

MAY 2015

Preventing Teen Pregnancy in Northeast Florida

A plan for community action



NORTHEAST FLORIDA TEEN PREGNANCY TASK FORCE

Then: 2010 - 2011

In November 2011, the NEFL Teen Pregnancy Task Force released "[Preventing Teen Pregnancy in Northeast Florida: A plan for community action](#)," the conclusion of a year-long process to identify strategies and community partners to address the high rate of teenage pregnancy, birth and repeat teen pregnancies in the region.

At the time, one in ten mothers in Northeast Florida was a teenager. One in five teen moms was having a subsequent pregnancy prior to leaving her teens. Teen mothers represented a higher proportion of poor birth and socioeconomic outcomes. Despite these statistics, teens reported their parents weren't communicating with them about reproductive health issues, they lacked access to comprehensive sex education and they needed more access to adolescent-friendly health services.

Teen Listening Tours

The results of Listening Tours held with more than 60 teens throughout the region in 2010 painted a picture of adolescent sexuality in Northeast Florida: peer pressure, the prevalence of sex, little communication with parents, desire to learn about the different aspects of sex but a lack of information and a huge gap between knowledge and behavior: teens know how to prevent pregnancy but they're not necessarily actively practicing prevention.

Several follow-up Listening Tours held in Spring 2015 with 20 additional youth reiterated many of the main themes from the original tours. Many teens still have not received adequate sex education and don't have conversations with their parents, but feel sex is a prevalent part of their lives.

Two tours held with youth in foster care and the juvenile justice system showed many of these youth are not receiving sex education because of reasons such as it was not available in their schools, they dropped out of school before it was offered or did not participate in health classes. They

Now: 2015

The state of teen pregnancy and births and landscape of prevention efforts has changed since the release of the community action plan. This document serves to define

The Task Force, comprised of more than 25 Coalition volunteers, adolescent-serving agencies and more, developed community-based strategies to improve adolescent health and prevent primary and secondary teen births.

The Task Force identified five themes as framework for the development of the action plan:

- *Engaging parents*
- *Community-based teen pregnancy prevention*
- *Access to adolescent health services*
- *Reducing repeat teen pregnancy*
- *Public policy changes*

also revealed that there are many special considerations for providing sex education to these priority populations, including periods of incarceration, history of sexual abuse, involvement of parents in their lives, knowledge level of foster parent or resident/non-resident caregiver and the relationship with their case manager/probation officer.

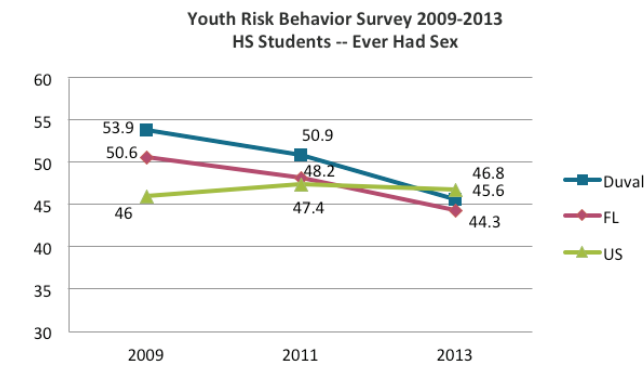
An additional listening tour held with youth in rural Nassau County that had completed the 4Me Teen Health Project provided insight into the need in non-urban populations. None of the youth had received sex education in school because it is not offered and most had only discussed sex with their parents after the Teen Health Project accompanying parent workshop. These youth identified as relevant topics: sex as a taboo subject; "slut-shaming" and the differences in treatment of males and females; and the disconnect between the physical and emotional aspects of sex.

the current issues impacting youth, celebrate achieved goals and identify areas for improvement and new strategies moving forward.

