



*AMP It Up!*

**An Arts-Based, Multiple Intervention, Peer-  
Education Approach to HIV/STI Education**

**Final Report**

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Submitted to:  
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Center for AIDS Research

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Art and Global Health Center at UCLA presents this report to the UCLA AIDS Institute, Center for AIDS Research, and the Program Evaluation and Research Branch of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to provide research-based evidence that our *AMP It Up!* program enhances student learning in the areas of HIV/AIDS and sexual health within the district. Using a mixed research methodology consisting of surveys and focus group interviews for assessing the effectiveness of this program, we have carefully prepared an evaluation of the established *AMP It Up!* project for review.

Survey results have revealed significant improvements in information retention related to HIV transmission and prevention methods, increased HIV testing behavior, and increased positive attitudes towards people living with HIV. During focus group interviews, high school students specifically emphasized the impact of youth educators. Positive changes in students' attitudes from the pre- to the post-intervention surveys were striking in certain categories. These include:

- A 21% increase, from 52% to 73%, of students who reported feeling compassion towards people living with HIV/AIDS.
- A 29% increase, from 31% to 60%, of students who agreed with the statement, "I speak up when I hear someone tell a myth about HIV/AIDS."
- A 38% increase, from 27% to 65%, of students who reported knowing where to go in their neighborhoods to get an HIV test.
- An 11% increase, from 65% to 76%, of students who reported feeling comfortable discussing the impact of HIV/AIDS with their peers.
- 8% more students, from 27% to 35%, are likely to take an HIV test before the end of the year.
- Among students that are already sexually active, the surveys found a 45% increase, from 14% to 59%, in those who have taken an HIV test. Indicating that nearly half of sexually active students chose to get tested for HIV during the *AMP It Up!* program.

The section below provides a general overview of *AMP It Up!* including a brief description of the Art and Global Health Center's core objectives for this project.

### ***AMP It Up!* Overall Program Objectives**

Founded in 2006, the Art and Global Health Center at UCLA was created in order to nurture a global network of artists and advocates working in the realm of public health. Harnessing the communicative power of the arts, the center creates public health interventions that celebrate life, buttressed by principles of human rights and social justice. The Center's programs challenge communities and individuals to reconsider preconceived notions of intimacy in an age of disease, and of tolerance in an age of distrust. Building on this vision, the *AMP It Up!* program was designed to educate youth within the Los Angeles community on HIV/AIDS prevention.

**The *AMP It Up!* program goals are the following:**

1. Increase knowledge about HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention among LAUSD high school students.
2. Reduce stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS among Los Angeles high school students.
3. Promote methods of prevention—including condom usage—as well as increase voluntary HIV testing, both of which will lead to a reduced infection rate among at-risk youth.

The Art and Global Health Center combines theory and practice by utilizing the best of current thinking from faculty and students within UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures. Core faculty members are highly experienced practitioners in HIV/AIDS education and partner with students, schools, and community partners.

**THE UCLA *AMP It Up!* MODEL**

The Art and Global Health Center at UCLA and cooperating partners presented *AMP It Up!* to participating high schools and youth community centers throughout South and East Los Angeles in early 2010. The AMP in *AMP It Up!* stands for Arts-based, Multiple-intervention, Peer education.

The project is Arts-based, because artists are expert communicators who can inspire and mobilize youth. There are Multiple-interventions, in order to have a lasting impact. Finally, Peer educators are employed so that teens can learn from someone who can easily relate to the situations they are presented with on a daily basis.

This new model for community-based sexual health education affirms human sexuality while memorably informing teenagers about STI/HIV prevention with a five-stage program in each school.

**Program Components:**

*AMP It Up!* is five different programmatic components, moving through movement, audio, and visual learning modalities. These are:

1. Positively Speaking: First person stories from HIV-positive individuals, letting students know what it is like to live with HIV, reducing stigma against people living with the virus.
2. *AMP It Up!* Performance Team, *When the Situation Gets Slippery*: A performance encounter featuring hip-hop dance, humor, and heartfelt monologues, followed by peer-directed discussion.
3. AIDS Ambassadors: Through the use of skits and role-plays, UCLA students teach high school students how to use condoms and how to negotiate condom use with a potential partner.

