

BREAKING THE CYCLE

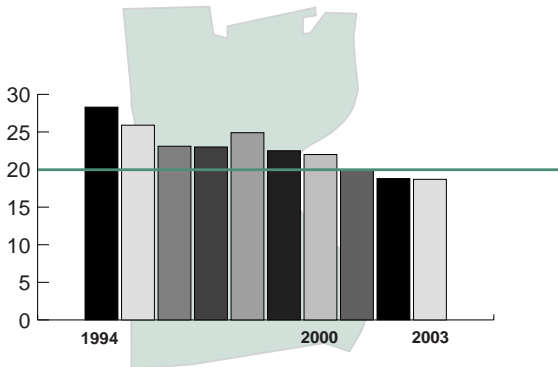
Statistics From 2002 and 2003 Show Continued Progress on Teen Pregnancy Reduction Goals

On December 17, 2004, *Breaking the Cycle* held a press conference to announce exciting news: the number of births to teens in Hartford has continued to decline during 2002 and 2003. Since 1994, the year before *Breaking the Cycle* began, births to teens in Hartford have dropped from 727 to 406, a decline of 45%. During 2002, births to teens under age 15 dropped into the single digits for the first time.

Births to Teens in Hartford

1994	2000	2002	2003
727	481	408	406
29	22	6	10
380	183	150	140
318	320	252	256

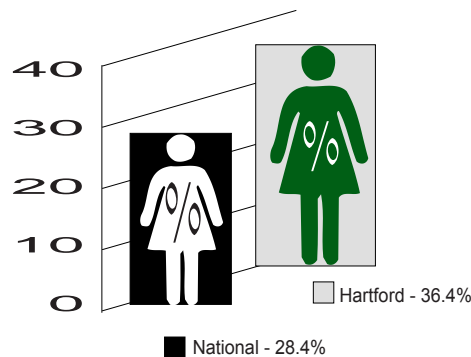
Percentage of Births to Teens 1994 - 2003



Also of note is the fact that births to teens in Hartford as a percentage of total births have fallen below 20% for the first time during these last two years.

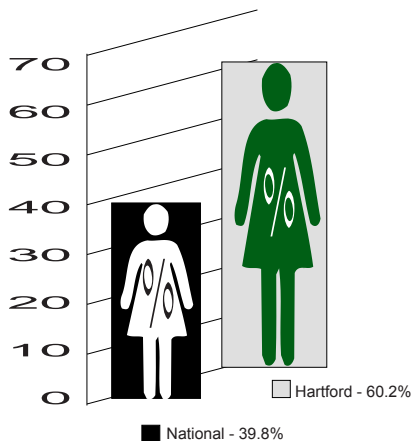
Hartford's rate of births to teens has declined faster than the national average. (A rate allows us to compare Hartford's data to cities of similar size, as well as to cities both smaller and larger.) Hartford's rate of births to teens ages 15-19 in 1994 was 120 per 1,000 as compared to the national rate of 58.2. In 2003 it decreased to 76.3 per 1,000 as compared to the national rate of 41.7.

Percentage Decrease in Birth Rates, 1994 to 2003 Ages 15-19



Hartford's rate of births to teens has decreased by 36.4% since 1994. During the same time period, the national rate has come down by 28.4%.

Percentage Decrease in Birth Rates, 1994 to 2003 Ages 15-17



In the 15-17 age group, the rate of births to teens declined in even more dramatic fashion. During the period of 1994-2003, Hartford's rate of births to teens in this age group decreased by 60.2%. This is better than the national decrease, was only 39.8% during the same time period. *Breaking the Cycle* places its greatest emphasis on this age group, with a coordinated series of initiatives including expanded health education, access to contraception and reproductive health services, and leadership programs that give youth a vision for a future that does not include too-early parenting.

While the news is good, there is still much work to be done. First, we must continue to bring the numbers down, and maintain programs that are working. We cannot afford to stop now -- 406 births to teens is still too many -- and our rate is still nearly double the national average. Secondly, we must find effective ways to work with teen mothers to delay the birth of a second, or even a third, child while they are still in their teens. The problems that exist for a teen mother and her children are only magnified when she gives birth to other children while she is still in her teens. Finally, with Hartford's high Latino population, we must continue to develop culturally relevant solutions for this important segment of our community.

Second Annual Gala Raises \$30,000 for *Breaking the Cycle* Programs

Thanks to the many individuals and organizations that supported *Breaking the Cycle*'s second fundraising benefit, "Gold Star Gala -- Successes in Teen Pregnancy Prevention." The event, which was held in September 2004 at The Hartford, raised \$30,000 and involved the community at many levels.