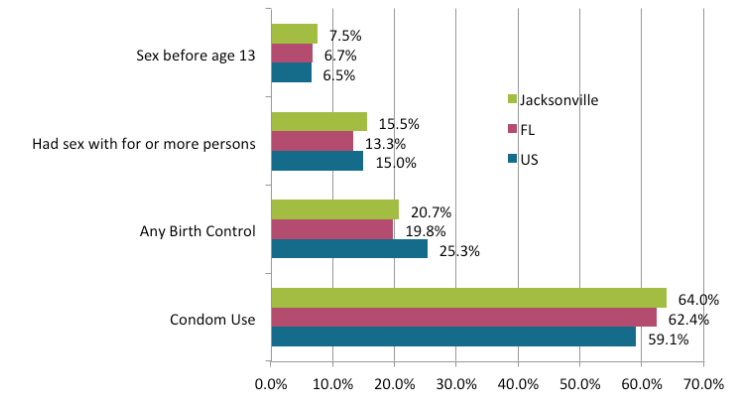
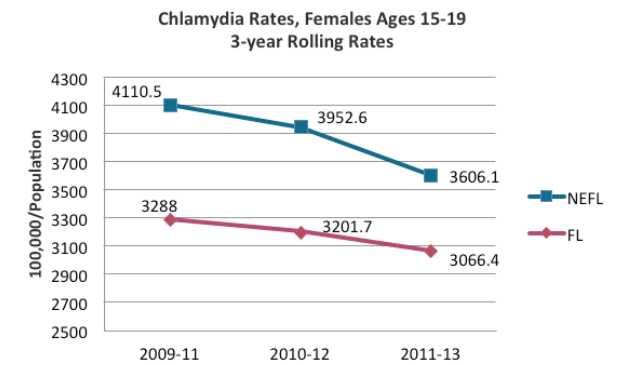
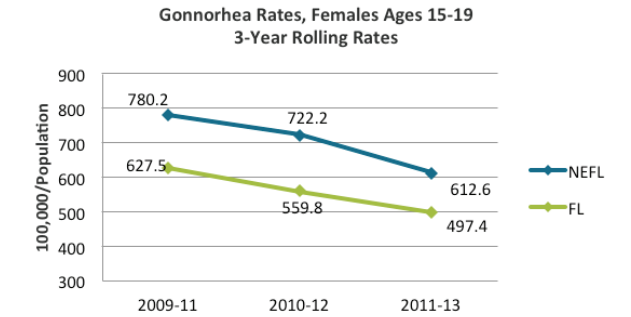
Current State of Teen Pregnancy and Births

Teen birth rates have reached historic lows. Teen parents make up a smaller portion of new mothers and fewer teen parents are having subsequent births before leaving their teens. However, the work is not done. Across the United States, nearly 25 percent of girls will get pregnant before the age of 20. Locally, many young teens still experience primary and repeat teen pregnancies, particularly in minority communities and among certain high-risk populations.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) provides insight into the sexual behaviors of youth across the state and in Duval County. More than 40 percent of youth are sexually active according to YRBS results – 46.8 percent of youth in Duval County and 44.3 percent of youth in the state. And for those youth that are sexually active, many of them are participating in risky behavior, including sex with multiple partners and sex before the age of 13. Local teens also have significantly high rates of sexually transmitted diseases.



The rates of sexually transmitted diseases – particularly among females ages 15-19 – exceed the national rates. In 2013, the rate of chlamydia in Northeast Florida was 3,242 per 100,000 females ages 15-19, compared to



3,043 per 100,000 nationally. The rate of gonorrhea was 497 per 100,000 females ages 15-19 in Northeast Florida, compared to 459 per 100,000 nationally.



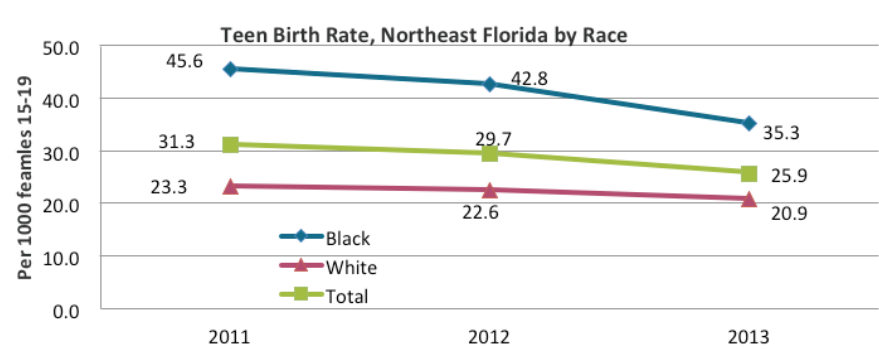
Shalia McDowell, TEEN HEALTH CENTER | CLAY COUNTY

Shalia has been attending the Teen Health Center at the Florida Department of Health – Clay County in Green Cove Springs site since September 2014. She sees the program as helping teens with their problems and lives. Her favorite part of the program has been getting to experience having group discussions and experiencing more opinions of others to help you make safe and healthy choices.

