



Why Latina Teen Pregnancy Matters to Me

By: Lorena Granados

www.teenpregnancy.org

In the last issue, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy wrote an article about teen pregnancy among Latina teens, which is an issue that is very important to me. I'm way too familiar with the devastating consequences of what can happen when teen girls become parents as teenagers. As a witness of my fellow Latinas struggling with the pain and stress of taking care of a child, I can say that this is a burden that I'm definitely not ready to handle at just 19-years-old. Latina girls around the ages of 12-19 have the highest risk of getting

pregnant. In my community, most Hispanic teen girls are expected to get pregnant. In fact, my hometown of Alexandria has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state of Virginia.

I have been a witness to not just friends, but to family members as well, including my own sister. When she got pregnant at nineteen, she had to drop out of high school and take the responsibility of having multiple jobs, with little support from her boyfriend. She has managed to stay strong despite her many hardships, but admits, "Having a child is not easy and is not something that a teenager is ready or capable of handling."

I choose to spend my free time trying to make a difference in my community. That's why I've gotten involved with groups like the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy by becoming a member of its Youth Leadership Team, NULITES (National Urban League Incentives to Excel and Succeed), the Alexandria First Night Teen Task Force, and Top

Teen of America. I believe that through education and working with groups like these, we can change not only the statistics, but the lives and futures of Latino teens.

“ I choose to spend my free time trying to make a difference in my community.

Education and community service are two ways I keep focused and stay on my path to success. Community service has not only distracted me from peer pressure and negative influences that could cost me my future, but it's really worthwhile, rewarding, and fun. So stay strong, get your education, continue to make good decisions for yourself, and get involved. Together we can make a difference and break this chain.

THE FACTS

51% of Latinas get pregnant at least once by the age of 20.

69% of Latina teen moms don't finish high school.

74% of sexually active Latina teens regret having sex too soon.

34% of Latino teens ages 15-19 did not use contraception the first time they had sex.

51% of Latina teens have never thought about what their life would be like if they got pregnant as a teen.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What would you tell your Chica amigas about preventing Latina teen pregnancy?
What would you want to hear from them?



Send your answers to kpetros@thenc.org with your gender and age.
By responding, your email address will not be used for advertising or any other purpose.



www.chicagirlmagazine.com