



# Ambassadors for Respect

## Learning About the Program



We advocate for ourselves and  
others because...

WE ALL MATTER

AMBASSADORS FOR  
RESPECT

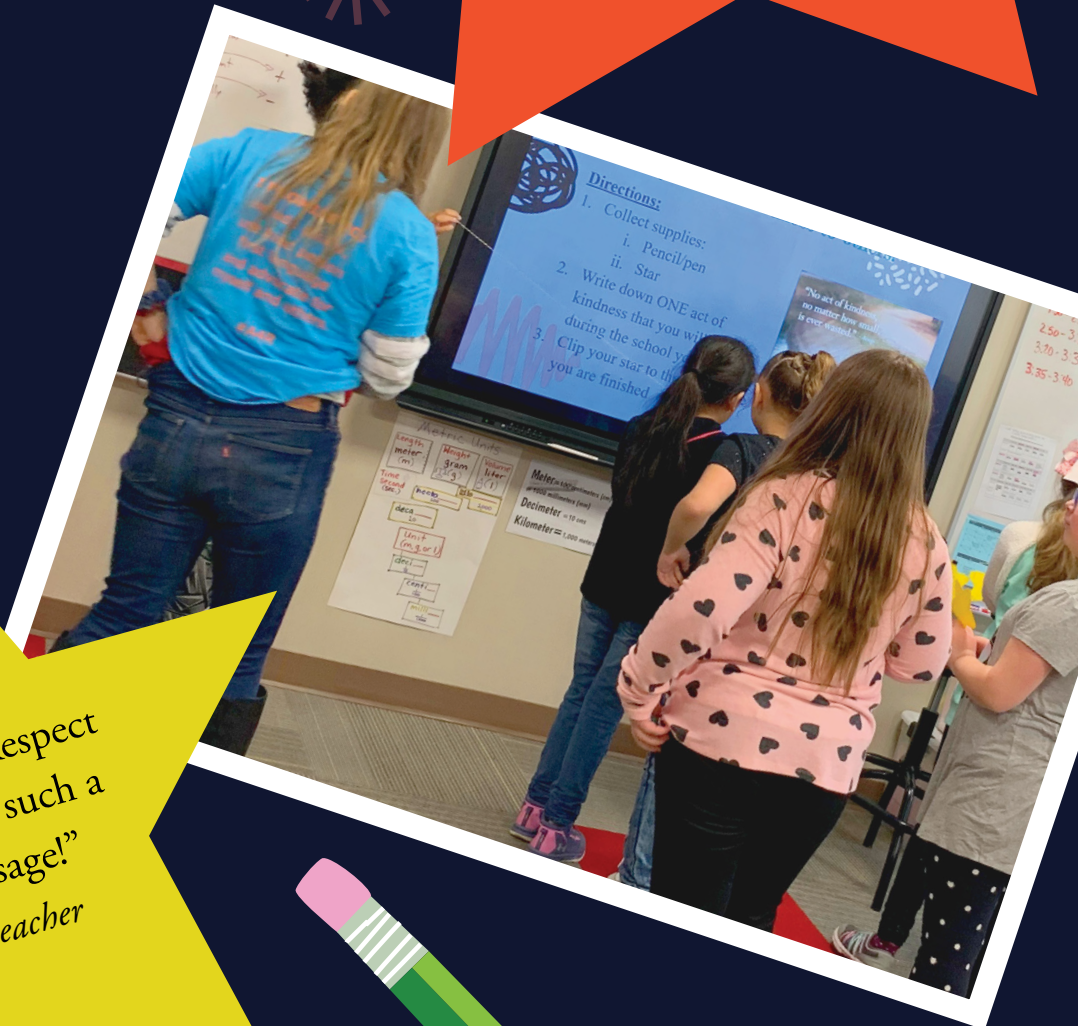




"I think the Ambassadors for Respect Program has helped my students to come out of their shells. They were able to really tell their stories and to facilitate groups. They are proud."