"It has impacted my life by giving me more information about teen health and how to protect myself from different situations."

The rate of births to teenagers in the United States is still high and affects different ethnic and racial groups disparately. In Northeast Florida, black and other nonwhite teens have babies at a significantly higher rate than white mothers.

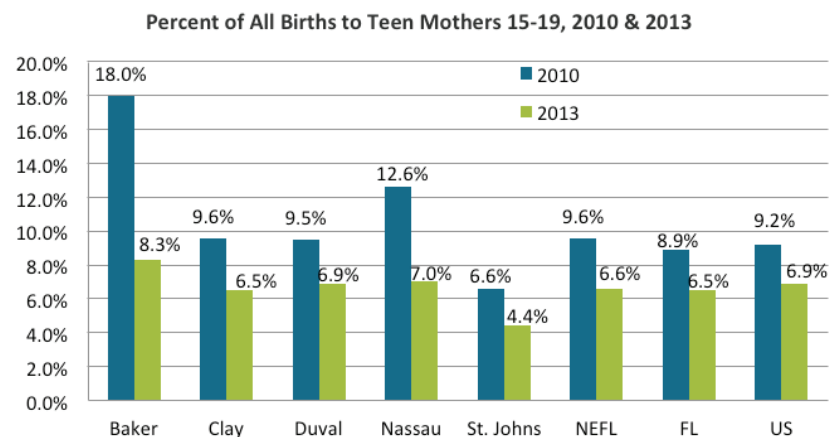
Youth in foster care and the juvenile justice system are also high-risk groups for teen pregnancy and births. Nationally, teen parenting is a concern for youth in the juvenile justice system. While organizations in the region work with girls in the juvenile justice system – including the PACE Center for Girls and the Dolores Barr Weaver Policy Center – there is a lack of coordination of services for males in the juvenile justice system.



Locally, teen pregnancy prevention for both foster care and juvenile justice youth has been identified as a critical issue in Northeast Florida:

- The local child welfare system launched a workgroup in early 2015 to address the high rate of pregnant and parenting teens aging out of the child welfare system – which currently stands at more than 50 percent of the total population – and identify strategies to reduce the rate.
- The Clinton Health Matters Initiative selected Northeast Florida as a site in 2013 and convened work groups to develop action steps. The Initiative’s Blueprint for Action was released in July 2014. In addition to action steps around male incarceration and adolescent health clinics in each county, the “Healthy Behaviors: Sexual Activity” section includes the action step to promote comprehensive health education for incarcerated youth.

Currently, teen mothers account for 6.6 percent of new mothers in Northeast Florida. It varies by county – from only 4.4 percent of births in St. Johns County to 8.3 percent of births in Baker County. All Northeast Florida counties, the region and the state have seen a decrease in the proportion of births to teen months – a noted improvement over the proportion in 2010.



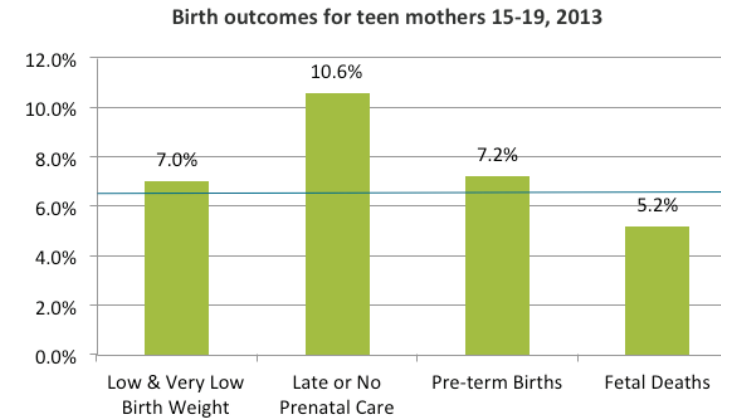
Teening Up Parent

Florida Department of Health
Nassau County

“The curriculum was incredibly timely during my adolescent’s life. At this time, I sense the other parents felt similar based on our conversation during and after our meeting. More importantly, parents and students found new friendships and tools that would assist us in getting through the turbulent teen years.”

- Carolyn Pozzi

Teen mothers still account for a larger proportion of poor birth outcomes. One out of every ten mothers who receives late or no prenatal care is a teen mother. These mothers are also more likely to deliver low birth weight and pre-term babies.



