



REPORT

TO THE PEOPLE

**Community and Law Enforcement
Workshop & Services, Inc.**

“Working together toward greater intercultural
understanding”

2017-2018 CLEWS Program

Summary of Seven Youth Workshops

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Sponsoring Agencies

Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO)
Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS)
United Way Suncoast
Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Inc. (CDC)

This *REPORT TO THE PEOPLE* recaps seven (7) CLEWS workshops held January through August 2018 in Hillsborough County, Florida.

Publication cost provided by Hillsborough County BOCC and United Way Suncoast.



CLEWS MOTTO

“Working together toward greater intercultural understanding”

VISION

Community and Law Enforcement Workshops & Services, Inc. (CLEWS) envisions a world in which persons who enforce the law, citizens from various ethnic backgrounds, and community service providers cooperate in making each other feel respected and safe in their work places and neighborhoods.

MISSION

Community and Law Enforcement Workshops & Services, Inc. (CLEWS) facilitates law enforcement personnel and citizens working together to achieve greater intercultural understanding through earnest, interactive dialogue in structured non-threatening environments, and by providing various community services.

Introduction

This ***REPORT TO THE PEOPLE*** summarizes seven (7) CLEWS workshops held for 310 Hillsborough County youth and 73 Hillsborough County deputies, between January and August 2018. CLEWS brings young people and law enforcement personnel together to address societal issues the youth believe to be important.

The workshop format includes ice-breakers, self examinations by participants of their understanding and attitudes before and after the CLEWS experience, small group discussions of challenges and recommendations, reports of discussion, an exploration of patrol cars and an evaluation of the workshop components.

Because CLEWS can adapt throughout the year to address timely issues young people find important, it began having a session titled, “Students, School Safety and Guns” in March 2018. This innovation addressed the tragic shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County, Florida the previous month. Students who attended CLEWS sessions made more than 100 comments and suggestions about how to prevent future school shootings.

These sessions (an average 40-45 students and 8-10 deputies per workshop) matched primarily middle school students with law enforcement personnel to discuss topics the youth identified as their concerns. These issues included, for example: bullying, gun safety, school security, the need for more mental health counseling, racism among authority figures and a lack of adequate interaction with well-meaning adults. Highlights of this report include many recommendations for improving community and law enforcement relations made at the workshops.

The Summary Reports for each individual school Workshop may be viewed at CLEWSprogram.org.

Where Workshops were Held

Workshops for 2018 were held at schools in Brandon, Westchase, Riverview, Town 'n' Country, Seffner and Clair-Mel City.

January 29 ----- McLane Middle School, 306 N Knights Ave., Brandon
February 5 ----- Davidsen Middle School, 10501 Montague St., Tampa
February 19 --- Giunta Middle School, 4202 S Falkenburg Rd., Riverview
March 19 ----- Pierce Middle School, 5511 N Hesperides St., Tampa
April 2 ----- Jennings Middle School, 8799 Williams Rd., Seffner
May 2 ----- Brandon EPIC-3 (Alternative), 1019 N Parsons Ave., Seffner
August 27 - Dowdell Middle Magnet, 1208 Wishing Well Way, Clair-Mel

Attendance at Youth Workshops (383 Participants + 14 Officials = 404)

Workshop #1: **50 participants** (40 students, 10 HCSO) + 5 Officials)
Workshop #2: **52 participants** (42 students, 10 HCSO) + 2 Officials)
Workshop #3: **59 participants** (48 students, 11 HCSO) + 4 Officials)
Workshop #4: **54 participants** (42 students, 12 HCSO) + 2 Officials)
Workshop #5: **53 participants** (45 students, 8 HCSO) + 2 Officials)
Workshop #6: **59 participants** (51 students, 8 HCSO) + 2 Officials)
Workshop #7: **56 participants** (42 students, 14 HCSO) + 5 Officials)

Officials include: *School Principals, Assistant Principals, HCPS Administration and HCSO Community Outreach/Command Level Personnel*

Overall CLEWS Workshop Participant Evaluation

An average of 87%, or 314 of the 362 of the youth and Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) personnel who completed Evaluations at the seven workshops in program year 2017-2018, ranked their four-hour CLEWS Workshop experience as either **"Excellent"** or **"Very Good"**.

