

Media Advisory

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DPS students to participate in first-ever virtual Peer Mediation Summit with New York City students

Partnership with Children, a New York-based, not-for-profit agency, will be facilitating a first-ever virtual Peer Mediation Summit via Skype on Wednesday, May 25 with students at Golightly Career and Technical Center and the students at Global High School in New York City.

The non-profit has been working with six Detroit schools to bring its extensive experience in the area of social and emotional learning to nearly 100 inner-city Detroit students, including leveraging the free video conferencing technology, Skype, to train and monitor teachers in collaboration with Partnership with Children's Center for Capacity Building.

The summit will be the first such event at which students from different schools served by Partnership with Children will have the opportunity to communicate directly with each other about the issues children everywhere address through Partnership with Children's group counseling programs.

When and Where:

1:15 p.m., May 25

Golightly Career and Technical Center

900 Dickerson Avenue, Detroit and

Partnership for Children Offices

299 Broadway, New York

The event will include a Q&A where Detroit and New York City Public School students will have an opportunity to ask brief questions about each other's experience with peer mediation, schools and cities. Students will also participate in "*Peer Mediation Jeopardy: Detroit vs. New York City*" and then engage in a "*Peace Pact*" to discuss how they are going to use Peer Mediation in their everyday lives.



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The program is part of the DPS Conflict Resolution Initiative, a \$2.5 million program aimed at equipping students, teachers, principals and parents with the skills needed to resolve school-based conflicts, increase tolerance and ward off behaviors that can lead to bullying. Every school in the district is being paired with a partner company that will work alongside school staff to implement the initiative, which is being funded through Title I, Title IV and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

In the first phase of the Partnership with Children's Center for Capacity Building training, two to three selected staff members learn the organization's methods for facilitating student-led peer mediation which involves students listening to one another's perspective and making mutual agreements to end conflict. In the second phase these staff members train groups of students to mediate non-violent conflict between their peers. In the third and final stage, the trained staff members oversee student peer mediators as they bring together their peers to resolve non-violent conflicts.

"Our peer mediation training in Detroit schools will help children and youth acquire tools to cope with negativity in their lives, to take ownership of their behavior, and will create safer, more positive school environments," said Carolyn Parker, director of the Partnership with Children's Center for Capacity Building.

To reach a greater number of students throughout the country, Partnership with Children introduced the Center for Capacity Building to provide professional development, as well as a replication model of the Open Heart-Open Mind program – the agency's school-based program for at-risk children and adolescents through individual and group counseling.

The presence in Detroit represents the first replication of Open Heart-Open Mind outside the New York City metropolitan area. Partnership with Children has successfully tailored the model to meet the Detroit's specific educational needs including adjusting the model for its work in a special needs school, demonstrating Open Heart-Open Mind's flexibility. The agency's programs in New York City have had a proven positive impact on attendance, social and emotional skills, support for parents, more effectively managed classroom behavior and the development of stronger communities more conducive to learning.

Partnership with Children, Inc., founded in 1908 as Big Sisters, is a not-for-profit organization with a mission is to strengthen the emotional, social and cognitive skills of at-risk children and youth so they can succeed in school, in society and in their lives. The organization, which is reaching over 10,000 students in 23 schools in New York City, provides early intervention, preventative services and counseling to at-risk children and youth. Its teams of professional social workers integrate themselves seamlessly into school communities to provide comprehensive support, including bullying and harassment prevention, to those children and families who need it most.

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