As we started implementing this exciting expansion, CAASE’s Legal Team provided free, expert legal services to 152 survivors of rape and commercial sexual exploitation in Chicago. Our attorneys were also busy educating the legal community. They connected with, trained, and added 70 members of the private bar to our Pro Bono Project; 4 of the new members were matched with CAASE clients.

Our commitment to centering and incorporating survivors’ voices and experiences was reaffirmed by the establishment of our new Community Engagement Department. We welcomed a director and manager to lead this work. They hosted workshops and open mics for over 100 survivors and have partnered with allies to bring workshops to women incarcerated at Cook County Jail. We continued presenting to the public about how to address sexual harm, in all participating in 37 panels, trainings, presentations, and speaking engagements, which reached a total of 1,457 people.

EMPOWERING YOUTH TO END SEXUAL HARM

CAASE’s Prevention Team educated 4,098 youth across the city of Chicago. Our programs remain in high demand, and referrals from established institutions regarding our great work developed into 3 new school partnerships. To accommodate our popularity, we hired another Prevention Educator.

The team revised our signature programs in order to maintain cultural relevance for our students and trained 22 facilitators on the revamped material. 2019 also brought expansion to our curriculum. We added a fifth session specifically centered on consent so we could dive deeper into the topic. Students noted its importance in their surveys. One student wrote, “The information that stood out most to me was the consent talk because we need to know and be aware of what we give consent to.” Participants demonstrated an improved understanding of consent and sexual assault on their post-workshop surveys and also frequently stated they wanted to learn even more about it.

WALKING WITH SURVIVORS

CAASE was chosen to implement the Rights In Systems Enforced Project (“RISE Project”). It aims to raise awareness of victims’ rights and increase victim access to no-cost legal services to help them assert and enforce their rights in the criminal justice system. This award will substantially increase CAASE’s capacity for direct services by creating a new division within our existing legal program called Victims’ Rights Representation (“VRR”) and invest in our holistic approach to changing systems—a method we’ve practiced since our founding.

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Our community showed up for us, too. 71 people joined the Race for CAASE team and raised funds to support CAASE’s Prevention Programs. ‘Celebrating Allies’, our annual fall fundraiser, was attended by 150 Supporters and friends of CAASE. They helped the event net a record-breaking $40,325 to support our programming.

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