

Youth Violence Prevention: Dissemination of Evidence-Based Research Findings in a Community Setting

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ABSTRACT

In order to create healthy behavior change within communities, research translation and dissemination is an essential component of public health research. However, research findings are not always readily available to and/or translated in manners that match the health literacy levels of communities. This limits the community's ability to implement recommended practices based on evidence-based research studies. Therefore, there is a need for public health researchers to include communities in their dissemination efforts. The Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center (PCVPC), funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), used a four-phase approach to develop communication strategies and tools to actively disseminate evidence-based research findings on youth violence prevention in the West and Southwest Philadelphia communities. Through the development of these communication strategies and tools, PCVPC aimed to engage and inform multiple community audiences (e.g. youth, parents, educators, caregivers, and community leaders), and increase awareness about youth violence prevention research efforts.

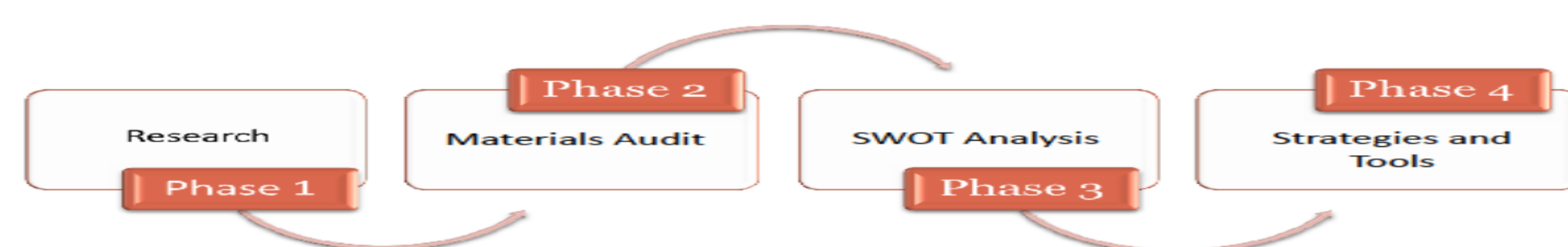
BACKGROUND

- Youth violence is the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 to 24.
- Youth violence has serious economic, personal, and social consequences for individuals, families, and communities.
- In Philadelphia, 179 youth between the ages of 7 to 24 were victims of homicide in 2006.

APPROACH

A four-phase process was used to develop health communication strategies and tools to disseminate research findings to target audiences in the West and Southwest Philadelphia communities. Through these strategies and tools, PCVPC aimed to:

- Increase visibility in the targeted communities to generate awareness and engage audiences about youth violence prevention research activities and initiatives;
- Strengthen the capacities of the communities to influence, increase, and support behavior change; and
- Increase bi-directional communication between PCVPC and the community.



PCVPC DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES & TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

