



Media Release

For immediate release

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAM WINS PRESTIGIOUS PREVENTION AWARD

11 December 2013: A violence prevention program targeting children aged nine to 12 was the recipient of the Community Award at last night's *ACT Partners in Prevention Awards* at the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The *ACT Partners in Prevention Awards* recognise best practice programs that create awareness of gendered violence, or programs that work to prevent violence and sexual assault against women and children in the ACT.

An initiative of the YWCA of Canberra, *Respect, Communicate Choose* aims to equip young people with the tools and support they need to develop and practice equal, safe and respectful relationships.

The YWCA of Canberra's Executive Director, Frances Crimmins said she was honoured to accept the award.

"The YWCA of Canberra is dedicated to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, and *Respect, Communicate, Choose* demonstrates the importance of taking an evidence-based approach to preventing this community wide issue."

"I applaud the dedication and professionalism of our staff, who are integral to the success of this initiative, and thank the collaborating schools and teachers for integrating this program into their school culture."

Respect, Communicate, Choose aims to prevent violence by building young people's skills to negotiate non-violent, gender equitable relationships, assess options for accessing help, and create a respectful school environment.

Ms Crimmins said it was crucial to work with grade five and six students to develop respectful relationships, as they are particularly vulnerable as they transition to adolescence.

"Research tells us that interventions targeting children in this age group can help them reach their full potential, but they are often overlooked. *Respect, Communicate, Choose* provides students with opportunities to interrogate gender roles and stereotypes before they begin negotiating intimate relationships."

More than 900 students have completed *Respect, Communicate, Choose*, in primary schools across Adelaide and Canberra, including Kingsford Smith, Mt Rogers, Ngunnawal, Chapman, Farrer, Namadgi and Majura primary schools.

Ms Crimmins said that she hopes this award sends a message to governments about the importance of funding educational programs for children and young people.

“Primary prevention programs are a cost-effective way to make a lasting impact on the culture of gender inequity. Educating our young people is the first step to preventing violence against women and girls in our communities.

“We look forward to working with governments and community leaders to continue to educate and empower young people to develop a culture of respect”, Ms Crimmins said.

Frances Crimmins is available for interview.

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About the YWCA of Canberra: The YWCA of Canberra is a feminist, not-for-profit community organisation that has been providing community services and representing women’s issues in the Canberra community since its establishment in 1929. The YWCA of Canberra employs more than 350 staff across the ACT, and delivers 30 quality programs in children’s services, community development, housing, youth services, women’s leadership, advocacy, and training. Represented in 122 countries, the YWCA has a global reach of 25 million women and girls. As part of this international movement, the YWCA of Canberra works for a world where reconciliation, justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment are promoted and sustained through women’s leadership. For more information visit: www.ywca-canberra.org.au