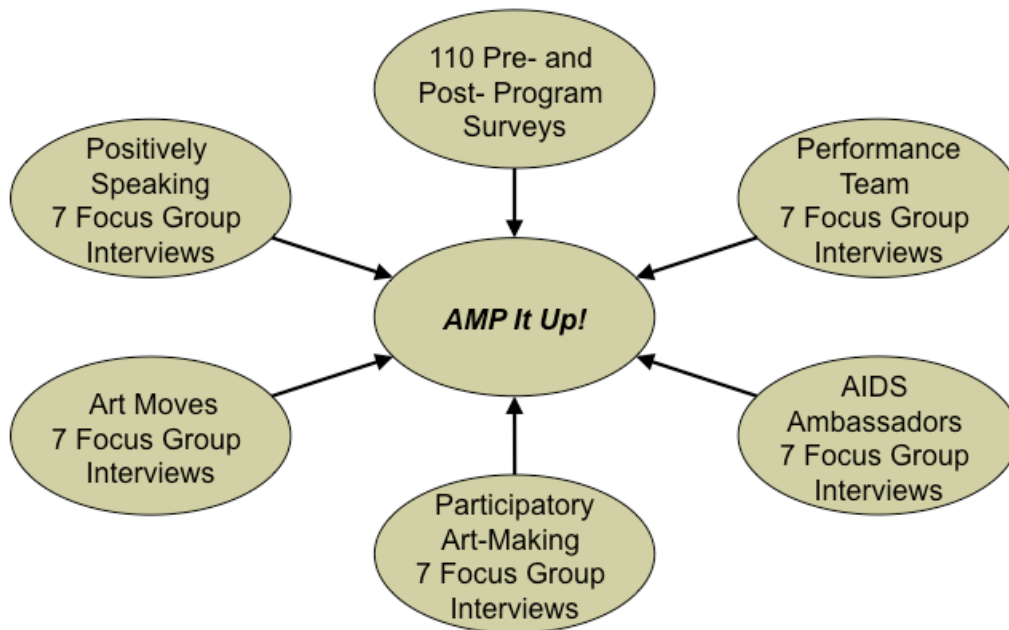
4. *ArtMoves*: A portable visual arts exhibition dealing with themes such as international treatment inequalities, followed by discussion directed by AIDS Ambassadors.
5. Participatory Art-Making: Students take part in a hands-on workshop where they have the opportunity to express themselves and incorporate what they have learned through the *AMP It Up!* process. At the conclusion of the workshop student-made art works are put on display.

## **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH EVALUATION METHODS**

The preliminary data for this proposed study was drawn from the Los Angeles Unified School District HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit, Centers for Disease Control 2007 and 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Study (YRBS) 9<sup>th</sup> grade student district-wide data. In addition, 148 9<sup>th</sup> grade students attending King Drew Medical Magnet High School in the 2010 spring semester, who participated in *AMP It Up!* HIV/AIDS education curricula, were administered one paper-based survey questionnaire with 25 items. This survey was intended to measure baseline student sexual health behaviors and HIV/AIDS knowledge at the commencement of the 2010 spring academic semester among students taking Health class. The same paper-based survey questionnaire was administered to 110 of the same students in their Health class at the end of the 2010 academic year to measure change in behavior and HIV/AIDS knowledge.

Additionally, 35 focus group interviews consisting of eight students per group were conducted, in order to clarify findings from the student survey questionnaires. Eight students were selected at random by course period in which they were enrolled in their Health class at King Drew Medical Magnet High School. Eight was chosen as the focus group size in order to accommodate the conference room that was available for the researchers for use on campus for the purpose of conducting interviews. Seven focus groups consisting of eight students were conducted after each of the five *AMP It Up!* components as part of this research evaluation.

***Figure 1: Overview of Primary Research Methods***



In addition, student works completed in their 9th grade Health course, as part of the *AMP It Up!* HIV/AIDS education curriculum, were observed as artifacts for final data analysis. Researchers ran sample descriptive statistics and basic correlations of all questions relating to HIV/AIDS knowledge, intravenous drug use and sexual behaviors with particular attention given to variables pertaining to freshman grade level, age, and ethnic background of students. Table 2 outlines all of the research methods and the timeline in which the research was conducted.

**Table 2: Overview of Research Methods and Timeline**

<b>Research Methods</b>	<b>Dates Conducted</b>
Supplemental data collection, LAUSD Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2007 & 2009	January 2010
148 Pre-test student surveys	January 2010
35 Focus group interviews	February-June 2010
110 Post-test student surveys	June 2010
Observations of student-generated artifacts	June 2010

