

Beloved Community: Next Level

California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CaVIP) Program Final Local Evaluation Report

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APPENDIX Logic Model

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of Project

Beloved Community: Next Level (“Beloved Community”) operated from May 2018 through April 2020 and was funded by the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant program. The City of Richmond Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) was the lead agency for Beloved Community and worked in partnership with two community-based organizations located in Richmond, the RYSE Center (RYSE) and Richmond Police Activities League (RPAL), to implement the project.

The purpose of Beloved Community was to provide evidence-based prevention and intervention services and supports to young people ages 13 to 26 in the Richmond community who were involved or at risk of involvement in violence. Services included street outreach, cognitive behavioral therapy, mentoring, life skills training, case management, and subsidized employment. They centered the priorities, needs, and interests of young people disproportionately affected by violence, trauma, and stress, including systems harm and distress.

The project sought to decrease youth involvement in violence, including gun violence, while helping young people to develop positive relationships with empathic adults, gain additional techniques to resolve conflict, begin to address underlying trauma that may contribute to engagement in violence, and participate in constructive activities such as recreation, community service, and education and career supports. The project planned to serve a minimum of 145 youth during the grant period, with 85 participants entering the program through ONS and 60 through RYSE. Beloved Community also aimed to support and strengthen a shared commitment among partners to implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches.

Evaluation Methods

ONS contracted with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), a nonprofit research organization, to evaluate Beloved Community. The evaluation examined both processes and outcomes and used a non-experimental, mixed-methods research design. Data collection methods included conducting surveys and interviews with program staff and participants and obtaining administrative data and secondary materials. The evaluation explored four primary research questions: (1) What interventions were offered? (2) Who participated in interventions? (3) What was the impact of interventions? (4) How did partners strengthen their commitment to implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches?

Findings

The evaluation data show that project partners exceeded the number of young people they intended to serve through their organization's interventions. In all, ONS served 249 youth, RPAL served 365, and RYSE served 319. Survey and interview findings indicate that project participants met the project's stated objectives of young people developing positive relationships with empathic adults, gaining additional tools to negotiate conflict and avoid violence, addressing underlying trauma, and engaging in constructive peer activities. For example, large percentages of survey respondents across interventions agreed that program staff always tried to be fair, really cared about them, and were a resource to talk to about what was going on in their lives. Outcomes specific to participants in ONS's Operation Peacemaker Fellowship showed that during the grant period, all fellows remained alive; and most were not injured or hospitalized due to gun violence or arrested on gun-related charges. In addition, through attending, facilitating, and/or presenting at a wide range of events such as conferences, trainings, convenings, and site visits, project partners deepened their commitment to implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches.

These findings help to inform and contextualize community-level data that show an overall decline in gun violence in Richmond. Shootings that resulted in an injury or death decreased during the grant period, continuing a downward trend seen under the previous California Gang Violence Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIP) project led by ONS. Between 2015 and 2019, Richmond had a 51% reduction in firearm assaults that caused injury and a 17% decrease in shootings that resulted in homicide. Homicides that the Richmond Police Department considered to fall into ONS's focus area dropped 22% from 2015 to 2019. In addition, ONS outreach staff prevented at least 16 firearm incidents in 2019, averting events that were expected to result in injury or death. While some methodological challenges are associated with measuring community-level outcomes, the data show that gun violence decreased during the grant period, with these reductions occurring in the context of Beloved Community's implementation and continuing the gains experienced during the previous CalGRIP project.

Challenges

The project experienced few challenges in implementation. The primary challenge had to do with the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged near the close of the grant period. After Contra Costa County issued its first stay-at-home order in mid-March 2020, all project partners transitioned their programming, to the extent possible, to online platforms. Some work, including street outreach and hospital-based programming, continued in person when feasible, with staff following guidelines for physical distancing and personal protective equipment. In addition to the challenges posed by the pandemic, project staff described an ongoing need to focus on transforming systems that negatively affect young people.

Unintended Outcomes

The project produced two unintended outcomes, both positive. The first grew out of ONS's collaboration with several high schools in support of project participants' school engagement. This increased contact provided ONS greater access to various schools, which subsequently helped them to partner in new ways with the schools. The second unplanned outcome emerged during the pandemic. Using telehealth services, RYSE was able to expand their services and support for young people who have various disabilities. For example, young people who experience depression and pain and may have difficulty attending a regular in-person therapy appointment had the option during the pandemic to consistently meet with a therapist by phone or video. This increase in virtual services will help inform the availability of telehealth services as an option for service provision once RYSE reopens for onsite programming.

Lessons Learned

Regarding lessons learned, project partners continuously expressed a need for ongoing system change and transformation. This need was present throughout the grant period and came into even sharper focus when the pandemic began.

Conclusion

The evaluation findings indicate that Beloved Community worked as intended and as described in the grant proposal. The project partners collaborated to provide evidence-based prevention and intervention services and supports to young people in West Contra Costa affected by violence and engaged more youth than originally planned.

While it is challenging to separate the project's impacts from other violence reduction strategies occurring simultaneously in Richmond/West Contra Costa (as well as other factors that could impact changes in gun violence), the evaluation indicates that Beloved Community had positive outcomes at both the individual and community levels. The findings also suggest that consistent and authentic engagement through strategies including mentoring and counseling can appropriately support young people who are disproportionately affected by violence, trauma, and stress. In addition, while this project did not specifically seek to reduce recidivism, the finding that most ONS fellows were not arrested on gun violence-related charges during the grant period may have implications for interventions that focus on decreasing recidivism.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview of Beloved Community Project

The Beloved Community: Next Level (“Beloved Community”) project operated from May 2018 through April 2020 and was funded by the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant program. Administered by the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), CalVIP funding was allocated through a competitive application process to support communities’ evidence-based violence prevention and intervention efforts. CalVIP replaced the California Gang Violence Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIP) grant program.

