



PHE Spring Challenge Report 6 High Schools in 6 Weeks

Focusing Philanthropy Matching Grant Campaign

Last spring, Peer Health Exchange (PHE) and Focusing Philanthropy launched a campaign to raise \$150,000 to fund six PHE partner high schools. In support of this goal, Focusing Philanthropy pledged to add an extra \$1 for every \$2 raised through May 31st 2015, up to a total of \$50,000 in matching funds. The campaign exceeded its goal, raising \$167,300, enough to sponsor six high schools and fund additional program evaluation and development work.

In the 2014-2015 program year, we trained 2,000 volunteers to deliver skill-based health education to over 20,000 ninth grade students in 150 high schools. To measure our impact on student health, Peer Health Exchange invested in an external evaluation conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to learn what works and what doesn't in our model. Our study found that our skills-based curriculum and near-peer model has a statistically significant effect on sexual and mental health knowledge, skills, and help-seeking behavior—highlighting the areas where baseline prevention programs, like ours, can have the greatest impact for young people.

Students increased their knowledge about critical health topics like sexual consent, pregnancy prevention, and the warning signs of poor mental health. For example, PHE students increased their understanding of sexual consent at three times the rate of the comparison group, and were 20% more likely to have an accurate understanding. Students were more likely to know how to access contraceptives and mental health support. They also reported greater intentions to use effective contraceptives such as condoms and IUDs. Four times as many PHE students intended to use an IUD than the comparison group, and nearly half of PHE students intended to use a condom.

Our study revealed the limitations of a baseline program in reducing risk behaviors, particularly in substance use. We are using these results to drive programmatic changes to our decision-making and substance used workshops. Instead of emphasizing the consequences of substance use, we will emphasize the connection between mental health and substance and spend more time building decision making skills.

*Tax letters will come from Focusing Philanthropy. PHE will send an additional acknowledgement letter.

**All donor gifts are allocated to the PHE city site as if they were made directly to PHE, while matching funds are allocated to National.