



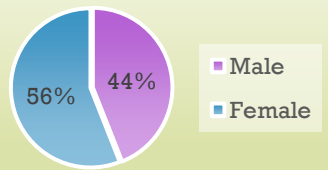
In their own words: Start Strong's Impact

Peer Leaders reflect on Start Strong's impact on their personal and professional lives

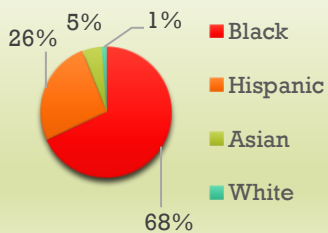
START STRONG AT A GLANCE

Since 2008, **100 youth** from all over Boston have served as Start Strong Peer Leaders

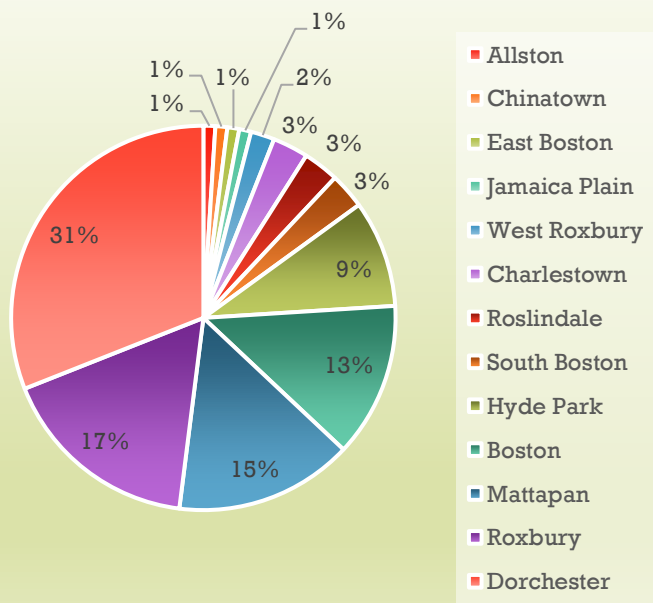
Gender identity



Racial identity



Neighborhood



“I have become a better person from being a peer leader for Start Strong”



Healthy Relationship Promotion

START STRONG RAISES AWARENESS OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

“[Start Strong] helps and informs people about **such a huge epidemic in the world that doesn’t get noticed as much as it should.**”

“I love that I am part of a teen group that is involved in **doing good and spreading awareness of a problem or issue that most people do not like to talk about.**”

“The Start Strong program has helped many teens become more aware of dating violence and develop better relationships.”

START STRONG HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE **TALK TO THEIR FRIENDS** ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

100% of Start Strong Peer Leaders were likely to help a friend in an unhealthy or abusive relationship

“My advice is backed up now, because it’s based off facts rather than my judgments about the situation.”

Instead of “I think”, I can say “I know” because of what I have learned.”

“Start Strong impacted the types of relationship advice I give to friends and family by teaching me how to **approach the situation correctly** and making my friend or family feeling safe and comfortable.”

“I can also **help my friends** if I see warning signs of an abusive relationship.”



START STRONG TEACHES YOUNG PEOPLE TO **IDENTIFY WARNING SIGNS AND PREVENT RELATIONSHIP ABUSE**

After being a Start Strong Peer Leader....

100% of teens were likely to remember that abuse happens in a pattern

in comparison with 62.9% before Start Strong.

“I am more aware of things now and know what’s right from wrong. More aware of warning signs of unhealthy relationships and when something isn’t right.”

“I can recognize things that are unhealthy that I normally wouldn’t because of this job.”

“Start Strong helps young teens understand relationships and **what to watch out for relationship dangers even before they start having serious relationships** like bad communication and the first waves of abuse like the first incident or outburst of violence toward a partner.”

START STRONG TEACHES YOUNG PEOPLE TO **ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES** IN THEIR ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

“Before going into the program, I had some questionable views on relationships. I thought arguing was healthy and that there could be no trust in relationships.

“I didn’t know that there were five types of abuses so **whoever my partner is, I have boundaries that I am not willing to break.**”

“Then next time I get into a relationship I will make sure I trust my partner and every decision that he makes. I want to gain the ability of trusting my partner because **in Start Strong I have been taught and shown that trust makes a relationship grow.**”



Professional Development

START STRONG TEACHES YOUNG PEOPLE HOW TO
COMMUNICATE AND RESOLVE CONFLICTS IN THEIR PERSONAL
AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES

After being a Start Strong Peer Leader....

100% of teens planned to use reflective listening, compared with 64.29% before Start Strong

100% of teens planned to use empathy when talking to someone, compared with 42.86% before Start Strong

100% of teens planned to reflect on the root issue of a conflict, compared with 57.14% before Start Strong.

“I love this job I have gained many communication skills for my future love life and business life.”

“Communication is what builds the relationship and develops the love and friendship my partner and I will have. I want to be able to talk with my partner about any and everything because in Start Strong we all as peer leaders had to communicate and come together to build a stronger bond.”

“I learned many healthier alternatives such as using “I” statements in my conversations. I have noticed that this communication skill has benefited me quite a bit and I am less likely to argue with someone **because using “I” statements softens what I say and causes a softer response from the other person.**”

“I learned about handling situations differently such as **walking away or taking a time out for myself when I get worked up.**”



START STRONG HOLDS PEER LEADERS TO **HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

“Start Strong has taught me professionalism. I am required to wear professional clothes in the summer and respectful daily clothes in the school year. I learned how to act in a professional manner seeing as how I am working with many other people and it is not respectful to say words like swears. In addition, **I learned to be a team player** because I am constantly working in a team so I learn to share responsibilities and to do my part in my team.”

“We learn responsibility and we have deadlines to meet like real adults.

I feel ready to go into the work force with my experience from Start Strong. “

START STRONG HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE **EXPLORE CAREER PATHS AND BUILD THEIR NETWORKS**

93% of Start Strong peer leaders graduate high school and 46% attend higher education programs.

“I feel that this connection has allowed my world to expand-I know more people and I have more connections. When I need to do a project, I can outreach to more people now seeing as how Start Strong is connected to so many people and vice versa.”

“The program is also a great development program and allows students to explore the public health career path.”

“Start Strong has made me think deep about my career and whether I want to work with kids or not.”



START STRONG HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOP **LEADERSHIP SKILLS.**

“Start Strong provides leadership skills because we have to talk and teach young boys and girls about relationships.”

“Start Strong completely opened my mind to teen dating violence and has **greatly increased my public speaking skills** in facilitating workshops and giving a speech at the Hudson Airforce base to discuss TDV.”

Media Literacy

START STRONG TEACHES YOUNG PEOPLE HOW TO **ENGAGE CRITICALLY WITH MEDIA**

After being a Start Strong Peer Leader...

100% of Start Strong Peer Leaders believe that media influences society, compared to 92.86 before Start Strong.

100% of peer leaders reported that they were likely to think about relationship messages in the media, compared to 71.4% of peer leaders before Start Strong.

“Start Strong has impacted the way I look at things because **I have become more analytical of social media**”

“**It has made me see the media in a whole different perspective.** I am more alert for how the media tries to sell different items. Especially making my own poster about relationships, help me see things from both the consumer and seller sides.”