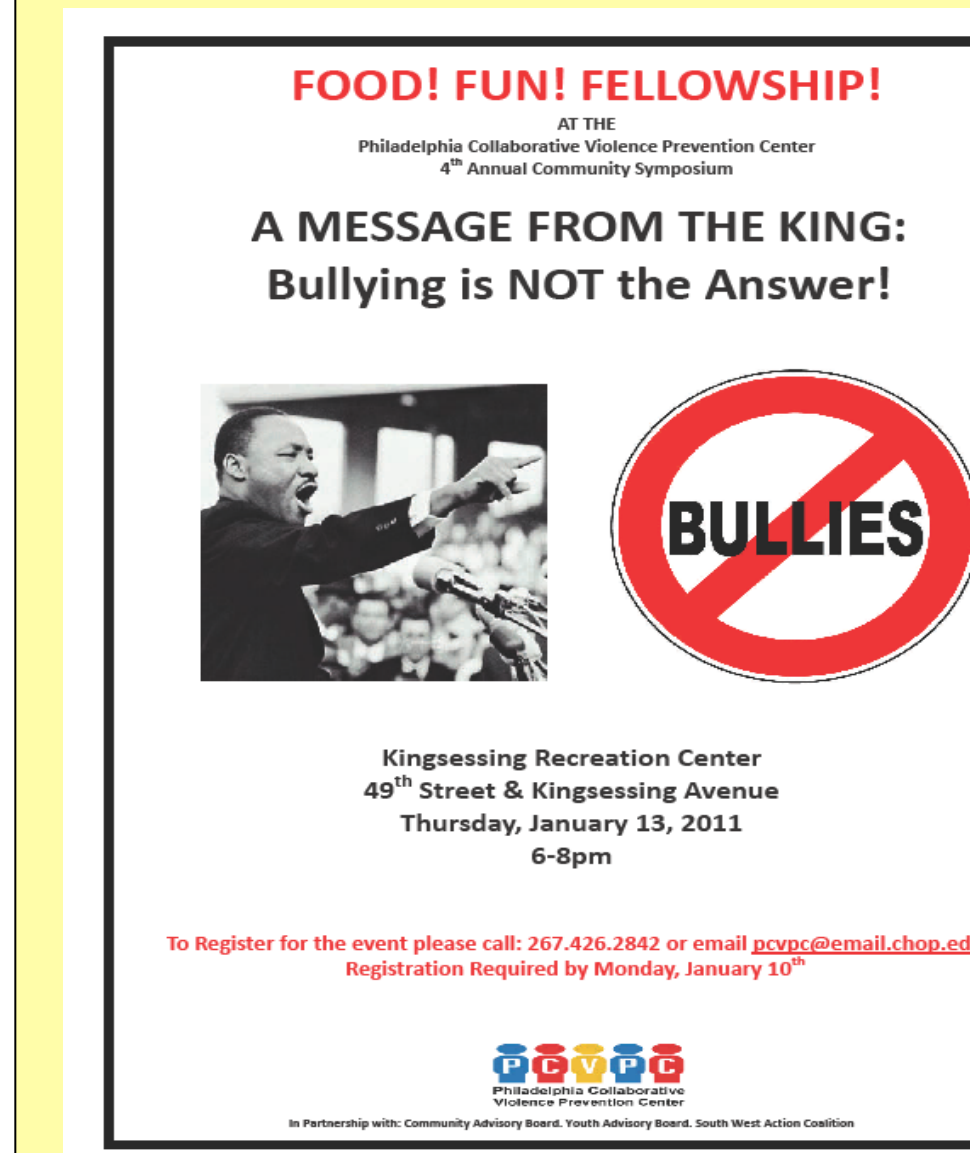
BRAND DEVELOPMENT

A well-recognized, positively associated brand can promote an organization's efforts by building a relationship with their specified audience(s). The main characters from the animated video series, Briana and Damon, were used to represent PCVPC in the community. Both characters were part of a mass media campaign displayed on the public transit system and placed on materials developed for communities.