The Gala began with a silent auction featuring many exciting packages, and a live auction conducted by John Motley, President of Saint Paul Travelers Connecticut Foundation. The event also featured presentations by youth and adult participants from *Breaking the Cycle*'s Let's Talk program that underscored the importance of parent/child communication on issues of sexuality.

The Hartford was the event's primary sponsor. Ramani Ayer, Chairman and CEO of the Hartford, was honorary chair of the event. Other sponsors included: Advest; Congressman John Larson; Connecticut Children's Medical Center; Day, Berry & Howard LLP; McCarter & English LLP; Hartford Hospital; Helen & Henry Frye; Hilb, Rogal & Hobbs; Lebon Press; Lee Hecht Harrison; St. Francis Hospital & Medical Center and Saint Paul Travelers.

Public Service Campaign Encourages Youth to "Be What you Want to Be"

Youth from the Teens United in Health program worked with *Breaking the Cycle* staff this year to develop a television public service announcement directed toward other teens. The concept behind the PSA was to show the challenges of being a parent at an early age.

The youth developed several concepts, and producer Tim Johnson from Fox 61 worked with them to pick the best one for development. The final spot, which features a local teen mother talking about the difficulties she encounters, aired for the first time during Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month in May 2004.

The star of the spot, a 16-year old girl who became pregnant at age 14, mentions that having a baby keeps her from "being what she wants to be" at this stage in her life. The spot continues to appear on Fox 61 during programs that teens watch.

Addressing the Needs of Latino Youth

Breaking the Cycle received funding this year from the Centers for Disease Control to conduct a conference for Latino youth on the issues of teen pregnancy, sexually-transmitted diseases and HIV prevention. The conference, entitled, "*Fighting Back: Latino Youth Against HIV, STDs & Teen Pregnancy*," was held in September 2004 and involved approximately 60 youth and adults.

Fighting Back! was not a typical conference. Many youth conferences on sexual health simply instruct youth in the dangers of teen pregnancy and STDs and teach them personal protection skills. This conference, by contrast, gave young people an opportunity to create prevention products to help their peers throughout Connecticut.

Fighting Back!

LATINO YOUTH AGAINST HIV, STDs & TEEN PREGNANCY

The products fit into three categories: media, advocacy, and services. The morning workshop sessions began with a slide presentation on the problem of teen pregnancy, STD's, and HIV among Latino teens in Connecticut. Then each workshop facilitator gave an overview of their area of expertise – such as poster design, lobbying, or teaching – and gave examples of good and bad products. Facilitators included professionals from social service, government, medical, artistic, and other professional organizations throughout the state.

After lunch, the groups reconvened to do the hands-on work of creating actual products. A poster workshop group designed prevention posters targeted toward youth. Participants in a video session designed two television public service announcements about teen sexual health. A health care group created a culturally relevant list of do's and don'ts for health care providers.

In the closing session, each group presented their product to the entire conference. The conference ended with Puerto Rican music and dancing performed by local youth.

The design of the conference – presentation of information followed by hands-on design of a product – was strongly validated. Teens viewed the conference as worthwhile, challenging and fun. They also felt they received very valuable information about the prevalence of teen pregnancy, STDs and HIV in their community, and said they had gained additional knowledge about how to protect themselves. Most importantly, teens welcomed the opportunity to have their ideas listened to by the adult facilitators, and were very excited that their products might actually be developed. They felt that their products, when implemented, would make a positive difference for other teens in their communities.

Collaborative relationships were forged during this event that will continue beyond the scope of this conference. Several facilitators thanked conference organizers for the opportunity to work with youth and with each other on such an inspiring project.

Breaking the Cycle is working to bring several of these products to fruition during the coming year. If you would like more information about the conference or the products that were developed by the youth, please contact Jack Cullin at (860) 236-4872.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Thank you!

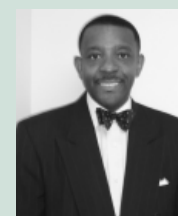
Our thanks to the following organizations and individuals who contributed funds or in-kind resources in 2004 to support the work of *Breaking the Cycle*.

