilled several tools are needed, such as communication and open dialogue. I believe that peacemaking in a high school setting must involve addressing and eliminating bullying. Bullying is a problem numerous high schools face. According to the 2015-2016 Safe School Annual Statistical Report done by the Kentucky Department of Education there were a total of 18,709 reports of bullying or harassment.

**A needs analysis of the issues and of current strategies being used to address these as well as their successes and failures**



- While schools have methods of handling bullying, such as in-school removal or out-of-school suspension, sources on how to cope with harassment and bullying are less monitored.
- There are support groups available, such as Green Dot, but the students participating have reached out to Flash 502 in response to the Young Poet Ambassador Project.

**A rationale for the goals of the proposed project;**

- During the summer, Flash 502, students, and student's sponsors selected from the participating high schools will meet regularly to discuss needs and desires for the program.
- Once high schools are back in session, we will continue to meet with them and check in on their experiences. For instance, Manual wants to host a workshop/poetry slam in late September of 2017. Poets of Society are planning smaller events throughout the upcoming school year.

**A timeline for initiating it;**

- The project has already started and progress is underway. Participating schools have been chosen and come up with goals and budgets for the first semester of school.

**A list of expected outcomes and the means to measure them;**

- In order to make sure outcomes and goals are being met, attending events for the poetry groups already planning a poetry slam will be a method used to track progress.

- For New Albany (and potential future high schools) the formation of a poetry club is the short term outcome and easy to measure by seeing the number of students involved and witnessing the formation.

### **Connectors**

- The members of the poetry group and participants in poetry slams will all be students. This is a unique bond and a sense of community can form.
- Another connector is that the participants all want to express themselves. Choosing to open up can be intimidating but having other participants doing the same thing can be comforting.
- Another large connector is that all the students have experience with bullying in one way or another. It can be beneficial to see they are not alone.

### **Dividers**

- The largest divider I see is potential drama or popularity within the groups involved.
- Group members not wanting to open up or potentially judging others.

### **Potential obstacles and strategies to overcome them;**

- John Paul Lederach and Janic Moomaw Jenner remind us as peacebuilders we do not know it all. The largest obstacle is that each high school will have a different environment. Tools used at one school may not work at the other. To combat this, we must adjust to our situation. We are not saviors and must be realistic.

- At first a potential obstacle was the lack high schools being interested but our strategy was to approach many schools and “broadcast” our ideas and plans. We then had students reach out to us.

**A budget of expenses and also of expected income and sources to meet the budget;**

- Flash 502 has given each school a maximum budget of \$1,000 each. The schools are to create a list of needs and what they intend to do with the money before acquiring the sum. Each school has unique needs. Some of the needs mentioned have been:
  - Writing supplies for participants, such as notebooks (\$50-150)
  - Food and prizes for events
  - 250 5x7 paperback books (approximately \$500) with a cover design costing \$200-300
  - Video and camera support for recording poetry documenting the slams and issues addressed for future projects (\$150-200)

## Bibliography

"Kentucky Department of Education." Bullying and Harassment. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2017.

Lederach, John Paul, and Janice Moomaw Jenner. Peace, Justice and Conflict Transformation:

So What Have We Learned? N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.