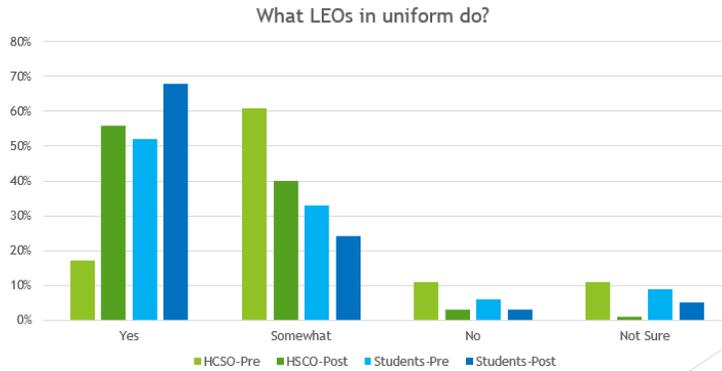
Experience Measurements

Using questionnaires collected from participants prior to and at the end of each workshop, CLEWS measures self-reported participant changes in the areas of knowledge and opinions with three statements. They cover: (1) Youth and HCSO personnel knowledge about youth's understanding of HCSO personnel responsibilities; (2) Youth and HCSO personnel opinions about the existence of barriers to good relationships that may exist between youth and law enforcement personnel; and (3) The value of getting to know each other as a result of the CLEWS experience.

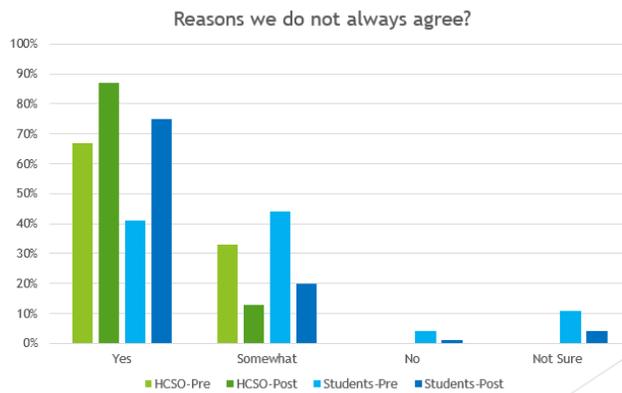
- **Youth**: The overall average of "Yes" responses rose **from 47% to 70%** (pre-workshop to post-workshop).
- **HCSO Personnel**: The overall average of "Yes" responses rose **from 50% to 75%** (pre-workshop to post-workshop).

Charting Our Success

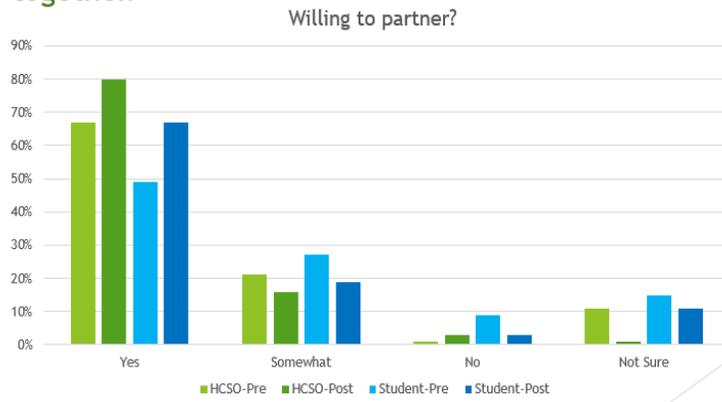
1. I believe the youth in this room know what LEOs are sworn to do when they put on their uniforms.



2. I know some of the reasons LEOs and youth do not always agree with each other.



3. I believe the youth and LEOs in this room would be “willing” to be partners if they spent more time together.



Most Frequent Youth Comments **CLEWS Small Group Discussions**

1. Youth frequently expressed serious concerns and fears about their schools, neighborhoods and society including: bullying, cyber-bullying, fights, violence, gangs, guns, shootings, theft, burglary and peer pressure to do or deal drugs. They want LEOs to understand the pressures they have to deal with beyond academics.
2. Many students felt that LEOs often act judgmentally or abuse their power using intimidation, acting unnecessarily rude or aggressive, and using more force than may be necessary during encounters with them and the general public.
3. Youth often were concerned about racism or other forms of discrimination in school and within their community. They also felt that many LEOs are racist, and that the justice system seems to be biased as well. Possibly reacting to media sensationalism, students said they believe that many LEO shootings and killings are often not justified and that racism seems to play a role when lethal force is used.
4. Students felt that LEOs harass or confront people who may not be doing anything wrong. For instance, don't assume that a group of Black teens walking around or hanging out, or adult Black men out late at night, are up to no good; they are usually just socializing with friends.
5. Many youth said they want respectful (and more frequent) interaction with LEOs, SROs and teachers. Enhance listening, communication skills with youth and build a relationship with them. When possible, use mediation to understand and better change behavior.

