Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI)
United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee (UNCOM)

$1,050,000 • 11/01/10 to 06/30/15

Goal: To decrease rates of violence in identified areas of Milwaukee and, possibly, greater Wisconsin and to strengthen community capacity to prevent future violence.

Progress: To date, the United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee (UNCOM) and its member agencies have: developed a five-year plan; developed and gained approval for the Internal Review Board process for the project; obtained all research components and consents as outlined by the approved IRB for the Parent Action Councils (PAC) and Youth Leadership Councils (YLC).

After approval of the IRB was granted, UNCOM developed a 14-month curriculum and recruited the trainers and facilitators for the PAC's & YLC's. Partners developed an in-kind partnership with Discovery World to host and conduct training curriculum at that site. All participants were given a baseline assessment by the Research and Evaluations team of Medical College of Wisconsin staff.

UNCOM has continued its work in building relationships in the Milwaukee community. This relationship building has helped provide rites of passage for community collaboration with several schools, churches and both UNCOM & non UNCOM community-based organizations. A new partnership was developed with Municipal Court Judges and the court system. The Judges were introduced to the "Evidence for Action" report and VPI programs. This has proven to strengthen the community capacity building for future prevention efforts through VPI. UNCOM VPI staff also collaborated with The “Summer of Peace Rally” held at North Division High School held on Friday, July 29th, 2011. The UNCOM VPI member agencies were strongly represented. This venue promotes peace and spreads the word of the great work being done through the VPI efforts. In August, three partners participated in the training of “Say It Straight - Train the Trainer” series curriculum in Texas. And, capacity building was conducted at community forums and violence prevention presentations at MATC and several MPS schools for teachers and administrators.

UNCOM staff have attended and been trained in the “Say It Straight” communication and behavior skills program curriculum. UNCOM staff provides training for member agency staff in the curriculum at the neighborhood level. The program prevents destructive behaviors; promotes wellness in young people, parents, and other adults; and creates opportunities for personal discovery. UNCOM has met with MPS elementary schools to create future partnerships by conducting Restorative Justice Circles and violence prevention workshops for parents of youth ages 0-11 which has helped to build outreach capacity in this area. Partners have selected and held the first meeting for the review of the “Building Me Curriculum”. This part of the program focuses on developing individual child/youth resiliency skills utilizing a train-the-trainer model.
UNCOM partner agencies have identified and recruited youth through the YLC sessions and have provided training to develop their natural leadership abilities. Youth are being trained to become peer youth leaders and champions of healthy violence free behavior. Youth who complete the program, will help others with their youth development, and to create a UNCOM youth leadership board.

UNCOM staff convened partners to catalyze community coordination, collaboration and resource exchange including leveraging resources by convening monthly affinity team meetings to discuss best practices, challenges, successes and by identifying and pursuing additional potential funding resources. Partners continue to provide capacity building and technical assistance to member agencies and new partners to promote community cohesion and increase availability of and access to community services through various opportunities including community presentations and information sharing at our affinity meetings.