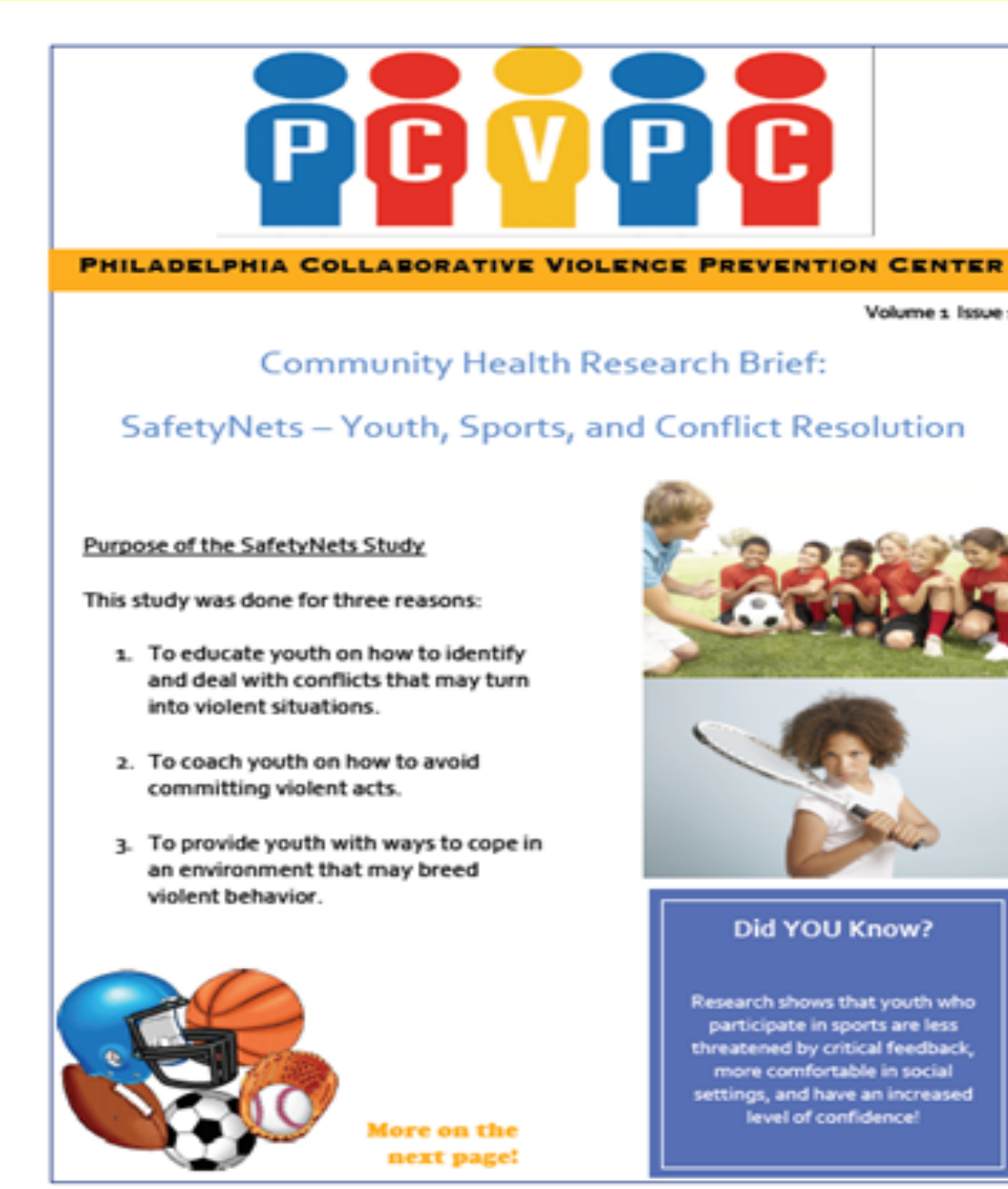
BRAND POSITIONING AND MESSAGING

Brand positioning can assist with establishing and enhancing the presence of an organization within a community setting. The PCVPC tagline aimed to strengthen their identity in the community as a research organization with a strong focus on building community capacity to create sustainable change. Additionally, key messages were created and promoted on materials disseminated to the community.