—School District Transition Program Staff member

"i was truly inspired to be kind and make a difference. so awesome!"  
—4th grade student



"The Ambassadors for Respect Program delivers such a powerful message!"  
—4th grade teacher



# Collaborating to Increase Skills and Reduce Bullying

The Ambassadors for Respect (A4R) Program brings individuals with developmental disabilities, called Ambassadors, into 4th grade classrooms to teach students to include others, to use Person First Language, and to advocate for themselves and others. A collaboration with the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, the purpose of the program is to develop the self-advocacy of individuals with developmental disabilities and to initiate or strengthen schools' bullying prevention efforts.

## Program Highlights:

- Highly customizable program offers paid work experience and multiple roles for students or clients with disabilities to get involved.
- Complements your program or organizational goals by providing participants an opportunity to develop or enhance independent living and employment skills.
- Brings individuals with disabilities together with 4th grade students to deliver an interactive, engaging training to build community and reduce bullying.
- Award-winning program that's been around since 2013.

## Who Can Participate in the A4R Program:

- **Organizations that serve individuals with developmental disabilities such as:**
  - School District Transition Programs or Special Education Departments.
  - Community-Based Organizations serving individuals with developmental disabilities.
- **Individuals with Developmental Disabilities who have experienced bullying.**
- **Elementary Schools:** 4th grade students and teachers.

19%

**of Minnesota students surveyed reported being bullied or harassed weekly.**

"2019 Minnesota Student Survey Results Released," Minnesota Department of Education, October 17, 2019

60%

**of students nationwide with disabilities have reported being bullied regularly.**

Student Reports of Bullying: Results From the "2015 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey" by Deborah Lessne and Christina Yanez, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015.

84%

**of Ambassadors for the A4R Program rated themselves a 4 or above (on a 5-point-scale) in response to, "I have become more independent at work, home, or school."**

IPSII Survey, 2020.

## A Win-Win Opportunity

The Ambassadors for Respect (A4R) Program creates a win-win opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities (Ambassadors), Program Partner Organizations, and for 4th grade students, teachers, and elementary schools.

### Program Partner Benefits:

- **Help Reaching or Enhancing Your Goals:** A4R focuses on and measures improvements in independence, productivity, self-determination, integration, and inclusion for participants. Becoming a program partner can help your organization meet or enhance already established goals for students or clients enrolled in or receiving your services.
- **Partnership and Collaboration:** A4R is a partnership and collaboration between the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, PeaceMaker Minnesota, and a growing list of Program Partner Organizations including several school district transition programs and Merrick, Inc. The program received a State Government Innovation Award from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and The Bush Foundation in 2019.
- **Promotion:** Partner organizations will be listed on PeaceMaker Minnesota's website with links to programs, school districts, or organizations as available. PeaceMaker Minnesota will announce new partner organizations and share news about their A4R work via their social media, newsletter, and website.



94%

of Ambassadors stated that they have increased their advocacy; and 97% of Ambassadors stated that they are better able to say what they want, since participating in the A4R Program.

IPSII Survey, 2020.

The IPSII Survey is given to Ambassadors at the end of each pay period, measuring improvements in these 5 areas:

- **Independence:** "increased control and choice over your own life"
- **Productivity:** "starting employment or positive change in your employment situation"
- **Self-determination:** "more freedom to choose where and with whom I live, or taking personal responsibility for personal decisions about needed support and services"
- **Integration and Inclusion:** "using the same community resources that are available to others or fully participating in community activities"

### Ambassador Benefits:

- **A paycheck:** Ambassadors are paid for their participation in the A4R program.
- **Increased self-advocacy and independent living skills:** this can include things like personal growth, self-awareness, and tracking finances.
- **Employment skills and work history:** A4R provides an opportunity for Ambassadors to gain skills and work history, which could help with future job prospects and counter the high rate of unemployment among people with disabilities.
- **Sense of purpose:** By sharing their personal experiences with bullying and training kids on how to prevent and counter bullying, Ambassadors make a direct and positive impact on elementary school environments.

