

# BREAKING THE CYCLE

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## Campaign Urges Action During Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month

May is Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. *Breaking the Cycle* is planning a variety of activities and public awareness initiatives throughout the month to encourage the community to stop, think, and take action to prevent teen pregnancy. The Campaign is urging the entire city to participate. Plans include:

### National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

*Breaking the Cycle* is joining the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy in launching the first ever **National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy on May 8, 2002**. Mayor Perez will issue a proclamation declaring May 8 as Teen Pregnancy Prevention Day in Hartford.

Individuals and organizations are encouraged to develop teen pregnancy prevention activities for May 8. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Invite a speaker** to address your group or organization about teen pregnancy prevention issues. *Breaking the Cycle* has a free Speakers Bureau program that provides speakers to groups in Hartford. To arrange a speaker for your organization, call Laura Stone at (860) 236-4872.
- **Display a prevention poster where teens will see it.** Youth from *Breaking the Cycle's* Always on Saturday and Postponing Sexual Involvement programs will be visiting area businesses and community organizations to distribute a series of pregnancy prevention posters directed toward teens. If you are approached by one of these young people, please listen to what they have to say and support this initiative by displaying a poster in a prominent area. You can also request a poster from *Breaking the Cycle* by contacting Laura Stone at (860) 236-4872.
- **Have a group discussion.** Use the National Day as a reason to talk about sexuality and prevention with a group of youth. Ask teens for their ideas -- their answers might surprise you. Some conversation starters: "Why do you think teens get pregnant?" "At what age is it ok to become sexually active?" "How old should someone be before having a baby?" "Where do you go for advice or someone to talk to about sex?" "What would make a difference in preventing teen pregnancy?"
- **Arrange a parent training program.** Many parents say they would like to talk to their teens about sex but don't know where to start. *Breaking the Cycle* has a free training program, Let's Talk, to help Hartford parents learn to communicate with their teens about sexuality. To arrange a training for your group, call Alice Leibowitz at (860) 236-4872. Instruction is available in Spanish.
- **Write a letter or op-ed article.** State your views about teen pregnancy prevention in a letter to your local newspaper. Statistics are available online at [www.teenpregnancyhartford.org](http://www.teenpregnancyhartford.org). Letters to the *Hartford Courant* can be sent by e-mail to [letters@courant.com](mailto:letters@courant.com). Letters may also be mailed to Letters, The Courant, 285 Broad St., Hartford, 06115, or sent by fax, 860-520-6941.
- **Take the online quiz for teens, or host a site where teens can take it.** See below.

### Online Quiz for Teens

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is sponsoring an interactive, confidential, online "quiz" that teens can access on May 8 at [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org). Unlike most quizzes teens have to take, this one includes a series of scenarios and storylines that will prompt teens to decide how they would act in risky situations involving relationships and sex. Results from the quiz will be published by the National Campaign.

**Why an online quiz?** No matter how you measure it, the number of teens online is overwhelming and on the rise. Nine out of ten young people (aged 15-24) have gone online. About 17 million youth (aged 12-17) use the Internet. Put another way, 75 percent of 14-17 year olds and 65 percent of 10-13 year olds use the Internet. The National Day quiz provides a concrete activity to help inform teens about one major consequence of sex — pregnancy — through an entertaining online challenge that encourages them to think about what they would do in the moment.

*Breaking the Cycle* is encouraging all Hartford teens to participate in the quiz.

Youth ages 13-19 who are interested in taking the quiz but don't have access to the internet can visit the computer lab at **Organized Parents Make a Difference, Inc. (OPMAD)**, 350 Farmington Ave., Hartford. The office will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on May 8. Refreshments will be provided. For more information, contact Lisa Wascholl at (860) 548-0301.

If you would like a flyer to promote the quiz at your organization, contact Laura Stone at *Breaking the Cycle*, (860) 236-4872 or [lauras@pariskygroup.com](mailto:lauras@pariskygroup.com).

"I thought the numbers were going down. Why do we need a Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month?"

Despite recent declines in the teen pregnancy and birth rates, four out of ten young women get pregnant at least once by age twenty. Many teens still think "it can't happen to me." The majority of teen pregnancies are unintended.

**In Hartford, 458 teens gave birth during 2000. That's enough to fill nearly a quarter of the kindergarten classes during 2005.**

Children of teen parents are at greater risk of child abuse, neglect, and behavioral problems, and may be less successful in school.

**28% of Hartford 7<sup>th</sup> graders report they have had sexual intercourse, increasing to 55% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.**

Teens who are at risk for pregnancy are also at risk for sexually-transmitted diseases. Sexually-active youth need comprehensive health education and access to reproductive health services.

**Everyone has a role to play in preventing teen pregnancy:**

- **Teens** should seek to become fully informed so they can make responsible choices.
- **Parents** must talk to their children about sexuality.
- **Schools** need to offer comprehensive health education beginning in early adolescence and continuing throughout a student's career.
- **Health care providers** can deliver confidential reproductive health care services in teen-friendly settings.
- **Youth serving organizations** should adopt best practices in teen pregnancy prevention curricula.
- **Funders** can incorporate teen pregnancy prevention guidelines into program requirements.
- **City and state government** can make this issue a higher priority when setting policy and allocating funding.

