



COMMUNITY  
MATTERS



# Safe School Ambassadors

# Community Matters Mission

To equip and empower students and adults to create schools that are **safe, welcoming and inclusive.**

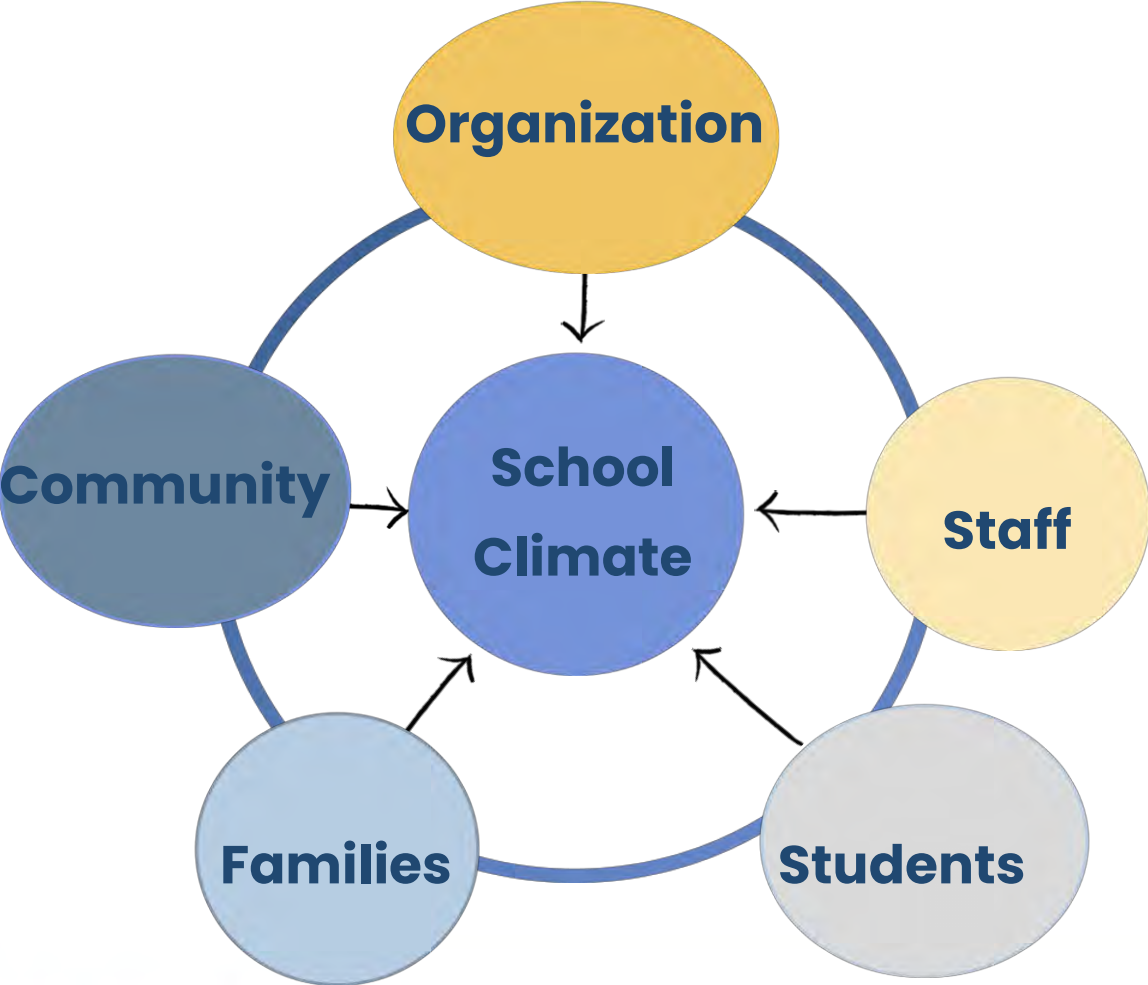


# History & Service Area



- A 501(c)(3) – Non-profit organization
- Founded in Sebastopol in 1996
- Headquartered in Santa Rosa
- Serving schools/communities in:
  - 42 states plus Washington DC
  - 2 US territories: Puerto Rico and Guam
  - 3 other countries: Canada, Japan & Paraguay

