Vol. 3: Fall 2023 Newsletter

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Center for Violence Prevention
The mission of the Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention (PATCVP) is to build the capacity of institutions of higher education, K-12 schools, victim service agencies, law enforcement and the criminal justice system to systematically implement best practice violence prevention and evaluation strategies in collaboration with state, family and community partners.

In conjunction with its 10-year anniversary, UNI's Center for Violence Prevention was renamed the Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention, in honor of the alumna's decades of work on behalf of survivors of abuse. Patricia, '86, and her husband, O. Jay Tomson, announced a $2 million gift to the center in support of its mission to build the capacity of Iowa’s schools, victim service agencies, law enforcement and other institutions to systematically implement best practices in bystander-based prevention education. The endowed gift will provide operational support as well as sustained funding for the Tomson Scholars Program, which since 2016 has funded student internships with violence prevention organizations and agencies providing direct services to survivors of abuse.

Our goal in sustaining our mission is by developing partnerships and collaborations with school, community, and state-wide partners to conduct sustainable bullying and gender violence prevention initiatives.
We have had a great fall semester filled with new partnerships, trainings, conference speaking engagements, and more. We have also started a new grant project with University of Iowa’s Injury Prevention Research Center to evaluate the Mentors in Violence Prevention Strategies program. We look forward to our continued growth with Iowa partners and in developing and evaluating the effectiveness of our programs and services. We thank all of our partners for their hard work and dedication to violence prevention!

Thank you!
One of our signature gender-based violence prevention programs is Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP). MVP is based on a peer leadership model that focuses on the role of the “bystander” to interrupt problem behaviors. The MVP model utilizes trained student leaders (MVP mentors/ambassadors) and supportive adults to guide discussions and problem-solving activities around scenarios that depict harassment, bullying and other forms of gender-based violence.

The MVP program has three primary goals:

1. To increase awareness and understanding of the types of abuse, bullying and discrimination young adults experience.
2. To discuss the socialization and messages young adults are exposed to in relation to abuse, bullying and discrimination.
3. To inspire leadership by empowering bystanders to confront and challenge norms that support abusive, bullying and discriminatory behaviors.
MVP: Mentors in Violence Prevention

The Patricia A Tomson Center for Violence Prevention and the University of Iowa’s Department of Emergency Medicine Research Division, Injury Prevention Research Center have funding from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control to undertake a year-long project focusing on understanding best practices in training and implementation of the Mentors in Violence Prevention program in secondary schools and what factors may be associated with program effectiveness. The project will involve gaining an understanding of students and staff perceptions through surveys, observations and interviews. MVP participating schools are: Perry High School, Cedar Rapids Kennedy High School, and Ft. Dodge High School.
On Friday August 18th, PATCVP assisted the Ft. Dodge MVP Advisors in on-boarding over 60 new and returning MVP ambassadors in the model through a summer bootcamp.
We continued to grow the MVP program in secondary schools and colleges/universities across Iowa.

In September, we hosted an MVP Training of Trainers in West Des Moines, IA. We would like to welcome the newly trained schools and new advisors to current MVP schools.

Cedar Falls High School (new advisor)
Marshalltown High School (new advisors)
Grinnell-Newburg High School (new advisors)
Cedar Falls-Holmes Junior High School
Cedar Falls-Peet Junior High School
Simpson College
MVP: Mentors in Violence Prevention

Council Bluffs Thomas Jefferson MVP Teacher Training

On August 17th, PATCVP had the opportunity to provide a training to 35 teachers, counselors, and administrators from Thomas Jefferson High School in Council Bluffs on MVP implementation and two MVP educational units they will be focusing on. CBTJ is restarting their MVP team this fall and we welcome them back!

MVP Student Leadership Summit

On Friday November 10th, Ft. Dodge, Marshalltown, Perry and Mason City participated in a regional MVP Student Leadership Summit. Over 80 MVP mentors came together in Ft. Dodge to network, learn and celebrate their accomplishments as leaders! Breakout session topics included: facilitation skill development, building inclusive spaces, masculinity, teambuilding, and more.
Mason City High School’s MVP team is led by Associate Principal Chris Krueger and Kerri Foley. Their school is a Leading to Prevent grant recipient through our center and have been funded since 2019. They have approximately 45 MVP students.

