

# Teen Pregnancy Coalition Issues Position Paper

The Monroe County Teen Pregnancy Coalition, a broad-based organization which includes representatives from several diocesan departments, was formed in October 1981 to address the issue of teenage pregnancy.

In late 1981 and early 1982, it conducted a series of 16 forums on the topic which were attended by hundreds across the community and input was synthesized into a set of principles adopted by the coalition and the City School Board which, according to a position paper released Monday, "stress the need for respect of the primary role of parents and families, the religious and cultural viewpoints and teenagers rights to privacy.

In addition, the position paper declared that the dialogue between the coalition and city schools staff "has been mutually beneficial." The work is ongoing and one of the principal duties remaining is production of a parental handbook which, according to the coalition, "will be developed by the City School District and reviewed by the coalition prior to distribution to all parents whose children will be taught the curriculum this coming semester." It will "outline the curriculum, identify the objectives, briefly describe the modules and specify the means by which students may be exempted from single modules or the entire curriculum without jeopardy to scholastic standing or embarrassment to student or parent."

Another provision ensures creation of a statement "enabling students to remain silent or not participate in some sensitive classroom activities," again to be reviewed by the coalition.

In addition, according to the position paper, the curriculum is designed to include parents -- "many student activities include take home exercises and all Unit Tests require a parental sign-off -- to encourage discussion of key materials between student and parent or guardian."

The paper summarizes that preparation of the curriculum "is no easy task." It anticipates that "some parents will disagree with our handling of selected modules. There are

controversial topics covered within this curriculum. We have made every effort to express the variety of viewpoints in this community about these topics. We urge continuation of the community dialogue which the preparation of this curriculum has begun. We are hopeful that the process and the products will ultimately decrease the incidence of teen pregnancy and the concomitant health and social problems and aid parents and adolescents in helping themselves."

The paper listed the following principles emanating from the previous community forums:

**I General Operating Principles:**  
 1. programs should be designed and implemented so that they do not encourage or promote sexual intercourse before marriage; 2. programs must actively get parents and adolescents involved in goal setting, planning and implementation; programs should involve males as well as females; 4. programs should be non-judgmental, particularly toward adolescents who are pregnant; 5. programs must take a multifaceted approach by utilizing a wide variety of agencies and resources which represent the range of philosophies and values within our community; 6. programs should be community-based, i.e., they should be planned, designed and implemented by the community they are intended to serve; 7. programs must recognize that the problem related to adolescent sexuality activity are not unique to any religious, cultural or economic group, and 8. cultural and religious differences must be respected in all programming.

**II Principles Relating to the Role of the Family:**  
 1. Programs must recognize that families should have the primary responsibility for teaching values to their children, and that the family should be the primary sex educator; 2. where families have difficulties with these responsibilities, community agencies have a responsibility to aid them; 3. programs must respect and reinforce the role of the parent; 4. programs should make all reasonable efforts to urge adolescents to involve appropriate family members in discussion of matters relating to adolescent sexuality; 5.

programs should aim to improve family communications around common concerns of adolescents.

**III. Principles Relating to Educational Programs:**  
 1. programs should give adolescents factual information regarding sex related issues, sexual, physical, emotional and psychological development; 2. human sexuality education should be accompanied by identification of and sensitivity to values and responsibilities from cultural and religious perspectives and opportunities for values clarification.

**IV. Principles Relating to Adolescents, Their Values and their Rights:**

1. Programs designed to resolve programs related to adolescent pregnancy should be sensitive to and respectful of the various interpretations about the beginnings and development of life; 2. programs must respect the privacy of adolescents applying the same standards as would be applied for adults; 3. the right of choice of adolescents who are not parents, as well as those who are, should be respected in all programming; 4. adolescents have the right to follow through on an informed choice, without coercion or influence by community agencies. 5. pregnant adolescents should have the right of choice of where they pursue their education.

**V. Other Principles:**  
 1. Programs should aid adolescent parents in their pursuit of an education by providing services which will enable them to do so; 2. programs should encourage positive alternatives to early sexual activity; 3. programs should work with and encourage schools to expand achievement activities for adolescents in order to help them develop self-esteem, and 4. programs must make the media aware of their responsibility to the community they serve for the presentation of positive role models and responsible human sexuality.

