

Bethany hosts Teen Forum to Kick Off Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month

Written by Mary Ann McLeod
Monday, 02 May 2011 10:45

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Moline, Illinois – Bethany for Children & Families, in conjunction with Edgerton Women's Health Center and the Scott County Health Department, is hosting a teen forum, entitled T.O.P. (Teens on Point) to kickoff Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month on Tuesday, May 3, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. at Bethany for Children & Families, Moline. Invitations have been sent to area high schools, asking each school to bring one student and one staff member.

Teen pregnancy; so what? Mary Ann McLeod, Director of Community Services at Bethany for Children & Families, said that "In examining the issues related to teen pregnancy and how it effects youth in the Quad-Cities area, the following statistics are sobering:

--only 38% of moms who have a child before 18, graduate from high school;

--80% of teen fathers do not marry the mothers of their first child and contribute less than

\$800 annually for child support;

--only 2/3 of children born to teen moms receive a high school diploma compared to 81%

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of children born to adults;

--daughters of teen mothers are 3X more likely to become pregnant as a teen than

daughters born to mothers who were age 20-21;

--sons of teen moms are 2X more likely to end up in prison;

--over 75% of unmarried teen mothers will receive welfare; and

--children of teen parents are 2X more likely to suffer from abuse and neglect.”

Both Rock Island County, Illinois (13.3%) and Scott County, Iowa (11.5%) have higher teen birth rates than their respective state rates of 10.1% and 8.7%. To address the issues related to teen pregnancy and the implications for the Quad-Cities, the teen forum will provide an opportunity for a representative group of area high school students and a separate representative group of adults, composed of parents, school personnel, social service providers, and community members, to discuss the following four questions:

- To what extent is teen pregnancy a problem in your school and how does it affect you personally?
- What is not working in addressing the issue as presented by parents, educators, media, and/or community organizations?
- Should a different message be sent to junior high school students than high school students, and if so what?
- What are three steps that can be taken in the next year to help reduce the incidence of teen pregnancy and/or increase awareness regarding teen pregnancy and its related issues?

After the discussion has been completed, the groups will re-convene to share respective findings and direction for action in the upcoming year. **A press conference is scheduled at**

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11:00 a.m., at which time the findings and direction for action will be revealed to the media. The press conference is scheduled to be held in Bethany for Children & Families' Education Center, which is located at 1830 - 6th Avenue in Moline.

For more information about Bethany for Children & Families, its mission and program services please visit www.bethany-qc.org or call [309-797-7700](tel:309-797-7700) .

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