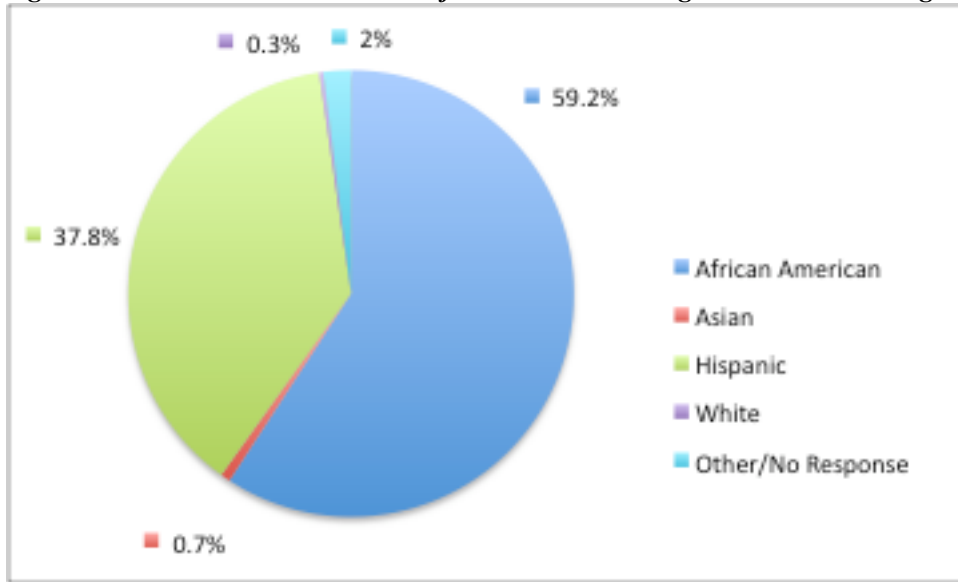
### **SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS**

In 2009, King/Drew Medical Magnet High School, an alternative magnet high school within the Los Angeles Unified School District, was selected by the Art and Global Health Center to guide in the creation and implementation of the *AMP It Up!* 9<sup>th</sup> grade health curriculum. All students were required to enroll in a health course within their first year at King/Drew Medical Magnet and approximately 30% of the population, 479 students, at King/Drew Medical Magnet was in the freshman class in 2009.

*AMP It Up!* was developed in order to achieve significant improvement in student knowledge about HIV/AIDS and student learning about risks of sexual behaviors. The Art and Global Health Center selected King/Drew Medical Magnet High School based upon the needs of their diverse, low-income, and at-risk student populations from the 1,679 students on campus. The high school's commitment to health sciences education, as well as pre-existing collegial and professional relationships among campus faculty made King/Drew Medical Magnet High School an ideal case study in which to begin a preliminary program evaluation.

The racial and ethnic backgrounds of students enrolled at the King/Drew Medical Magnet High School are predominantly African American and Latino, representative of those both in the Los Angeles Unified School District. As shown in *Figure a*, King/Drew Medical Magnet High School's student ethnic diversity differs slightly from that of the overall district in that there is a larger representation of African American students, at 59.2%, than in the overall district, where 10.7% report African American racial/ethnic backgrounds.

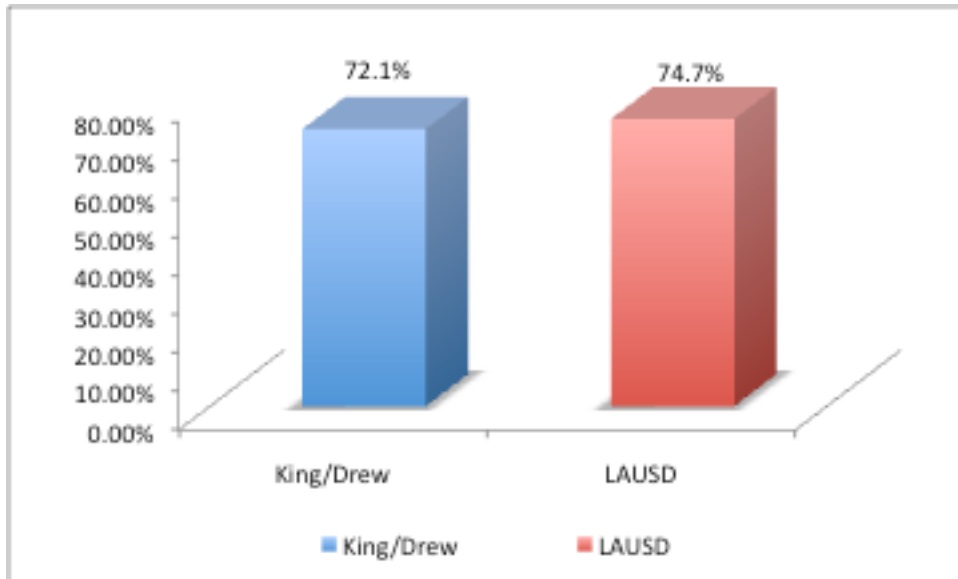
**Figure a: Student Racial/Ethnic Profiles 2008-2009 King/Drew Medical Magnet High School**



Source: Ed-Data, Data Quest 2009

In addition, King/Drew Medical Magnet High School has a significant low-income student population. 72.4% of the students qualify for the Reduced Price/Free Lunch program, similar to the proportions of low-income students in the overall district.

