



Project of the *Vermont Research Partnership* among the Vermont Agency of Human Services, Vermont Department of Education, Vermont Association of Regional Partnerships, and The University of Vermont

Project Name: Youth Initiated Grants Project

Outcome of Well-Being: *Families, Youth, and Individuals are Engaged in Their Community's Decisions and Activities (#1)*

Project Participants: Mostly middle and high school aged youths

Project Location(s): 11 of Vermont's 12 regions

Addison County; Caledonia and Southern Essex; Central Vermont; Chittenden County; Franklin Grand Isle; Lamoille Valley; Orange and Windsor; Orleans Northern Essex; Rutland County; Springfield area; Windham County

Project Description: Youths serve as grantmakers and grant recipients for projects that help prevent substance abuse and violence. Regional Youth Councils disseminate requests for proposals (RFP's), review the proposals, and award funding for worthy projects. Most of the grants range from \$250 to \$2,500. Each Council awards \$10,000-\$20,000 per year. Local youths write the grant proposals and direct the funded projects. Thousands of youths and other community members participate in the resulting substance abuse and violence prevention projects. The Regional Partnerships and adult advisors provide support and guidance to the Youth Councils and youth grant recipients. This project is supported by Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities funding.

Indicators Used to Track Progress:

Of the Youth Council members surveyed:

- 92% indicated that the YIG Project enabled them to organize and lead change in their communities
- 98% indicated that the YIG Project enabled them to help make the community better for youth

"This project opened my eyes to how widespread the problem [of substance abuse] is. It also made me more sure that we could make a difference."

— Youth Council member

"I am convinced that this Youth Council did as good a job – and in many cases they did a better job – than the adult [grantmakers] I've worked with."

— Adult Advisor

Several adult advisors indicated that this is one of the most promising initiatives for preventing youth substance abuse and violence they have ever encountered.

Findings To-Date / How this Project Contributes to Well-Being Outcome #1:

Youth are serving as thoughtful funders and skilled leaders in their communities. As grantmakers and grant recipients, they are advancing substance abuse and violence prevention throughout their regions.

Project Timeline / Status: Three rounds of evaluation were completed in 2002, 2003, and 2005. The evaluation reports are available upon request.

Program Partners: Youths, Regional Partnerships, Agency of Human Services

Researchers and Institutional Affiliations:

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