Most Frequent HCSO Comments

CLEWS Small Group Discussions

1. Deputies frequently said they often feel disrespected by youth. There is a lack of cooperation and understanding towards law enforcement. LEOs strongly believe that the media often portrays them in a negative light, without all the facts, or with bias. They also feel that many youth allow their peers or other people to influence their feelings and actions toward law enforcement. Youth may then feel justified in distrusting law enforcement.
2. Officer safety procedures are perceived by some citizens as the officers being cruel. When someone does not listen or follow orders, an officer may have to think and act quickly to gain control of a scene and conduct an investigation. LEOs may use force to prevent a situation from escalating or to match the aggression they encounter.
3. Disrespect and distrust causes students to be uncomfortable or scared around LEOs. They do not see LEOs as approachable or they don't want to be seen as a "snitch". If kids don't report the presence of guns on campus an unsafe situation can easily arise. LEOs understand students have issues, but kids only see the uniform. They may not realize LEOs care about keeping them safe.
4. Many deputies felt that some youth do not respect one another or themselves. Bullying, threats, fights or peer pressure can make kids feel fear or anger. Some live in a constant state of fear or be angry and not know why. Marginalized or unstable individuals are most susceptible to acting out, as has recently happened at school campuses and public venues.
5. Students rely too heavily on social media to form opinions. They use social media to get educated on certain topics, but the internet is filled with inaccurate, bogus information. Also due to media misinformation, some deputies feel they have become targets. People may assume that a White officer is racist when they arrest, use force or shoot a Black person. The truth is there are more LEO shootings of White males than Black males.

“Students, School Safety and Guns”

Summary of CLEWS Youth Comments

1. School Security:

- Study how shooters get on campus and do something about it
- More lock-down/safety drills, check lockers randomly or as needed
- Use teachers’ cell phones as alternate system of communication
- Train teachers and adult staff to spot suspicious behavior
- Strengthen safety parameters:
 - taller gates/fences, build walls where needed
 - one entry point, conduct searches as students arrive
 - metal detectors, x-ray machines, use clear backpacks
 - lock outside doors (with alarms) when school is in session
 - security cameras, strong class doors/locks, bulletproof windows
 - have security circulate often and check that doors are locked

2. Violence Prevention and Student Interactions:

- Stagger dismissal times of each grade to discourage fights
- Address bullying, harsher consequences for fighting and make it easy for students to report rumors, suspicious or bad behavior
- Teach students how to solve their problems; peer mediation
- Educate on real-life consequences of actions (threats, bullying, fights, carrying/using gun/weapon at school). Teach youth to respect and trust each other, reach out to someone needs help to fit in and remind youth to be nice to everyone as we don’t know what another is going through
- More student socialization; more inclusive student groups/functions

3. Emotional, Mental and Physical Health

- Provide access or referral for mental health care for the students so their personal issues do not affect their (mis-) behavior at school

- More interaction between students and guidance counselors and teachers to identify kids who might need more help (education, bullying, problems at home, hunger, etc.)
- Schools should organize support groups to prevent students from endangering themselves or others
- Have more mentors at school
- Better food at school to keep kids healthier in body and mind

4. Law Enforcement, Arming Teachers and Guns

- More LEOs/safety officers trained specifically about school safety (guns, threats of violence, calming an emotional teen, etc.)
- Hold open sessions so kids can express their feelings and thoughts with LEOs/security officers present (like this workshop)
- Some felt that teachers should not be armed (there to educate or not appropriate candidates); Others felt teachers should be armed if not enough LEOs, but should be very well-trained (or have rubber bullets)
- Gun owners, particularly parents, should secure their weapons against theft and because unstable, angry or fearful kids may get ahold of them
- Strengthen background (incl. mental health) checks for gun ownership
- More thorough training for concealed weapons permits

What CLEWS Participants Liked Best

Evaluation Forms

- Both youth and HCSO personnel most liked the Training Director, the “My New Partner” exercise and the small group table discussions
- Most youth also liked “Exploring the Patrol Cars” and lunch
- Most HCSO really liked the addition of the new component for youth to dialogue on “Students, School Safety and Guns”

Most Frequent Post-Workshop Comments - Youth

1. Helped me better understand the job of LEOs and see them as people
2. Helped me feel more comfortable and not so scared around LEOs
3. LEOs need to better understand the problems we have
4. We want help to make better decisions and improve our behavior
5. Teach us how to prevent school violence, bullying and keep ourselves safe
6. Have deputies do presentations on firearms and what they carry on their belts and uniforms
7. Have an open question/answer session with deputies
8. Have more, longer workshops; make it a whole school event

Most Frequent Post-Workshop Comments - HCSO

1. Helped us better understand what kids think and how they see things
2. Helped youth learn of our duties, the dangers we face and the seriousness of staying calm and following directions in encounters with LEOs
3. We want students to understand we are more than just the uniform and that respect for one another will go a long way
4. We want to change negative perceptions: that we have their best interests in mind, we care and will help when needed and to trust the uniform
5. More role-play, team-building exercises and discussion-based activities
6. Make it longer and allow more time for discussion with students
7. Workshops address important issues and need to continue

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