**Figure b: Student Free/Reduced Lunch Profiles 2008-2009 King/Drew Medical Magnet High School**



Source: Ed-Data, Data Quest 2009

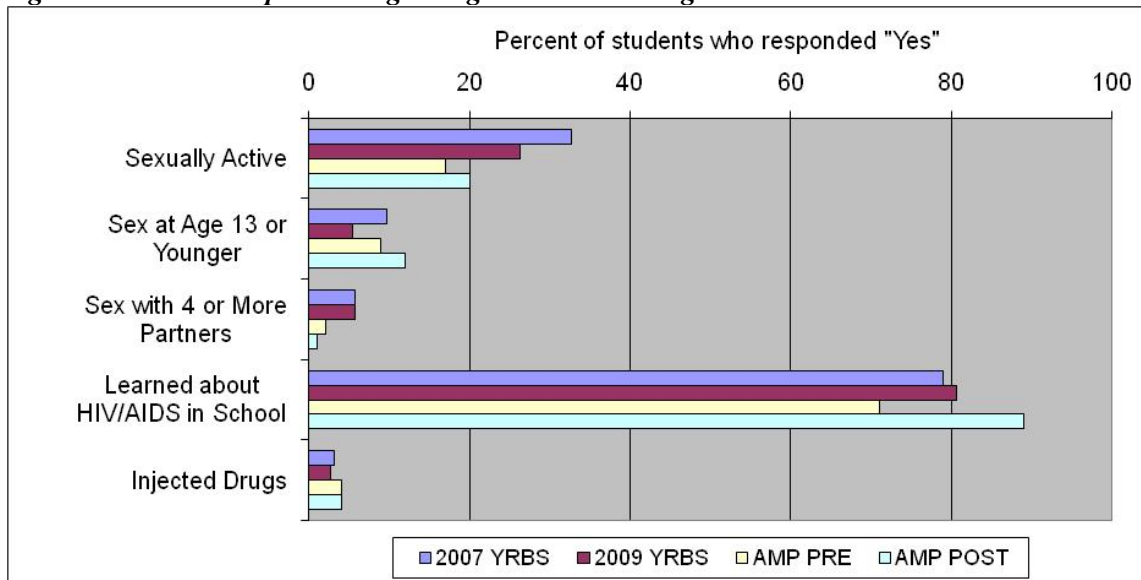


## SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

Sexual and drug use behaviors among the King/Drew Magnet High School *AMP It Up!* student participants is consistent with the overall LAUSD student population, based on the Los Angeles High School Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS) from 2007 and 2009 (see Figure c). The age of first sexual intercourse and the use of injected drugs are almost identical to the YRBS results, while the percent of sexually active students and the number of students with four or more partners are slightly fewer among the King/Drew students. Additionally, the number of students who indicated that they have learned about HIV/AIDS in school increased among the King/Drew students from approximately 70% to 90%, which is about 10% more than the overall LAUSD student population.

Once pre- and post-intervention surveys were collected (N=110); these data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0). Numerous analytical variables were constructed from the raw data including questions pertaining to the programmatic goals of increasing knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention, reducing stigma toward those living with HIV/AIDS, and promoting methods of prevention, condom usage, sexual practice choices, and knowledge of HIV testing sites relevant to youths' regional location. Chi-square analysis and other non-parametric techniques were used to test for statistical significance. Significant findings from student survey questionnaires are detailed below.

