

Peer Prevention:

An inside look into the realities of teen pregnancy

**Schools visited by
the Peer Prevention
Program
2002-2003**

High Schools:

Annunciation Catholic School
Downers South High School
Glenbard West High School
Glenbard South High School
Hinsdale Central High School
Hinsdale South High School
Naperville Central High School
Naperville North High School
Neuqua Valley High School
St. Francis Catholic School
Waubonsie Valley High School
York High School

Junior High/ Middle Schools:

Burr Ridge Middle School
Clifford Crone Middle School
Thayer J. Hill Middle School
Churchville Middle School
Jay Stream Middle School
Scullen Middle School
Cass Junior High School
Jefferson Junior High School
Lakeview Junior High School
Stratford Junior High School

Peer Prevention is the education of young people by young people. This program trains MYM participants to speak to middle school and high school students about their lives as a teen parent. These young parents share their real-life stories of the realities and the responsibilities of early parenthood.

As peer educators, they discuss how much their lives have changed since becoming parents and talk about the myths and realities surrounding risky behaviors. They encourage students to postpone sexual activity and to take responsibility for their actions. Students are more likely to listen to this critical message from their peers. Volunteer adult facilitators accompany the young parents to guide classroom discussion.

The program's primary goal is to increase youth awareness of the long-term consequences of adolescent pregnancy and parenting. It also allows our young parents an opportunity to work within our community.

This past school year alone, nearly 7500 DuPage students heard the prevention program. It also serves students and adults through community groups, churches and special events.

Schools pay a minimal fee to support the delivery of the program to their students. In times of tight budgets, schools sometimes find it challenging to fund such a program. Teachers and parents who value the program have advocated and requested funding from parent-teacher organizations, school foundations or other sources for program support. When parents, teachers and schools work together, a way to accommodate the costs can be found. Contact your principal or health teacher to request that they schedule the program for your students' classes. They may contact Kristen Hartsaw at (630) 790-8433 Ext. 371 for more information.

-Kristin Hartsaw



*A young mom shares her story with students at Neuqua Valley High School
photo taken by Liz Streeeter/ Daily Herald*



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Editors: Tanya Landsman & Kendra Meyer

August 2003

From the Director's Chair:

Happy New Year! Our new program year started July 1. This year we will serve 19 schools through our prevention program, 275 adolescent parents through our Group Services and the Healthy Families programs.



M. Janet Bornancin
Executive Director

Our goals include:

Prevention:

- 1) Deliver abstinence-based pregnancy prevention program to the youth of DuPage County in order to delay sexual activity among teens.
- 2) Increase youth awareness of the long term consequences of adolescent pregnancy and parenting.
- 3) Continue partnerships with other agencies to provide sexuality education programs assisting adolescents to make informed decisions about the risks of early sexual activity.
- 4) Provide parents of adolescents the tools and resources to assist them in opening a dialogue with their children about sexuality and decision-making.

Parenting Support Programs:

- 1) Systematically assess for a family's strengths and needs and refer as needed.
- 2) Enhance family functioning by building trusting relationships, teaching problem solving skills, and improving the family's support system.
- 3) Promote positive parent /child interaction.
- 4) Promote healthy childhood growth and development.
- 5) Develop a comprehensive evaluation plan.

What resources do we need to meet these goals?

- *Volunteers to facilitate our programs
- *Churches to host a support group
- *Volunteers to provide a meal for a support group
- *Diapers, wipes, personal hygiene products
- *Financial support
- *Increased community awareness and support of the programs and services offered by Greater DuPage MYM

We would be happy to visit your community group or club to talk about our programs and services.

MYM Board of Directors

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In their words...

Comments from Year End Satisfaction Survey:

"I was all alone and pregnant. Meeting everyone helped me more than I can put into words."

"I've learned how to teach my son a lot! He has been talking so much!! And he's almost finished potty training!!"

"I learned about the anger I had and how to redirect it, not at my kid."

"I got two scholarships, which is impossible to describe the immense changes it has made in my life."

"I use all the tips they showed me and apply it to my baby."

