



2020–2021 Annual Report

**Building healthy relationships using theatre and
community collaboration**

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RESPECT: Flexibly Filling a Need During the Pandemic

During the 2020 – 2021 year RESPECT
provided more than **100 programs**
And reached nearly **4,000 participants**

Despite the limitations of being remote, RESPECT has remained busy. Our flexibility makes it possible for schools and organizations to continue incorporating RESPECT's programs into their own toolboxes to

"I learned to respect others and when someone is getting bullied to comfort them or help them. The show teaches us to treat people with respect and to not judge without knowing what you are judging. I can't come up with anything you guys could do better."

"Telling a teacher or another student that someone is being bullied for their skin color (race), gender, or if they can't afford something that it's helpful. Because sometimes you may not know what to do in the situation if you're not used to seeing it happen. The person you tell could help you solve the issue/problem. Getting a teacher or an adult can be helpful. You should stand up for people who are getting picked on for who they are because it's the right thing to do."

"The most important thing that I learned today was that there are many different types of bullying and if it ever happens there are many ways to approach it."

"The most important thing I learned was that everyone needs to be treated fairly no matter their skin color, amount of money, or what gender. Also if you see any type of bullying happening then you should tell an adult."

What Educators Say

"Students and staff were very excited to have the RESPECT plays in our building last month. I was very impressed with the level of engagement each of our classrooms had, even though the plays and talking session were presented virtually. Our students learned helpful strategies to deal with their big emotions and difficulties with peers. Several teachers shared with me their appreciation of how 'current' the plays were. The stories were realistic representations of issues our students face. The skills and strategies taught by the actors align well with our social-emotional curriculum, allowing our students to implement and practice them routinely since they viewed the plays. I am hopeful that we will be able to have RESPECT back in our building every year!"

-Elementary School Counselor

"The RESPECT Program has amazing programs. During the pandemic restrictions, I was hesitant to do virtual programs because I felt they may lose their impact. I scheduled them and was so surprised with how the programs had an impact on my students! The actors as well as the content were effective, engaging and had a lasting effect on the students who attended."

-K-8 School Counselor

"RESPECT has been an incredible program for both middle school and high school students. Their play invokes a lot of thought about real life situations and empowers students to advocate for themselves and their peers. I think topics of bullying, suicide, hate, drugs and violence need to be taught more in schools. Respect finds ways to make it relatable to the age of students they are presenting to and then equips them with the tools they need to be successful in and out of school."

-Middle & High School Counselor

"We love having the RESPECT program at our school! Each year, they provide meaningful and applicable tools for our students through their presentations. We notice that our kids are quick to repeat the phrases they are taught in and out of the classroom! We have utilized various programs over the past 5 years, and will continue to do so!"

-Elementary School Counselor

Expanding Our Programs

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we were able to provide all of our programs at a “Pay What You Can” rate. During this challenging year, this allowed the majority of schools to build RESPECT into their students’ experiences at no cost.

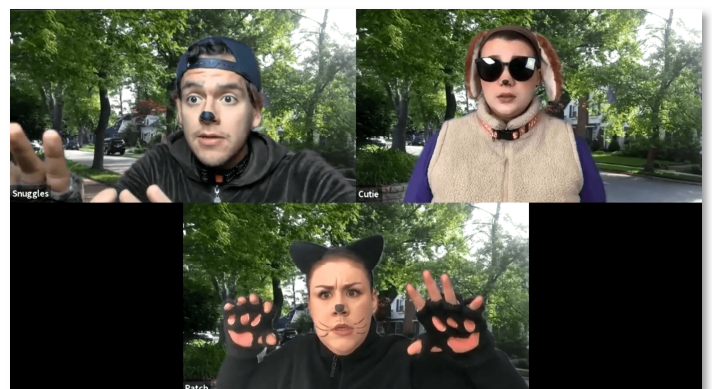
RESPECT was happy to be able to continue providing after school workshops on a weekly basis for middle school students in partnership with Collective For Youth. RESPECT's flexibility to conduct interactive sessions virtually made it possible to offer such programs even while students were entirely remote.

RESPECT has SEVEN brand new plays that our actor educators have recorded – these range from preschool through college. These plays can be viewed at a convenient, flexible time prior to our actor educators “arriving” for a virtual talkback/panel discussion/role play interaction with the audience. We also have updated a few of our old favorites to include current topics of concern. For more details on these plays check our website at www.respect2all.org

In addition to new virtual educational plays, RESPECT has created new short video content called "Continuing Conversations." These brief videos can be used by educators to reinforce skills demonstrated in RESPECT programs such as how to ask for help, how to build a role play, how to disagree appropriately and more. We were especially happy to partner with the Boys Town National Hotline to demonstrate how the hotline can be used in times of crisis. These videos and other resources can be found at www.respect2all.org/continuing-conversations.

