Highlighting the ACEs: Philadelphia

By Jane Onoye & Rachel Myers

This is the tenth in a series of newsletters that highlight the National Academic Centers of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention (ACEs), funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In response to the rates of youth violence in urban communities, the Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center (PCVPC) was established as an Urban Partnership Academic Center of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention (UPACE) in 2006 with the goal of preventing violence and aggression in the lives of young people in West and Southwest Philadelphia.

Led by Dr. Joel Fein, Center Director and Principal Investigator, PCVPC brings together through a collaborative relationship, academic institutions (Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Drexel University) and community-based organizations (Philadelphia Area Research Community Coalition) to share equally in planning, leadership, analysis and dissemination efforts.

PCVPC’s mission is to design, implement, and evaluate programs that enhance the resiliency of the communities affected by violence, to reduce the frequency and impact of youth violence, injury, and death in the community using a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach. PCVPC researchers are committed not only to determining which interventions are most effective, but also to ensuring that these programs can be sustained in local communities through ongoing collaborations between scientists and community members. The Center structure includes community and academic Core Directors for components: 1) Administrative and Infrastructure; 2) Research; 3) Information; and 4) Communication and Dissemination.

For the Research Core, the
(Continued on page 4)
Program Evaluation of the Academic Centers of Excellence

By Kristin Holland, Alana Vivolo, Jason Dela Cruz, & Greta Massetti

The overall goals of the Academic Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention (ACEs) are to serve as models for youth violence prevention, support the translation and application of research findings into communities, and enhance academic and community capacity and partnerships to prevent violence. Five objectives were laid out in the original Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA): 1) monitor the magnitude and distribution of youth violence in a defined community; 2) build the scientific infrastructure necessary to support the development and widespread application of effective youth violence interventions; 3) promote interdisciplinary research strategies to address youth violence in a defined community; 4) foster collaboration between researchers and communities by bringing together individuals with diverse perspectives; and 5) mobilize and empower communities to address youth violence.

A National ACE Program logic model was developed by the Division of Violence Prevention (DVP) to define the future orientation of the ACE Program, its activities, and the outcomes it is expected to achieve. The ACE logic model, which was included in the FOA, has served as a planning mechanism for the National ACE Program and each individual Center to guide activities during the 5-year funding period. Additionally, the FOA included a list and description of 14 performance indicators to track and measure the progress of the ACE Program and each ACE in meeting the goals and objectives in the logic model. The performance indicators provide a set of key determinants for the evaluation of the ACE Program’s impact on improved practice and policy, as well as the ACEs’ impact on reducing risk factors or increasing protective factors. These indicators were subsequently integrated into the creation of a web-based information system (IS).

DVP has finalized the evaluation process for the ACE Program. The evaluation aims to compile and aggregate data across the ACEs to determine progress on the ACE performance indicators, as well as document successes, outcomes, and accomplishments for each ACE. The evaluation will not compare ACEs with one another, nor is it designed to measure an ACE’s direct impact on youth violence in the defined community. Instead, collected data will be used to assess their progress in building capacity and addressing the reduction of risk factors and increase in protective factors.

The IS was established to collect, document, and detail the variety and scope of research and programmatic activities occurring at each ACE. Currently, 11 of the original 14 performance indicators are being used to collect data for the ACE evaluation.

Questions in the IS are directly related to the performance indicators listed above, and space is provided for each Center to enter detailed information specific to each indicator. Data from the IS will be compiled to provide aggregate data across all ACEs, as well as information for all performance indicators for each individual ACE. IS data will be supplemented by information provided by CDC Science Officers and ACE Principal Investigators to ensure that the main accomplishments and progress made at each Center are highlighted in the evaluation.

The information gathered through the evaluation will be assembled to develop an ACE Program Report that will highlight accomplishments, successes, and lessons learned from the current round of ACE funding. Data compiled from the evaluation will be used to provide information to CDC partners and internal and external stakeholders about the progress of the ACE Program and accomplishments.