Landscape of Teen Pregnancy Prevention Efforts

Since the NEFL Teen Pregnancy Task Force released the community action plan, great strides have been made. Community agencies across the region have been working hard to engage parents, provide community-based teen pregnancy prevention, improve access to adolescent health care, reduce repeat teen pregnancies and change public policy.

The Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation and Florida Blue funded two rounds of NEFL Teen Pregnancy Task Force mini-grants, with funding totaling \$100,000 each round. Applicants to the program were required to address

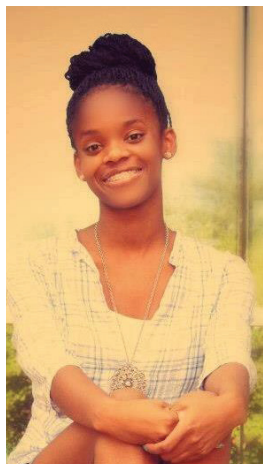
specific strategies outlined in the community action plan. In 2013-14, nine agencies were funded. Seven grants were distributed in 2014-15. Strategies addressed include community-based comprehensive sex education, adolescent clinic services, health education and parent engagement.

The 4Me Teen Health Project was piloted in 2011 and expanded by the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition in 2012 with funding from the federal Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP). The program currently operates at nine sites in the community.



Candice Robinson,
MOM

My children and I have been participants with Project YouthLink for 5 grant years. The program has helped reinforce the skills that I’m instilling in my children; primarily communication skills, creativity and public speaking. Essentially, I believe, we all should possess these skills to foster successful personal and business relationships. My favorite part of the program is the community outreach events. It’s rewarding seeing my children, extend themselves, through educational enrichment activities, to other youth.



What's working?

Engaging Parents

Teens reported that they wanted to talk to their parents about difficult issues like sex. But that communication isn't always there – parents often feel awkward or uncomfortable having that talk and teens are concerned their parents will judge them.

Equipping parents with knowledge and working with them to improve their communication skills can go a long ways toward increasing parent-child communication.

Through mini-grant funding, the Florida Department of Health in Baker County surveyed 25 parents about parent-child communication. The parents expressed unease in discussing sex with their youth. The health department took the information they learned from parents during focus groups, developed and held two parent-teen days to work with families on improving communication and creating more ease in discussing a range of topics.

The Teening Up curriculum, developed by the Duval County Cooperative Extension, was identified as a best practice with potential for expansion. In 2012, more than 50 people in Baker, Duval and Nassau counties were trained on the curriculum. Since then, it has been offered to parents across the region with the help of mini-grant funding. The Florida Department of Health in Baker



County, Florida Department of Health in Nassau County and the Women's Center of Jacksonville have all utilized the curriculum to engage parents.

The 4Me Teen Health Project, implemented by the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, includes a parent workshop that focuses on providing condensed information on pregnancy prevention, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases, while also working with parents, grandparents, guardians and other trusted adults to improve their communication with adolescents and help them become askable adults.

Reaching youth in community settings


Agencies across the region are capitalizing on time adolescents spend in after school programs, community centers and other youth programs to provide them with the tools they need to prevent pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

The Bridge of Northeast Florida, a two-time mini-grantee, adapted their Healthy Choices program to not only offer information to teens on abstinence and safe sex, but also incorporate leadership training, asset development and the social justice theory into services.

APEL Health Services utilizes peer health educators through their "Project YouthLink," a youth empowerment initiative for teens and young adults in Duval County's urban communities. Through mini-grant funding in 2014-15, the peer educators provided prevention education sessions for incarcerated male adolescents, focusing on STI awareness, contraceptives, the financial costs of teen parenting and the roles and responsibilities for males in teen pregnancy.

The Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition piloted the 4Me Teen Health Project, an evidence-based comprehensive sex education program, in 2011 and later secured funding for an expansion through the federal Personal Responsibility Education Program in 2012. The program, which includes a teen education series, parent workshop and six-month Teen Leadership Council, currently operates at nine sites in Clay, Duval and Nassau counties.