**Figure c: Student Responses Regarding Sexual and Drug Behavior and HIV/AIDS Education**

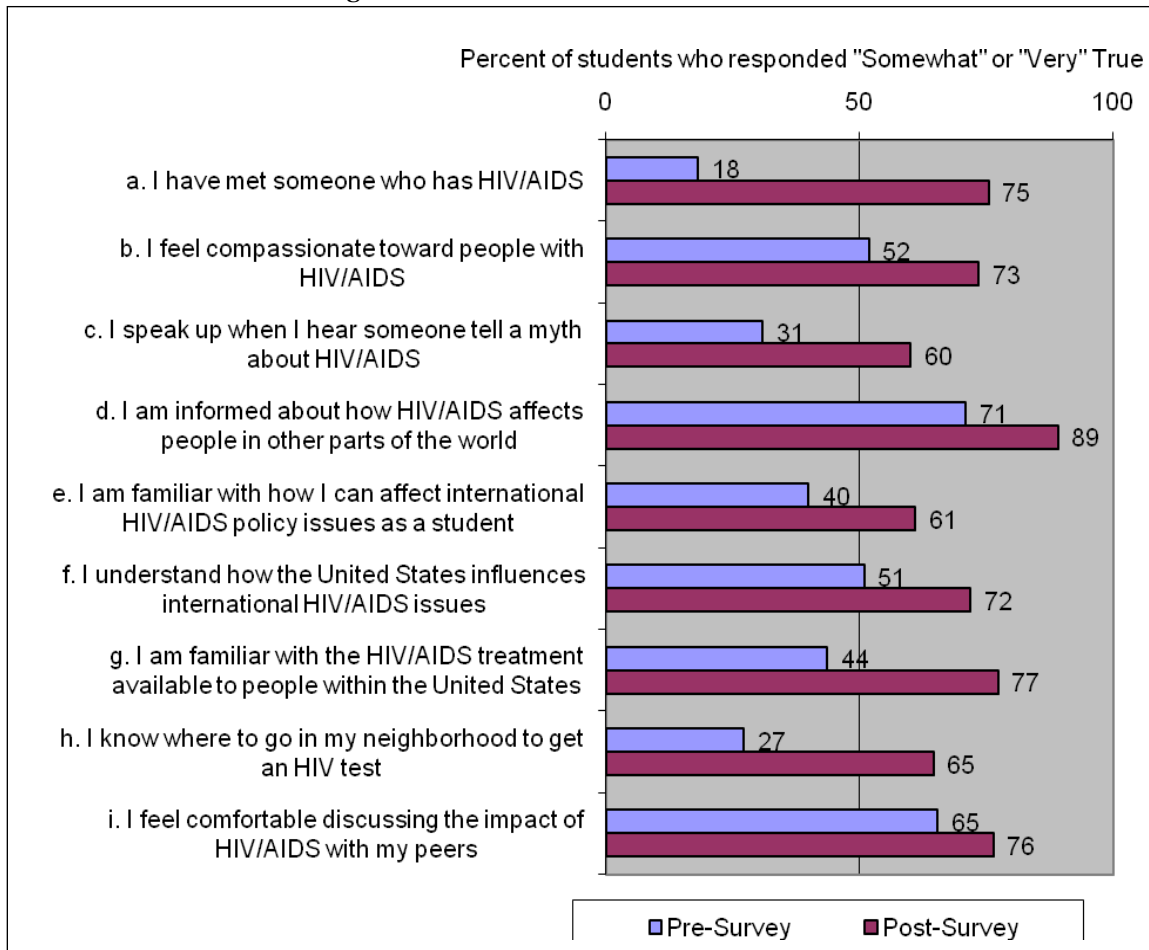


### **Knowledge about HIV/AIDS Transmission, Prevention and Stigma:**

Changes between the pre- and the post-intervention surveys suggest that the student participants acquired substantial knowledge about HIV/AIDS through *AMP It Up!* (see Figure d). The number of students who expressed compassion for people with HIV/AIDS increased from 52% to 73% of students surveyed. Students who expressed a willingness

to discuss issues related to HIV/AIDS also increased to three-quarters of the students surveyed, while the number of students willing to speak up and correct false information about HIV/AIDS doubled. Knowledge about the impact of policies related to HIV/AIDS, both domestically and internationally, also increased significantly. The number of students who know where to obtain an HIV/AIDS test more than doubled to 65% of the students surveyed.