Data extraction from the IS on the performance indicators will be complete by April 30, 2010. A preliminary draft of the ACE Program Report will be complete by the end of August 2010. CDC Project Officers and Science Officers will be in contact with Principal Investigators throughout the program evaluation process to address questions, inform the development of ACE-specific chapters of the report, and discuss accomplishments that can be highlighted for each ACE.
Philadelphia UPACE Receives Recognition

By Rachel Myers

Over the past several months, the Philadelphia Collaborative Public Violence Prevention Center (PCVPC) and several of our members have been recognized for their work in the community to prevent youth violence.

Both PCVPC and Tara Hayden (PCVPC Administrative Core Co-Director) were among this year’s recipients for the 15th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Involvement Award, given by the University of Pennsylvania. This award recognizes active community involvement while exemplifying the ideals of Dr. King.

During the 2009 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, two of our community partner organizations, the Philadelphia Area Research Community Coalition (PARCC) and ACHIEVEability, were recipients of Unsung Hero Awards from the National Community Based Organizations Network (NCBON). LaVelle King, a Master’s of Public Health student and member of our Community Mobilization Team and Communication and Dissemination Core, received the Excellence in Community Service Award and Scholarship from the Delaware Valley Chapter of the National Association of Health Services Executives.

Communication and Dissemination Core Co-Director, Nicole Vaughn, was recently recognized by the Philadelphia Beauty Showcase National Historical Museum for her contributions to the community, as the 2009 recipient of the museum’s Community Health Award.

Several of our Center members presented at the University of Pennsylvania Injury Science Day. Kate McDonald, a PhD student and member of our Research Core, received second prize in the Injury Science Day Student Poster Competition for her work examining the role of family in youth violence prevention, one of our Center’s small projects.

Kate’s mentor, Therese Richmond, a Research Core Co-Director, recently received the Andrea B. Laport Endowed Term Associate Professor Chair at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. This position recognizes excellence in and provides support for faculty research.

We are proud that our members’ hard work is being recognized. Congratulations to all!
Youth in Action  By Lourdes Hernández-Cordero & George Espinal

The youth of Washington Heights & Inwood are often not involved with important decision-making groups in the community. Since January 2008, the Washington Heights & Inwood Youth Council has been working on identifying community issues faced by young people in the neighborhood and developing an action plan to address them.

The Youth Council was created to (1) make young people aware of important issues affecting them, (2) promote ways to get their ideas presented to decision-makers, and (3) encourage more engagement through action and ownership. The Youth Council provides youth with the opportunity to practice leadership skills and strengthen their ability to discuss key issues.

In 2009, the Youth Council continued their work on addressing teenage pregnancy since Washington Heights & Inwood has the highest rates in New York City (in 2007, 10.2% of teen girls in Washington Heights & Inwood became mothers).

With this in mind, the determined members of the Council developed their own policy recommendations to present to their elected officials. This partnership has strengthened the ability of the Youth Council to advocate for the most pressing needs of the youth.

At times like this when many adults think young people are immature or not capable of leadership, the Youth Council continues to prove otherwise.

If you are interested in learning more about the Council, contact George Espinal at (212) 942-0043, Ext.118 or by email at gre2101@columbia.edu. You can also visit us online at www.whiyouth.org.


Highlighting Philadelphia  continued from page 1

Centerpiece project, Participatory Action Research to Negotiate Every Response (PARTNER), takes a multi-component, multi-level approach to preventing youth violence. PARTNER looks at both risks and resiliency through relationships with peers, parents, and professionals across varied physical and social environments. The Centerpiece project focuses on developing and testing the effectiveness of an aggression prevention program that combines developing youth problem-solving skills and leadership with parenting/family outreach and community workshops. A trial of the program, for 10- to 14-year olds, is currently being conducted in six neighborhood venues (e.g., recreation centers and after-school programs).

In addition to the Centerpiece project, PCVPC also engages in smaller projects, including: 1) developing a brief, evidence-based screening tool for adolescent dating violence to be used by health providers and researchers; 2) a study on exploring individual and environmental assets and stressors experienced by (Continued on page 5)
Surveillance Lessons Learned: Harvard

By Deborah Azrael & Renee M. Johnson

Since 2003, the Harvard Youth Violence Prevention Center (HYVPC) has partnered with the city of Boston, Massachusetts to create a data system, the Boston Data Project, to track youth violence. The youth violence surveillance system provides continuing information about fighting, bullying, dating violence, and gun carrying utilizing multi-level data systems from the Boston Youth Survey (BYS), Boston Neighborhood Survey (BNS), US Census, Boston Police Department, and the Boston Public Health Commission.