50+ STAFF  from local adolescent-serving agencies were trained on the Teening Up curriculum for parents

 **70** PARENTS

parents in Baker, Clay, Duval and Nassau counties attended parent workshops to learn about improving their communication and sexual health through the Task Force mini-grants


 **28** PARENTS

participated in listening tours on teen sexual health and pregnancy prevention through the Task Force mini-grants

1200+  PRE-TEENS

and teens received age-appropriate, community-based teen pregnancy prevention education through the Task Force mini-grants

20 YOUTH

 were trained as peer health advocates, educating teens in the community and juvenile justice system through the Task Force mini-grants

273 TEENS COMPLETED

the 4Me Teen Health Project comprehensive sex education series

 **81.3%** OF TEENS

in the 4Me Teen Health Project reported increased confidence in their ability to obtain information to avoid unplanned pregnancy

 **95%** OF TEEN PARTICIPANTS

in the 4Me Teen Health program who were abstinent while participating in the program continued to be abstinent.

 **85%** OF TEEN PARTICIPANTS

in the 4Me Teen Health Project who are sexually active reported using contraception.



Access to adolescent health care

Research shows that teens are more likely to use adolescent-specific health care services. In 2011, adolescent health clinics were limited to very few locations, including the PACE Center for Girls, the Florida Department of Health in Nassau County and monthly STI screening and treatment services at the Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network (JASMYN).

With mini-grant funding, both FDOH—Nassau and the PACE Center for Girls expanded their clinical services. In Nassau County, a second teen clinic was opened in the rural community of Hilliard. PACE utilized funding to offer gender-specific services to youth in both their day program and transition services, and continues to be a model for providing adolescent health services.

205
YOUTH
received adolescent-friendly health care services through the Task Force mini-grants

573

TEXTS HAVE BEEN SENT
to the BrdsNBz NE Florida text message warm line.

5 **TEEN SPECIFIC**
health clinics serving three different counties

80 **PEER HEALTH ADVOCATES**
from 11 different agencies have participated in the FDOH – Duval training and program.

In 2013 and 2014, the Florida Department of Health in Clay County launched two teen health centers that provide both education and clinical services. The first center launched in Green Cove Springs in 2013, while a second opened in Orange Park at the Bear Run Clinic in 2014. Both sites offer health dialogue, guest speakers and arts and crafts, in addition to free and confidential access to medical services on site. To combat the issue of transportation, FDOH—Clay is utilizing mini-grant funding to provide transportation to the THC youth.

The Duval County Public Schools and Florida Department of Health in Duval County have begun implementing clinics at several Full Service Schools in the county through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health. The first opened in the summer of 2014 at Ribault High School.

The BrdsNBz NE Florida text message line launched in January 2013 as part of the Healthy Start Coalition's PREP grant. Youth can submit sexual health questions and receive answers and referrals to local resources within 24 hours.

The Florida Department of Health in Duval County implemented a successful Peer Health Advocate program in 2012-2013 to equip teens and young adults to be community resources for correct information and referrals for STI/HIV screenings and family planning information. The program relaunched in 2014 and continues to utilize youth to reach their peers.

Repeat Teen Pregnancies

Pregnant and parenting teens in Northeast Florida are receiving resources to help them have healthy pregnancies, reach their goals and delay subsequent pregnancies.

The Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition launched the Nurse-Family Partnership in 2012. The evidence-based home visiting program is implemented through the FDOH-Duval and UF Health/Shands Jacksonville Healthy Start programs and includes teen mothers as a priority population for the intensive home visits utilizing nurses.

The Stork's Nest of Jacksonville currently works with pregnant and parenting teens in the school system. Utilizing mini-grant funding, the Stork's Nest provides prenatal and postnatal curricula on pregnancy, parenting and health, peer mentoring support, engagement of the mothers' support system and an emphasis on preventing subsequent pregnancies.

30 **TEEN MOTHERS**

received health and parenting education to prevent repeat teen pregnancies through the Task Force mini-grants



Virginia Thompson, grandmother
APEL HEALTH SERVICES | PROJECT YOUTHLINK

"Seeing my grandson going to his meeting and outreach events I see the changes he is making and it makes me proud to see him give back to the community. I think it's a good program that helps teenagers to learn about them self and to outreach to others."



Di'Jon Thompson
APEL HEALTH SERVICES | PROJECT YOUTHLINK

"The program has impacted my life by having the chance to come in contact with teenagers from all different walks of life. My favorite part about being in the program is being able to work with different teens from all different walks of life and being able to be a blessing to others."



What are the challenges?

Enacting public policy change, particularly around hot button issues like sex education and teen pregnancy prevention, can be a long, slow process. Little progress has been made in this area, despite it being one of five key themes selected by the Task Force. The Task Force created a Public Policy Subcommittee in January 2015 to lead the effort for policy changes on both the local and state level.

