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Monday, September 19, 2005

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Hampton Inn
 Jonesboro Arkansas

Group seeking to raise awareness about teen pregnancy in the area

By LeAnn Askins

Message Board
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JONESBORO -- Locke Isaacson wants to make both teens and their parents more aware of the teen pregnancy problem in Northeast Arkansas.

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The Jonesboro High School senior, along with several of her peers, are seeking to spread awareness about teen pregnancy.

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According to information from the Arkansas Department of Health and the National Center of Health Statistics, there were 157 teen births in 2002 and 19 teen abortions in the county.

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Isaacson, who is on the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, was looking for a community project to get local residents involved in the fight to decrease teen pregnancy, and decided on a walk, scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday at the JHS track.

"I just tried to think of what was fun," she explained of the idea. "I like doing the Race for the Cure" and other walks for good causes.

Because the 10th anniversary for the national campaign is Wednesday, she thought hosting the Reality Check Awareness Walk-Run that weekend would work out well.

"I just really want to let the community know there is a problem in Jonesboro and Craighead County," she explained.

The national campaign had a goal of reducing teen pregnancy by a third in 10 years, and that goal was met, she explained. "So it's a big celebration."



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Isaacson said she is reaching out to all the area school districts and hopes many will participate.

"We're giving away a lot of cool stuff," she added.

Among the door prizes will be an Ipod and gas cards.

"All you have to do is come walk; everything is free," the student said.

T-shirts and bracelets will be given to the first 250 people to arrive at the walk.

She is also encouraging parents to join teens in the walk. Literature on teen pregnancy will be available for both groups.

Organizers of the event are encouraging teens to STEP UP -- using the slogan Standing Together Effectively Preventing Unintended Pregnancies. Isaacson said the club from any of the area schools with the most members present at the walk will receive \$100. She said area businesses and organizations have stepped in to help with the event, especially NEA Clinic and PACES.

The walk is designated for teens age 12 and older.

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