## City Summarizes Sex Curriculum

The City School District has released a summary of the Family Living/Sex Education Curriculum Junior High component.

The curriculum is divided into five units of study -- Mental Health, Anatomy and Physiology, Relationships and Responsibilities, Family Decisions and Societal Concerns. Each of these units is subdivided into specific modules, each of which has three parts -- student activities, teacher guidelines and background information for the teachers.

Mental Health is divided into six of these study modules, "all of which are relative to helping the student gain an understanding of him/herself and a better understanding of his/her feelings which will help to communicate this understanding," according to the summary.

The second unit, Anatomy and Physiology, is divided into four modules that deal with Adolescent Growth and Development, Male and Female Anatomy and Physiology, Genetics and Human Reproduction. The purpose of this unit, according to the summary, "is to give students a basic understanding of growth patterns, changes one goes through in adolescence and puberty, and to understand sexuality as it relates to adolescence and puberty."

"The student will identify anatomical parts and reproductive organs," the summary states.

The third unit, Relationships and Responsibilities, is composed of four modules designed to help the student gain an understanding of different cultures, dating, engagement and marriage and family organization.

For instance, the Dating module, according to the summary, is designed to "help the student gain an understanding of and identify how different cultures and customs are associated with dating characteristics and responsibilities relative to dating."

La Coalicón del Embarazo en las Adolescentes anuncia que el día 21 de Octubre, de 1984, de 3 a 5 PM, en la Liga de acción Ibero Americana localizada en el #938 de la Avenida Clifford, se llevará a cabo la primera audiencia pública en la cual se le dará la oportunidad a los padres, estudiantes y cualquier otra persona interesada para que de sus opiniones o recomendaciones sobre el curso que se va a dar en las Escuelas Públicas sobre La Sexualidad y la Vida Familiar.

Esta primera reunión será conducida totalmente en Español, a la cual invitamos a todos los interesados que hablen Español.

The fourth unit, Family Decisions, is divided into modules for Parenthood, Teenage Pregnancy, Family Planning and Divorce and Separation. The first module, hopes to prepare students to understand "the obligation and responsibilities of parenting."

Perhaps the most scrutinized module at the forums will be Teenage Pregnancy. The summary says this unit "will explore the reasons for teenage pregnancy, help the individual gain an understanding of the problems and health risks associated with teen pregnancy and recognize the impact pregnancy has on teenagers and their family, culture and religious beliefs."

Family Planning, according to the summary, "will help the individual gain an understanding of family planning, contraceptive methods and the need to make responsible decisions about planning for a family."

The fifth unit is divided into specific concerns which might be encountered in life, under the headings of Domestic Violence, Sexual Abuse of Youth, Rape, Life Styles and Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

## Teen Pregnancy Coalition

The following are members of the Teen Pregnancy Coalition: Mary Jane Cruikshank, Eastside Community Center; James Rhodes, Baden Street Settlement; Angel J. Rivera, diocesan Spanish Apostolate; Alan Robinson, City/County Youth Bureau; Sue Rodgers, Board of Health; Ivette Salgado, Bilingual Health Training; Rev. Susan Shafer and Frank Anderson, United Methodist Church; Marilyn Shapiro, YWCA; Shirley Maloney-Smith, Charmaine Bennett and Denise LaRosa, Planned Parenthood; Rev. Larry Witmer, Genesee Ecumenical Ministries.

Catherine E. Wobus, diocesan Catholic Family Center; Beverly Wright, Lewis Street Center; Hazel Jeffries and Maureen Richardson, Jordan Health Center; Pat Begner, City School District; Pat Fox and Anne Wegman, diocesan Youth Ministry; Elizabeth Rich, Genesee Regional Family Planning; Sabina Ubell, Jewish Family Service; Nancy Kannianen, First Unitarian Church; James Reed and Martha DeLane, Family Service of Rochester; Anita Z. Watkins, Marcus Garvey Committee.

