

# #184

**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Gimbel Foundat...nd Evaluation (Web Link)  
**Started:** Friday, December 14, 2018 7:51:58 AM  
**Last Modified:** Friday, December 14, 2018 9:09:05 AM  
**Time Spent:** 01:17:06  
**IP Address:** 74.109.243.182

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Page 1

**Q1** Name of your organization.

Planned Parenthood of Western PA

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**Q2** Grant #

20170861

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**Q3** Grant Period

December 1, 2017 - November 30, 2018

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**Q4** Location of your organization

City	<b>Pittsburgh</b>
State	<b>PA</b>

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**Q5** Name and Title of person completing evaluation.

Katie Horowitz

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**Q6** Phone Number:

412-370-0695

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**Q7** Email address.

khorowitz@ppwp.org

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Page 2: Key Outcomes and Results

**Q8** Total number of clients served through this grant funding:

266 students were served through both LifeSkills and Peer Helpers programming.

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**Q9** Describe the project's key outcomes and results based on the goals and objectives. Use the following format: State the Goal: State Objective 1: Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 1: State Objective 2 (if applicable): Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 2: State Objective 3 (if applicable): Describe the Activities, Results and Outcomes for Objective 3:

PPWP's GOAL for the funds awarded by the S.L. Gimbel Grant was to provide the Peer Helpers peer education program to an underserved high school in the Pittsburgh Public School system, Westinghouse 6-12. Staff sought to serve a broad population of students with LifeSkills classes, which provide foundational, multi-session sexuality education programming, and to enroll a select group of higher need students as Peer Helpers, peer educators who receive long-term, intensive peer education programming, including staffing a sexual health textline, It's Ok To Ask Someone (IOTAS). By delivering programming on a broad range of sexual health topics, staff sought to help students develop knowledge, self-efficacy, and healthy behaviors that will help them avoid unintended pregnancy, STDs, and violence.

During the grant term, the program successfully met these goals and exceeded OBJECTIVE 1, which was to: deliver LifeSkills programming to 160 students through at least 56 sessions, and to enroll 72 students as Peer Helpers, delivering at least 84 Peer Helpers sessions.

In response to greater need at the school for the LifeSkills curriculum and foundational sexual health education for a broader population of students, staff made small adjustments to the balance of students served and classes taught, and over the grant term served 200 students with the LifeSkills program and 66 students through Peer Helpers. These students received 100 LifeSkills sessions and 60 Peer Helpers classes respectively.

The Peer Helpers peer education program was able to meet its goals and objectives this year in Westinghouse and other schools due in large part to our educators' constant focus on relationship-building with students in the program. Despite the large number of students enrolled at each school, our staff worked to demonstrate flexibility, attention and care for the specific needs of each group and, importantly, each individual student. Knowing how hard it can be for students to pay attention to a lesson when they are preoccupied about issues in their lives, especially at an underserved school like Westinghouse, peer education staff listen to and hear students, help them understand that they aren't alone, and connect them to much-needed and hard-to-find resources. The passion staff have to see students succeed means that they are there for them when they need support -- whether that's responding to a text from a struggling student on the weekend or going with a student to a counseling appointment or attending an important event like a graduation or a student performance in the community.

Ensuring that lessons and content are relevant to the students we serve, as well as responsive to their educational needs, remains very important in a program like ours that works with students year after year. Subjects covered during the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years have included puberty, anatomy, STIs, contraception, healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviors, gender, communication skills, pregnancy/STI prevention, decision-making, setting boundaries around sexual activity, and other sexual health topics proven to help students avoid unintended pregnancy and STIs. Staff made every effort to center youth in their lessons and to connect material to their lives. As an example, when the discussion focused on active bystander concepts that encourage youth to find ways to respond when they are a witness to relationship violence, staff connected the lesson to other forms of violence, like street violence, that students at Westinghouse have to contend with in their community and that, while extremely related, for students, can feel so much more impactful than the kinds of relationship violence that can impact sexual health outcomes. These kinds of violence and the skills needed to prevent and respond to them are so connected and yet without including this context, staff would have risked losing the attention of the students if the material felt irrelevant for them.