The City of Richmond’s Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) was the lead agency for Beloved Community and partnered with two community-based organizations located in Richmond, the RYSE Center (RYSE) and Richmond Police Activities League (RPAL), to implement the project. ONS contracted with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), a nonprofit research organization, to evaluate Beloved Community. NCCD prepared an interim local evaluation report for this project in July 2019. The current report is the final local evaluation report for Beloved Community.

B. Beloved Community’s Purpose and Goals

The purpose of Beloved Community was to provide evidence-based prevention and intervention services and support to young people ages 13 to 26 in the Richmond community (including Richmond, El Cerrito, San Pablo, and unincorporated North Richmond) who were involved or at risk of involvement in violence. The project sought to decrease youth involvement

in violence, including gun violence, while helping young people to develop positive relationships with empathic adults; gain additional techniques to resolve conflict; begin to address the underlying trauma that may contribute to engagement in violence; and participate in constructive activities such as recreation, community service, and education and career supports. The project's primary services included street outreach, cognitive behavioral therapy, mentoring, life skills training, case management, and subsidized employment. It centered the priorities, needs, and interests of young people disproportionately impacted by violence, trauma, and stress, including systems harm and distress. In addition to individual-level goals and objectives, Beloved Community also aimed to support and strengthen a shared commitment among partners to implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches.

The project's goals and objectives, as stated in ONS's CalVIP grant proposal, were as follows.

- Goal 1: Reduced participation in violence/gun violence by West Contra Costa youth.
 - » *Objective 1.1*: By program end, participants develop positive relationships with empathic adults.
 - » *Objective 1.2*: At program completion, youth will have additional tools to negotiate conflict and avoid violence.
 - » *Objective 1.3*: By program completion, youth have begun to address the underlying trauma that contributes to engagement in violence.
- Goal 2: Youth in West Contra Costa engage in positive activities that give them the opportunity to become productive members of society.
 - » *Objective 2.1*: By program end, participants have engaged in constructive peer activities (such as recreation and community service) as an alternative to violence.

- » *Objective 2.2:* By program end, youth participate in education and career supports.
- » *Objective 2.3:* By program end, youth have identified plans for future goals such as housing, education, and employment.
- Goal 3: Shared commitment among partners to trauma-informed/healing-centered approach/system.
 - » *Objective 3.1:* Partner staff are trained in trauma-informed/healing-centered services.
 - » *Objective 3.2:* Partner staff implement trauma-informed/healing-centered practices.

C. Identification of Project Participants

The project planned to serve a minimum of 145 youth who entered the program through ONS and RYSE. This included a goal of recruiting 85 participants through ONS staff’s street outreach activities and an additional 60 participants through RYSE, via referrals from three sources: the RYSE Restorative Pathways Project, which provides intensive case management and mentoring for youth admitted to local hospitals for crime-related injuries; RYSE’s Youth Justice Initiative providing transition services for youth; and local school districts. RPAL would provide services to participants who entered the program through either partner and to other young people interested in pursuing recreational activities.

D. Grant Partners

ONS, a non-law enforcement agency and the lead agency for Beloved Community, was established in 2007 in response to escalating gun violence and homicides in Richmond. While originally based in the city manager’s office, ONS has operated as its own city department for

several years. ONS seeks to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, gun violence and associated homicides in Richmond. This approach is informed by evidence-based practices, including Cure Violence (Picard-Fritsche, 2013; Webster et al., 2012); combines individual and community outreach; and considers violence prevention a public health issue. Each year, ONS works with approximately 150 to 200 male youth identified as being at high risk for involvement in gun violence in Richmond, employing such strategies as street outreach and the Operation Peacemaker Fellowship (Fellowship).

ONS collaborated with two primary partners for the project: RYSE and RPAL. These organizations have extensive experience—including working with ONS on many previous projects and initiatives—with developing, implementing, and sustaining collaborative efforts to meet the needs of young people.

RYSE was established in 2008 as part of a youth organizing movement in response to a series of homicides near Richmond High School. RYSE is grounded in the belief that young people have the lived knowledge and expertise to identify, prioritize, and direct activities and services that benefit their well-being. RYSE offers programming in areas such as education and justice; youth organizing; community health; and media, arts, and culture.

Founded in 1982, RPAL takes a holistic approach to supporting young people on their path to adulthood. RPAL programming includes academic assistance, computer and media technology classes, sports and recreation, mentorship, and community service opportunities. Activities also include field trips to sporting events, college campuses, and museums.

II. EVALUATION METHODS

NCCD collaborated with project partners to develop and implement data collection processes and tools for the evaluation. This approach included drawing on data that partners were already collecting for other purposes, when appropriate, thus minimizing the data collection burden on evaluation participants. It also involved modifying methods and tools if needed during the evaluation implementation.

A. Research Design

The evaluation included a process evaluation and outcome evaluation and used a non-experimental, mixed-methods research design.¹ This design allowed for collecting a range of quantitative and qualitative data at various times that offer insight about program implementation and outcomes. To understand and document project implementation, the process evaluation focused on collecting process measures and conducting interviews with program staff and participants. To examine whether the program met the goals described in the grant proposal, the outcome evaluation used program outcome data, participant self-report surveys, and interviews with program staff and participants. Secondary data, including quarterly progress reports submitted to the BSCC, helped to inform both evaluation components.

