

Briefly...

United Way Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy

The United Way has a long history of helping children, youth, and families achieve their full potential of being financially stable, independent, and healthy. To achieve these goals, many local United Ways have undertaken partnerships with government entities, faith- and community-based groups, and businesses.

While most United Ways have programs that promote positive youth development, build self esteem, and focus on education and making wise decisions about relationships, not all of them have specifically developed programs to prevent teen pregnancy. Several local United Ways are leading such efforts by heading up teen pregnancy prevention initiatives, funding programs during and after school, raising community awareness, and synthesizing research on this topic.

Several local United Ways have recognized the serious consequences of early pregnancy and parenthood for teen parents, their children, and their communities in general, and in response are leading efforts to reduce teen pregnancy. This fact sheet highlights six examples of local United Ways that have taken on such projects. This is by no means an exhaustive list and is not meant to serve as a complete representation of the United Way's work on this issue. Each site highlighted serves a community with teen pregnancy rates higher than the national teen pregnancy rate.

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley – Boston, Massachusetts

The United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley provides funding to the Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy, the only organization in Massachusetts solely dedicated to working to develop solutions to the complicated challenges associated with teen pregnancy. The Alliance's mission is preventing teen pregnancy and promoting quality services for young families by engaging new partners in Massachusetts to address this issue.

With funding from the United Way, the Alliance is working on several strategies to prevent teen pregnancy, specifically among youth in foster care, including:

- Researching what other states have done to address this issue;
- Developing relationships with foster care staff at the state Department of Social Services (DSS), foster care youth's regional councils, and foster parent advocacy groups; and
- Advocating for increased funding for teen pregnancy prevention programs aimed at foster care youth by meeting with legislative leaders, disseminating research, organizing local legislative meetings and press events, and training foster care youth and parents to become effective advocates.

For more information, please visit www.massteenpregnancy.org or contact Patricia Quinn, the Alliance's Executive Director, at 617-482-9122, extension 114.

United Way Tri-County – Framingham, Massachusetts

The United Way of Tri-County is the coordinating body for the Framingham Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition (FTPPC), whose mission is "To develop a teen pregnancy, STD, and HIV-free community through collaborative planning, community action, and policy advocacy." To do this, the coalition has developed three subcommittees—School, Medical/Clinical, and Community—that work with organizations in Framingham to ensure that teen pregnancy prevention is addressed along with the many services they provide to the individuals with whom they work.

Each subcommittee is charged with assessing current resources available to the community on this issue, identifying gaps in services, and researching successful national, regional, and local programs that can be tailored to the Framingham community.

They are currently working with Framingham Public Schools, School Health Services to design, implement, and evaluate a teen pregnancy prevention program for Latina youth.

The Coalition hopes to achieve its vision of “Helping Teens Reach Their Full Potential” by repeating its message to community organizations, schools, and medical facilities in Framingham. They have set a goal to decrease teen pregnancy, STD, and HIV rates by 13 percent among those ages 13-19 by 2013.

For more information, please visit www.unitedwaytri-county.org or contact Jen Mesada 508-872-3291, extension 31.

United Way of Greater Milwaukee – Milwaukee, Wisconsin

In response to the high rates of teen births and child poverty in their community, The United Way of Greater Milwaukee has taken the lead in a local initiative to prevent teen pregnancy. They began their efforts by putting together a comprehensive picture of the effect of teen pregnancy in the community, including recommendations for action in a report entitled “If Truth Be Told.” The response from both the public and private sectors—including public health, business leaders, and the media—was immense.

To address the teen pregnancy crisis, the United Way created a community-wide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Oversight Committee to work in collaboration with other local agencies and community leaders. The committee is chaired by Bevan Baker, Commissioner of the Milwaukee City Health Department and Elizabeth Brenner, President and Publisher of *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. The membership is comprised of individuals from the public and private sectors. The Committee set a goal to reduce teen births in Milwaukee among 15- to 17-year-olds by 46 percent by 2015.

A local advertising firm has donated services to create a bold media campaign geared towards teens and the business community. Several local businesses provided funding and in-kind support for the campaign. In addition to a media campaign, *The Journal Sentinel* made teen pregnancy one of their five priority issues for 2008 and featured a series of editorials and articles highlighting teen pregnancy.

