REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

Community and Law Enforcement Workshop & Services, Inc.

“Working together toward greater intercultural understanding”

2018-2019 CLEWS Program

Summary of Seven Youth Workshops
CLEWS Board of Directors

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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)
Caspers Company McDonalds Restaurants

This REPORT TO THE PEOPLE recaps seven (7) CLEWS youth and Hillsborough County law enforcement personnel workshops held January through August 2019 in Hillsborough County, Florida.

Publication cost provided by Hillsborough County BOCC.
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 305 Hillsborough County youth and 59 Hillsborough County deputies, between January and August 2019. 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.

Each workshop session matched an average of 40-45 students (in middle school) with 8-10 Hillsborough County Sheriff’s deputies to discuss topics the youth identified as their concerns. These issues included wanting to know more about officers’ training, arrest and traffic stop procedures, their gear and the use of force. They also discussed school security, social media, racism and the desire for a mutual understanding between youth and law enforcement personnel.

The Summary Reports for each individual school Workshop may be viewed at CLEWSprogram.org.
Where Workshops were Held

Workshops for 2019 were held at schools in Lithia, Seffner, Tampa and Ruskin

January 14 ---- Randall Middle School, 16510 Fishhawk Blvd., Lithia
February 11 ------ Burnett Middle School, 1010 N. Kingsway Rd. Seffner
March 26 ------ Progress Village Middle Magnet, 8113 Zinnia Dr., Tampa
April 15 -- Sgt. Paul Smith Middle School, 14303 Citrus Pointe Dr., Tampa
April 24 --------------- Young Middle Magnet, 1807 E. Dr. MLK Blvd., Tampa
May 13 -------- North Tampa EPIC-3 (Alt.), 8602 N. Armenia Ave., Tampa
August 26 -------- Shields Middle School, 15732 Beth Shields Way, Ruskin

Attendance at Youth Workshops
(364 Participants + 25 Officials =389)

Workshop #1: 53 participants (43 students, 10 HCSO) + 3 Officials
Workshop #2: 55 participants (46 students, 9 HCSO) + 4 Officials
Workshop #3: 50 participants (42 students, 8 HCSO) + 5 Officials
Workshop #4: 49 participants (42 students, 7 HCSO) + 3 Officials
Workshop #5: 46 participants (38 students, 8 HCSO) + 2 Officials
Workshop #6: 56 participants (49 students, 7 HCSO) + 4 Officials
Workshop #7: 55 participants (45 students, 10 HCSO) + 4 Officials

Officials include: School Principals, Assistant Principals, HCPS Administration and HCSO Community Outreach/Command Level Personnel
Participant Evaluation  
*(Overall CLEWS Workshop)*

An average of 89%, or 309 of the 349 of the youth and Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO) personnel who completed Evaluation forms at the seven workshops in program year 2018-2019, ranked their overall four-hour CLEWS Workshop experience as either “Excellent” or “Very Good”.

**Pre- and Post-Workshop Questionnaires**  
*(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:** From pre-workshop to post-workshop, the overall average of “Absolutely” responses rose from 5% to 24%; and the average of “Yes” responses rose from 24% to 43%.

- **HCSO Personnel:** From pre-workshop to post-workshop, the overall average of “Absolutely” responses rose from 5% to 13%; and the average of “Yes” responses rose from 20% to 48%.

The above information (and the chart on the next page) reflects a significant number of participants expressed an increase in their perception of knowledge gained or more positive attitude towards mutual understanding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Absolutely</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-WS</td>
<td>Post-WS</td>
<td>Pre-WS</td>
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<td>Pre-WS</td>
<td>Post-WS</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. 1 - Do you think most youth in this workshop understand what law enforcement officers are sworn to do when they put on their uniform?</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 2 - Do you think you know a lot of the reasons why most youth and law enforcement officers do not always agree with each other?</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 3 - Do you think youth and law enforcement officers would be willing to be partners if they spent more time together in workshops like this?</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages:

- **10%**, **5%**, **26%**, **36%**, **14%**, **23%**, **11%**, **13%**, **22%**, **21%**, **7%**, **6%**, **5%**, **8%**, **0%**, **2%**, **0%**, **14%**, **0%**, **6%**
Pre-Workshop Comments

(Expectations – Before the CLEWS Experience)

Following are participants’ top 6 responses to finish this statement:

I hope this workshop will...

**Students:**
- Help students understand what deputies do for us; how law enforcement benefits my community – 45
- Help me learn more about law enforcement; what officers do and why - 34
- Be interesting; teach me something new - 25
- Be fun – 21
- Give some insight on what officers go through on a daily basis; what it’s like to be them - 11
- Help me become more open-minded about law enforcement officers - 10

I hope this workshop will...

**HCSO**
- Bridge the gap in understanding between youth and law enforcement – 12
- Open lines of conversation to discuss and address questions youth have about law enforcement - 8
- Increase trust, build better relationships between youth and law enforcement - 8
- Improve interactions between law enforcement and youth – 4
- Give the students a clear understanding of what LEO’s do in the community - 4
- Start a positive dialogue that will initiate thought for a better understanding between law enforcement and students - 5
CLEWS Small Group Discussions
(Most Frequent Topics & Comments)

1. Police Training & Procedures
This year, more than any previous year, students were greatly interested in the training that officers go through and procedures used when making arrests, traffic stops and vehicle searches. They often asked why officers got into law enforcement and about their personal experiences on the job.