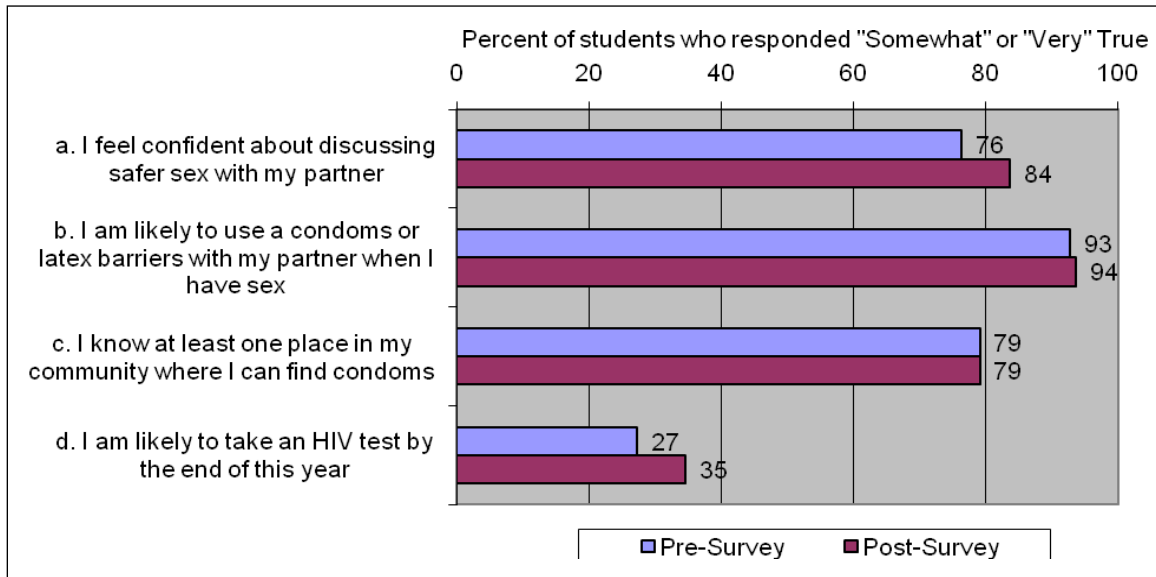
**Figure d: Student Responses Regarding Knowledge about HIV/AIDS Transmission, Prevention and Stigma**



**Awareness and Use of Methods of Prevention:**

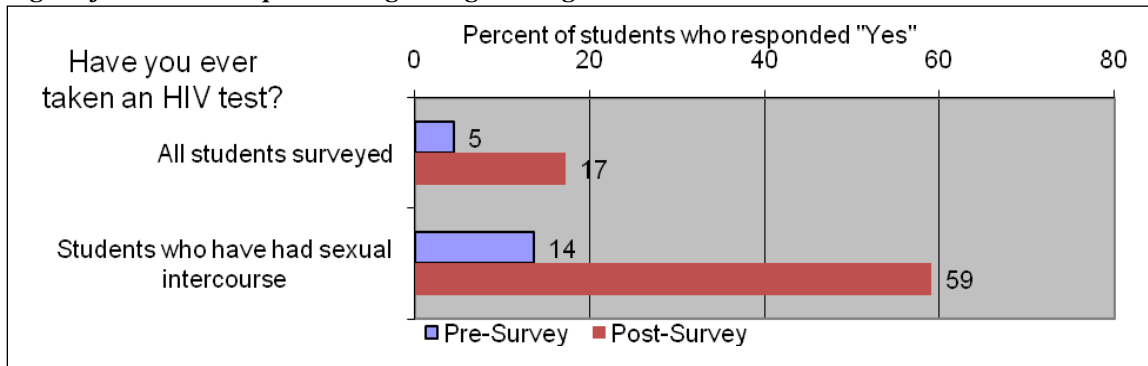
Questions in the surveys regarding the awareness and use of methods of prevention of HIV/AIDS suggest that there was a large percentage of student who had positive attitudes about discussing safe sex and obtaining and using condoms prior to the *AMP It Up!* program. As such, the number did not increase substantially after students received *AMP It Up!* (see Figure e). Additionally, the number of students who were likely to take an HIV test by the end of the year was low before and after the program.

**Figure e: Student Responses Regarding Awareness and Use of Methods of Prevention**



While the number of students who indicated whether they were likely to take an HIV test by the end of this year was low before and after the program, the number of students who actually took and HIV during the duration of the program tripled from 5% to 17%, as shown in Figure f. In particular, when this question is correlated with students that have had sexual intercourse, the post-intervention surveys demonstrated a significant increase in students that have taken an HIV test, from 14% to 59%.

**Figure f: Student Responses Regarding Having Taken an HIV Test**



## **SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW RESULTS**

Thirty-five student focus group interviews were coded following five main programmatic goals—drawn from the five *AMP It Up!* components—as indicated below:

1. Increase knowledge about HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention.
2. Reduce stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS.
3. Promote methods of prevention, including condom usage.
4. Increase voluntary HIV testing.
5. Increase understanding of the impact of HIV/AIDS in a global context.

### **Positively Speaking**

Positively Speaking was the first classroom presentation. It consisted of first person stories from HIV-positive individuals, sharing with students what it is like to live with HIV, in the hopes of reducing stigma against people living with the virus. Student reports showed a dramatic impact on related to addressing the stigma against people living with HIV and AIDS. After a Positively Speaking session one student reported,

“When she told us [she had AIDS] it was like my mouth dropped. Like, what? When she walked in we didn’t think she had AIDS, but then when she told us, it just made me realize that you can’t tell if someone has AIDS or not, just by looking at them. Your face doesn’t always look sick if you have the virus. That just made it open my eyes more to you have to get tested because you can’t tell.”