### Elementary School Benefits:

- **A recipe to reduce bullying through inclusion, Person First Language, and advocacy:** A4R Training provides a recipe that schools can use to initiate or enhance their bullying prevention efforts.
- **Teacher Resource Guide:** Following the A4R training, teachers receive a guide with ideas to help them continue anti-bullying lessons in their classrooms.
- **Clear training objectives:** Following A4R training, 4th graders will be able to: list 3 ways to include others, know how to use Person First Language, and be able to list 3 ways to advocate for themselves and others.
- **Classroom community building:** Participating in the A4R training allows 4th graders to get to know one another better and helps to improve the climate in their classroom.
- **Interactive training:** A4R training includes several hands-on activities, in addition to Ambassadors' personal stories about bullying, which help students pay attention for the duration of the training and retain the information they learn.

98%

of 4th grade students surveyed could list 3 ways to include others;

92%

could list 3 ways to advocate for themselves and others; and

88%

indicated that they learned how to use Person First Language following A4R training.

4th Grade Student Survey, 2020.

# Getting Down to It: How the Ambassadors for Respect (A4R) Training Works

## *Elementary Schools*

**Run time: One classroom period (45–60 minutes)**

**Sample Timeline and Components (can be adapted as needed)**

- **Pre-Training Set up:** Ambassadors and their Coach (adult staff member) arrive in advance to set up materials, cue up the PowerPoint presentation, and distribute a 3 question pre-training survey to students.

### **Introduction and Inclusion:**

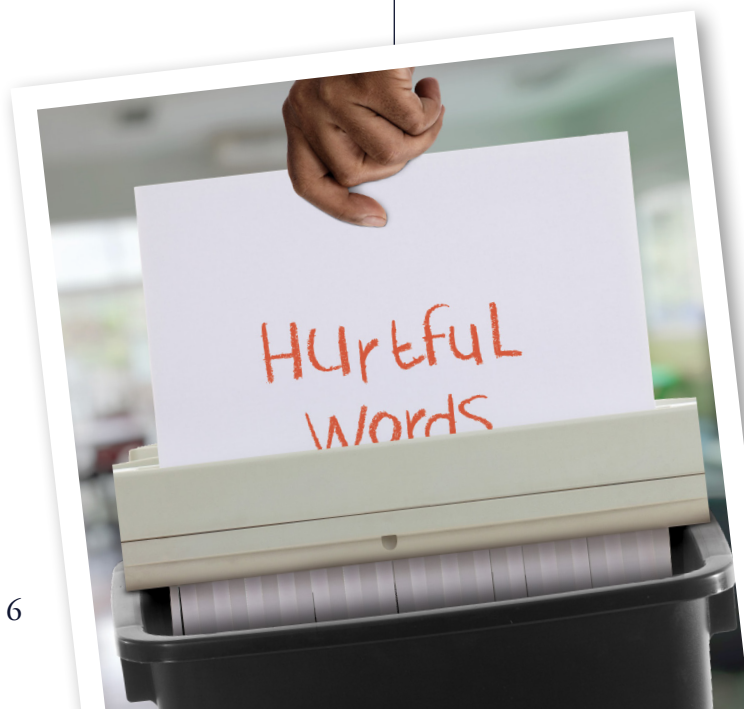
- **Training begins with Introductions:** Ambassadors introduce themselves and greet students.
- **Definition of Inclusion:** The act of including, embracing, or accepting.
- **Personal Stories:** 2–3 Ambassadors share their own experiences of being excluded.
- **Activity – Crushed Charlie:** Students write down how a person feels when left out, crush it, and then put it on a poster of “Crushed Charlie.” Ambassadors talk with students about how they can include others.

### **Power of Language and Person First Language:**

- **Language Can Hurt:** Ambassadors explain how language can hurt and that we are more alike than different.
- **Interactive Discussion:** Ambassadors talk with students about the power of words, and how language shapes attitudes.
- **Activity – Person First Language:** Ambassadors use signs to teach students how to use Person First Language. For example, saying “person with autism,” rather than calling someone “autistic.”
- **Activity – Shredding Hurtful Words:** Students write down hurtful words they have been called (or have called others) and put them through a paper shredder.