# Programs & Services





# Programs & Services – Youth Empowerment

- Safe School Buddies (1-3)
- Waking Up Courage  
Assemblies (TK-12)
- **Safe School  
Ambassadors (4-12)**





# SAFE SCHOOL AMBASSADORS®

An evidence-based, field-tested program to engage, equip and empower student bystanders to reduce bullying and other forms of harmful behaviors that lead to more serious issues such as harmful behaviors, suicide and threats to schools.

**Fights**  
**Weapons**  
**Gangs**  
**Physical bullying**

**Reactive**  
**Catch**  
**Discipline**  
**Suspend**  
**Expel**

**Unwanted Physical Touch**  
**Sexual Misconduct**  
**Relational Aggression**  
**Exclusion**  
**Put-downs**  
**Rumors**  
**Cyberbullying**  
**Harassment**

**Pro-active**  
**Prevent**  
**Intervene**  
**De-escalate**





# Leveraging the Power & Potential of Students

See, hear and know things adults don't



First to arrive on the scene of mistreatment

Can effectively intervene and support in ways adults can't

First to detect changes in their friends

Set the tone and social norms on campus

## The Dynamic of Bullying & Other Mistreatment

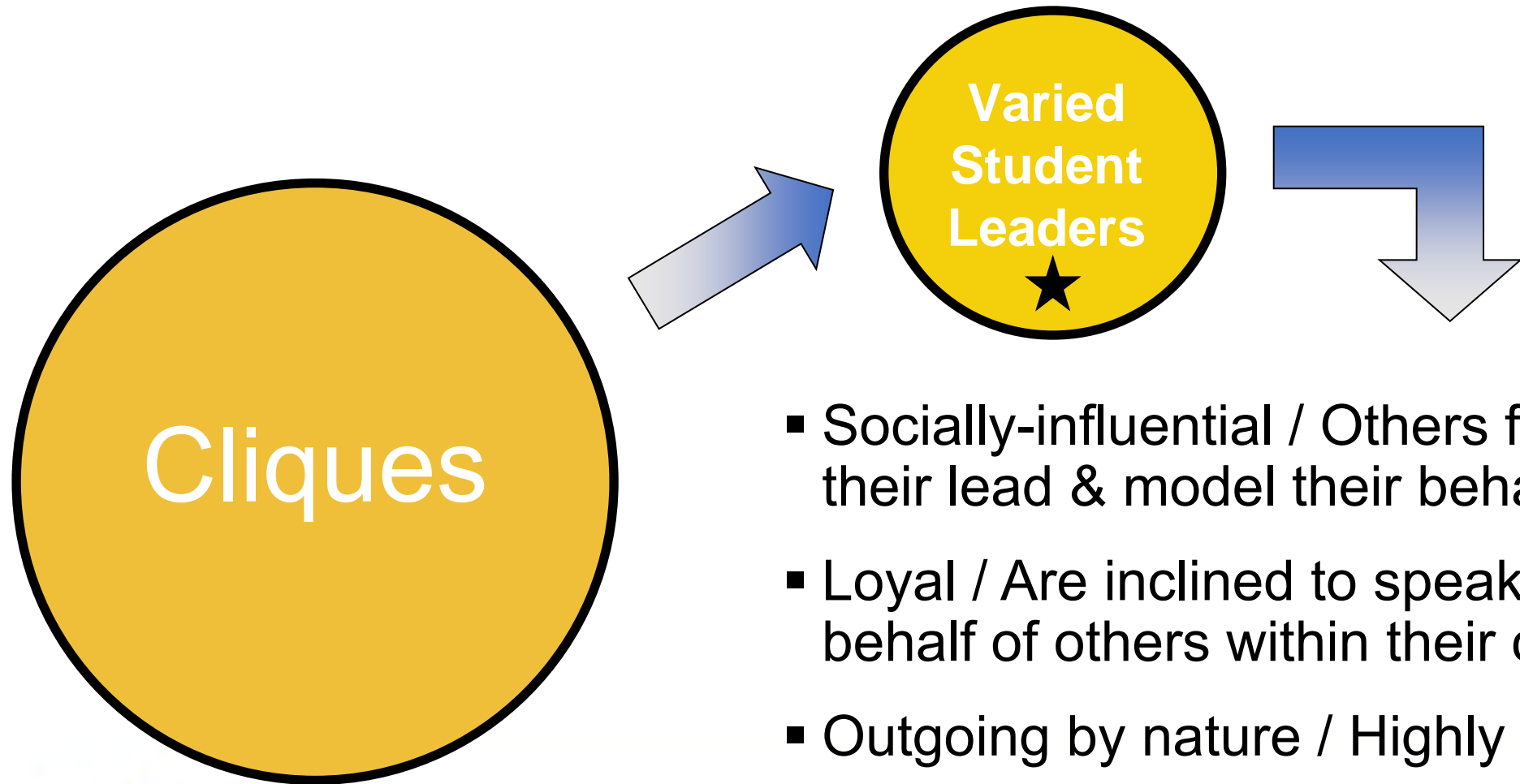
Targets

Aggressors

Bystanders = **85%**  
The Passive Majority



# Identify and Recruit Students



- Socially-influential / Others follow their lead & model their behaviors
- Loyal / Are inclined to speak up on behalf of others within their clique
- Outgoing by nature / Highly verbal

# SAFE SCHOOL AMBASSADORS® TRAINING

Long term prevention-based program

- Two Day Training
- Grades 4-12
- Up to 40 Varied Socially Influential Leaders
- 6-8 Adults
- Year-round Family Group meetings
- Sustainable TOT Model



# Building Positive Connection



# Center for Disease Control

## Strong Connections at School Lead to Healthier Choices

- School connectedness was found to be the **strongest protector** against substance use, school absenteeism, early sexual initiation, violence, and risk of unintentional injury.