Many pregnant and parenting teens are recipients of care coordination and case management through programs like Healthy Start and the Magnolia Project. The Coalition is looking for ways to incorporate more teen-specific programs to enhance work already being done. While the Nurse-Family Partnership program has been implemented through the Healthy Start program in Duval County,

this program is at capacity and currently only serves 100 women at a time. We are looking into additional opportunities to pilot and expand teen-specific services within Healthy Start.

The Task Force identified **engaging the faith-based community** in teen pregnancy prevention as an area in need of additional study in the 2011 action plan. Engaging the faith community is important because religious faith and a strong moral sense play important roles in protecting youth from too-early sexual activity, teen pregnancy and other risky behaviors, according to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. Since then, Task Force members have had limited success with engaging the faith community.



Kennesha Bacon and her mom, Shemeika Williams

4ME TEEN HEALTH PROJECT

Kennesha completed the education classes and teen leadership council in Spring 2014. She is currently a 2014-2015 Teen Ambassador. Her mom, Shemeika, completed the parent workshop and supports her daughter's continued participation

"It impacted me to be safe while in sexual contact. To watch who you have sex with." Kennesha said. "It also impacted my life by teaching me the different diseases and viruses."

Shemeika sees the benefits of her daughter's participation – the new and exciting adventures for her. "She's learning a lot and making new friends. She really enjoys being in the program."

Going Forward: 2015 and Beyond

The Task Force met in January 2015 to identify additional areas to focus efforts, including male responsibility, foster care youth, incarcerated males, parent involvement and public policy.

2015 Action Plan Additions

STRATEGIES

Prioritize referrals of pregnant teens to Healthy Start programs. Identify teens referred to Healthy Start as a special high-risk group.

Incorporate teen pregnancy prevention and foster parent engagement into foster care programs in the region.

Provide comprehensive sex education to males currently in the juvenile justice system.

Engage school health advisory committees, county and city commissions and school boards in advocacy efforts to provide comprehensive sex education in schools and other programming.

Provide comprehensive sex education in a faith-based setting, including churches and youth ministries.

Train local parents and teens on key issues related to comprehensive sex education to enable them to advocate for public policy changes

Continue to engage parents in teen pregnancy prevention through curricula like Teening Up, church group and marketing campaigns.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition
- Local health departments
- UF Health Jacksonville
- Children's Home Society
- DCF Family Support Services

- Local jails, courts
- Duval Regional Juvenile Detention Center
- Duval Academy
- Jacksonville Youth Academy
- St. Johns Juvenile Correctional Facility
- Impact House
- Tiger Shop
- City of Jacksonville – Mayor's Office

- Local school boards
- Local SHACS
- Local commissions

- Ministers alliances
- ICARE
- New Town Success Zone
- Planned Parenthood

- Community organizations
- Churches
- Healthy Start Coalition



Jordan Thomas

BRIDGE OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA | POTTER HOUSE HIGH SCHOOL PARTICIPANT

I have been a member of the Healthy Choices Abstinence Program for six weeks and it has greatly impacted my life! The Abstinence Program has encouraged me to remain steadfast when dealing with the sexual pressures of this world and it was comfortable being able to listen and ask questions without parents being in the room. My favorite part of the program were the games and activities the instructors set up. They were both educational, and fun, which kept our attention and focus.

I would most definitely recommend participation to all youth/teens because too few of my generation are completely clueless to the different STI's or STD's that are waiting to happen. Also, little to none of us are properly sexually educated so it is often regarded that things like condoms, or the fact that it may be the first sexual encounter, will always prevent one from any number of viruses ranging from minor to deadly!

Community Partners 2010-2015



- APEL Health Services
- Baker County Public Schools
- The Bridge of Northeast Florida
- Chamberlain College of Nursing
- Children's Home Society of Florida
- Duval County Public Schools
- Family Support Services of North Florida
- Florida Department of Health – Baker County
- Florida Department of Health – Clay County
- Florida Department of Health – Duval County
- Florida Department of Health – Nassau County
- Florida Department of Health – St. Johns County
- Girls, Incorporated
- Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of North Florida
- Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network
- The Jaguars Foundation
- Jersey College School of Nursing
- JobCorps
- Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition Board of Directors
- PACE Center for Girls
- Planned Parenthood of North Florida
- Shower of Hope
- St. Johns County Public Schools
- Sunshine Health
- University of North Florida
- UF Health/Shands Jacksonville
- The Way Clinic
- Women's Giving Alliance



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