The evaluation explored four primary research questions: (1) What interventions were offered? (2) Who participated in interventions? (3) What was the impact of interventions?

¹ Research design selection was informed by the resources available for evaluation as well as the program's design and target population. Because the program did not use a waiting list and because of a lack of other appropriate programs in the community to serve the project's target population, no comparison group was available with which to conduct a quasi-experimental study.

(4) How did partners strengthen their commitment to implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches?

B. Data Collection and Analysis

Primary and secondary data sources included the following.

- Administrative data collected from partners such as number of participants served and number of trainings attended. These data also include program-specific outcome information. For example, ONS staff provided data on several outcomes for the Fellowship, as of the close of the grant period: number of fellows who were alive, number who were arrested on gun-violence related charges, and number who were injured or hospitalized due to gun violence.
- Quantitative surveys with participants. To collect information about participants' experiences with and impressions of Beloved Community programming and staff, the evaluation drew on a range of survey data. NCCD and the partners developed a pre/post survey for Fellowship participants that was administered after program enrollment and prior to program exit. NCCD and the partners also developed a survey for youth who participated in RPAL's life skills/late-night basketball programming; while this survey was administered twice during the grant period, in the summer of 2019 and the winter of 2020, it was not designed to be a pre/post instrument.² RYSE's annual member survey includes items relevant to this evaluation; NCCD received aggregate survey data from 2018 and 2019. RYSE also shared program impact survey data from participants in its RYSE Restorative Pathways Project. All surveys measured participants' attitudes in such areas as development of healthy relationships and accessing mental health resources. Survey item wording may vary by partner based on staff input on what would resonate with participants.
- Qualitative interviews with staff and participants. NCCD staff conducted individual qualitative interviews with four staff from project partners. Staff interviews focused on how the project was being implemented, what was working well, suggestions for improvement, and lessons learned. The evaluation also included qualitative interviews with 12 young people participating in Beloved Community programming. Topics included attitudes about and impacts of programming, experiences with program staff, and suggestions for improvement.

² The sample size for the winter 2020 RPAL survey was considerably smaller than for the summer 2019 survey due to there being fewer participants during the second survey administration.

- Observation and participation in monthly project meetings. Throughout the grant period, NCCD attended monthly ONS-facilitated project meetings that brought partners together to discuss progress, challenges, questions, and contextual factors related to real-time implementation of the initiative and evaluation.
- Secondary data, including quarterly progress reports submitted to the BSCC, program documents, and other materials that project partners shared with NCCD.

NCCD staff analyzed quantitative data (such as survey data and program outcomes) using descriptive statistics. NCCD staff analyzed information from interviews with a qualitative approach to identify, understand, and contextualize themes that emerged from the data.

C. Outcome Measures

Table 1 lists the outcome measure categories and variables used to gauge project impact. The results for these variables appear in Section III, Findings/Results, and are augmented by qualitative data.

Table 1		
Outcome Measures		
Category	Variable	Data Sources
Developing positive relationships with empathic adults	Survey Questions	ONS fellows survey, RPAL life skills/late-night basketball survey, RYSE member survey
	Program staff always try to be fair	
	Program staff acknowledge my behavior, whether it's good or bad	
	Program staff talk with me about what's going on in life, whether it's something good or bad	
	Program staff show they care about me	
	I feel safe and comfortable with program staff	

Table 1		
Outcome Measures		
Category	Variable	Data Sources
Gaining tools to negotiate conflict and avoid violence	Survey Questions: Program Participation Has Helped Me . . .	ONS fellows survey, Fellowship administrative data
	Learn strategies and methods for conflict negotiation, conflict de-escalation, and conflict resolution	
	Increase my ability to solve problems on my own	
	Fellowship Administrative Data	
	Number/percent of fellows who are alive	
	Number/percent of fellows who were not arrested on gun-violence related charges	
	Number/percent of fellows who were not injured or hospitalized due to gun violence	
	Number/percent of fellows who completed the Fellowship	
Addressing underlying trauma	Survey Questions: Program Participation Has Helped Me . . .	ONS fellows survey, RPAL life skills/late-night basketball survey, RYSE member survey, RYSE impact survey
	Pay attention to my emotions and feelings	
	Feel it is okay and beneficial to be in programs or services that support my mental health	
	Acknowledge my weaknesses and deal with my trauma	
	Make myself more vulnerable and confront pain head on	
	Express my needs, concerns, fears, goals, and aspirations	
Engaging in constructive activities	Survey Questions: Program Participation Has Helped Me . . .	ONS fellows survey, RPAL life skills/late-night basketball survey
	Think more about my future	
	Understand the importance of legitimate employment	
	Understand the importance of education	

III. FINDINGS/RESULTS

A. What Interventions Were Provided?

During the grant period, Beloved Community partners provided several complementary interventions for the target population. Services were implemented as expected and adjusted if the need emerged. While partner organizations also provided other services in addition to those described in this report, the services highlighted here were those supported by the CalVIP grant.

