

Teen Pregnancy

By Fludiona Naka

It is not unusual to walk down the hallways of Bulkeley High School and see at least three pregnant girls with backpacks on their back. The first time I saw this, I was shocked. It saddened me to see these girls throw away their own childhood and take on the responsibilities of parenthood. I looked around and told myself I should do something to change this. I wanted to make the community where I lived and studied a better place. Breaking the teen pregnancy cycle would make Hartford a city of healthy and educated children. Some months later, I joined a program called Postponing Sexual Involvement (PSI). PSI trained me and other teen leaders how to teach fifth graders about the benefits of abstinence. I joined this program because I believe teen pregnancy is an important issue my community has to face. Teen pregnancy affects our economy, workforce and the leaders of tomorrow. I was extremely happy to be part of this program, yet awfully nervous. The first time I entered the classroom, I could not speak. I thought the kids would laugh at my accent and not listen to what I had to say. I lost confidence in myself and my abilities. A week passed and I had not showed up for teaching. My self-esteem was low, and I thought I was not good enough to teach these students. I was in my English class when I saw a yellow poster on the class wall. I had never seen it before, so slowly I walked toward it and read, "Keep your dream alive. Understand, to achieve anything requires faith and belief in yourself, vision, hard work, determination and dedication" (Gail Dever). After reading the quote, something awoke in me. I told myself that I had the ability to make a difference. I just had to work harder than the other teens. I went back to teaching, and I have taught ever since. It was not easy. There were times I wanted to give up, but I kept going because I was dedicated to the cause. I believe that pre-teens and teens should be helped to create a vision for their future other than what they have seen growing up. Education will help them do that. If we educate our children about this issue then we can lower the teen pregnancy rates and poverty in America I cannot believe what a difference PSI has made in me and through me. Now, I am able to go in front of the class and tell the fifth graders what they need to know. They do not laugh or make fun of me. Instead, they listen attentively to what I say, soaking up every word coming out of my mouth. I am more confident in myself, and I know that I can do whatever I set my mind to. It just takes a vision. My dream is getting closer and closer to becoming a reality. The students look up to me as a positive role model in their lives. The teen pregnancy rates in Hartford have dropped significantly, but there is a lot more work to be done. I will continue to do what I can, to make a positive difference in my community. I joined the Postponing Sexual Involvement Program with one goal in mind, to help lower the teen pregnancy rates in Hartford. I believe we need to work together to educate our future leaders to break away from the chains of their background. We need to start from the bottom planting in their hearts a desire for a better life, and work to the top, producing successful and responsible individuals.