Additionally when students were asked the question, “How did this presentation influence the way in which you see people with HIV/AIDS?” a student stated,

“When she said she had AIDS and she was about to touch me I got scared and I was like, ‘DON’T TOUCH ME!’ But then I had to realize that it has to be like blood or something to get HIV...I realized that it’s okay. If she does touch me nothing would happen to me.”

Finally when a student was asked, “How do you feel toward people with HIV and AIDS?” her reply was,

“I feel sad for them and sorry for them because I know that people might think of them like, Ugh you’re nasty, I don’t want to touch you. And I know it’s more to it than that. You can still touch them you can still give them a hug.”

Youth who participated in the Positively Speaking sessions generally demonstrated reduced stigma and increased reports of compassion toward people living with HIV and AIDS. Student participants recognized an initial fear of individuals living with HIV and AIDS and acknowledge that hearing individuals’ personal stories helped to combat their misconceptions and fears related to HIV and AIDS.

### ***AMP It Up!* Performance Team**

The second component of *AMP It Up!* consisted of an hour-long UCLA student-led university campus performance, followed by peer-directed discussion. It was the most frequently mentioned and memorable component cited by student participants. Interviews indicated excitement from visiting a college campus, enjoyment in hearing personal accounts from UCLA students related to HIV/AIDS, and greater credibility of the information being shared within the performance due to linkages with a university. One student reported that she felt confident in the accuracy of information that was provided in the performance, saying,

“I liked especially being at UCLA, because I know that UCLA isn’t the easiest school to get into. I know people who go there and so I know that if you are in UCLA you are doing really well, you know. You have to be doing good and know what you’re talking about. So, I like the UCLA people that taught us.”

Additionally youth *Amp It Up!* participants reported having an enjoyable experience in hearing personal accounts of HIV/AIDS awareness from peer UCLA performers. One student mentioned,

“I had liked how they did the play and told their own personal experience because that kinda made me think, even though you don’t have it, someone that you know has it and it won’t only affect that person but it will affect you.”

Throughout interviews, students most frequently mentioned this component as most memorable. It is clear that the performance delivered at UCLA impacted youth and through creating a positive experience on a university campus.

### **AIDS Ambassadors**

UCLA undergraduate AIDS Ambassadors instructed high school students on condom usage, employing demonstrations with a potential partner through skits and role-plays. One student reported a greater confidence in negotiating condom use, saying,

“I would feel safe talking to my partner and I would feel that I could trust my partner because I learned how to have an open, full-blown conversation about it.”

Students were asked to participate in hands-on demonstrations and skits that replayed real-life scenarios related to sexual choice practices and condom use negotiation among male and female sexual partners.

## ***ArtMoves***

*ArtMoves* was a visual arts exhibition dealing with themes related to the international AIDS epidemic, such as treatment inequality, and was followed by discussion directed by UCLA AIDS Ambassadors. The quote below illustrates students' increase in knowledge toward HIV/AIDS issues, particularly related to the disease in a global context. These findings were also demonstrated in student surveys where there was a dramatic increase of awareness in this area. One student said;

“People die of AIDS in other places because they don't have the money to pay for the medications. AIDS and HIV doesn't discriminate on age and gender.”

Consistent with finding from student survey reports, *ArtMoves* aided youth in developing an awareness of HIV and AIDS within a global context.

## **Participatory Art-Making**

Students took part in a hands-on workshop where they have the opportunity to express themselves and incorporate what they had learned through the *AMP It Up!* process. At the conclusion of the workshop, student-generated art works were put on display. Students expressed a deeper understanding of themes explored through the *AMP It Up!* curriculum. Student participants frequently quoted popular music lyrics as well as television shows or movies that connected popular media to themes safe sex. For instance, one student designed a t-shirt that quoted a popular rap song by Lil' Wayne,

“Safe sex is great sex, better wear a latex  
'cause you don't want that late text,  
that 'I think I'm late' text  
Heh-heh, so wrap it up.”

This linking of popular culture with important themes from *AMP It Up!* illustrates a deeper application and awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention as well as other risks associated with sexual choices and health practices.

## **STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

The accumulated evidence from this study indicates increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS, positive attitudes towards people living with the virus, and increased likelihood to engage in certain safer behaviors among students that have participated in the *AMP It Up!* program. Less clear is the extent to which these benefits can be directly attributed to the *AMP It Up!* program in the school. It is possible that King/Drew Medical Magnet High School, being a specialized alternative magnet school, may have characteristics that would have led to improved health outcomes even in the absence of Art and Global Health Center involvement, and perhaps cannot lead to generalizable

results. In addition, other health programs that were simultaneously run in and outside of the high school campus may have impacted student HIV/AIDS knowledge and sexual health behavior. Additionally, the small survey sample of 110 students is not a representative sample of the overall student population within the school district.