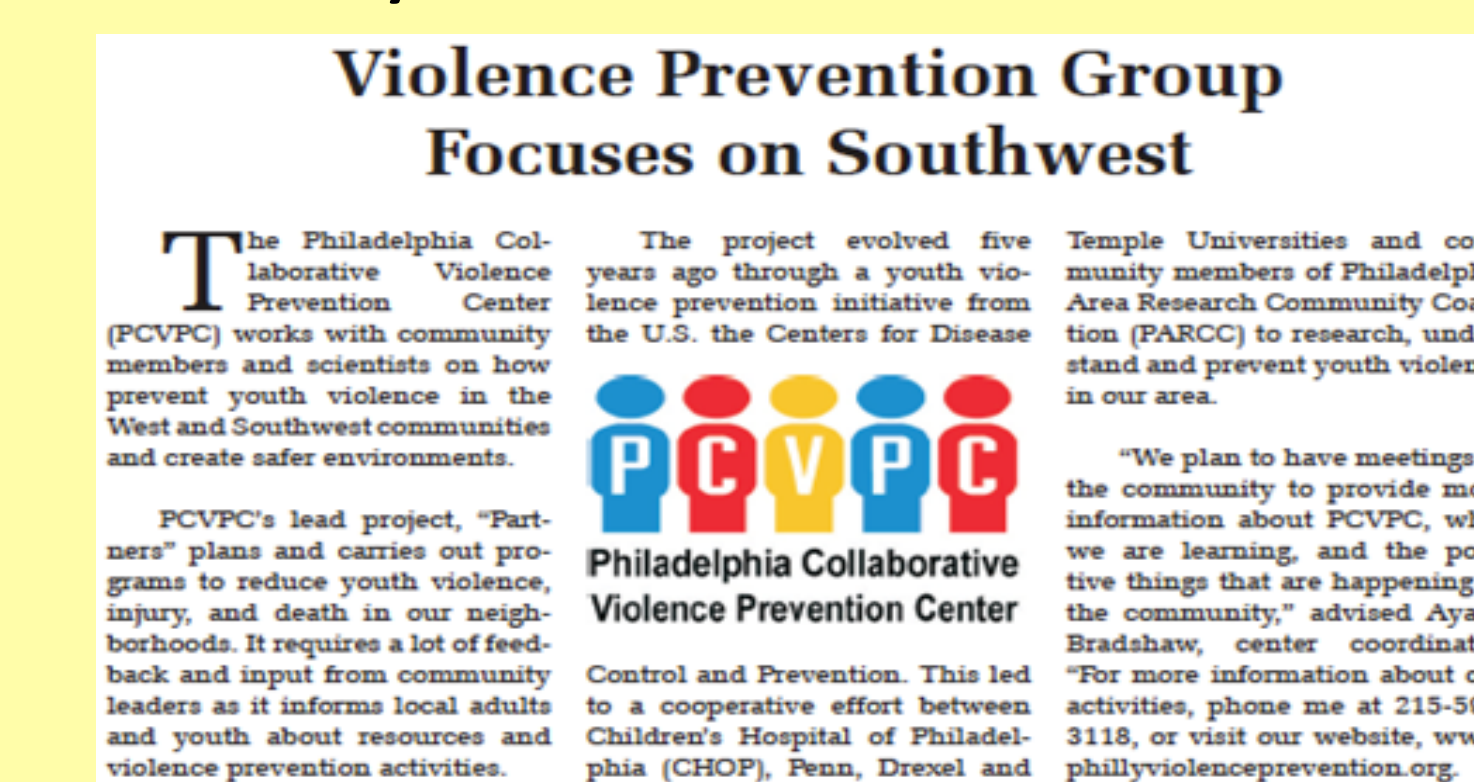
COMMUNITY RESEARCH BRIEFS (CRBs)

The CRBs were developed to inform communities about existing and previous research projects. CRBs provided a synthesized summary of research projects and findings, and highlighted tips to encourage participation in healthy behaviors for adults, youth, and service providers. CRBs were distributed in community recreation centers, at community events, and placed on the PCVPC website.



TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Articles written by PCVPC staff was published as features in the community newspaper. These articles covered topics associated with youth violence such as bullying and environmental health. A total of 7,000 copies were distributed bi-weekly across 6 communities.



SOCIAL MEDIA



With the increasing use of social media platforms, a community page was created on Facebook. This page featured youth violence prevention health messages, and information about PCVPC's research and community-based initiatives.

DISCUSSION

In order to effectively create behavior change at the community level, health researchers need to include communities as a primary audience of receiving evidence-based research information. Research information must be communicated and disseminated in manners that will not only inform but will also engage communities. Through the use of communication strategies and tools, PCVPC actively disseminated health messages and research information to multiple audiences in the West and Southwest Philadelphia communities.