100%  
of teachers said  
they would like  
the Ambassadors  
to return to their  
classroom next year.

Teacher Survey, 2020



## Advocating for Oneself and Others:

- **Definition of an Advocate:** Ambassadors review the definition of an advocate.
- **Examples of Advocating for Oneself and Others**
- **Video:** Advocating for oneself or others.
- **Activity – Act Of Kindness Commitments:** Students write an act of kindness that they commit to on a paper star. All students clip their stars on a long string, which is hung in the classroom.

## Conclusion:

- **Ambassadors for Respect Promise:** Students are asked to promise to include others, to use Person First language, and to be an advocate for themselves and others.
- **Thank You Gift (optional):** Ambassadors provide students with a small gift.
- **Evaluation Survey:** Ambassadors ask students to complete a survey about the training. They collect teacher (provided previously) and student evaluations about the training.
- **Group picture:** A group photo is taken of the class with the Ambassador team (if possible.)

## Program Partner Organizations

### Sample Program Timeline (can be adapted as needed)

#### Phase 1: Program Orientation (1 to 4 weeks or 10 hours)

Become familiar with the A4R training. Choose 1-2 staff members to serve as Ambassador Coaches. Coaches: Recruit students or clients to serve as Ambassadors. Coaches and/or Ambassadors: Contact your local elementary schools to determine interest in an A4R training.

#### Phase 2: Preparation (4 to 8 weeks or 16 class hours)

Request childhood photos from Ambassadors. Get signed photo releases from Ambassadors (for those who agree.) Identify interested elementary schools. Develop Ambassador testimonials. Assign speaking parts. Begin rehearsing. Schedule trainings. Make props. Obtain supplies. Rehearse. Credential Ambassadors. Practice the training. Review areas for improvement.



**"I think a huge thing for our students is having leadership qualities and being able to advocate for themselves at their next job or training program or whatever it is that they are doing. They are going to have the voice now that they are important; that Person First language is important. I think they will have the skills and leadership qualities to defend not only themselves but other people as well."**

*—School District  
Transition Program  
Staff Member*



**"Thank you again for this experience. For us, seeing the students so actively strive for progress was great. For the students, they consistently expressed excitement in advancing toward the next steps in creating their [training] video. Great and simple continuation and subject material for our transitional classroom!"**

*—School District  
Transition Program  
Staff Member*

### Phase 3: Implementation (1 to 20 weeks or 3 hours per training)

Email 4th grade teacher in advance of training. Deliver classroom training. Review evaluations, record survey data, and comments. Practice the training as needed for improvement. Offer speaking roles to different students, if possible. Review areas for improvement.

### Tools and Resources — for all phases — to Help You

- **Learn about and implement the program:** an illustrated **Training Handbook** covers every step of an A4R training, including detailed instructions, examples, and templates to: recruit ambassadors, get elementary schools interested, develop Ambassador stories, assign speaking parts, make props, obtain supplies, and schedule trainings
- **Get additional help and answers to your questions:** The A4R Program Coordinator at PeaceMaker Minnesota can help you as needed to:
  - support and guide you during every step of the program;
  - contact elementary schools to identify who to contact to schedule trainings;
  - help Ambassadors write their stories;
  - provide feedback and suggestions to you and your Ambassador team during rehearsals;
  - pay stipends to Ambassadors;
  - purchase t-shirts for the Ambassadors and possibly provide a small gift to the 4th graders;
  - pay for some of the costs associated with training supplies;
  - highlight your program or organization's work in PeaceMaker Minnesota's communications





## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How do I know if students or clients from my program or organization qualify for the A4R program?**

**A:** Students with an Individualized Education Program qualify for participation in Ambassadors for Respect. For adult Ambassadors, a more detailed definition of what qualifies as a developmental disability can be found at [mn.gov/mnddc/council/council.htm](http://mn.gov/mnddc/council/council.htm)

**Q: How much does the A4R Program cost for Program Partner Organizations?**

**A:** Program Partner Organizations pay their staff time to prepare students or clients to deliver trainings. They also pay for transportation costs to and from the elementary schools. PeaceMaker Minnesota provides payment to the Ambassadors and can help with some of the supply costs.

