



Orcas Island School District, San Juan County Executive Summary of the Community-Level Progress Evaluation Reports

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The Orcas Island Prevention Project is one of eighteen recipients of the Washington State Incentive Grant (SIG). SIG funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs by Washington State youth. Community grantees are expected to make their local prevention system more effective by establishing prevention partnerships, using a risk and protective factor framework for data driven needs assessments, and by implementing and monitoring science-based prevention programs.

Project Site

Orcas Island, in San Juan County, is a popular retirement location. In addition, young, working families who are primarily dependent on tourism and the service industry for their livelihood also comprise a large portion of the population. In recent years, there has been an influx of wealthier families and individuals, raising the cost of living on the island.

The Orcas Island Prevention Project serves a rural community consisting primarily of retirees and young working families who must depend on tourism and the service industry for their livelihood. The use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs is viewed by many youth and young adults as an easy way to “kill time.” In addition, Orcas Island community norms are somewhat permissive toward drug and alcohol use, misuse, and abuse. SIG has brought to the community two prevention programs, one based in the schools and one housed in the FunHouse, a newly established, youth-oriented activity center.

Prevention History

Prior to SIG, collaboration and cooperation between local prevention providers and agencies occurred through the Orcas Island Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force. The task force has given Orcas Island community members and service providers the opportunity to gather and share ideas, communicate awareness, reach out to the community, and more effectively help those youth and families in need. SIG’s focus on prevention planning and partnerships matched the efforts that were currently taking place on Orcas Island. The task force had used the risk and protective factor model for organizing data and planning prevention services. SIG introduced science-based programs to the area.

Progress toward Community Level Objectives

Objective 1: Establish partnerships...

The role of SIG funding has been to reinforce and publicize prevention partnerships already existing in the Orcas Island community. The Orcas Island Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force draws its members from all of Orcas Island, including service providers, agency decision makers, concerned parents, and community leaders.

Objectives 2 and 3: Use a risk and protective factor framework for planning and participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment.

A large portion of the prevention community embraces the risk and protective factor framework. It is used in prevention planning and when applying for additional funds. The framework had been introduced and used before SIG funding was received. Before SIG, the Orcas Island Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force community based its action plan on a process that included a needs and resource assessment and the identification of target populations. In hopes of establishing more effective structures for prevention organizations on Orcas Island, the Task Force has conducted retreats and planning meetings to discuss and prioritize outcomes and strategies. Prevention planning before SIG did not include Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior results.

Objective 4: Select and implement effective prevention actions...

The SIG process encouraged the choice of programs shown through published research to be effective in different locales and with multiple populations. These are known as research-based programs. The programs Orcas Island selected to address their prioritized risk and protective factors include the following:

- *Second Step Program*: Classroom teachers, counselors, and parent volunteers present the Second Step curriculum to K-8th grade classes. The program empowers youth with the skills to control their behavior and to establish positive relationships with each other. According to respondents, there is a positive change in how youth deal with problematic issues, and disciplinary referrals have decreased.
- *Second Step Program, Parenting Component*: Parenting classes led by school counselors are available for parents in need.
- *The SMART Moves Program*: Rated by federal researchers as one of the most effective drug prevention programs in the nation, the SMART Moves program is a curriculum-based program that uses role-playing, group activities, and discussion. During the first year of SIG funding, the program was housed in a school library and had low participation. With a second-year move to a community center for youth, the Orcas Island FunHouse, 20 to 25 youth are involved in the SMART Moves program. A challenge is that many of the older students in the program have received similar information from other

prevention/education programs. A meeting with the Orcas Island Prevention Specialist is planned in order to address this issue.

Objective 5: To use *common reporting tools*...

One of the requirements for participating in the SIG project was to participate in the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior. Survey data provide cross-sectional substance abuse prevalence rates and measures of risk and protective factors among 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12 grade students. Orcas Island schools participated as required in this measurement of community level outcomes.

According to respondents, this objective is not being met around program level outcomes. Prevention providers were often focused on their own evaluation requirements and reporting, and therefore did not regularly participate in the use of the Everest program outcome monitoring system, developed during SIG and pilot tested by SIG community grantees. However, pre-tests were administered at the beginning of Year 2 (2000-2001), and post-tests will be administered at the end of the year.

Conclusion

The Orcas Island school and prevention community have made substantial progress toward achieving the community level objectives, as established by the Governor's Substance Abuse Advisory Committee. During the last year of SIG community funding, the Orcas Island Prevention Project intends to continue moving toward institutionalizing some of the changes they have achieved in the system of prevention planning, funding, implementation, and monitoring developed under SIG.



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