- School connectedness was **second** in importance, after family connectedness, in protecting adolescents from emotional distress, eating disorders, and suicidal ideation and attempts.



# NOTICE

Identify the problem to intervene safely & effectively

Common & Shared  
Language of Mistreatment

1. Exclusion
2. Put-downs
3. Intimidation
4. Unwanted physical touch
5. Acts against campus

*\* Technology amplifies all*



# THINK

## Determine if Help Is Needed

- What is the best way to intervene?
- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Am I comfortable?
- Do I need an adult?





# ACT

## Skills to Intervene with Peers Safely & Effectively



Balancing



Supporting



Reasoning



Distracting



Directing



Getting Help



# Ongoing Support & Supervision

## Family Group Meetings

- Connect & Inspire
- Regularly-Scheduled
- Deepen Skills
- Debrief Experience
- Collect Data



# Student Empowerment IS Effective

## A long-term study showed:

- Suspension rates decreased by 33%
- Suspension rates increased by 10% at demographically matched non-SSA control schools



<http://www.communitymatters.org/downloads/EvaluationReportSSA2011.pdf>

# Community Matters Impact

- 24 Years Serving Schools
- Over 2,100 schools



- Over 170,000 Youth Empowered
- Over 30,000 Adults Trained



It's easier, more effective, and less costly to build strong children than to repair broken adults.

-Adapted from Frederick Douglass

# Ambassador Testimonials

## What is the biggest change SSA has caused at your school?

- We have made the school a safer place where people are accepted and feel included.
- SSA reduced the amount of put downs and exclusion at my school.
- Less people feeling that they are alone in a situation.
- We made it safer to have students feel more heard and understood.
- The biggest change the Ambassadors have caused is that there are much less people getting bullied...





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**Thank You!**