

# YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

## Summary of Key Findings:

- 20 participants completed some or all of the training evaluation surveys
- Prior to the program, youth participants completed a pre-survey, asking them to self-evaluate their knowledge, confidence, and involvement with policy, advocacy, and leadership in their community. At the completion of the program, participants completed the same survey, and parents of participants were surveyed on how the youth ambassador program impacted their child.
- Based on the results from these surveys, there were three notable skills that youth gained from the Youth Ambassador Program: increased knowledge, increased confidence, and more involvement and connections.



### *Increased knowledge*

about advocacy, and the impact of trauma and toxic stress on individuals and their community

- Prior to the program, participants rated their current knowledge about advocacy, and their average rating was 2.9. After the program, participants' average rating increased to 4.1, indicating a 39% increase in knowledge about advocacy.
- Participants also rated their knowledge about the impact of trauma and toxic stress on individuals and students. Prior knowledge among participants averaged at 3.5, whereas knowledge after the program averaged at 4.1, representing a 16% increase in knowledge about trauma and toxic stress.
- Chad Ward, a ninth grader from Jennings High School, shared, “During this program, we’ve learned about how we can change the community, how we can stop making children sell drugs, how we can stop kids from getting access to drugs and weapons.”
- Parents emphasize that the program allowed youth to become “more knowledgeable about issues that others are facing.”
  - One parent noted that the program “broadened [her] child’s horizons,” and that she was “impressed when he told me who was on the school board and who [the] state representatives for our district were.”
  - Another parent expressed that the program allowed her daughter to “be aware of what trauma is, how it affects her community, and policies to address the issue.”