**For more about what you can do to help prevent teen pregnancy, contact *Breaking the Cycle* at (860) 236-4872 or visit [www.teenpregnancyhartford.org](http://www.teenpregnancyhartford.org).**

On May 8, 2002, find out how much you know about sex, love, and risky situations. Take the quiz at [teenpregnancy.org](http://teenpregnancy.org)



**YOUTH INVOLVEMENT**

**In Their Own Words...  
A Teen Talks about Postponing Sexual Involvement**

Below are excerpts from an article written by Irena Kaci, a senior at Bulkeley High School and a teen leader in the Postponing Sexual Involvement Program:

Of all the things that I have done this year, PSI has been the most rewarding extracurricular I have engaged in. What I find especially stimulating about this program is the positive energy I feel exuded by my coworkers, just about everyone involved is so committed to this cause, so dedicated to doing their best at promoting the program, at helping these children learn how to deal with peer pressure and sexuality, that my own belief in this cause is constantly replenished.

One of my peers has designed a helpful, step by step, informative web site for kids to access and communicate with us outside of sessions. Another one of my peers has helped build a jeopardy type game to make the learning experience more enjoyable for our precious fifth graders. The amount of time and energy that I see everyone put into this program inspires me to hope for great things.

Then there are the kids. I have always enjoyed working with children, but seldom get to work in an environment where I know that I am not just helping them with their schoolwork, but I am helping them with their lives. Hartford's unacceptably high teen pregnancy rate has given me this opportunity to truly make a difference in a child's life. Through PSI we are truly making headway. Fifth graders may be fickle when listening to adults, but they are eager, excited and attentive when listening to 'cool high school students'. I talk and I know that they are listening, I know that through the videos, through my words or even through my jokes, somehow they are getting the message.

At the end of the day, the best part is always when, walking down Franklin Avenue, I encounter one of the many familiar little faces from one of the fifth grades. They whisper something to their friend, smile nervously and say "Hey PSI lady. When are you guys coming again?"



Left: Irena Kaci at a recent Postponing Sexual Involvement session at Dwight Elementary School.

**Program Updates**

Let's Talk, *Breaking the Cycle's* free training program that teaches adults to communicate with youth about sexuality, reached a record number of parents during the first quarter of 2002. The program trained 110 parents in 3 months.

The Let's Talk program will be featured in the Sexuality Information and Education Council's (SIECUS) 2002 publication *Innovative Approaches that Encourage Parent-Child Communication About Sexuality*.



The Always on Saturday program core curriculum is being implemented at other youth-serving organizations. *Breaking the Cycle* offers training for Hartford organizations that want to incorporate effective teen pregnancy prevention curriculum into their programming. Three staff members at the Hispanic Health Council were recently trained and will integrate the curriculum in their youth programs this spring. For more information, contact Alice Leibowitz at (860) 236-4872.



The Action Plan's Health Care Initiatives Project aims to identify, develop, and promote the implementation of high quality, comprehensive and teen friendly health care interventions to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases. To date the project has worked primarily with health care providers and managed care plans to achieve these objectives.

The project's new initiative – community action groups on teen health – envisions a neighborhood coming together to improve access to reproductive health care services for adolescents in that community. By directly involving new players in the affected communities, we believe we can achieve the project's objectives in a more immediate timeframe for more teens in Hartford.

The first community action group on teen health will be in the Barry Square and Frog Hollow neighborhoods – where there were a total of 120 births to teens in 2000. We have begun interviewing teens in the community to get a better understanding of where they hang out, where they would go for health care, what they know about health care services available to them, how satisfied they are with those services, and what the barriers are as they see them. From the teen interviews, we expect to identify gaps in access and quality, particularly in the areas of pregnancy and STD/HIV prevention. Finally, we plan to address these gaps with a community action group of teens, adults, business owners and health care providers. We'll keep you posted as to our progress.

**BIRTH STATISTICS BY NEIGHBORHOOD**

**Teen Births in Hartford, January 1 - December 31, 2000**



Total Teen Births City of Hartford	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	20
15 - 17	176
18 - 19	262
<b>Total</b>	<b>458</b>

Numbers on map at left represent total teen births for each neighborhood. For more detailed information, see charts below.

Asylum Hill	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	0
15 - 17	20
18 - 19	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>

Barry Square	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	2
15 - 17	25
18 - 19	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

Blue Hills	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	0
15 - 17	13
18 - 19	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>

Charter Oak/Zion	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	1
15 - 17	17
18 - 19	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>

Clay/Arsenal	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	2
15 - 17	13
18 - 19	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

Downtown	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	0
15 - 17	1
18 - 19	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>

Frog Hollow	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	4
15 - 17	26
18 - 19	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

North Meadows	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	0
15 - 17	0
18 - 19	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>

Northeast	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	3
15 - 17	15
18 - 19	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>

Parkville	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	2
15 - 17	10
18 - 19	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

Sheldon/Charter Oak	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	2
15 - 17	2
18 - 19	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

South End	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	0
15 - 17	10
18 - 19	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

South Green	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	1
15 - 17	4
18 - 19	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

South Meadows	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	0
15 - 17	1
18 - 19	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>

Southwest	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	0
15 - 17	6
18 - 19	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

Upper Albany	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	2
15 - 17	7
18 - 19	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

West End	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	1
15 - 17	3
18 - 19	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

N'hood not Specified	
Mother's Age	#Births
14 & under	0
15 - 17	3
18 - 19	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>

Source: Preliminary data from the City of Hartford Department of Vital Records