- Deputies responded that they went through a long process of intensive training and education which continues throughout their career. They train and practice defensive tactics and martial arts to have an advantage during confrontations or to better help a citizen get out of a physical predicament.
- Arrests are based on evidence (a witness, a video or what they see). Officers may not know the whole story at the time, but an investigation will be done to get the facts. If evidence leads to a wrongful arrest, there are several checks and balances within the judicial system to correct any wrongs.
- When asked why they got into law enforcement, most of the deputies said they wanted to help people who are unable to help themselves and that they like helping make people feel safe and protected from crime.

2. Gear & Use of Force
Students asked a lot of questions about the officers’ gear (bodycams, guns, tasers, bulletproof vests, handcuffs, etc.). They were surprised to learn how heavy all the gear is and that the vests do not work in all situations. Students asked when officers use their weapons and what circumstances can escalate to their use of force.

- Deputies explained that they do not wear bodycams all the time because it is too expensive. Also, the State of Florida Public Records Law mandates that such footage be stored for 5 years. One bodycam worn for two 12-hour shifts for one year, would be 8,760 hours of footage. That’s just for one camera for one year of use. It is not feasible to keep that much video in storage.
- Officers are trained to use force to ensure the safety of the suspect, the officer and the public. Suspects who won’t comply with officers need to be constrained before they become a threat to themselves and to others.
The use of weapons depends on the interaction with the citizen and the circumstances of the investigation. Law enforcement’s use of force begins with their being present up to the use of their firearm to protect themselves or others against harm. The use of their tools is either equal to that of the suspect’s or up one level (from the least lethal to the greatest). Officers must evaluate each situation to determine what action they are going to take.

3. School Safety
Students discussed the pros and cons of teachers being armed in school. They asked about the possibility of having more resource officers or other law enforcement personnel on campuses.

- Deputies suggested students bring their concerns to the school’s faculty. There are too many schools in Hillsborough County for more deputies to be placed at schools full-time, so one idea is to make more effective use of existing school resource officers. Continued security assessments are being done, but funds are not available to implement all possible safety measures.

What else can students do about violence at schools (or other places)?
- Be aware of your surroundings and of suspicious people in the area. Report to school staff or the school resource officer about any guns on campus, fights or threats of violence. If you are in danger scream and/or run away. Have a plan and a cell phone if available. Don’t be a super hero… have an escape plan. Be safe and call 9-1-1.

4. Social Media
Students discussed the use of social media to bully, spread hate or make threats. They also wanted to know what the deputies thought about how law enforcement is perceived through social media these days.

- Deputies responded that a lot of society’s ills and (oft repeated) misconceptions are reflected in the general media, but more so in social media because much of it is not based on fact. Often what is posted is someone’s opinion or attitude. A lot of society is misinformed by social media and misled about incidents with law enforcement. Question everything... it is too easy for liars and haters to feel anonymous. Also, be
careful of what and with whom you share on social media as you can fall victim to those out to do harm.

5. Racism & Police
Youth talked about the problem of racism in society. Why are minorities treated as though they are less than? And although a lot of students asked why more black people are shot by law enforcement, a few students seemed to know that this was a common misperception not based on fact. Still, unfortunately, racism is a part of our society and they asked the deputies if the ethnicity or religion of a person would determine how they would handle certain situations?

- Deputies felt that racism, in general, is due to ignorance or a lack of interaction or understanding between social, ethnic or racial groups. Most officers treat citizens based on how the citizen reacts to them (the officers). Statistics show that more white people are shot by law enforcement than are black people. Subjects in the wrong may use their ethnic origin to try and build a case against the officer, but any citizen with a bad attitude can create unwanted consequences.

Why aren’t there more minorities in law enforcement?

- Negative stigmas are a huge barrier to more minorities working as law enforcement officers.

6. Police and Youth
Students wanted to know why officers watch them so intently and why they often may feel nervous around law enforcement.

- Kids tend to think that officers are “out to get them”. But the truth is that most officers really care about kids and teens and want to make sure that everyone is safe. Officers can only arrest kids who commit crimes, so don’t be afraid if you are acting right. Even if you are arrested, the juvenile arrest avoidance program helps protect kids.

What can be done to help improve relations between youth and law enforcement?

- We need to better understand one another. Programs like CLEWS and other programs and community events can help bridge the gap to help youth and adults understand law enforcement’s role to help protect them.
Post-Workshop Comments
(Comments on Increased Understanding – After the CLEWS Experience)

Following are participants’ top responses to the question:

What did you experience as a result of this workshop?

