



## CDC's Choose Respect Initiative Partners with WNBA

Unhealthy relationship behaviors can start early and last a lifetime. One in 11 adolescents reports being a victim of physical dating violence. Adolescents who report experiencing dating violence are also more likely to report binge drinking, suicide attempts, physical fighting and current sexual activity.

In response to these reports, CDC developed the Choose Respect initiative. Choose Respect helps youth identify healthy and unhealthy behavior and choose respectful relationships with friends and dating partners. Choose Respect focuses on youth ages 11-14 years old because they are still forming attitudes and behaviors that will affect how they are treated and how they treat others.

In 2007, Choose Respect formed a partnership with the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and the WNBA BE Tour: Be Smart–Be Fit–Be Yourself. The tour was a traveling mobile fitness expo featuring Jennifer Azzi, Olympic gold medal winner and WNBA legend. The WNBA BE Tour promoted fitness, health, and self-confidence among youth in 13 cities across the coun-

**Youth participate in the "WNBA Be Tour" in Minneapolis**



try. In 2007, Choose Respect reached over 1.7 million WNBA fans through this strategic partnership. In each of the tour's locations, youth received official WNBA credentials that entitled them to "Take the Choose Respect Challenge."

During the Choose Respect WNBA BE Tour:

- Over 21,000 signatures were inscribed on Choose Respect/WNBA Wall of Respect murals
- Over 4,900 DVDs of *Causing Pain: Real Stories of Dating Abuse and Violence* were distributed
- Over 3,400 Raps for Respect were created and over 900 Raps were downloaded

The partnership continued during the season finals with the library project, a new link between the WNBA Read to Achieve Program and Choose Respect. During the event, WNBA stars read to students from books that emphasize the core values of Choose Respect and discussed how the stories relate to their lives. Over 450 students participated in the library events.

Local communities continue to work with WNBA franchises to encourage youth to choose respect. This successful partnership provides a model for future Choose Respect collaborations at the national level. To learn more about the Choose Respect Initiative, go to [www.chooserespect.org](http://www.chooserespect.org).



**WNBA star reads about respect at the "Read to Achieve" event in Phoenix**

For more information about CDC at Work, please contact us at (202) 245-0600 or go to <http://www.cdc.gov/washington/>.