1. ONS Services

ONS provided two primary interventions during the grant period: street outreach and the Fellowship.

a. *Street Outreach*

Neighborhood change agents (NCAs) implemented the ONS street outreach strategy, engaging daily with youth and young adults who ONS believes have a high likelihood of involvement in gun violence in the Richmond community. NCAs focused on building trust with community members, mediating conflict among young people to prevent and reduce gun violence, providing life skills information about healthy lifestyle choices, and referring young people to other services. The street outreach strategy also involved providing street-level conflict mediation, supporting community members if gun violence occurred, and offering resources to interrupt potential retaliation efforts. NCAs built trusting relationships with community members, which allowed ONS to consistently gather, assess, and act on critical information regarding the potential for community violence. These efforts led to NCAs making

more than 10,600 street outreach contacts during the grant period. “We’re constantly getting in between situations where we think there is going to be gun violence,” reported an ONS staff member.

b. Operation Peacemaker Fellowship

ONS also implemented the Fellowship during the grant period. A non-mandated intensive mentoring intervention for youth identified as those individuals most likely to be involved in gun violence in Richmond, the Fellowship consists of several components designed to provide fellows with tools, skills, and resources to lead healthy, productive lives.

Fellowship programming and services focused on providing intensive mentoring, including daily contact with ONS staff; developing a goal plan (called a life map); case management with social services navigation support and referrals; training in life skills, anger management, and conflict resolution; and subsidized work opportunities and other employment support. In addition, staff worked closely with school-age participants to ensure that they consistently attended school and were on track to graduate. This included collaborating with several high schools to provide targeted educational assistance in an effort to support fellows’ school engagement. ONS staff noted that an unintended positive outcome of the project was an increase in contact with local schools. This provided ONS greater access to various schools, helping them to partner with the schools in new ways.

Fellows also participated in numerous peacebuilding excursions in the San Francisco Bay Area and further afield, including day trips to watch and discuss films and engage in recreational activities as well as longer overnight trips. Excursions were designed to bring together youth

who have had conflicts and help them see each other as human beings rather than as rivals. Staff described the multi-pronged benefits youth derived from these experiences. “These are trips to inject hope so the young people don’t just have an eight-block radius to be in and they know why they need to go to school and get a good job,” said an ONS staff member. “Excursions give spaces for youth to express themselves, have fun, play games, and get into conversations that are harder to do at home in the life skills space, such as, ‘I never got over the guy that killed my brother.’”

Throughout ONS’s service provision, staff regularly engaged fellows in conversations about real-time issues the fellows faced and provided them with support and guidance in productively dealing with these issues. Services were offered in individual and small-group settings to facilitate fellows’ feelings of safety. Fellows who completed specific goals received small stipends.

c. Challenges During Implementation

ONS’s primary challenge during the project had to do with the COVID-19 pandemic. Contra Costa County issued its first stay-at-home order in mid-March 2020. To help mitigate any potential for gun violence, ONS’s outreach work continued during the stay-at-home orders, with NCAs using physical distancing and personal protective equipment. NCAs also distributed essential items such as food and toiletries and educated community members about the public health crisis.

2. RYSE Services

RYSE provided mentoring, case management, and clinical counseling to Beloved Community participants who were on probation and/or reentering the community from juvenile hall or hospitals. This initiative served participants through both RYSE's Youth Justice Program and RYSE's Community Health Services.

a. *Youth Justice Program*

Youth Justice programming consisted of the following services.

- *Streets to Success diversion program:* In partnership with the Richmond Police Department, this program provided intervention for low-to-moderate-risk youth with first-time offenses and included a curriculum designed to preempt and protect youth from formal involvement in the criminal justice system. In collaboration with their case manager, participants developed individualized case plans that included participation in other components of RYSE programming.
- *Reentry services:* These services provided transitional support and reentry services for youth who were in custody (through the county's juvenile hall or the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility) or who had recently been released from custody. Working with their case manager, youth developed individualized plans to promote successful reentry and participated in programming such as education and career support, anger management, and individual counseling.
- *Community service program:* This program assisted youth referred to RYSE by the Contra Costa County Probation Department or Office of the Public Defender in completing their court-ordered community service hours.

b. *Community Health Services*

Programming provided through RYSE Community Health Department was offered in two primary areas, the RYSE Restorative Pathways Project and case management and clinical services.

The RYSE Restorative Pathways Project is a hospital-based program that works with John Muir Medical Center to provide mentoring and intensive case management services for youth who are victims of gun violence, stabbing, or assault, serving young people who live in and/or were injured in West Contra Costa. The program's support begins at a young person's hospital bedside, guided by a RYSE trauma response specialist. "As soon as we get a referral, we call the youth and talk to them or their family members," stated a RYSE staff member. "We identify their needs and move quickly in those critical moments. Going to the hospital and connecting with them is really powerful. The youth see RYSE staff as a resource—someone they can talk to and help them reconnect with their community." Staff noted this relationship between young people and staff is particularly helpful as participants may have a physical disability or worry about retaliation following their injury. RYSE's support continues upon a participant's hospital exit to protect against re-injury and to support stabilization and recovery in areas such as advocating for housing, obtaining food and other emergency resources, and applying for victim compensation through the California Victim Compensation Board (e.g., for reimbursement of hospital or relocation expenses).

Through RYSE's case management and clinical services, Beloved Community participants received trauma-informed case management and counseling, including psychosocial assessments, crisis intervention, and individual and group therapy using approaches such as cognitive behavioral therapy. Clinical staff partnered with young people to identify and make progress on individual goals related to improving their health and wellness, increasing self-empowerment, and processing trauma and stress. The clinical team expanded during the

grant period, hiring a bilingual therapist to provide counseling services in English and Spanish to support project participants and other young people.

Other clinical activities during the grant period included the following.