To offer educators additional supportive materials for their students, RESPECT has been producing "RESPECT Reads." With permission from authors - mostly local, RESPECT actor-educators record videos of the stories being read aloud on topics that align with RESPECT's mission of building healthy relationships.

To share practical insights from Executive Director, Dr. Patricia Newman, RESPECT developed a new social media campaign called "Dr. Newman Says." These image-based messages come along with longer form information about how to incorporate healthy behavioral strategies into everyday situations.



Building Our Capacity

Throughout the pandemic, RESPECT's staff continues to deepen their knowledge of the important topics we cover in our programs. This year's staff trainings consisted of workshops on: compassion fatigue, suicide, depression, body image, teen dating violence, racial inequality, and child abuse. We also held special sessions about the effects of COVID-19 on the mental health of our audiences.

Staff and board of RESPECT have come together to launch the Courageous Conversations committee. This group works to advance ways that we can be mindful of race and all aspects of inclusion. One of the highlights of this committee's efforts has been holding sessions for the staff and board with Felicia Webster, an Omaha-based artist promoting social change. Her sessions have encouraged staff to be open about their experiences and how they relate to themselves, each other, and our audiences.

Many organizations were challenged with how to hold their annual fundraiser events in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. RESPECT was one of those organizations that had an in-person event planned, but could not happen as scheduled. The creativity of RESPECT's staff and board made it possible to quickly transition the event to be virtual. It not only exceeded our fundraising goal, but also allowed us to raise greater awareness about the organization.

Throughout the pandemic, RESPECT has stayed up to date on the financial resources available to nonprofit both from federal, state, and local sources. These special grants enabled us to purchase new technology such as iPads, lighting, green screens and more, to create a truly professional look to videos produced over Zoom.

Aaron Winston, a former RESPECT actor-educator, has returned to be RESPECT's Consulting Artist. In his role, Aaron provides the RESPECT staff, board, and audiences with a more diverse and inclusive perspective to better mirror the audiences whom we serve. Until he moved to Illinois at the start of 2020, he had been a beloved member of RESPECT's middle school after school programs that we run in partnership with Collective For Youth. Aaron took a brief hiatus from RESPECT after moving away from the Omaha area at the start of 2020. With much of our programming now being provided virtually, we were excited to be able to incorporate Aaron's talent back into RESPECT's work remotely.

RESPECT welcomed Kathleen Sorensen McGee, MA as our Education & Training Director. For more than 35 years, Kathleen has worked with, and on behalf of children and teens – as a classroom teacher, a trainer, an author and a public speaker. She has written more than 20 books and articles. Kathleen has presented workshops nationwide on bullying, teen dating violence, the influence of media, as well as sexual harassment and abuse. She earned both her BA and MA from Creighton University in Omaha.



Expanding Collaborations

Building upon our collaborative efforts, RESPECT is happy to have developed a new partnership with Fit Girl, an organization in Omaha dedicated to empower young girls as they develop and mature by demonstrating positive lifestyle choices. RESPECT's customized workshops were a great way to support Fit Girl's mission as we could tailor the sessions to meet the participants' specific needs.

RESPECT was pleased to become a community partner with *More Tomorrows*, an awareness campaign focused on suicide prevention in the Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare service area in Nebraska. Through this partnership, we are working together to bring *More Tomorrows* through hope, help and healing to prevent suicide through public education, service announcements, presentations, events, and various communications. We are also honored to be a part of the Metro Area Suicide Prevention Coalition organized by the Kim Foundation and Region 6 Behavioral Health. On a monthly basis, RESPECT's staff members attend meetings alongside other behavioral health organizations, school districts, churches, survivors, law enforcement agencies, and community members. Doing so helps us collaborate with others and keep our programs up-to-date with the most current information and trends.



RESPECT presented its virtual program "Headlines for Hate" for students at the Quest Forward Academy. While students learned about several forms of bullying and harassment during the program, they also shared feedback to RESPECT staff about the program assisting us in our efforts in developing our virtual program catalogue.



In January, RESPECT had the pleasure of being part of the Nebraska Thespian's 24 Hour Play Festival, held virtually. The theme of this year's festival was "I See You", focusing on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. RESPECT's staff led two groups of students. Over the course of three sessions the students conceived, wrote and performed short scenes for the rest of the delegates at the festival under the group's guidance and collaboration.



For the past few years, St. James Seton school has welcomed RESPECT to meet with groups of students participating in our "Hold That Thought" workshops, a series that combines learning about social skills with theatre based activities. While we could not go into the school this year, we were thrilled to return remotely to conduct these workshops. Subsequently, RESPECT launched "Red Flags" workshops which gives students tools to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

RESPECT is appreciative of the generous support provided by our donors. As financial partners these donors help students have conversations about and learn the skills needed to have safe and healthy relationships. If you would like to join this list of supporters, visit www.respect2all.org/donate.

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To learn more about RESPECT or to be a guest at one of our programs contact us at
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