Recently, Dr. Deborah Azrael and colleagues from HYVPC published a peer-reviewed article entitled, “Creating a Youth Violence Data System for Boston, Massachusetts” in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology on the creation and development of their surveillance system, results and trends, as well as lessons learned.

One of the unique features of the data system is that because of the planned partnership, results from the data system have been used to inform policymaking on an ongoing basis, even at its earliest stages.

Some of these data used to inform policy planning for the city encompass results on exposure to violence, feelings of safety, violence perpetration, possession/carrying firearms, and social norms. Specific examples include:

- Boston adolescents are afraid on public transportation (as compared to home, school, or street)
- that most students widely overestimate the number of their classmates carrying guns.

The system also provides important data on key neighborhood variables such as collective efficacy to better understand the relationship between youth violence and neighborhood characteristics and social processes.

The level of analyses afforded at the neighborhood level have been valuable in looking at specific trends of youth violence, as well as in evaluation of programs and interventions. As a reflection of its importance as a resource, numerous requests for information relevant to the Boston Data Project have come from many sectors in academia, policy, media, and community.

As with all partnership endeavors, there were accompanying challenges to creating an ongoing data system. Establishing a strong partnership with the city necessitated identifying and building key contacts who could facilitate or move forward the initiative across multiple agencies from its beginnings as a concept, to its development and implementation. The ongoing processes for communication and dissemination are also complex, but necessary to ensure its usefulness and sustainability. Coordinating multiple secondary data sources and methodological issues with primary data collection have also

(Continued on page 7)
CCYVP and UNIDOS Inwood Coalition: Weathering the Times

By: Angelo Ortiz

Anyone doing coalition work can tell you that the hardest part of sustaining projects is when there is a lapse of funding for the coordination component. The experience of the UNIDOS Coalition is no exception.

In 2010, the coalition turns 10 years old, and in only five of those years has the coalition had a coordination grant. For the past six years, the Columbia Center for Youth Violence Prevention (CCYVP) has been a member of the youth development coalition, and during that time we have seen coalition funding come and go.

The work of the coalition, however, has been carried out because coalition members have found ways to bring resources to make up for the lack of dedicated monies from outside funders. For example, Inwood Community Services (fiscal sponsor and headquarters of the coalition) has provided staff time for the coordinator position, office space and has served as the hub of organizing efforts. Manhattan Bible church and CityVision have dedicated staff time and sponsored one of the annual activities that the coalition founded. CCYVP has contributed funding for two community interns who help carry out the day to day tasks needed to maintain communication and projects running. The list goes on.

Brighter opportunities came in September 2009, when the UNIDOS Inwood Coalition received notification that it was awarded a Drug Free Community Support Program five-year grant. This new initiative, overseen by President Obama’s Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, will enable coalition partners to evaluate and implement strategies that will help prevent youth alcohol, tobacco, illicit drug, and inhalant abuse. The grant will also strengthen UNIDOS’ internal coordination and prevention efforts, encourage citizen participation in substance abuse reduction efforts, and disseminate information about effective programs.

The timely news has been especially welcome, as all of these activities are complementary to the Community Mobilization Plan that was developed by CCYVP in collaboration with the coalition.

A Tradition for Families: M&M Night

By: Karla Filibeck

The 6th annual Movie & A Message (M&M) Night was hosted at Kailua High School (KHS) on April 29, 2010. Since 2007, the Asian/Pacific Islander Youth Violence Prevention Center (APIYVPC) has partnered with KHS to organize the free community-school event to promote a positive message through a movie and bring families together to share a message.

As in previous years, students, staff, and community partners worked together to coordinate the day’s events which included student-created public service announcements (PSAs), art displays, children’s games, prizes, community booths featuring services and resources, dinner, movie, and a community survey on violence and other issues.

With approximately 500 people in attendance, M&M Night was sponsored by Friends of Kailua High School, Friends of Waimānalo, God’s Country Waimānalo, and Queen Lil’uokalani Children’s Center. The evening’s movie featured “The Blind Side” with the student-developed message “Never let your past hurt your future.”