- RYSE staff facilitated an anger management group for system-involved young people mandated to participate in substance use education as part of their probation conditions. Using a harm reduction approach, the group engaged young people in conversations about the sources of their anger, trauma, and substance use and explored ways to productively channel their energy.
- RYSE clinical staff attended Operation Peacemaker Fellowship life skills classes to provide emotional and psychosocial support to participants and facilitate referrals to mental health services at RYSE and within the community. "Our hope is that through building these relationships with our staff, youth who have experienced compound trauma will be open to going to our services," said a RYSE staff member.
- RYSE began a pilot project with John Muir Medical Center to participate as a trauma-informed care training site for the hospital's medical residents. Residents learned about RYSE programming, including Beloved Community programming, in order to gain a better understanding of how trauma, stress, and violence affect young people.

c. Challenges During Implementation

While RYSE reported no problems with implementing Beloved Community programming, staff stated that the structural conditions of violence and their impact on young people posed a significant barrier and demonstrated a continuous need for systems change and transformation. Staff also reported challenges in helping young people and their families locate emergency and long-term housing.

Additionally, the pandemic raised challenges for direct service provision. When the county issued its first stay-at-home order in mid-March 2020, RYSE transitioned their onsite

engagement strategies to online platforms. “The young people we serve are already facing a lot of inequities. COVID-19 highlighted this even more, including the need for Wi-Fi for distance learning or telehealth services,” RYSE staff reported. To help address this need, RYSE obtained mobile hotspots for youth engaged in programming. RYSE’s trauma response team members, who provide services for the RYSE Restorative Pathways Project, were considered essential workers and continued to meet young people at hospital bedside and provide supplies and support under physical distancing guidelines.

RYSE staff reported that moving services from onsite to online due to the pandemic appears to have produced an unintended positive outcome. Using telehealth services, RYSE was able to expand their services and support for young people who have various disabilities. Young people who experience depression and pain and may have difficulty attending a regular in-person therapy appointment had the option under the pandemic conditions to consistently meet with a therapist by phone or video. Staff reported that this increase in virtual services will help inform the availability of telehealth services as an option for service provision once RYSE reopens for onsite programming.

3. RPAL Services

a. *Life Skills and Leadership Development Activities*

RPAL provided Beloved Community participants with constructive peer activities focusing on leadership development, life skills training, and academic support. Primary services offered as part of the grant, each provided weekly or more often, included the following.

- Late-night basketball/life-skills development workshops: These weekly workshops provided young people with leadership development, goal setting, and values exercises prior to engaging them in basketball games. Workshop topics included team building; options for higher education; and techniques to address anger, frustration, stress, and anxiety. The life skills workshops also featured guest speakers including Mack Neal “Shooty” Babbitt, a former professional baseball player for the Oakland A’s. In addition, participants had an opportunity to participate in basketball tournaments at various times during the grant period.
- Leadership development/anger management classes: These classes provided youth with behavior modification exercises and techniques to promote healthy, positive relationships with peers and adults. This activity included sessions led by a clinical social worker to help young people cope with family issues, school issues, self-esteem, grief, and other concerns that may contribute to anger and violence. It also featured workshops offered through RPAL’s boxing program, giving youth an opportunity to learn and practice fitness techniques, safely release their anger and aggression, and process their emotions in a supportive environment.
- Changing Habits, Attitudes and Minds Program (CHAMP): Designed for male youth ages 13 to 17, CHAMP activities included education and career support, behavior management, leadership development, life skills training, and mentoring.

RPAL staff emphasized that the supportive, positive connections participants developed with the trainers and coaches who led Beloved Community programming were as vital as the activities themselves. “The trainer for CHAMP developed relationships with the young men that would come in for this program,” said an RPAL staff member. “He could connect. They really believed in him. He helped them with setting goals and thinking about where they’ve been and where they want to go in life.” Staff also reported that the life skills trainer interacted with the project’s young people in his professional capacity both at Richmond High School and at RPAL, which provided strong continuity for participants.

During the grant period, RPAL also hosted various events open to all youth, including Beloved Community participants, such as an annual back-to-school carnival featuring a

backpack giveaway. In addition, in May 2019, young people who participated in CalVIP-supported activities traveled together to Sparks, Nevada to play organized basketball games against youth teams from other states.

b. Challenges During Implementation

RPAL experienced a few challenges during Beloved Community programming implementation. During 2019, program participants from two different neighborhoods had a conflict, and RPAL worked with ONS outreach staff to mediate and prevent any potential violence related to this issue.

RPAL staff also reported that consistently reinforcing the life skills instruction provided in various program settings could be challenging. To strengthen young people's interest and engagement in the lessons, staff paired instruction on life skills topics with recreational activities such as boxing and basketball.

As it did for the other partners, the pandemic introduced an additional set of challenges for RPAL's Beloved Community programming. After the county issued its first stay-at-home order in mid-March, "We weren't able to give that everyday attention to youth that we're accustomed to doing," RPAL staff reported. However, RPAL transitioned to providing services online and continued to engage with youth using the phone and web.

B. Who Participated in Interventions?

Young people in the target population participated in interventions that ONS, RPAL, and RYSE provided throughout the grant period, with partners exceeding their expected participation numbers. In all, ONS served 249 youth, RPAL served 365, and RYSE served 319.

While some program components, such as the Fellowship, were designed to be relatively long-term interventions, others were provided on a more short-term, drop-in basis, including late-night basketball, where youth can participate in a single session or many. As a result, the level of information collected across program components varied. Table 2 indicates the average number of youth, based on the grant's quarterly reporting periods, who engaged in each major intervention across the initiative.