Other important pieces of content staff focused on this year included the concept of stigma and how feelings of shame around stigma can act as a barrier to staying safe and healthy while deciding to be sexual with someone else. Students practiced having conversations

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with partners around SID status and getting tested, with staff providing feedback and helping students to process their feelings around the conversations. As the role plays evolved, staff also saw student approaches around talking about STDs evolve into being more mature, more realistic, more at ease, and more personalized in terms of how students would actually conduct themselves in such a conversation.

Just as important to content in the classroom is the attention staff pay to tone, creating safe space, and connecting students to additional resources where needed. Peer education staff are sensitive to all of their students' reactions to this material and pay special care when talking about anatomy and consent -- knowing that some students may respond adversely because of traumatic experiences. Staff are sure to explain what lessons are being taught and why before starting a lesson, and reminding students that they are always welcome to pass, leave the room, or do whatever is needed to take care of themselves. These lessons are always accompanied by linkage to services and resources, including talking organizations such as Pittsburgh's Center for Victims, websites like [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org), and other places where students can get extra support if needed. Other resources are often linked to in individual conversations and of course, Planned Parenthood services are a common linkage to care made by staff. When these linkages are made, they are typically very strong, since staff can make a warm handoff to other PPWP staff and can describe in detail the process a student will go through to access the service they need, reducing barriers by helping young people to feel less intimidated even when they may have never accessed our services in the past. One interesting and important note was that although schools do not allow condom distribution, students from multiple schools asked staff for condoms when they met in spaces outside of their classrooms, further demonstrating that accessibility, not necessarily resistance to wearing condoms, is one of the major roadblocks to condom use.

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is a more formalized avenue to engage the most active Peer Helpers in program decision making and to prioritize student led work. The YAB recruited Peer Helpers from several schools, including Westinghouse, who act as ambassadors and architects for their school's Peer Helpers program. The YAB will continue to exist as a hub of passion and ideas, and will strengthen to include a more diverse group of students, leadership development opportunities, workshops, one-on-one mentoring, and shadowing of educators, along with guest speakers and experts from various disciplines like art, organizing, and healthcare. This past year, in addition to meetings around staffing IOTAS and discussing program ideas, special sessions and engagement with community initiatives (described in more detail in question six below) engaged YAB members in deeper thinking about community and their work as peer advocates, as in a Summer Institute that engaged students in conversations about how to better evaluate the success of the Peer Helpers program, visioning sessions about what they would like to see stay the same and change about the program, and broader conversations about how they see their role as Peer Helpers in the context of the greater community.

PPWP's sexual health textline, It's OK to Ask Someone (IOTAS) also continues to be an important tool for students to access and disseminate sexual health info. IOTAS was promoted in each of the participating schools as well as through advertisements and outreach in the community and on social media and questions continued to come in from youth across our service area about puberty, birth control, condoms, relationships, and other topics related to sexual health. Peer Helpers continued to participate in answering questions and in the coming year, staff will identify a smaller, core group of students dedicated to staffing the textline. These students will receive special attention around ongoing training and engagement. Peer Helpers continue to assist at community events to promote the textline and through recommending IOTAS to their friends and peers.

Evaluation of the Peer Helpers program continues to be refined through PPWP's work with partners from the Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences at the Graduate School of Public Health. Attached is the full report for the 2017/18 school year, as well as a brief summary report of this year's key and notable findings. The Peer Helpers program core goals of 99% pregnancy prevention and 100% school completion for senior Peer Helpers were met last year, pending one senior Peer Helper who is currently in a credit recovery program and slated to graduate with her diploma in January.

Evaluation results discussed here are for the entire Peer Helpers program across three middle and four high schools. and what follows are the behavioral goals (using benchmarks where available) that PPWP set for Peer Helpers students, as compared with Peer Helpers' results at post-test:

Behavioral Goal 1) At least 70% of sexually active students report use of condoms at last intercourse (Exceeds the Healthy Allegheny Teen Study benchmark for condom use of 60% and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey benchmark of 59% by at least 10%.)

Peer Helpers Outcome 1) 75% percent of sexually active students reported using a condom at last intercourse, far exceeding the benchmarks and exceeding the goal

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benchmarks and exceeding the goal.

Behavioral Goal 2) At least 70% of students report plans to use contraception the first or next time they have sexual intercourse (No benchmark available.).

Peer Helpers Outcome 2) 79% percent of students plan to use contraception the first or next time they have vaginal intercourse, with an additional 12% reporting that they do not plan to have vaginal intercourse, for a total of only 3% reporting they did not plan to and 6% reporting they had not thought about it.