"I have matured and become an excellent mother. I am more confident."

"I'm stronger now."

Annual MYM Picnic



Two children show off their new MYM t-shirts received at the annual Greater DuPage MYM Picnic.

Summer is finally here and along with it is the Annual MYM Picnic! This traditional gathering offers MYM families the chance to meet each other and get to know the MYM staff, board members and volunteers better. On average, more than 100 participants and their families have attended the event.

This year, the picnic was held at Cosley Zoo in Wheaton. MYM provided chicken for adults and chicken nuggets for the kids and the participants were asked to bring chips and dip, fruit and veggies, a side dish or a dessert. The participants and their children had a great time meeting one another as well as petting the animals in the zoo. Participants were excited to receive Greater DuPage MYM "I Love My Mom/ Dad" t-shirts for the kids.

The picnic helps to keep participants in touch over the summer when groups are not meeting. The picnic at Cosley Zoo also raised awareness of a fun and free outing for parents and their children to enjoy during the nice weather.

Can't wait for next year!

-Niki Liss

Breaking the Silence: Talking about Child Sexual Abuse

While child abuse in any way, shape or form is intolerable, there is something viscerally repugnant about the idea of child sexual abuse that makes it especially unthinkable.

However, we must force our minds to go there and think about it, because it is happening in our community, in our churches, in our schools, and even more often in our own families. Research suggests 20-33% of women and 15-20% of boys have been sexually abused before the age of 18.

Heart to Heart, our newest MYM parenting group, is designed to educate young mothers on what child sexual abuse is, how to identify signs and symptoms of abuse, how to talk to their child about it, and how to report abuse.

Last week in group, one of the moms questioned why no one else had told her this. She remarked that everyone should know this information and it should be discussed in school.

Unfortunately, child sexual abuse isn't talked about. If you would like more information on how to protect your child please call our office at 630/790-8433x283. If you suspect a

child is being abused in any way, please call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE. You could save a child's life.

-Tanya Landsman

MYM Staff at (630) 790-8433

M. Janet Bormancin	Ext. 266
Executive Director	
Becky Beilfuss	Ext. 282
Director of Programs	
Katharine Broberg	Ext. 305
Doula	
Ana Campos	Ext. 309
Doula	
Melissa Chandarana	Ext. 268
Business Manager	
Lisa Cuvala	Ext. 372
Program Coordinator	
Pam DiGioia	Ext. 307
Program Coordinator	
Betty Hamilton	Ext. 225
Group Services Program Assistant	
Kristin Hartsaw	Ext. 371
Prevention Program Coordinator	
Heather Herzog	Ext. 306
Family Support Worker	
Tanya Landsman	Ext. 283
Group Services Assoc. Coordinator	
Niki Liss	Ext. 240
Family Support Worker	
Amanda Marks	Ext. 295
Family Support Worker	
Heather Maynard	TBA
Family Assessment Worker	
Kendra Meyer	Ext. 269
Director of Resource Development & Public Relations	
Sheila O'Neil	Ext. 308
HFD Supervisor	
Courtney Rowden	Ext. 241
Family Support Worker	
Cindy Smith	Ext. 296
HFD Program Assistant	

Greater DuPage MYM -- Uniting as a family to serve families in need

Kendra Meyer

Family is the idea that comes to mind when people describe their experiences with MYM.

Whether you donated a single meal or you have volunteered for years, you begin to realize that MYM is not just about serving

“We are a family -- we share the same passion to help empower the young families at MYM”

families. MYM board, staff, volunteers, and young parents are a family.

We are a family because we share the same passion to help empower the young families at MYM.

While not everyone remains connected to MYM, few people will forget their time and experi-

ences with the organization.

Many have continued to extend their gratitude for these memories through their giving to MYM. They don't give just to take advantage of the tax deductions; they give because it feels good. For them, it is their way to show their appreciation and confidence in the work that we do.

Similarly to the six women who started this organization, six members of the MYM family came together in 1999 and pledged a gift to the MYM Endowment Fund. These charter members, our past board members, a site coordinator, an event committee member...once again pro-

vided their invaluable treasures. Their commitments created a viable source of revenue to provide our essential support programs for years to come.