As part of their community service, Mason City MVP students assisted with healthy relationship presentations for 9th and 10th grade students at Hampton Dumont Cal school in March 2023 to over 200 students!
Professional Conferences

National Sexual Assault Conference—San Francisco, CA

In August PATCVP directors had the opportunity to attend the National Sexual Assault Conference in San Francisco. The annual three-day conference hosts over 1,000 professionals working in victim services, violence prevention, academics, law enforcement, and more.

World Anti-Bullying Form—Raleigh, NC

In October the PATCVP director attended the World Anti-Bullying Forum hosted for the first time in the United States in Raleigh, North Carolina. This forum is a bi-annual global event with participants from over 13 countries who come together to share, learn, and network around bullying research, interventions, prevention, and more.
Professional Speaking Engagements

Iowa BEST Summit-Des Moines, IA

In October the PATCVP director and the Perry High School Counselor, Tamara Valline, had the opportunity to present about the MVP model and supporting students engaged in it at the Iowa BEST Summit hosted by the University of Iowa’s Scanlan Center for School Mental Health. The summit gathers over 1,700 educators, school counselors, social workers, and administrators from across the state for research, information, training, and networking on school-based social-emotional and behavioral health strategies.

Iowa School Counselor Association Conference-Des Moines, IA

In November the PATCVP director presented a breakout session about building empathy in the classroom for the Iowa School Counselor Association’s annual conference. This conference hosts over 1,000 school counselors from across Iowa.
MEET OUR GRADUATE ASSISTANT
PLAXCEDES MAWORA

“I am a master’s level student in the Women and Gender Studies program. Since I began my role as a GA with the PATCVP, my learning has been substantial. I have gained valuable insights into promoting men’s involvement in efforts to reduce violence and abuse, as well as in assisting schools in their endeavors to eliminate all forms of bullying and teen dating violence. I am grateful for the constructive work environment and the chances for both academic and professional development that contribute to my enjoyable experience here. I look forward to bringing the knowledge acquired here to my home country.”

Home Country:
Zimbabwe

Fun Fact:
I have 8 siblings
“My major is in Family Services with a minor in mental health. I am doing my 200-hour internship with the Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention as a school liaison for 7 high schools in the state of Iowa that have the Mentors in Violence Prevention program. I present new material and talk with MVP advisors about their needs. I also create posters, social media posts, and newsletters for the program and help with the organization of information and the creation of new activities for the MVP curriculum. I am a newly designated MVP master trainer”

Hometown: Perry, IA

Fun Fact: I am a Swiftie (aka-Taylor Swift superfan)
Meet our volunteer Tatiana Schaapherder

“I am an Art Education major. I was a previous MVP ambassador in my high school in Clarinda. I assist PATCVP with their new Instagram page for the MVP teams across the state. I also presented at the fall MVP Student Summit and ran a special art creation project during it.”
Through a generous donation to the Patricia Tomson Center for Violence Prevention (PATCVP) from O. Jay and Patricia Tomson, the PATCVP offers financial support for eligible students in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences who are undertaking internships in agencies, non-profit organizations, associations, or government agencies that have a focus on interpersonal violence such as child maltreatment, sexual, domestic, and family violence.

Focus areas may include related policy development, partnership/coalition development, criminal justice issues, education etc. We funded three UNI students this semester, granting $8,000 in funds to support these students.

Congratulations to our Fall 2023 Tomson Scholars:

- **Ainsley Marburger** - Family Services Internship site: Patricia A Tomson Center for Violence Prevention
- **Rory Schmidt** - Psychology & Social Work Major Internship Site: Iowa Department of Health and Human Services
- **Jasmine Zeleke** - Social Work Major Internship site: Amani Community Services