Students
- Helped me better understand officers; what it’s like to be them – 22
  Sample comments:
  o Helped me better understand the struggle an officer goes through.
  o Helped me understand their thought process while in action.
- Talking to the officers changed my perspective/thinking on officers - 7
  Sample comments:
  o I feel more respect for them and the job they do.
  o I now understand the main reasons why officers are trained to do what they do in the way they do it.
- Showed me that officers are just people (human) too - 6
- I feel more comfortable around the officers; not as scared – 5
  Sample comments:
  o Really helped open my eyes and I now feel better prepared if I ever have an encounter with the law enforcement.
  o Helped me understand why youth and officers might not get along and what I can do to help in certain situations.
- Showed me that all officers aren’t bad like how the media portrays them - 4
- Showed me that law enforcement officers care about us; they want to protect and help us - 4

What did you experience as a result of this workshop?

HCSO
Taught me more about the concerns of youth - 8
Helped bridge the gap of understanding - 7
I better understand some common issues among youth in today’s society. - 2
Post-Workshop Comments
(Comments on Improving Workshops – After the CLEWS Experience)

Following are participants’ various responses to the statement:

*If I could, I would change the workshop in this way...*

**Students**

- Change nothing; fine the way it is – 99
  - Sample comments:
    - *Don’t change a thing because it was fun.*
    - *This workshop teaches us about officers in a way we can understand.*
- Have new, more or change activities – 25; (+ 44 - see below):
  - Improve/have more time for the visits to the patrol cars – 9
  - Spend more time just talking; getting to better know the officers – 8
  - Let us ride in the patrol cars – 7
  - Allow more table time to discuss students concerns – 4
  - Have more officers participate to make table groups smaller - 3
  - Have a special presentation by other law enforcement personnel (detectives, SWAT, ICE, K9 unit, etc.) - 4
  - Have games that teach us about the law – 3
  - Add role-play scenarios (simulations of arrest or traffic stops) - 2
  - Give more information on what to do if approached by an officer - 2
  - Have more physical or hand’s on activities (try on a bullet-proof vest or bring in some weapons that are safe for us to inspect or touch) – 2
- Change the opening (16 – see below):
  - Have everyone greet one another; have all deputies greet and introduce themselves to the students – 7
  - Make the start more engaging to grab students’ attention - 3
  - Maybe have some jokes or fun facts at the beginning - 3
  - Shorten the intro; fewer speeches and sponsor announcements – 3
- Less or no paperwork - 15
- Let students sit at the table they choose – 13
- Change the first activity (7 – see below):
  - Start with the pre-workshop questions - 2
  - Have a short Q & A - 2
  - Have officers tell us about their normal day - 2
- Do the pledge first. - 1
- Hold the workshop for multiple days – 7
  Sample comments:
  - Have a Part 2... like the next day.
  - Come once a week for 4 weeks to develop better relationships with deputies and improve understanding of law enforcement.
- Have more/bigger workshops - 4
  Sample comments:
  - They should have more workshops because this knowledge is imperative and valuable to the youth.
  - Have the whole school participate because this was an amazing experience! It was awesome!
- Make the workshops longer - 4
  Sample comment:
  - Have more time for deputies and students to get more comfortable just being together.
- More give-aways - 3
- I would change my attitude; I would be nicer – 2
- Change the program to spend a day with deputies and do ride-alongs - 2
- The place I want to go is the sheriff’s offices. - 1
- Have more programs where every student can partner with an LEO. It would strengthen the community. - 1
- I would change the workshop into a program to help kids that want to become officers. - 1

If I could, I would change the workshop in this way...

HCSO
- Change nothing – 11
  Sample comments:
  - Great workshop!
  - I think the workshops are structured well for interaction and dialogue.
- Allow more time for interaction/discussion between students and law enforcement – 7
  Sample comments:
  - Open discussion was welcomed and utilized.
  - We began a good conversation but time was over.
• Add more time to the meet-and-greet at the tables; maybe have a few ice breakers so table groups can loosen up - 5
• Allot time for free talk or unstructured dialogue at the table outside of the concerns for the table report – 5
• Have some structured or pre-screened questions regarding youth and law enforcement concerns to get the group discussions started – 5
  Sample comments:
  o *Have pre-determined topics specific to table numbers.*
  o *Possibly incorporate hot topic issues.*
• Allow time for audience Q & A to get students more comfortable within the workshop environment - 3
• Have officers introduce themselves to the room and briefly explain their roles and responsibilities to students – 3
• Provide students a general understanding of the workshop and expectations at the beginning to minimize any fears they may have – 2
• Do scenarios for a better understanding of law enforcement, such as calls for service - 2
• Include the opportunity to have one-on-one contact with some students for low pressure conversations - 2
• Schedule workshops more often during the school year - 2
• Open up a segment at the beginning for officers to ask questions of the youth audience. - 1
• Have smaller groups. - 1
• Have the workshops at a sheriff’s office for a better understanding of all aspects of law enforcement. - 1
• Have a greater variety of officers from different department sections. - 1
• Have the parents get involved. - 1
Evaluation Forms
(What CLEWS Participants Liked Best)

• Most youth and HCSO personnel liked the Training Director and the Overall Workshop.

• Most youth best liked Exploring the Patrol Cars and Lunch.

• Most HCSO also really liked interacting and talking with students for the Table Discussions & Reports, and the CLEWS Pledge.