Advest
Asylum Hill Congregational Church
Board of Directors Hartford Action
Plan on Infant Health
Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention
CIGNA Foundation
Congressman John Larson
Connecticut Children's Medical
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Services
Day, Berry & Howard LLP
Ensworth Charitable Foundation
Helen & Henry Frye
Hartford Community Development
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The Hartford

Hartford Hospital
Hartford Public Schools Safe
Schools & Health Students
Program
Hilb, Rogal & Hobbs
Lebon Press
Lee Hecht Harrison
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Prudential Foundation
Rocky Hill Congregational Church
St. Francis Hospital & Medical
Center
Sovereign Bank
St. Paul Travelers Connecticut
Foundation
United Technologies
US DHHS Office of Community
Services, Administration for
Children & Families
Wiremold Foundation
Samuel Wohl Foundation

Program Updates

PSI Welcome to Michael Walters, new Adolescent Health Leader for the Postponing Sexual Involvement program at Hartford Public High School.



Michael Walters

Forty-three youth from the Whole Truth program and the PSI programs at Weaver and Hartford Public High School participated in a Peer Educators Conference in Hamden this past November. Training topics included various techniques of peer-to-peer sexuality education that the youth can implement in their teaching sessions.

AOS The Always on Saturday program has gone through several changes this year. The boys' and girls' groups at the Albany Avenue Library have moved next door to the Artist Collective, where they are enjoying the creative learning environment. The program year for these two groups has also been shortened from 30 weeks to 20, to concentrate on the core topics of the curriculum.

The Sanchez School group has moved to M.D. Fox Elementary, a larger elementary school which serves both the Frog Hollow and Barry Square neighborhoods – the two Hartford neighborhoods with the highest number of births to teens. Carmen Cotto Stanford has been hired to facilitate this group.

To orient staff and volunteers to the new format and set a vision for the year, Always on Saturday held a retreat at Ocean Beach Park in October 2004. Facilitators and advisors spent the day training on the core curriculum and looking at the year ahead. The beautiful setting made this an ideal way to bond as a team. For some of the youth volunteers, this was their first time seeing the ocean.



The Whole Truth, *Breaking the Cycle's* peer education program at Hartford High, began its first full year this September. Of last year's ten Peer Educators, seven returned to teach again this year. Under the program's new Coordinator, Terrance Bowens, the returning peer educators have run one 9-week session of The Whole Truth this fall while new Peer Educators were trained. The full group will teach four more sessions in the spring.

LET'S TALK *Breaking the Cycle* offers a professional version of the popular Let's Talk program to organizations that wish to train their staff on how to communicate with their clients about sexual health. "Let's Talk Professional" specifically addresses issues that face youth workers in Hartford. This fall, the Hartford Public School System requested training for two groups of youth-serving professionals.

The first was a group of 60 school social workers, supervised by Winston Johnson. School social workers are on the front line when it comes to addressing the emotional and health needs of Hartford youth and the training was very relevant for this group. The second request came from Shelley Johnson, who supervises the Parents as Teachers program, which teaches early literacy skills to parents of young children. This year, Parents as Teachers workers will be focusing their efforts on teen mothers in the Hartford Public Schools. *Breaking the Cycle* developed a special training to teach them how to communicate with teen moms about preventing a second birth. The training took place in November 2004 and was very well received.

BTC CURRICULUM Youth-serving organizations throughout Hartford are recognizing the importance of incorporating best practices in teen pregnancy prevention into their programming. *Breaking the Cycle* offers this training, which can be customized to meet the needs of each organization. In November 2004, two staff members from YO! Hartford, Hartford's largest employment & training program for youth, were trained in the *Breaking the Cycle* Teen Pregnancy Prevention Curriculum. They will begin using the curriculum in YO! Hartford support groups beginning in January 2005.

TEENS UNITED IN HEALTH Action and community service continues at a high level for the youth involved in TUH. Some of these youth are participants on the Wellness Center Advisory Committee for the school based health center at Bulkeley High School. At their suggestion, the Advisory Committee agreed to sponsor four information tables promoting use of the services at the clinic (with a special focus on sexual and reproductive health services) during this school year.

The youth developed wallet cards detailing the reproductive health services provided at the Wellness Center and distributed these to incoming freshmen at Bulkeley in September. The second of these information events was held in December and was staffed by TUH members. In addition to distributing brochures and 300 wallet cards, TUH conducted a survey of students on their perceptions and views on counseling services at Bulkeley, their knowledge about how to obtain birth control and condoms as well as their knowledge and attitudes about emergency contraception (the morning after pill). This information will be shared to aid in the development of public awareness messages and youth service programming. The youth are also in the process of developing a brochure on emergency contraception and are working to improve access to it through Hartford health care providers.

For more information about the Always on Saturday, Whole Truth or Let's Talk programs, contact Alice Leibowitz. For information about Teens United in Health contact Maureen Mullen. Both can be reached at (860) 236-4872.