

Direct Connection to **Policy Area 4** of *The Illinois Commitment*

DePaul University Women and Gender Research Initiative

DePaul University

What issue or need is addressed by the effective practice?

The Women and Gender Research Initiative was founded in 2002 to promote community-based programs and research that inform the prevention of and intervention in gender-related oppressions.

Description of the effective practice:

The initiative works with community members to effect social change through social policy, advocacy and community development. The initiative also is committed to documenting, collecting and making public the contributions of individuals whose lives reflect previously untold experiences and resilience.

How does this practice achieve sustainability?

Over the last two years, the Women and Gender Research Initiative has been supported by the Steans Center for Community-Based Service Learning, the William and Irene Beck Foundation and The Vincentian Endowment Fund. It has developed, funded and implemented several very successful community-based projects.

What are the results/measurable outcomes?

TEEN GIRLS RE-VISION EAST ROGERS PARK

DePaul students and faculty collaborated with members of two teen girls' programs at Family Matters, a community organization in the East Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago. This project was designed to further empower this group of urban teens from low-income families who were members of a thriving community-based leadership program. Through a life narrative project, DePaul students helped design the interview questionnaire and commented on interview transcripts, which were published in both English and Spanish and converted into an original dramatic performance. Through this process, DePaul students increased their awareness of a central principle of community-based research: that the complexity of diversity issues and interlocking oppressions of sexism, racism and classism can profoundly impact the lives of real young women in our own urban community.

VOICES OF A MOVEMENT: ILLINOIS COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

DePaul students and faculty are working with members of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) to create an oral history of this social movement. The project includes research on a collection of files that document the history of this organization within the broader context of the statewide and national struggle against domestic violence during the decades of ICADV's existence (1978-present). ICADV historical records are now permanently archived in DePaul University's Richardson Library Special Collections Archives. This project provides DePaul students with opportunities to understand and experience direct links between academic scholarship, community activism and social justice.

TAKE BACK THE HALLS: ENDING VIOLENCE IN RELATIONSHIPS AND SCHOOLS

DePaul faculty and students are collaborating with community-based organizations to plan and implement relationship violence prevention programs with teen girls and boys in the Chicago Public Schools. This past year, 11 DePaul students worked at four Chicago Public high schools while enrolled in a two-quarter seminar at DePaul. DePaul students partnered with domestic violence professionals to deliver a 12-week violence prevention curriculum that culminated in a community event designed to combat violence against women. This project also involves outcome-based evaluation research which is used to improve the program quality as well as to examine the curriculum's effectiveness and whether it can be generalized to other teen participants.

Contact Information

Name: Lance Kennedy-Phillips – Research Associate, Office of Institutional Planning & Research

Email: lphilli5@depaul.edu

Phone: (312) 362-6718