

# GETTING TO 'Y'

Inspiring Student-Driven Change in Health & Risk Behavior



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning



## WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:

- The adolescent years are a key time to develop healthy behaviors.
- Schools play a central role in promoting the health and safety of young people.
- When students are engaged in meaningful work they are highly effective in initiating positive changes in their schools and community.
- Youth who become agents of change are more likely to become civically engaged later in life.

## WHY GETTING TO 'Y'?

There is a growing concern about the mental and physical health of youth, particularly school safety, opioid addiction, bullying and suicide. The national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data is a primary tool used by school officials and community organizers to inform work and dialogue around these critically important issues. Students are rarely involved in the process of analyzing this data or actively shaping the health and well being of their schools.

### Our GTY partners

- Vermont Department of Health
- Vermont Agency of Education

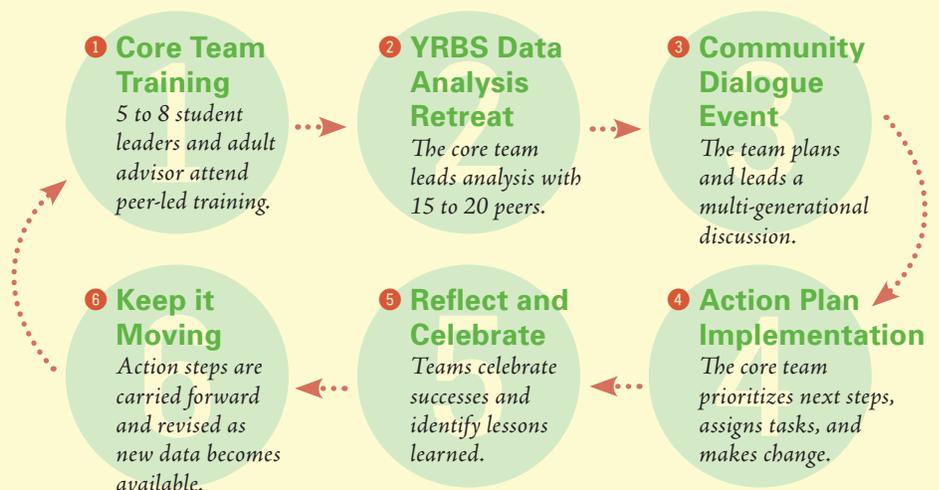
In 2012, the program was successfully replicated in **Albuquerque, NM**, in diverse, urban schools.

Getting to 'Y' invites youth teams, working with adult advisors, to facilitate the analysis of the YRBS data for their own schools, empowering students to take the lead and bring meaningful solutions to their specific issues. The Getting to 'Y' program cultivates student and community engagement, which promotes the healthy development and resilience of young people and seeds lifelong civic engagement.

## GTY BY THE NUMBERS (as of 2018-19)

**12** years • **79** Vermont schools  
**132** teams • **1,050** student leaders

## Getting to 'Y' 6-Step Program



“The one thing I liked most was **learning about how I can be a leader and effect positive change in my community.**”

—GTY Student Participant



“GTY is the **strength-based approach to youth voice and agency that public health needs.** It is the foundation of our prevention efforts and changes the conversation in communities in meaningful ways.”

—Breena Holmes, MD, Director of Maternal and Child Health for Vermont



## Getting to ‘Y’ Impact

- **Youth ownership** of their own health issues.
- **Sense of responsibility** for peer and community well-being among students.
- **Increased youth belonging and competence.**
- Administrators, teachers, and parents gain **new insight into school culture, adolescent health, and students as agents of change.**

For more info about GTY, contact Sharon Koller: [sharon@upforlearning.org](mailto:sharon@upforlearning.org) or 802.373.7594.

**OUR GOAL:** To expand GTY nationally to schools and state agencies who wish to mobilize their students as agents of change to improve school climate and culture.

Getting to ‘Y’ is presented by

## UP for Learning

A nonprofit organization amplifying the role of youth as partners & agents of change in education

UP for Learning works to:

- Ensure students **own their learning** and **participate actively** in school change,
- Create **engaging learning environments** where all students thrive,
- Elevate **youth personal power and purpose**, and
- Develop **leadership skills** and promote lifelong **civic engagement.**

“Students who believe they have a voice in school are **seven times more likely** to be academically motivated than students who do not believe they have a voice in school.”

—Russell Quaglia, Quaglia Institute of Student Aspirations, 2014

To achieve these outcomes, UP for Learning crafts innovative, student-centered education initiatives and supports schools with customized training, coaching, graduate courses, professional development, and online resources. In addition, we are an active contributor to national and international efforts to integrate student-centered practices in education.

“When people ask me for an example of high quality work on student voice and youth-adult partnerships, I always send them to UP for Learning.”

—Dr. Dana Mitra, national leader in youth-adult partnership research and practices, Pennsylvania University

Since 2008, UP has trained more than **2,600 student leaders** in **113 Vermont schools** through **334 programs.**