James W. Cotter, Hillside Children's Center; Kit Davis, Rochester AJHC Teen Group; Judy Lee, Threshold; James McCuller, Action for a Better Community; Father Charles F. Mulligan, diocesan Social Ministry; Rev. Toribio Nieves Jr., Assembly of Christian Church; Joel L. Nitzkin, Diane Matthewson and Lucy Carpentier, Monroe County Health Dept.; Therese Petracca, Natural Family Planning; Rev. James B. Pritchard, Episcopal Diocese; William H. Privett, Catholic Charities.

Thomas Harris, Statewide Youth Advocacy; Dr. Henry A. Theide, U. of R. Medical Center; Juan Garcia, Ibero-American Action League; Mary McClary, Montgomery Neighborhood Center; Jean DesMarteau, Junior League; Roger C. Battaglia, St. Joseph's Villa; Dr. Eve Shapiro, Rochester General Hospital; Gladys Santiago; Cassandra Williams; LaMarr Jackson.

The following high school student are also representatives to the coalition: Christen Koerner, Ange Kunzman, Tina Malone, Elizabeth Russell, Donna Smith, Chuck Staropoli and Joe Tripi.

## Third Draft

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The statement said that "much of the material (in the curriculum) is totally new and locally generated."

A summary of the curriculum was released but the

curriculum itself has been made available for study at all city secondary schools, public libraries and at the parent center of the district's administrative office building on West Broad Street.

## Knights Induct Members

Spencerport — The Knights of Columbus of Pope John XXIII Council here recently inducted John

J. Dietrich, Harry N. Johnston, Dr. Robert J. Marriss and John Goosley.

## Chorus Concert

Fairport — The Perinton Community Chorus and Orchestra, directed by Sister Virginia Hogan SSSJ will open its concert season with "A Musical Kaleidoscope," 4 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 4 at Martha Brown Auditorium, 665 Ayrault Road. Tickets are \$4 at the door; \$3.50 in advance by calling 223-9006.

The men received the honors of the second degree during ceremonies at Our Lady of Mercy Church, hosted by Our Lady of the Cenacle Council in Greece.

According to Ralph Handley, grand knight, Spencerport council officers will be installed by Edward C. Miller, district deputy, following a supper meeting Thursday, Oct. 18.



## IF YOU CAN'T GO— GIVE

THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION AID TO THE ORIENTAL CHURCH

October 21st is Mission Sunday, Christ asks all of us to be missionaries. He does not expect everyone to leave home and family and labor in His vineyards in foreign lands. But He does expect all of us to help spread His Gospel. He can answer His call through your gifts to **Catholic Near East**, our Holy Father's own mission to the Eastern Churches.

### GO TEACH ALL NATIONS

For just \$15 a month, you can train a native priest—a Sister, for \$12.50. For only \$14 a month, you can "adopt" a needy child. They'll all send you their photos and write to you.

Churches, chapels, schools, convents, rectories and clinics are needed, too. You can build one yourself as a Memorial for someone you love for between \$5 and \$15 thousand. Or, give whatever you can. Your gift will help our priests and Sisters carry on their Christ-like work in the Near East.

### A TASTY RECIPE

Your Sunday dinner will seem tastier and be more meaningful if you share your blessings with the hungry families huddled in refugee camps of the Near East. For only \$20 less than the cost of most family dinners—you can feed a Palestine refugee family for an entire month. To show their thanks to you, we'll send you an Olive Wood Rosary from the Holy Land.

### ANOTHER WAY TO HELP?

Needs of missionaries are great. It's hard sometimes to decide just where your help is needed most. Why not let the Holy Father decide? Mark your gift (in any amount) Stringless, and send it to us. The Holy Father will tell us where it's needed.

### HELP THE MISSION—YOURSELF HELP

Through Catholic Near East Deferred Giving Plans, you receive a guaranteed income for as long as you live. Then your gift goes to the help of Christ's poor in the Near East. The good you do lives on after you. Write for details today.

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THE CATHOLIC NEAR EAST WELFARE ASSOCIATION



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