Table 2		
Participation in Beloved Community Interventions		
Organization	Intervention Type	Youth Engaged per Reporting Period (Average)
ONS	Street outreach	136
ONS	Fellowship	31
RYSE	Clinical program/counseling	46
RYSE	Restorative Pathways Project	19
RYSE	Youth justice programming	22
RPAL	Life skills/late-night basketball	80
RPAL	Leadership development	60

Note: Quarterly reporting periods were May – September 2018; October – December 2018; January – March 2019; April – June 2019; July – September 2019; October – December 2019; and January – April 2020.

C. What Was the Impact of Interventions?

This section describes the interventions' impact on the project's goals and objectives, drawing on survey and interview data and program-specific outcomes as appropriate. Note that the objectives were not mutually exclusive; instead, they were designed to intersect with and inform each other. For example, as young people develop relationships with compassionate adults, they are likely more willing to engage with a trusted adult to begin examining the trauma they have experienced.

1. Developing Positive Relationships With Empathic Adults

Goal 1 of the project (reduced participation in violence/gun violence by West Contra Costa youth) included the objective that project participants would develop positive relationships with empathic adults by the end of the program. Participant survey and interview results indicate that this objective was met.

Large percentages of survey respondents across interventions agreed that program staff always tried to be fair, cared about them, and were a resource to talk to about what was going on in their lives. Most respondents also reported that they felt safe and comfortable with program staff (Table 3). In addition, all (100%) respondents to the 2019 and 2020 RYSE Restorative Pathways Project impact survey reported that they felt understood and respected by program staff (not shown).

Table 3						
Developing Positive Relationships With Empathic Adults						
	ONS Fellows Survey		RPAL Late-Night Basketball Survey		RYSE Member Survey*	
	Pre N = 21	Post N = 20	2019 N = 60	2020 N = 16	2018 N = 152	2019 N = 146
Program staff always try to be fair	90%	89%	90%	100%	95%	100%
Program staff acknowledge my behavior, whether it's good or bad	84%	95%	98%	100%	—	—
Program staff talk with me about what's going on in my life, whether it's something good or bad†	74%	89%	76%	94%	95%	95%
Program staff show they care about me‡	90%	95%	93%	100%	98%	100%
I feel safe and comfortable with program staff	95%	100%	94%	100%	97%	97%

Note: For this table and all other reports of youth survey data, sample size may vary by survey item. For this and following tables, dashes denote questions not included in that survey.

*RYSE's annual member survey data, for all RYSE members, includes youth engaged in Beloved Community programming.

†For RYSE, this item was worded as "I can talk with staff at RYSE about things that are bothering me."

‡For RYSE, this item was worded as "Staff at RYSE really care about me."

Qualitative interview data reinforced the survey findings. Multiple participants discussed the close relationships they developed with Beloved Community staff, describing them as "patient," "supportive," and "motivating." The following are additional quotes from interviews about the bonds that participants forged with staff.

How do you feel about the staff you've worked with at ONS, RYSE, and/or RPAL?

"Really helpful, encouraging, and motivating me, lifting me up when I was in a place of feeling alone."

"I have a good and close relationship with staff. Staff checks on us daily."

"I'd describe them as very caring. They make me feel like there's always a different way to look at different situations, you don't have to always be negative."

"They are all there for me. I can go to any one of them and they will help me out. I feel we have a bond and their life experience helps us avoid mistakes they have made."

2. Gaining Tools to Negotiate Conflict and Avoid Violence

The next objective for Goal 1 was that youth would gain additional tools to negotiate conflict and avoid violence by program completion. Drawn from the Fellowship, the data for this objective provides evidence that the Fellowship, designed for the male youth deemed most likely to participate in gun violence in Richmond, offered meaningful opportunities to gain and enhance skills for peacefully resolving conflicts and desisting from violence.

ONS staff tracked several individual outcomes that directly reflected fellows' involvement in lethal violence. For the fellows who participated during the grant period, 100% remained alive, 95% were not injured or hospitalized due to gun violence, and 76% were not arrested on gun-violence-related charges as of the close of the grant period (Table 4).

Table 4 Outcomes for Operation Peacemaker Fellows (ONS) N = 37	
Measure	Percent
Fellows who remained alive	100%
Fellows who were not injured or hospitalized due to gun violence	95%
Fellows who were not arrested on gun-violence-related charges	76%
Fellows who completed the Fellowship	76%

The fellows’ survey and interview data support these findings. Pre/post survey items related to conflict resolution and problem solving moved in a positive direction, with young people reporting that during the Fellowship, they learned strategies for conflict negotiation, de-escalation, and resolution (91% pre, 95% post; not shown) and increased their ability to solve their problems on their own (86% pre, 95% post; not shown). In interviews, fellows reported that the Fellowship provided opportunities to productively handle potentially difficult situations. “I am now able to walk away from conflicts,” one fellow said.

3. Addressing Underlying Trauma

The final objective for Goal 1 was that youth would begin to address the underlying trauma that may contribute to engagement in violence. Survey and interview data for this objective indicate that Beloved Community helped participants acknowledge, understand, and cope with their mental health concerns.

Most survey respondents agreed that program participation helped them pay attention to their emotions and felt that it was okay and beneficial to be in programs or services that supported their mental health (tables 5 and 6).