It is our belief in our young parents that supports their successes. It is the awareness that our programs have proven results that supports the organization's successes. And it is your confidence in our mission that supports the future of Greater DuPage MYM.

That is why our donors give freely of their resources, their time, their guidance and their talents to our young families.

To find more about the endowment fund or ways that you can reunite with MYM, please call Kendra Meyer at (630) 790-8433 Ext. 269.

Ladies Luncheon

Back by popular demand- the MYM Ladies Luncheon! Come with your girlfriends, bring your mother or daughter and spend the afternoon catching up with all of your old friends you met through MYM.

We look forward to seeing you again at *Indian Lakes Resort in Bloomingdale on November 8, 2003.*



Help Lines

Family Shelter Services (providing support and resources to victims of domestic violence)630/469-5650

YWCA 24 hour Sexual Assault Hotline
630/971-3927

Child Abuse Hotline- 1-800-25-ABUSE

Healthy Families DuPage -
.....630/790-8433x296

MYM Group Registration
.....630/790-8433x283

What Is Healthy Families?

The Healthy Families (HF) program is an intensive home visitation service. Healthy Families is a nationwide program that MYM replicated in 1997. The HF program at MYM employs four full-time family support workers (FSWs) and two full-time doulas. Anyone who is between the ages of 13-19 years old may receive home visits if they are pregnant or have a baby who is under one month old. A parent can be involved in HF until their child is 5 years old or enters school. Young parents learn about MYM from the health department, doctors' offices, school nurses, churches or from friends.

First, each family assesses their needs and strengths and creates a realistic, goal-oriented support plan or an IFSP. Over time, the FSW's use their skills and techniques to enhance a family's functioning. Parents are educated about their child's growth and development. They are also taught about building trusting relationships, how to make community referrals, problem solving skills, and improve their family's support system.

Since the families receive long-term services, staff familiarizes themselves with what is going on in their lives and the challenges and successes they face each day. MYM's Family Support Workers get to know every mother and child individually. Each family has unique situations. Ultimately, the goal for every family is to promote positive interactions and relationships between the parent(s) and the child.



Family Support Workers provide individualized support to young moms.

-Heather Herzog

What Is Group?

Group Services was the first program that Greater DuPage MYM offered. In response to the growing number of teen mothers whom needed parenting information and support, the Meld for Young Moms group was replicated in 1985. The program has since expanded to include Meld for Young Dads, Young Families and Growing Families.

Parents who participate are between the ages of 13 to 26, with children birth to six years old. Groups are facilitated for two to four years, based on the needs of the parents. Participants (adolescent parents) meet weekly for two hours from September through the second week in June. There is no charge to participants for services.

During meetings, parents enjoy a meal together and are welcome to bring their children and use the on-site childcare. Young parents are given an opportunity to meet other parents with similar life experiences and receive information and resources on child development, positive parenting and life skills. Adult volunteers who were former young parents facilitate the groups. These trained volunteers are role models and mentors for the young parents.

These weekly meetings are unique, non-judgmental atmospheres where new parents can learn together and share concerns about parenting with one another. At Greater DuPage MYM, Inc., the fundamentals of a group are learning, supporting and cooperating for families to become empowered toward self-sufficiency.



Our New Young Families Group, started March 2003

-Lisa Cuvala



Greater DuPage
MYM_{inc.}

739 Roosevelt Road, Bldg. 8, Ste. 306
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www.greaterdupagemym.org

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Volunteer Training

On October 4th, MYM will hold an all-agency volunteer training at the Northern Illinois University Naperville campus. The day will include an overview of MYM programs, lunch honoring all volunteers, and afternoon trainings to educate volunteers in the capacity that you serve MYM. We look forward to seeing you.

MYM COMMUNITY CALENDAR



August 11, 13, 15 .PGF Basic Training 6-9:30pm
 August 18Board Meeting
 August 21st . .DuPage Children's Museum MYM
 September 8MYM Groups Resume
 September 19Board Retreat
 October 20Board Meeting