This year, the APIYVPC incorporated a new approach to surveying youth and families that attended M&M Night. Participants started with the traditional paper-pencil survey, and then walked through a highly interactive booth which displayed a series of questions on banners. Some of the questions included:

- What starts violence in your school and neighborhood? What can we do about it?
- Who can make the most impact to end violence in your school or the community? And how?

Participants responded to questions using sticker dots directly on the banner for multiple choice responses, and by writing comments on post-it notes to open-ended questions. This new twist on the survey format demonstrated some clear benefits and challenges to collecting ‘real-time’ survey responses, and these methods have yet to be evaluated. However, the interaction and discussion among youth, adults, and APIYVPC staff throughout the survey booth was seemingly a positive outcome in itself.

Data collected by the APIYVPC at M&M Night surveys has been and will continue to be used to inform and develop stronger partnerships between the school and community to bring families together in order to address issues of violence and substance use in the community.
Surveillance Lessons Learned continued from page 5

been challenges that had be addressed.

The challenges to establishing the data system, have been far outweighed by the gains and successes out of the Boston Data Project. One of the major outcomes of the process include having demonstrated a model for academic partnership with a city. The lessons learned to the success of the partnership builds on the mutual benefit, communication, and respect between the academic and city partners.

The contributions of the Boston Data Project have also resulted in not only its value as a surveillance system, but also the collaborations which have been fostered by its existence, and the impact on policy and city-wide initiatives to reduce youth violence.


For more information about the Boston Data Project or HYVPC visit the web at www.hsph.harvard.edu/hyvpc/.

The full article can be found with the following citation:

Renee M. Johnson, PhD
Boston University
Once again, the Academic Centers of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention (ACE) and their partners will be presenting at the Annual Society for Prevention Research Meeting, which will be held June 1-4, 2010, in Denver, Colorado. Featured are individuals from the Johns Hopkins University (JHU), Harvard University (HU), Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHoP), University of California at Riverside (UCR), University of California at Berkeley (UCB), Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and University of Chicago at Chapin Hall (UCCH) ACEs, and from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which will also be sponsoring a table at the meeting.

If you are attending the upcoming meeting, we invite you to support your colleagues at the following symposia and poster sessions:

**Wednesday June 2**
- An Often Untold Story: Option for Prevention-Oriented PhDs Outside of Academe (CDC)
- Preventing Behavior Problems and Promoting a Positive School Climate Through School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (JHU)
- Parent-Focused Effectiveness Trials: Understanding Heterogeneity in Effects (UCCH)
- Risk and Protective Factors for Substance Use Among Minority Youth and Implications for Interventions (CDC)
- Early Career Prevention Network Early Career Award presentation to Dr. Catherine Bradshaw (JHU)
- Evening Poster Session I (UCB/JHU/VCU/UCCH)

**Thursday June 3**
- Using Observation Methodology to Understand Teacher-Child Interactions: Transactional Processes and Implications for Prevention (CDC)
- Considering Risk/Protective and Sociodemographic Factors in Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating Evidence-based Violence (JHU)
- US DHHS Grant Options for Early Career Prevention Scientists (CDC)
- School-based Interventions to Improve Social and Emotional Skills Among Elementary Age Children (CDC)
- The Social Context of Bullying and Peer Victimization: Implications for Prevention and Early Intervention (JHU/HU)
- Evening Poster Session II (UCCH/HU/JHU)

**Friday June 4**
- A Social-Ecological Approach to Bullying Prevention: The Consideration of Individual, Peer- and School-level Factors (CDC)
- Mental Health and Risk for Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration: Findings and Prevention Implications (CDC)
- Web-based Applications to Support Randomized Trials and Dissemination of Prevention Programs: Emerging Directions (JHU)
- Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) to Ensure High Quality and Culturally Appropriate Implementation (CHoP)
- Using Parent Perspectives to Enhance Prevention for Victimized Youth (JHU/VCU)

For the most updated list of presentations, visit the Coordinating Center website at [www.nacecc.org](http://www.nacecc.org). The Coordinating Center will be organizing an ACE dinner event for an opportunity to share ideas, discuss their ongoing Center and cross-ACE work, as well as to envision and plan potential and future collaborations. For more details, please contact the Coordinating Center at (808) 945-1516 or nacecc@dop.hawaii.edu.