Table 5				
Addressing Underlying Trauma—ONS, RPAL				
This Program Helped Me . . .	ONS Fellows Survey		RPAL Late-Night Basketball Survey	
	Pre N = 21	Post N = 20	2019 N = 60	2020 N = 16
Pay attention to my emotions and feelings	70%	85%	88%	100%
Feel it is okay and beneficial to be in programs or services that support my emotional well-being	81%	80%	90%	100%
Acknowledge my weaknesses and deal with my trauma	80%	100%	85%	100%

Table 6				
Addressing Underlying Trauma—RYSE				
This Program Helped Me . . .	RYSE Member Survey*		RYSE Restorative Pathways Project Impact Survey†	
	2018 N = 152	2019 N = 146	2019 N = 14	2020 N = 12
Pay attention to my emotions and feelings	90%	93%	—	—
Feel it is okay and beneficial to be in programs or services that support my mental health	93%	97%	100%	100%
Make myself more vulnerable and confront pain head on	—	—	85%	100%
Express my needs, concerns, fears, goals, and aspirations	—	—	100%	100%

*RYSE’s annual member survey data reported here are for all RYSE members, including youth engaged in Beloved Community programming.

The survey data were supported by interviews with participants. Participants reported that programming gave them a space to talk with someone who would listen and provided techniques for them to understand and express their emotions. Participants also stated that they engaged in services through the project, such as therapy and art, that helped them deal with trauma. The following quotes from interview participants describe what they gained from participating in services related to addressing trauma.

How did programming address emotions, feelings, and things you are personally going through or dealing with?

"I learned how to feel my own feelings and to express and control them."

"I know I am not alone and that it's okay to be sad and to be happy."

"Therapy helped me understand how to talk about [my experience] and leave it in the past so I can move on in my life."

"In individual therapy, I was able to vent and able to let [my worries and frustrations] go while being supported through it."

4. Engaging in Positive Activities

Goal 2 stated that during the grant period, participants would engage in constructive peer activities as an alternative to violence. Objectives for this goal included engagement in project activities such as recreation, community service, and education and career supports. Program participation data supported that these objectives were met; this included young people's involvement in boxing and basketball through RPAL, excursions through ONS, and media and arts activities through RYSE. For example, during the grant period, ONS staff led more than 20 peacebuilding excursions for small groups of fellows, including day trips in the Richmond area and longer trips to other parts of the state.

In addition, Goal 2 included the objective that youth will identify plans for future goals such as housing, education, and employment. Data indicate that Beloved Community participants proactively laid the groundwork for their futures during the grant period. Participants identified and made progress on personal goals described in their life maps (for

ONS fellows) and case management plans (for RYSE participants). For example, five fellows obtained hands-on work experience through participation in subsidized work opportunities.

Survey data from ONS and RPAL show that most respondents agreed that program participation helped them think more about their future and understand the importance of education and employment (Table 7). Most young people responding to the RYSE member survey in 2018 and 2019 stated that participation contributed to their belief that they can influence decisions in their school or community and they can make a positive difference in their school or community (not shown). In addition, interview participants said they received support in planning for their future in a range of areas including applying to college, interviewing for jobs, obtaining childcare, and applying for a U Visa.

Table 7				
Preparing for the Future				
	ONS Fellows Survey		RPAL Late-Night Basketball Survey	
	Pre N = 21	Post N = 20	2019 N = 60	2020 N = 16
This program helped me:				
Think more about my future	100%	100%	98%	100%
Understand the importance of legitimate employment	90%	85%	—	—
Understand the importance of education	91%	95%	—	—

D. Partners’ Commitment to Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered Approaches

Beloved Community’s third goal was a shared commitment among partners to a trauma-informed and healing-centered approach, with the following two objectives: (1) Partner

staff are trained in this approach, and (2) partner staff implement trauma-informed and healing-centered practices. Several data sources indicate that this goal was achieved.

During the grant period, project partners attended, facilitated, and/or presented at more than 60 local, regional, state, and national events such as conferences, trainings, convenings, and site visits on topics related to trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches. Efforts focused on providing professional development opportunities for partner staff; in addition, partners continued to share their expertise with other stakeholders through activities including hosting site visits with departments of public health and neighborhood safety in other states, providing expert testimony to a senate committee on the impacts of gun violence on young people, and presenting on complex trauma at many conferences.

Project partners' work during the grant period provides numerous examples of implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered practices. Examples include NCAs leading peacebuilding excursions as an outlet for ONS fellows to express themselves, RPAL coaches providing boxing not only as a recreational activity but also as a healthy way for young people to cope with their emotions, and RYSE training medical residents on RYSE's clinical services model. Partner staff emphasized that being trauma informed and healing centered is integral to their daily interactions with young people and providers, as seen in the interview quotes below.

Can you describe some of the trauma-informed and healing-centered practices and services your organization has implemented during the grant period?

"Sometimes [this work] looks like advocacy with young people, referring them to resources, supporting them to access resources, and being in healthy struggle because we want all of our services and the people we interact with to be healing centered. Working with community partners to see how trauma may be impacting young people and offering tools and strategies that can help the young people be successful." (RYSE staff member)

"This is what NCAs do every day—acknowledge young people's pain, allow them to be seen and heard. This is part of engaging young people. Every day, NCAs get someone who doesn't care about themselves to get to a place where they feel like, 'I care and I matter.'" (ONS staff member)

"We help the youth reflect on issues they have day to day. They can talk about issues they experience at school or home. If they came to PAL mad over something that happened and they are going to lash out the next day, we can help mediate and help youth understand what they went through. This comes from the relationships we have with the young people. Staff help them work through serious issues and provide insight." (RPAL staff member)

The pandemic provided additional impetus to collaboratively plan and organize the provision of trauma-informed and healing-centered services. In early March, RYSE began convening the West Contra Costa COVID Community Care Coalition to arrange for, create, and provide direct support for young people while adhering to physical distancing guidelines. Through regular conference calls with the coalition, which consistently included cross-sector participation by 80 to 100 community stakeholders, RYSE and their partners coordinated assistance for eligible young people such as distribution of emergency food and basic supplies and provision of support related to housing, mental health, COVID-19 health care, decarceration, and reentry.