## *Increased confidence*

in participants' advocacy skills and leadership abilities

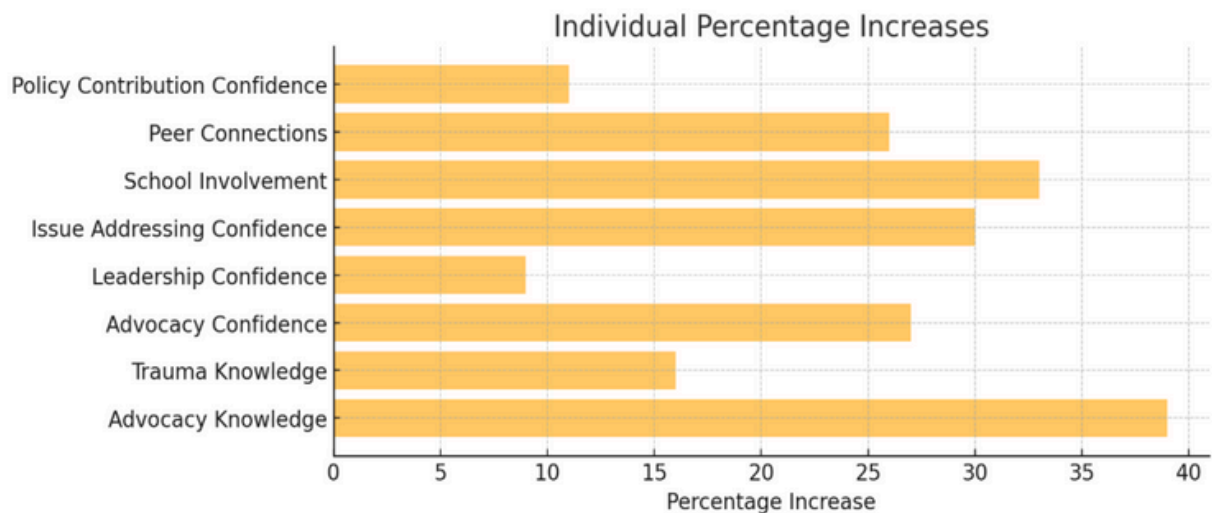
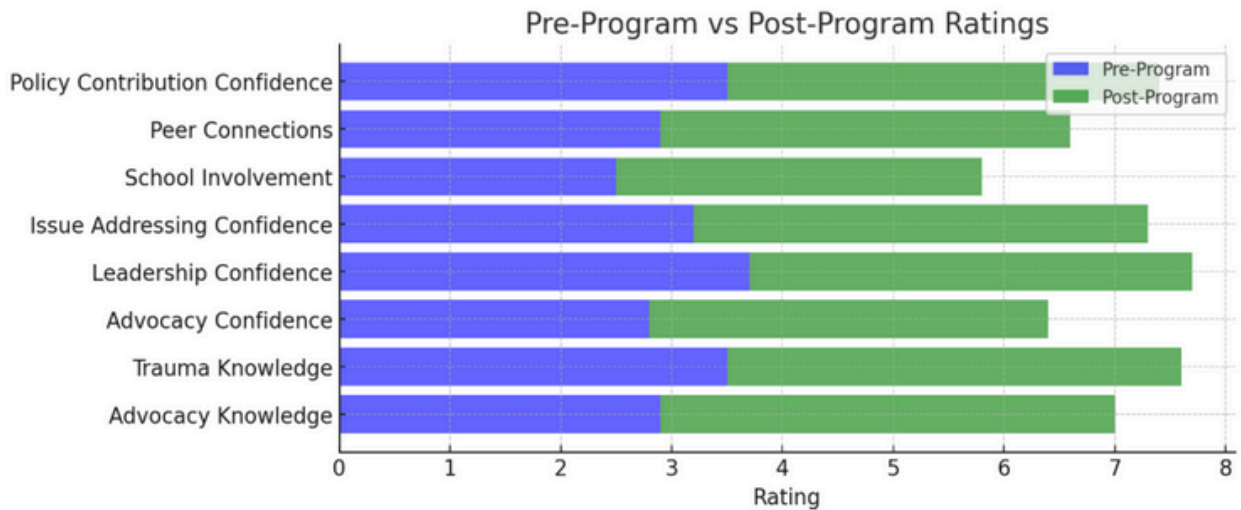
- Participants were asked to rate their confidence in their advocacy skills. Prior to the program, the average rating was 2.8, which increased by 27% after the program to an average rating of 3.6
- Participants were also asked to rate their confidence as a leader. The average rating prior to the program was 3.7, and the average rating after the program was 4.0, which is a 9% increase in confidence in leadership abilities.
- In addition, individuals rated their confidence level in bringing up issues affecting youth to principles and decision makers. The average rating prior to the program was 3.2, which increased to 4.1 after the program, representing a 30% increase
- Gabrielle Moore, a tenth grader from Reno High School, shared, "I feel like as a leader, I'm able to look at people in a different way to help me understand what they're going through or what they might have been through."
- Many parents highlighted the positive impact that the program had on increasing confidence in their children.
  - One parent mentioned that as a result of the program, their son was "showing increased confidence in his ability to influence change," especially in social situations, and this sentiment was echoed by several other parents of participants in the program.
  - Another parent emphasized that although her daughter has always appeared confident, the program has revealed this confidence in a "different air, as if her confidence is deserved due to her gaining more knowledge and insight."
  - In addition, one parent noted that their son "would not have been able to do the final exercise," which involved presenting about issues important to them to legislators, before involvement in the program.



## *More involvement and connections* with their peers and the community

- Individuals were asked to rate their current involvement in shifting attitudes or knowledge within their school district. Participants had an average rating of 2.5 prior to the program and an average rating of 3.3 after the program, indicating a 33% increase in involvement as a result of the program.
- Gabrielle Moore emphasized “Instead of me like judging people as quick as I normally do, I feel like I would wonder what happened or why they’re doing that.”
- In addition, individuals were asked to rate their connection to their peers in other parts of Missouri. Prior to the program, participants on average rated their connections at a 2.9, which increased to 3.7 after the program, indicating a 26% increase in connections.
- Individuals were also asked to rate their confidence in their abilities to contribute to policy recommendations for youth. Prior to the program, the average rating among participants was 3.5, which increased by 11% to 3.9 after the program.
- Parents noted positive impacts of the program on their children’s sense of involvement and connections within the community:
  - “It allowed them to use their voice”
  - “She cares about what’s going on around her”
  - “He advocates for his peers more.”
  - “They’ve built tighter bonds with peers in the program”
  - “He’s expressed interest in more school activities and leadership roles within the church”
  - “She has started to develop an empathy for others”

## Data



The Youth Ambassador Program effectively enhances participants' advocacy knowledge, confidence, and community involvement. Future programs could further explore personalized mentorship and extended community projects to sustain and deepen these impacts. By continuously refining our approach and fostering an environment of growth and learning, we aim to create a lasting impact on the youth and communities we serve. Together, we can build a cohort of empowered leaders dedicated to creating a better future.