The United Way of Greater Milwaukee also created the Healthy Girls Initiative to support programs that prevent teen pregnancy and sexual violence against girls. In 2008-09, United Way funded eleven evidence-based programs in the community, including ef-

fective programs such as *Making Proud Choices*, the *Teen Outreach Program*, and *Plain Talk*. These efforts are supported by a community collaborative fund, made up of local foundations, corporations and individual donors whose contributions are pooled and then granted to local organizations to run the programs.

Please visit www.unitedwaymilwaukee.org/Teen_Pregnancy.html for more information.

United Way of Anderson County – Anderson, South Carolina

The United Way of Anderson County’s Women’s Leadership Initiative collaborates with IMPACT!, a local, community-based, non-profit organization, to provide funding and support for an initiative to help prevent teen pregnancy in Anderson County School District Three. These groups also work to ensure that teens in Anderson County gain the knowledge and skills to become responsible adults.

Since its inception in 1988, IMPACT! has provided support and advocated for programs that educate at-risk youth about sex and related issues, and to reduce the number of teen pregnancies in Anderson and Oconee Counties. Currently, IMPACT! supports the community in three ways: (1) direct interventions using science-based approaches for preventing teen pregnancy; (2) technical assistance to other organizations running teen pregnancy prevention programs; and (3) resources on this topic. IMPACT! promotes an abstinence-first, age-appropriate, and comprehensive (inclusive of information on abstinence and contraception) approach to preventing teen pregnancy.

The United Way’s Women’s Leadership Initiative provides funding to IMPACT! to support a project coordinator/health educator to deliver programming at the local high school. The educator also helps to “teach the teachers” within the schools so that they are able to address this topic with students and to educate the community, including faith leaders and parents, on the issue of teen pregnancy. For the last two years, this same individual has implemented a highly successful “Peer Norms” campaign, funded by the South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

Please visit www.unitedwayofanderson.org for more information on the United Way of Anderson County’s Women’s Leadership Initiative. For more information on IMPACT!, please visit www.aoimpact.org.

United Way of Greater Battle Creek – Battle Creek, Michigan

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Partnership, also known as the “TP3,” was formed in the fall of 2000 in direct response to the disproportionately high rates of teen pregnancy in both the city of Battle Creek and surrounding Calhoun County. The mission of TP3 is to reduce the teen pregnancy rate in Calhoun County by developing multiple teen pregnancy prevention strategies, engaging the community, sustaining related activities, and evaluating progress. The goal is to reduce teen pregnancy rates in Calhoun County by five percent by 2010 and by 15 percent by 2015.

TP3 has brought together close to 30 different community partner organizations across many sectors, including non-profit, government, private, corporate, faith-based, and educational organizations. The purpose of these efforts is to educate the community about the factors related to teen pregnancy, related health risks, and choices for healthy life styles. Some of these activities, supported by grant funding provided by United Way of Greater Battle Creek, have included in-school prevention programs for teens, counseling services, education programs and tool kits for parents, social marketing on the importance of adult involvement in the lives of youth, providing proper information on sexual education and choices, hosting the national “Children of Children” traveling exhibit, and community engagement events.

For more information on United Way of Greater Battle Creek, please visit www.unitedwaybattlecreek.org or contact Matthew Lynn at 269-962-9538, extension 718.

United Way of the Concho Valley – San Angelo, Texas

The United Way of the Concho Valley in Texas supports La Esperanza Health and Dental Center’s “Success by 6 Initiative.” The program is a partnership among several community agencies and churches that supports pregnant teens through their pregnancy and beyond, as well as their children. The mothers receive intensive case management to help them through their pregnancy and the first three years of their child’s life. Services are tailored for the teen mother and her family and may include prenatal care; health care, including mental health and dental services; child care; tutoring; books for their children; and mentoring. Babies and young children receive developmental evaluations and therapy, if needed. “Success by 6” has also been able to expand health services to girls who are uninsured.

For more information, please visit the United Way of the Concho Valley website at www.uwconchovalley.org or contact Norma Lee, La Esperanza Health and Dental Center, SuccessBy6@esperanzahealth.org.

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