Behavioral Goal 3) Percentage of students reporting sexual activity at post-test is lower than or on par with national average (47% in the YRBS from 2013).

Peer Helpers Outcome 3) 47% percent of high school Peer Helpers reported sexual activity. This is slightly higher than the new YRBS results demonstrating that in the U.S. overall, 40% of high school students report sexual activity.

Behavioral Goal 4) At least 30% of sexually active students report being tested for an STI in the past year (No benchmark available from HATS or the YRBS. In 2013, the National Coalition for Sexual Health reported that in the past year only 19% of sexually experienced females and 12% of male youth had been tested.[1] [The only analogous YRBS data shows that in 2013, only 12.9% of students had ever been tested for HIV.]

Peer Helpers Outcome 4) 38% percent of sexually active high school Peer Helpers reported being tested for an STI in the past year, exceeding both the benchmark and the goal.

As to knowledge, self-efficacy, and healthy attitudes, since the majority of Peer Helpers students participate over many years, PPWP expects to see the biggest gains during students' first year in the program and for the overall analysis of students from pre- to post-test, we hope to ensure that students maintain these over the school year and over the course of the program. During the 2017/18 school year, the evaluation found that overall, among all Peer Helpers, there was maintenance and in a number of cases, significant increases in knowledge of a variety of healthy sexual behaviors, including abstinence as the most effective form of birth control, how and where to access emergency contraception, proper condom use, contraceptive methods, and transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). For those topics (namely, menstruation and ovulation) about which there were clear gaps in knowledge, PPWP will be sure to focus on specifically teaching content around these in the upcoming school year.

Items measuring self-efficacy speak to students' confidence practicing a variety of healthy sexual behaviors. PPWP has observed interesting trends in these questions over a number of years. During 2016/17, PPWP observed that while students overall shifted from less confident to more confident for nearly all items, including confidence getting tested for an STI, finding reliable sexual health information online, using birth control and condoms, practicing abstinence, and other behaviors, high school Peer Helpers reporting the highest level of confidence ("Extremely Confident") decreased from pre- to post-test, although the overall percentage of those reporting either Confident, Highly Confident, or Extremely Confident as an aggregate increased. In order to attempt to see confidence results with more clarity, between 2016/17 and 2017/18, PPWP reduced the number of scale items to 3: Not at all confident, Somewhat confident, and Extremely confident. The change did help to demonstrate very substantial decreases in students feeling "Not at all confident" about several of these behaviors, but interestingly, given the option of "Somewhat confident," student responses did still migrate into this category, out of the category of "extreme" confidence between pre- and post-test.

Seeing this same pattern repeatedly over several years while students' actual behavioral outcomes remain very strong and the program's very concrete goal of pregnancy prevention continues to be met, begs the question for PPWP of whether a more nuanced analysis of these results might be in order. Namely, since the way Peer Helpers educators work with students is by consistently encouraging critical thought and self-reflection, it is worth wondering whether student reluctance to report "extreme" confidence at post-test could result from more careful self-reflection and in-depth conversations that lead them to recognize the complexity of the interpersonal interactions around sexual health behaviors like negotiating condom use.

One important exception, as noted by evaluators, was that students' confidence related to questions about consent notably decreased from pre- to post-test. This change was not observed during 2016/17 or during previous years and PPWP believes there may be some credence to the speculation offered by the evaluators that the prominence of the Me Too movement and larger conversations about consent taking place in society may be causing students to question their own understanding of consent and their ability to recognize it

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consent taking place in society may be causing students to question their own understanding of consent and their ability to recognize it. Although Peer Helpers educators directly addressed these issues in the classroom this year, and even in an increased way from previous years, these results make it clear that a sexuality education classroom may play a very important role during a pivotal cultural moment, helping students to address overall discomfort to feel that they not only understand consent, but that they can effectively practice it in their own lives.

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### **Q10** Please describe any challenges/obstacles the organization encountered (if any) in attaining goals & objectives.