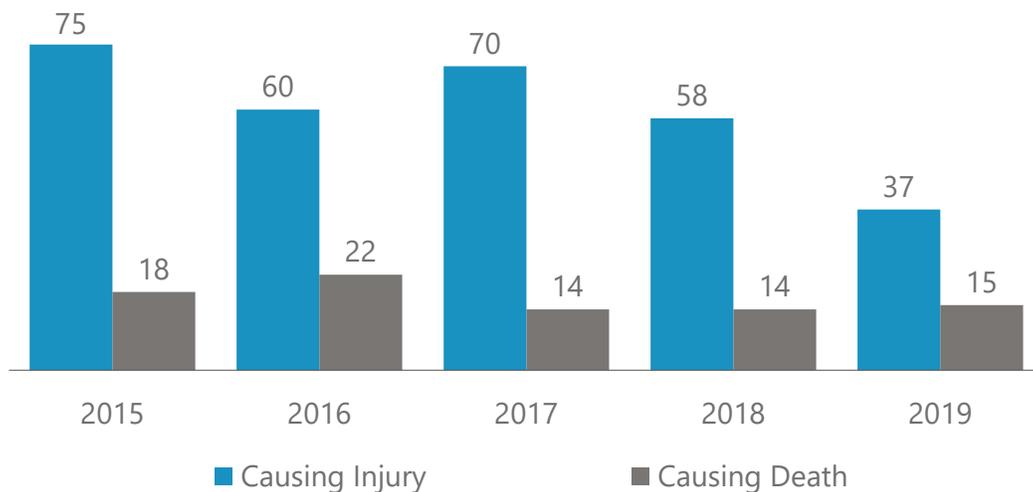
E. Gun Violence Reductions

The findings described in this report help to inform and contextualize an overall decline in gun violence in Richmond. Shootings that led to an injury or death decreased during the grant period, continuing a downward trend seen under the previous CalGRIP project led by ONS from 2015 to 2017. Between 2015 and 2019, Richmond had a 51% reduction in firearm assaults that caused injury and a 17% decrease in shootings that resulted in homicide (see figure).

In addition, homicides that Richmond Police Department considered to fall into ONS's focus area dropped 22% from 2015 to 2019. Related data indicate that ONS outreach staff prevented at least 16 firearm incidents in 2019, averting events expected to result in injury or death (not shown).

Figure

Firearm Assaults, City of Richmond



Source: Richmond Police Department

IV. CONCLUSION

From May 2018 to April 2020, Beloved Community provided evidence-based prevention and intervention activities for young people in the Richmond community who were involved or at risk of involvement in violence. Activities included street outreach, mentoring, cognitive behavioral therapy, life skills training, case management, and subsidized employment.

The evaluation data show that project partners exceeded the number of young people they intended to serve through their organization's interventions. In all, ONS served 249 youth, RPAL served 365, and RYSE served 319. Survey and interview findings indicate that project participants met the project's stated objectives of young people developing positive relationships with empathic adults, gaining additional tools to negotiate conflict and avoid violence, addressing underlying trauma, and engaging in constructive peer activities. Outcomes specific to participants in the Fellowship showed that during the grant period, all fellows remained alive, and most were not injured or hospitalized due to gun violence or arrested on gun-related charges. In addition, through attending, facilitating, and/or presenting at a wide range of events, project partners deepened their commitment to implementing trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches.

The findings described in this report help to inform and contextualize community-level data that show an overall decline in gun violence in Richmond. Shootings that resulted in an injury or death decreased during the grant period, continuing a downward trend seen under the previous CalGRIP project led by ONS. Between 2015 and 2019, Richmond had a 51% reduction in firearm assaults that caused injury and a 17% decrease in shootings that resulted in homicide. Homicides that the Richmond Police Department considered to fall into ONS's focus area

dropped 22% from 2015 to 2019. In addition, ONS outreach staff prevented at least 16 firearm incidents in 2019, averting events expected to result in injury or death. Although some methodological challenges are associated with measuring community-level outcomes, the data show that gun violence decreased during the grant period, with these reductions occurring in the context of Beloved Community's implementation and continuing the gains experienced during the previous CalGRIP project.

While it is challenging to separate the project's impacts from those of other violence-reduction strategies occurring simultaneously in Richmond/West Contra Costa (as well as other factors that could contribute to changes in gun violence), the evaluation data indicate that Beloved Community had positive individual and community outcomes. The findings also suggest that consistent and authentic engagement with young people, through strategies including mentoring and counseling, can appropriately support young people who are disproportionately affected by violence, trauma, and stress. In addition, while this project did not specifically seek to reduce recidivism, the finding that most fellows were not arrested on gun violence-related charges during the grant period may have implications for interventions that focus on decreasing recidivism.

REFERENCES

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Appendix

Logic Model

**BELOVED COMMUNITY: NEXT LEVEL
LOGIC MODEL**

