

Velocity (Middle School Version of Teen Advisors)

Student to student impact exists in every school, as teens are more likely to listen to their peers than any other age group. Most often, this comes in the form of negative peer pressure: students influencing other students to fit in by drinking or cheating or being sexually active.

We know there are students in every school who are making good choices with their lives – students who are avoiding drugs and sex – students who are living a lifestyle of integrity. The problem is that these students often feel alone in the positive decisions they are making...

...but they are not alone. What if these students could join together and strengthen each other in their stand for values and integrity? And what if, by coming together, they could actually create a movement that counters the negative peer pressure that seems to govern their schools?

This is the mission of Teen Advisors: to empower students to impact their culture with integrity for Life through positive peer pressure. When students commit together to stand for integrity, the influence and momentum of peer pressure is leveraged for good, so the effectiveness of student to student impact is multiplied! We believe that the students who are choosing to "live real" by making integrity-based decisions are "really living."

Classroom sessions (7th & 8th Grade Students Visit 6th Grade Classes)

Teen Advisors has developed a one-of-a-kind method for highly effective peer-mentoring known as "Classroom Sessions." A classroom session is an interactive, discussion-based presentation where older students speak to the underclassmen at their schools about the difficult issues that students deal with on a regular basis. The upperclassmen lead the younger students in activities that teach about having a lifestyle of integrity, and they share from personal experience on how they have dealt with these various issues. Some of the topics covered include:

- peer pressure
- alcohol & drugs
- dating & sexual abstinence
- loneliness & depression
- stress
- relationships with parents & friends self-worth

What makes this method so successful?

Through classroom sessions, Teen Advisors actually leverage the powerful force of peer pressure in a positive way. The underclassmen have role models right in their own schools confirming for them that not everyone is having sex outside of marriage; that not everyone is getting drunk every weekend; that you CAN face and overcome issues like stress and low self-worth in middle & high school!

For instance, let's consider the issue of being drug-free: by the time a typical student reaches the 9th grade, he has heard a drug-free message dozens of times in a myriad of ways - TV commercials, motivational speakers, drug-free youth rallies, drug-free school curriculum, etc. He knows that drugs are bad for him!

What's different about the Teen Advisor method is that those speaking to him about being drug-free are his classmates at school, his friends, and his teammates! Students who have made a pledge to be drug-free, and because he knows them and goes to school with them, this 9th grader sees daily how their lives back up their word.

The Contract

Every student involved must sign a contract stating that they commit to:

- model a lifestyle of integrity in all areas of life
- remain totally drug-free and sexually abstinent
- be accountable to their fellow students who have also signed the same contract.

The contract gives credibility to our message. By signing it, the students who present **classroom sessions** are not only talking about integrity-based living, but they have also given their word to model a lifestyle of integrity.

"The most important part of TAs is staying true to our contract. It separates us from everyone else." Chas J., 11th grader

"The contract helps me keep my values, because the real you come out when no one else is looking." Micah C., 10th grader

If someone breaks their contract, they go before the Honor Council – a small group of TAs who has been elected by their fellow TAs to that position. The Honor Council provides accountability for TAs who has broken their contract. In a loving environment, the individual talks through what happened, and the Honor Council members encourage the student with ideas for upholding their contract in the future.

At Blackmon Road students can apply at the end of each year, the beginning of the school year and in January. Applications are at school in the beginning of the school year, however, after September or they can be obtained on the Teen Advisors website at <http://www.teenadvisors.org>. For further information please contact Delilah Hardin at dhardin@mcsdga.net .