**Q: How many elementary schools does a Program Partner Organization have to visit? How are the participating elementary schools determined?**


**A:** There is not a minimum number of trainings that a Program Partner Organization has to provide. Elementary schools are selected by the Program Partner Organization.

**Q: Do Program Partner Organizations have documentation expectations?**

**A:** Yes, partner organizations are asked to stay in communication with PeaceMaker Minnesota while involved with A4R, and provide basic information about the A4R work they do each month.

*"I'm having such a great time with this program. I love it so much. I feel like I can stand up for what's right and wrong and I love teaching kids. Thanks so much for letting me have this opportunity ..."*

*—Ambassador for the A4R Program*



*I will  
Stand up for people  
who I see being  
bullied.*

## Learn More

To see the A4R Program in action, watch this video:

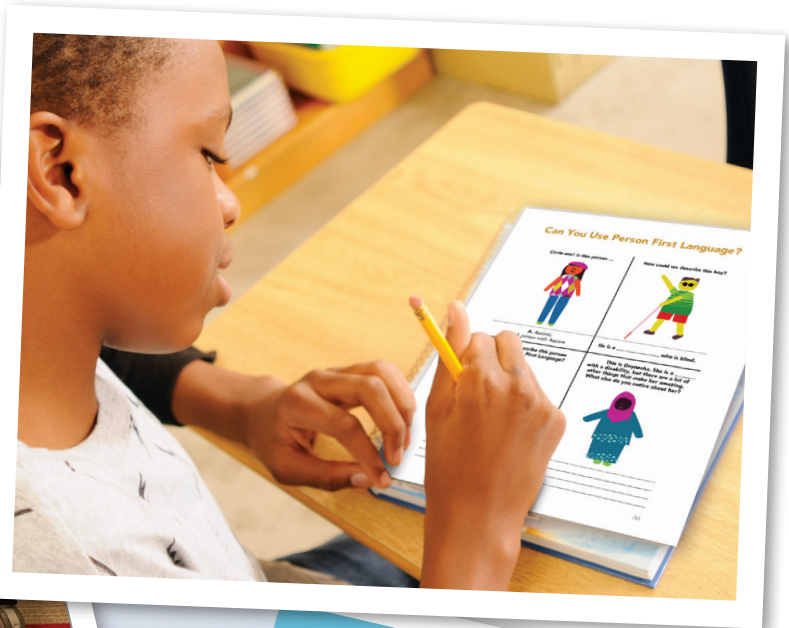
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmtSo0zEwAc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmtSo0zEwAc)

**Contact:** Ambassadors for Respect Program Coordinator, PeaceMaker Minnesota

**Call:** 651-631-1604

**Email:** [A4Rtraining@PeaceMakerMN.org](mailto:A4Rtraining@PeaceMakerMN.org)

**Website:** [PeaceMakerMN.org](http://PeaceMakerMN.org)





smile

treat  
others with  
respect

be  
kind

## We dedicate this to Colleen Timbers

Colleen was a Merrick, Inc. employee, now departed, under whose leadership and support, 4 self-advocates (individuals with disabilities) initiated the idea of an anti-bullying campaign. In 2013, the Ambassadors for Respect Program was born, and training was provided at 3 elementary schools in the White Bear Lake and North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale school districts. We are grateful to Colleen and to the self-advocates for their commitment and vision, which we work to carry forward every day.

"i learned  
that people get hurt because of  
bad words. i will start  
to include others."

—4th grade student  
following A4R training



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*Giving Schools  
Tools to  
Stop Violence*