



Our Safer Space program, launched at beginning of the school year, could not be more timely. This workshop is focused on keeping kids safe online. By February 2020, it was booked solid for the entire school year! Throughout the school year, we delivered 136 presentations to 6,997 students. It is now streamed live to youth and adults via social media, to answer the growing demand for this type of education.

It is at times like this that your support has a vital impact on the lives of children in our community.

“Spending more time on virtual platforms can leave children vulnerable to online sexual exploitation as predators capitalize on the COVID-19 pandemic”.

-UN Report, April 14, 2020

PREVENTION

This school year, you helped us reach 25,595 children and youth through 540 workshops.

We see this as a big success, especially as this was the first year our programs were delivered under PLEA Community Services. We could never say this enough – it is only because of supporters like you that we can help thousands of kids every year keep safe from sexual exploitation.

Along with this success, we also had our share of challenges due to the COVID-19 health crisis. As our presentations are mostly delivered in classes, after schools closed, we responded quickly and created digital presentations.

As kids are now spending more time online, our workshops are even more important than ever.

Taking Care of Ourselves and Taking Care of Others (TCO²) also had much success this year. Even with having to cancel trips and re-schedule workshops due to COVID-19, we were able to reach 12,216 young people through 221 workshops.

We noticed many requests to book workshops coming in due to nude image sharing amongst teens. This is happening in elementary, middle, and high schools across BC. We tailored our workshops to highlight this form of exploitation as it is directly impacting students' lives.

Finally, for our Redefining Masculinity workshop, this was a banner year as the program presented more workshops in one year than it had in the previous three years! Redefining Masculinity delivered 128 workshops to 6,062 students.

Thank you so much for helping us reach thousands of children around BC!

“This workshop taught me how to stay safe and ignore inappropriate content and messages. Also, how to get help if this happens.”

-Elementary School Student

INTERVENTION

You helped keep at-risk youth safe from sexual exploitation!

In North America, 300,000 children are sexually exploited each year. **Statistics Canada reports an astonishing 806% increase in online child sexual abuse related crime over the last decade.** As most cases now happen online, any kid, anywhere is at risk of sexual exploitation.

Exploiters target those most vulnerable in our community and lure them in with false promises and gifts. Reaching those most at-risk is crucial to preventing this crime.

Our Youth Art Engagement Project (YAEP) meet with at-risk youth to educate them about the signs and risks of sexual exploitation and discuss related topics such as healthy relationships, consent, gangs, substance abuse, and more. Then, participants put their creative muscles to work, creating their own piece of social-justice art to express their thoughts and feelings of the issue.

Thanks to supporters like you, no child is left behind.

As a result of COVID-19, our YAEP looked a little bit different this year. We worked with youth in PLEA's residential addiction treatment programs through virtual platforms to facilitate the sessions. These workshops lead to a great dialogue with participants.

Following these insightful conversations, participants chose mediums and materials – sculpturing, painting, writing, drawing – and created remarkable pieces. The artwork speaks for itself. Every year, we are excited to see what these kids will come up with, and every year, we are left at awe when we see their creation. Their artwork will be showcased later this year through a virtual gallery or in print, to replace the annual Youth Art Gallery (cancelled due to covid-19).

Thank you for helping us educate kids and empower them to speak out against sexual exploitation!

SUPPORT

There is no doubt – your giving saves lives!

As we mentioned, “sexting” (the sharing of nude or sexual images) is a growing issue amongst teens. Sexting is becoming prevalent and even normalized. However, it is a form of peer-to-peer sexual exploitation, and illegal.

When a young person shares an intimate or sexualized image, many times they do it because they want to feel accepted and liked by their peers or are being manipulated or coerced to do so. The pressure to fit in is immense. When nude photos of a child under 18 are shared, their entire life is put in someone else's hands. It can result in kids being bullied, having to change schools, and can even lead to suicide.

Many of the disclosures we received this year from parents, youth, and even young children, were related to sexting. When we get a disclosure - either in-person or via our confidential text line – we make sure the child receives the help and support they need. This can include directing participants to the relevant resources or to law enforcement.

We also consult parents, teachers, and professionals through our It Can Happen to Anyone (ITCHA) workshop, providing them with strategies to talk to youth about exploitation. In 2019-2020 ITCHA was delivered 20 times, to over 1,000 participants.

Last year, a study from The University of Calgary and the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute showed one in four teens report they've received sexts.

In addition, this year we have made the sending and sharing of nudes the focus of our public awareness campaign. Targeting youth via social media (SnapChat, Instagram) and displaying posters in bus shelters across the Lower Mainland, the campaign highlighted the immediate social consequences of nude photos ending in the wrong hands and aimed to make teens think twice before sharing a nude of themselves or of others.

Thank you for standing with us to keep BC's kids safe from all forms of exploitation!

One of three ads for our public awareness campaign, Stop the Share.



He thought your nudes were hot. The entire basketball team did too.
Think before you send and share pics.
Learn more at StoptheShare.ca

plea Children
of the Street