

Report of Program Activities:

1. What measurable outcomes did the project make for your organization and/or those served by the project?

What is a Forensic Interview?

When a child discloses abuse, social services or law enforcement may recommend that the child receive a child-friendly forensic interview to talk about their abuse.

2015 Total Forensic Interviews:	130
2015 Forensic Interview of Duluth youth:	96

Safe and Strong Child® is a sexual abuse prevention program implemented throughout southern St. Louis County and Lake County. The program teaches children basic personal body safety skills while giving parents, educators and other youth-serving professionals information and resources to reduce the risk of victimization and respond effectively to disclosures of abuse.

During the 2015-2016 school year, First Witness Staff completed the following:

184 Safe & Strong Presentations to 2,285 children
Lowell Elementary: 4 and 5 th - 99 students
Homecroft Elementary: Headstart, K, 2, 4 – 188 students
Stowe Elementary: K, 2, 4- 158 students
Piedmont Elementary: K, 2, 4 – 262 students
Lester Park Elementary: K, 2, 4, 5 -350 students
Myers-Wilkins Elementary: Pre-K, K, 2, 4, 5- 473 students
Laura MacArthur: K, 2 nd , 4 th – 135 students
Non ISD709: Minnehaha, Silver Bay, Two Harbors, Raleigh Edison, Floodwood
23 presentations to 233 parents through ECFE and parent associations/groups
18 community presentations to 311 youth workers and community members
On-going contacts and training with school staff and works

2. Describe any unanticipated benefits or problems you have encountered with this project.

One unanticipated benefit of this year's programming was our ability to be in almost all of the elementary schools in Duluth this year. Our increased presence at the school allowed us to not only build connections and relationships with teachers, staff and families in those schools, but also serve as a support system when unsafe, abusive, inappropriate or sexually reactive behaviors occurred or when some type of incident reporting needed to happen.

Through our presence in a wide range of schools we were not only able to assist teachers directly, but also further educate school staff and community members about the services we offer and the support we can provide for both kids and families.

We were also able to further enhance our curriculum by understanding what the issues that kids face are and what families, communities and schools are dealing with each day, so we could better tailor our teachings to those realities. For instance, at Stowe there were concerns about technology use and safety with some of the older kids. We were able to create a curriculum to speak specifically about issues around technology and were invited to do special presentations with the 5th graders who had been most affected by these technology concerns. In addition, we also worked on creating a pre-k/head start curriculum as Myers-Wilkins and Homecroft wanted us to also provide education for the young children. Creation of these more specialized curriculum helped us to expand the focus of Safe and Strong and make sure it is best serving the needs and concerns of our kids and community.

In addition, building relationships within the schools also creates opportunities for us to branch out educational and prevention services to tertiary community-based organizations, such as Early Childhood Family Education groups, community collaborative and youth organizations. This allowed us to further explore topics around body sovereignty and body safety with more families, many of whom have pre-k children. These opportunities to work more closely and directly with parents, teachers and youth further inform the array of services we provide and our coordinated community response to child abuse, while helping us to better ensure that our responses effectively and accurately meet the needs of community members.

This year, we were able to serve seven out of the nine ISD 709 elementary schools. We were unable to schedule Congdon and did not serve Lakewood because we did programming for the entire school over the 2014-2015 school year. Next year we will be focusing on presentations for Congdon, Lester Park, Lakewood and Lowell. We will serve other schools that want programming if we have additional availability.

3. If you were to undertake this project again would you do anything differently? Please explain.

In the future, it would be great to have an increased access to First Witness support staff in the schools. The opportunities for First Witness staff to provide support and help to teachers and administrators post-disclosure or surrounding concerns over the past year was mutually beneficial. As a result we were also able to serve as additional resource for parents and many teachers connected families in need with First Witness staff.

One example of this was when a disclosure was made at Stowe during programming. Post-disclosure the First Witness staff was able to go and meet directly with the principal right away and discuss the next steps for reporting the disclosure and what minimal facts to gather from the child. The ability for the school and First Witness staff to collaborate on how to respond right away created a more holistic response that kept the needs and safety of the kids and family the first priority. Multi-disciplinary approaches and community collaboration positively impact outcomes for kids and families. It's a privilege for First Witness staff when we can provide these supports and services not only for the kids and families, but also for those working with the kids and families, who know them best.

Often times when we're doing prevention education in the schools, we are also meeting one on one with teachers and staff who may have worries and concerns about students and situations. It is great to be right there and available when we are needed, as students frequently identify their teachers and



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school staff as safe people they can talk to. As a result it would also be a goal to provide more on-going contact with school staff and provide more on-going training opportunities. We would also like to synthesize some of the feedback we've received from teachers to further develop more specialized curricula as mentioned above, such as a sexual harassment curricula.

4. If applicable please provide a success story for this project.

The creation of new more diverse and reflective visual aids for our presentations and additional curriculum to meet the needs of specific issues within schools were two of our greatest successes this year. The creation of our technology safety curriculum and our revision of our headstart/ pre-k curriculum increases our capacity to help more families in our community.

Our ability to meet one on one with teachers during programming to discuss various issues that have arisen with students was another success, as we were able to help teachers strategize next steps and provide sample language for how to address pertinent issues.

In addition, the opportunity to be in both Lester Park and Homecroft schools were also big successes as we've been absent from both schools for a number of years. Homecroft teachers were very apprehensive about the programming being taught to their students, especially in the younger grades and expressed several concerns at the teacher meeting. That same night at the parent info meeting, after explaining the curriculum messages and topic discussions positive support was expressed by all the parents. There was an overwhelming amount of acceptance of the program and one parent even shared that she wished all grades including her child's 1st grade class would get the messaging. After the presentations were done at the school a student brought the information back to her church and the kids all agreed to make a donation to First Witness for the work that we do. A similar experience was met at Lowell Elementary where we were only in select classrooms, but the parents expressed the need to have it in all the classrooms.