

Youth Violence Prevention Initiative



Communities: Key Peninsula (2014-20), Federal Way, Des Moines, Parkland & Kitsap County

Violence Prevention at VMFH

For the last 10 years, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health (VMFH) has received funding from CommonSpirit Health to create and grow a violence prevention initiative. VMFH uses a public health model to create sustainable, measurable violence prevention strategies. Our current work includes increasing middle school attendance in Des Moines, expanding youth violence prevention programming in Parkland, leading community violence prevention coalitions in Federal Way and Des Moines, and Human Trafficking prevention in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties.

VMFH Prevention Philosophy

- Work with or create a violence prevention coalition of stakeholders tailored for each community.
- Focus on sustainable efforts implemented through community partners.
- Work to reduce risk factors associated with youth violence and increase protective factors.
- Connect neighborhood and school efforts to keep youth safe and out of trouble.
- Support a mix of primary prevention and secondary prevention activities.

Major Accomplishments

- Pursued outside funding to build a soccer field behind the Westway Community Center. The Federal Way Boys & Girls Club started a free soccer league for elementary students. Free soccer leagues have now been offered to Westway youth for 6 years.
- Worked with Federal Way Public Schools staff and community partners on creating and implementing several truancy prevention programs, including a public campaign to spread the message that “Every Day Counts”.
- Supported Federal Way Public School efforts to revamp their school discipline practices through training for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Race & Equity student summits and a Restorative Practices pilot program.
- Worked to spread Adverse Childhood Experience trainings, Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings, Human Trafficking Prevention, Restorative Practices, Suicide Prevention, and other valuable knowledge to youth-serving providers in all of our partner communities.
- Worked with Seattle Children’s to bring a safe gun storage event to Federal Way. 400 safe storage devices were given away to community members.
- VMFH was a founding member of the Federal Way Youth Action Team, which works to create new programs to keep Federal Way youth out of the juvenile justice system.
- Partnered with the Gig Harbor Key Peninsula Suicide Prevention Coalition on the “Take a Minute, Save a Life” awareness event.
- The Violence Prevention Coordinator chaired a coalition, created by the mayor and city council of Federal Way, to prevent future violence. The coalition created 10 policy recommendations that were adopted by the city. Two of those recommendations received State funding for implementation.

- The Reach Out Des Moines coalition has supported the creation of 6 new after school programs at Pacific Middle School and held yearly National Night Out events in the Pacific Ridge neighborhood.
- Reach Out Des Moines created several community gardens, including a garden at Midway Park that brings residents together. Part of this project included having middle school students construct a Farm Bot that is installed at the Midway garden.
- The Peninsula Violence Prevention Coalition has focused on holding training around resilience for area providers and increasing access to after school programs on the Key Peninsula. VMFH helped the Red Barn Teen Center open earlier than anticipated. The Red Barn is the only teen center on the Key Peninsula.
- The Peninsula Violence Prevention coalition worked with Oasis Youth Center to start a satellite program on the Key Peninsula to support LGBTQ youth. The coalition also worked to ensure secure transportation is available to and from the program.

Impact from Mini-Grants Awarded

As part of the VMFH Violence Prevention grant, VMFH has \$40,000 annually to give to worthy violence prevention partners. Grants could be from \$500-\$10,000 and needed to be a new or expanded program, have a clear sustainability plan, and connect with our violence prevention goals. This is a selection of some grants awarded over the last 6 years.

- Youth Experiential Training Institute (Y.E.T.I.) – After School Recreational Program at Pacific Middle School
- Federal Way High School – Attendance Counts Incentives, a program to count and incentivize student attendance during the pandemic
- Washington Traffic Prevention – Youth Prevention Education Program in Parkland, educating parents, the community and youth on safety, social-emotional tools, and support systems
- Adverse Childhood Experience Training for Federal Way Public Schools AmeriCorps, FWPS Early Learning Staff, Enumclaw School District, Communities In Schools Peninsula
- Federal Way Public Schools – FRED, a summer lunch and enrichment program that included Westway and Camelot Square
- Valley Cities Counseling – Real Talk for Teens program at Saghalie Middle School
- Kilo & Saghalie Middle Schools – Purchase and implementation of 2nd Step curriculum, and Student Race and Equity Summit
- Pierce County’s sexual assault and sex trafficking program to offer onsite, 24/7 medical advocacy to all victim-survivors of non-fatal strangulation. This funding also made it possible for St. Francis, a King County hospital, to gain access to these services.
- Federal Way Public Schools – Restorative Practices training for staff and students
- Des Moines Legacy Foundation – Summer recreation and feeding program at Midway Park
- Pierce County’s Family Justice Center - Non-fatal strangulation kits that will be used by Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) for forensic evidence collection.
- Helping Youth Perform Excellence (HYPE) – Family engagement and training
- Midway Elementary – ACE Academy After School Program
- King County Library System Foundation – Summer Day Camp in Federal Way

- Federal Way Public Schools – Gang Prevention Training & Motivational Interviewing

Quotes from Community Partners

- *“To say that having outside community-based support is valuable is a gross understatement. Honestly, it’s a lifeline that allows us to reach beyond the everyday demands of running a school.”
Margaret Peterson, Principal, Kilo Middle School*
- *“Our office discipline referrals are down and we have had very few students suspended this school year. I am confident this is the result of the partnerships we’ve been able to form whom all have had a common focus on the Key Peninsula.” Andrea Bowman, Assistant Principal, Key Peninsula Middle School*

For more information on the VMFH Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, contact:

Brenda Mbaabu, Violence Prevention Coordinator, Brenda.Mbaabu@vmfh.org.