Our program deals with sensitive content and since students leave class to attend Peer Helpers, PPWP staff prefers to have one room that they can occupy for the entire day so that there is less confusion for students and a feeling of relative privacy. Westinghouse has provided challenges to these needs due to lack of a consistent space to facilitate in,

PPWP also does not have a dedicated administrative contact at Westinghouse, which has proved to be challenging especially when it comes to ensuring there are no scheduling conflicts. Even after extensive coordination with school staff, other school demands interfered with both the field trip and S.E.L.F.I.E. party even though these days had been identified as free of conflicts by school administrators.

Neither of these challenges ultimately prevented staff from reaching the goals and objectives, as outlined above.

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### **Q11** How did you overcome and/or address the challenges and obstacles?

Staff did their best to mitigate space issues at the school by working with teachers and juggling scheduling so that Peer Helpers sessions could be held in vacant classrooms during teachers' planning periods. This approach requires that PPWP staff are organized, communicate needs in an consistent and clear manner, and remain flexible and understanding. Peer Helpers was never without a classroom this year and while staff continue to hope for a dedicated space in future years, they are also prepared to continue using this approach, since serving schools like Westinghouse is essential to the department's priority to serve underserved students who experience the greatest disparity.

PPWP staff is also working to identify one Westinghouse staff person to be a liaison with the Peer Helpers Program throughout the year. Staff turnover at the school is high and unfortunately, school staff are spread thin, which has made this a challenge over the two and a half years the program has operated in the school. Because of the goodwill fostered through sponsoring the S.E.L.F.I.E. party (discussed below) last year and through our staff's continued efforts to act as a resource to school staff wherever possible, we hope to be successful this year in communicating the importance of a dedicated contact to the administration and securing one.

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### **Q12** Describe any unintended positive outcomes as a result of the efforts supported by this grant.

Care No Matter Where (CNMW) is a new program of PPWP that provides mobile STD testing and seeks to break down barriers to services for communities that historically experience disparities in accessing reproductive healthcare. Over the past year, Westinghouse Peer Helpers students have pitched in to help with CNMW testing events in and around Homewood by staffing these events in conjunction with PPWP staff and encouraging community members to access free HIV testing; running sexual health-related games like sex ed Jeopardy; and connecting community members with resources, such as brochures, books, and service information. Some youth even assisted with medical intake for people seeking testing services. By using their expertise around sexual health and their connections within the community, these students improved the testing events by making them more approachable for youth and community members alike and in turn, the events helped the Peer Helpers to feel like they were making a very concrete impact in their community. Staffing the events also gave them practice at job skills used in the medical field and in other kinds of outreach work, another unintended positive outcome of the collaboration between these programs.

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**Q13** Briefly describe the impact this grant has had on the organization and community served.

The Peer Helpers Program at Westinghouse impacts youth in a very meaningful way. Through participating in the program, our students gain deep knowledge of sexual health and acquire practical skills and tools to navigate their lives. These skills address goal-setting, maintaining healthy relationships, sexual health decision-making and effective communication as a few examples. PPWP staff strives to build self-esteem and confidence in our students as we provide comprehensive sexuality education. Staff also makes themselves available to provide various other supports for students from bus fare, snacks, academic help or a connection to whatever resources they may need. Ultimately, through this work our goals for these youth are able to graduate from high school and to avoid pregnancy.

In our department and specifically in the Peer Helpers program at Westinghouse, through our work with a coalition called the Black Girls Equity Alliance, staff have also placed a special focus on meeting the needs of Black girls. Messages in the media, community, and society at large bombard young Black girls with negative messages about who they are, what they deserve, and who they will become. Our “relationship first” approach to programming means that we begin our work providing deep holistic support to all of our participants. At the base of that support is an intersectional framework that allows us to instill pride and confidence in the girls, not only in their femme identity but also in all of their identities. Whether black, white, straight, gay, rich or poor we reinforce that they are precious and deserve care and respect.

The Peer Helper program provides a safe, affirming space for the girls we serve at Westinghouse to celebrate and explore who they are and what they can become. This is an invaluable step in their journey to learn, to advocate for themselves and to set life goals, which are necessary to balancing the scales and building a more equitable, and just world for women and girls of all identities. By serving the youth and girls in particular at this school, we hope to have an impact on the greater communities that feed into Westinghouse, namely in the city neighborhood of Homewood and the borough of Wilkinsburg, where the majority of our Peer Helpers reside. By holding community events like those mentioned above through Care No Matter Where and the S.E.L.F.I.E. party, described below, that work to teach youth in the school the value of connecting the skills and knowledge they acquire in the program to the community at large, through service that helps expand access to resources, we hope for the program’s positive impacts with students to ripple throughout their communities outside of the school as well.

