

## What we do – together – is critical!

In a time when we are increasingly disconnected from one another, when the US Surgeon General has declared an Epidemic of Loneliness & Isolation, **PEPS makes it easy for parents to connect.** We know that **social connection and community are critical** to our — and our family's — health.

In the first half of 2024, **PEPS has connected 2,000+ parents through 169 PEPS Groups** — plus groups led through our Community and Network Partners!



*In May, PEPS staff met US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy at an event focused on combatting loneliness.*

## What we are excited about...

...**Supporting parents of adolescents and teens** through 4- and 9-week groups hosted in English and Spanish, single workshops on relevant topics, and **groups in partnership with local organizations** including Africans on the Eastside, Launch, Friends of the Children Seattle, The Circle, Hamlin Robinson School, and Mercy Housing NW. The latter has been a PEPS partner for years and will now offer PAT Groups in Spanish to families in their Kent housing site, many of whom participated in a PEPS-based group years ago!

...Incredible feedback from our 6 **Working Moms affinity** pilot-groups this year! This program supports mothers with children 0-5 in exploring their identity and values as working parents and aligning those principles to their lives and careers. The curriculum was initiated and developed based on responses from nearly 200 working mothers and professionals. We plan to launch Working Moms affinity groups later this year.

*"I thought this was a great program! Although challenging to be a working parent, working moms face unique hurdles and this group is a great place to discuss and find solutions to those challenges."*

*– Working Moms participant*

## What we are celebrating...

...The expansion of our Parents of Adolescents and Teens (PAT) program with the hiring of **Gloria Martinez Sierra, our Bilingual PAT Outreach Manager!** Gloria's outreach is generating new community partnerships as the PAT program grows. We are also celebrating continued program development in response to community feedback.

...Increasing and improving Group Leader recruitment and support — with the addition of **Anushree Dasgupta, our new Leader Recruiter.** We can't emphasize enough just how critical our Group Leaders are to being able to offer our peer-support groups! Attracting, retaining, and developing volunteer and contract Leaders is of highest priority.



*Gloria Martinez Sierra pictured, far left, with a Spanish-speaking PAT Group*

## What we are hearing...

...An increase in PEPS Group **conversations about anxiety, exhaustion, and other stressors**. While the PEPS curriculum includes topics on self-care and mindfulness, PEPS is aiming to go deeper by implementing a Well-Being Training program for our Group Leaders. This initiative focuses on **bringing mindful self-compassion practices to families**.

...**Parents continue to be most interested in connecting in-person**. We are responding by ramping up the number of in-person groups both in homes and at community sites and are **now offering PAT Groups in-person**. Groups that meet virtually are also still offered for every parenting stage.



*91% of participants intend to stay connected after their PEPS Group ends, often forming lasting friendships.*

## What keeps us up at night...

...We are experiencing **some funders and donors decreasing or delaying their giving** this year while operating costs increase. We suspect these are compounding impacts from the pandemic: our community's needs are high, everything is more expensive, and non-profit organizations need to invest more to recruit, retain and support their staff. These are not new challenges, but they are nonetheless significant. Anticipating that the fall will be highly influenced by the presidential election also adds to the insecurities felt by us and the non-profit community.

*"It was helpful to have a consistent group of adults with a shared experience to talk to, especially given that as our kids get older their friendships are sometimes developed outside of family friendships and shared parenting styles."*

— *Parents of Adolescents and Teens (PAT) Participant*

## How you can help...

...Consider attending a Leader training and invite a friend! **Group Leaders are our greatest need and the most rewarding role at PEPS**. Witnessing the PEPS magic, while building community and strengthening facilitation skills, is an incredible gift to families.

...**Introductions to family foundations, philanthropic individuals, and companies** help us further the depth and reach of PEPS. Send us your ideas and questions regarding financial sustainability. Like everything at PEPS, we know we are stronger when we have community collaboration.

...Share about our incredible Parents of Adolescents and Teens (PAT) programs with parents and organizations serving families of teens. **We offer customized PAT Groups for existing communities of parents who already share a connection** through their school, or religious congregation, etc. PEPS isn't just about babies anymore!



*"Being a Group Leader has been such a life-giving experience. Each week is filled with meaningful conversations and it's an honor to be a facilitator and witness to these."*

— *Armina, Group Leader*

Since 1983, PEPS has been connecting families in parent peer-support groups and now offers programs for expectant parents, parents of newborns, infants, or adolescents and teens, plus affinity groups for families sharing identities that intersect with their identity as a parent. With PEPS, parents create strong, healthy families with concrete support, social connections and parenting resources. PEPS is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization.

[www.peps.org](http://www.peps.org)



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