While it is certainly difficult to statistically disentangle the causal effects of the *AMP It Up!* curriculum on student knowledge scores, researchers used a variety of methods to help draw causal conclusions: the use of multiple comparison groups by school and district-wide data, student perspectives via focus group interviews, and pre- and post-survey scores drawn over an academic year. The consistent pattern of student reports demonstrating HIV/AIDS knowledge along each method of evaluation provides strong evidence that *AMP It Up!* is an effective mechanism for positively impacting student HIV/AIDS knowledge, stigma reduction, and likelihood of engaging in high-risk sexual behavior.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The Art and Global Health Center presents this report to the UCLA AIDS Institute, Center for AIDS Research to provide research-based evidence that our *AMP It Up!* program enhances student learning in the areas of HIV/AIDS and sexual health within the district. A mixed research methodology consisting of surveys and focus group interviews was used for assessing the effectiveness this program.

### **The *AMP It Up!* program goals and key study findings:**

1. Increase knowledge about HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention among LAUSD high school students.

Pre- and post-intervention survey results indicated increased knowledge and awareness of methods for prevention and transmission among participating students, where 76% reporting feeling comfortable discussing this information with their peers. Notable study results include findings that 89% of students reported an increase of knowledge related to the impact of HIV and AIDS on people in a global context at the conclusion of the *AMP It Up!* program.

2. Reduce stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS among Los Angeles high school students.

In post surveys, 73% of students reported expressing compassion and a reduced stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS, an increase from 53% in the pre-intervention questionnaire.

3. Promote methods of prevention, including condom usage and sexual choice practices, as well as increase voluntary HIV testing, both of which will lead to a reduced infection rate among at-risk youth.

Surveys indicated an increased awareness of HIV testing sites among youth, where 65% of students surveyed reported knowing where to go in their neighborhood in order to receive an HIV test, an increase from 27% in the pre-survey. Surveys also found a 45% increase, from 14% to 59%, in sexually active students who have taken an HIV test.

The consistent pattern of student reports, through data rich interviews and pre/post survey questionnaires, has indicated that *AMP It Up!* youth participants demonstrated greater HIV/AIDS awareness. Each evaluation method provides strong evidence that *AMP It Up!* is an effective mechanism for impacting student HIV/AIDS knowledge, stigma levels, and likelihood of engaging in high-risk sexual health behavior.

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The most commonly cited and memorable component reported by student participants was the performance at UCLA. If funding permits, it is recommended that youth be given the opportunity to view the *AMP It Up!* Performance Team presentation on the UCLA campus. Interviews indicated excitement from visiting a college campus, and greater credibility of the information being shared within the performance due to linkages with a university.
- Youth-generated artwork from previous *AMP It Up!* programs should be incorporated my fully in future incarnations. Peer models of information dissemination were frequently mentioned during interviews, where students reported being more comfortable learning and sharing information on HIV/AIDS prevention from UCLA instructors, who were closer to them in age than their health teachers or parents.
- Positively Speaking provided an excellent introduction to the overall project. Many youth reported feeling shock at the realization that presenters were HIV positive, and felt compassion toward others living with HIV and AIDS. It is recommended that younger and/or teenage individuals with HIV or AIDS be identified for Positively Speaking presentations to high school aged participants, as youth may show greater compassion for a peer living with HIV or AIDS.
- *ArtMoves* provided good examples of images created by HIV/AIDS activists and artists from around the world. Surveys indicated a greater awareness among youth participants of the global impact of HIV and AIDS on individuals.
- Greater continuity between the components is recommended, as there was some overlap and repetition in programmatic elements. A brief review of materials from prior components may also prove useful. Greater continuity and more opportunities for review should increase impact while conserving time and resources.
- Youth expressed interest in learning more about instructors, their involvement, and their reasons for participating in *AMP It Up!* Improving get-to-know-you activities with *AMP It Up!* instructors may increase youth interaction, as strong relationships between students and instructors can enhance student-learning outcomes.



- Continue to pre- and post-intervention survey all *AMP It Up!* participants as part of program evaluation. The larger the population surveyed the greater the likelihood of finding statistical significance, instrument reliability, and validity in the future.
- Include a post survey for all high school campus faculty and UCLA student instructors involved in the project. Surveys should cover process and recommendations for improved *AMP It Up!* implementation.

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Interviewer: Do you think next year you'll still remember everything you've learned?

Student: It's too fun to forget.