

## CONNECT

**Issue No.11**

"We have a **powerful potential** in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends."

Mary McLeod Bethune

### In School....Again?

Yes! As fall deepens and regular school sessions have begun, we wish that you could see **CONNECT** staffers Sharene Roig, Marlon Walker and Quentin Walcott (Q) as they return to school, too.

**Look** at what's unique about this program, **see** why we've been invited back for a third year, **and tell us what you think** about this program to develop that **powerful potential**.



250 students at 5 mini-high schools at Walton Educational Campus in the Bronx (pictured) will be guided in sharing their experiences and struggles as they transition from young adults into adulthood. Teaming with Joseph Maldonado and Reshmi Nair from the Committee for Hispanic Families and Children, **CONNECT** will help them explore how to **navigate** their lives, **develop** as critical thinkers and leaders, and **make healthier decisions**.

### What is Asked of the Students? Critical Thought.

Each group will critically examine the cultural and historical belief systems and gender socializations that can lead to family, domestic, teen dating, gang and gender and sexual violence. The groups will be taught with a race, class, and gender analysis. Q says: "We try to be as creative and as engaging as possible and so far it's been very successful. In the past, we've also brought in local and international artists to express their craft and talk about their own experiences growing up." All will investigate the root causes that lead to teen dating violence and other forms of youth and community violence.

Gender matters! Young men and women experience violence in very different and particular ways. To create the kind of safe space that makes honest and open discussion possible, young men's and young women's groups meet separately.

### What Can Students Discuss? They Choose.

**Both groups** choose what to discuss: we just add the violence prevention

### Powerful Potential

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### Mission

**CONNECT** is dedicated to preventing interpersonal violence and promoting gender justice. By building partnerships with individuals and communities, we strive to help change the beliefs, behaviors and institutions that perpetuate violence. Through legal empowerment, grassroots mobilization and transformative education, we seek to create safe families and peaceful communities.

### Donate

Click here to donate or send a check or money order.

### Contact Us

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Helpline offers assistance in English and Spanish  
Monday-Friday, 9am - 5pm

For 24 Hour Assistance,  
Please call 1-800-621-HOPE  
(4673)

### Stay CONNECTed



framework. Many students are recent immigrants grappling not only with these issues but also with the immigrant experience, which complicates their lives as they negotiate a new school, new country, and new social issues.

**Male students** will explore how young men who are disenfranchised in society maintain their own power, male privilege, and entitlement within their intimate and communal relationships. Importantly, the project will provide a space for them to have age-specific conversations about manhood, male socialization, male accountability, gender equality, healthy and unhealthy dating relationships, sibling, and peer relationships. In years past, male students have chosen to discuss witnessing domestic violence, teen relationship violence, dating violence, gang violence, self-esteem, sex and sexuality, parenting, socialization, and healthy relationships. This allows them to share their experiences and examine negative social norms associated with violence.

In their own age-specific conversations, **female students** will analyze their needs, their experiences with each other and with young men, and the often traumatic experiences young women face moving into adulthood. Young women also face unique issues with advances in technology: cyber stalking and sexting. In years past, female students, working with facilitator DeShannon Bowens, have chosen to discuss their personal experiences of negotiating the realities of the multiple worlds they inhabit. Many experienced violence at home as witnesses at the same time that they were moving into the world of dating and relationships. This project allows them to share their experiences, critically examine society's conflicting messages about being a woman and find creative and empowering ways to stay healthy and whole.

#### **In for the Long Haul? Definitely!**

Our goal is to keep the same students during their four years in the school, and also to stay in touch with those who graduate. **Please stay with them - and with us - and share your thoughts about this program as a preventive measure to violence. Email [connect@connectnyc.org](mailto:connect@connectnyc.org) re: Powerful Potential.**