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**Q14** Please provide a budget expenditure report. Also, provide a budget narrative that explains how the funds were utilized, what was purchased, what were the expensed items based upon the budget that was submitted.

PPWP's proposal to the Gimbel Foundation requested \$25,000 to cover the expense of salary and benefits for a staff member to provide the Peer Education program at Westinghouse High School, and for program expenses that included education materials, travel, student stipends, field trips, and program evaluation. The following is a summary of the budget and the grant expenditures:

	Budget	Actual
Salary	\$10,426	\$11,034
Benefits	\$ 3,274	\$ 3,543
Education supplies	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,540
Travel	\$ 800	\$ 358
Stipends	\$ 7,200	\$ 6,600
Field Trips	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,650
Program Evaluation	\$ 600	\$ 600
Total Expense	\$25,000	\$25,325

The full grant of \$25,000 was used to deliver the Peer Education program at Westinghouse High School. The program cost for the items covered by this grant exceeded the grant amount by \$325. The larger budget variances included the following items:

- salary and benefits were more than budgeted due to a small increase in the peer education staff member's salary, and the cost of benefits increasing this year more than anticipated,
- education supplies were more than budgeted due to more materials needing to be provided by PPWP than anticipated.
- travel is less than budgeted because staff obtained a discounted registration fee for a sex education conference thereby reducing this line item expense,
- stipends were less than budget because 66 youth were recruited to be peer helpers rather than the budgeted 72 participants.

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### Page 4: Success Stories

**Q15** Please relate a success story:

The 2017/18 school year at Westinghouse culminated with the Peer Helpers planning a celebration at the school to acknowledge and celebrate Black girls. The Peer Helpers worked together sharing thoughts, feelings, ideas and insights to plan the inaugural S.E.L.F.I.E. Party (with S.E.L.F.I.E. standing for smart, empowering, loving females who are independent and excellent). This event created a positive, affirming space to uplift Black girls and provided tools for caring for, advocating for, and loving themselves. On the day of celebration, several workshops were offered to 50 female students in the school that focused on areas such as self-care, self-advocacy, sexual health, etiquette, and self-expression. Seven of the Peer helpers took leadership roles within the small group workshops.

The grant from S.L. Gimbel, because of the additional resources available to staff to use at this school, made it possible to bring quality programming to the girls. The keynote speaker and Westinghouse High School graduate, Clarisse Jordan, discussed her struggles living with HIV. One workshop that was a highlight for the girls was the self-care session with Felicia Savage Freeman who shared her yoga practice, as well as some ways to use meditations and aromatherapy as means of self-care. After a day of engaging workshops, the girls got a chance to process over a delicious meal catered by local restaurant. Representatives from several community organizations shared resources with the girls including the Carnegie Library, Sisterhood (a violence prevention intervention research group), Healthy Ride (Pittsburgh's bike share program), and PERSAD (a human service organization whose mission is to improve the well-being of the LGBTQ communities, and the HIV/AIDS communities.).

In the coming year, PPWP will build on the successes of the S.E.L.F.I.E. party to further engage Westinghouse Peer Helpers in project based learning and provide more leadership opportunities to deepen their understanding of human sexuality and facilitate achievement of the program goals.

**Q16** Please relate a success story here: **Respondent skipped this question**

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**Q17** Please relate a success story here: **Respondent skipped this question**

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Page 5: Organizational Information

**Q18** Which category best describes the organization. Please choose only one. **Medical/Health/Public Agency**

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**Q19** What is the organization's primary program area of interest? **Health & Human Services**

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**Q20** Percentage of clients served through grant in each ethnic group category. Total must equal 100%  
 African American **100**

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**Q21** Approximate percentage of clients served from grant funds in each age category.  
 Children ages 06-12 years of age **10**  
 Youth ages 13-18 **90**

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**Q22** Approximate percentage of clients served with disabilities from grant funds. **Respondent skipped this question**

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**Q23** Approximate percentage of clients served in each economic group. **Respondent skipped this question**

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**Q24** Approximate percentage of clients served from grant funds in each population category.  
 Students **100**  
 Children/Youth (those not included in Family) **100**

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