

“Planned Blessings”

Bringing Healthy Children into Our Community

In the summer of 2007, community volunteers known as Baby First Advocates spoke with almost 200 men and women of all ages in Indianapolis about the meaning, causes and solutions to unplanned pregnancies. These are just a few of the opinions from people about the growing problem of unplanned pregnancies. These community voices have the power to get people talking and improve the future for our children, our grandchildren and great grandchildren.

- ***When a person has a pregnancy before he or she intended to, how does that affect their lives, their family and their community?***

“Unplanned pregnancies bring about a lot of controversy – the community is not brought together but pulled apart.”

“Another body with an uncertain future.”

“Until you experience it you will never know. It’s hard on your life is all you can understand.”

“A person who is confused on how to love or be loved.”

- ***What keeps people from becoming pregnant or having sex before they are ready?***

“Either abstinence or very effective birth control – each takes discipline.”

“Talking to them, using condoms and being a part of your kid’s life.”

“Probably a personal resolve not to, usually due to religious or personal ethics. This is rare and hard to do.”

“The love for themselves and great opportunity down the road.”

Young people talked less about moral values or religious beliefs and more about:

- having future goals,
- support from parents
- peer pressure

The fear of becoming pregnant or catching a disease was rarely talked about as something that would keep people from having sex.

- ***What role does the church play in preventing unplanned pregnancies?***

“There’s a lot the church could do, but some are afraid to talk about it.”

“The church needs to teach about the bible and not ridicule them about their situation.”

Many of the people we talked to did not seem to see the church as a source for information and support for this issue. Important opportunities that the church could take included:

- Teaching about the importance of not having sex before marriage
- Reaching out to youth programs
- Educating more about sex
- Supporting parents in their efforts to teach and raise their children

➤ ***If you were in charge, what would you do to stop or decrease unplanned pregnancies?***

"I would try to get girls come hear me personally talk about my experience with two children at a young age and let them know it is not easy, nor is it cute. It is a blessing, but a blessing can wait till the right time."

"Teach people in their youth to love themselves and to have other interests other than just satisfying their urges."

"Push condom use severely, stay away from sex and focus more on getting an education and lifetime goals."

People usually identified one of the following solutions to prevent unplanned pregnancies:

- Teaching more about sex and using protection
- Teaching more about abstinence
- Helping people focus on school, future opportunities and life goals
- More involvement and support from parents

What Can We Do?

1. Continue the discussion. Talking about a difficult subject like unplanned pregnancies helps bring it out into the open and is the first step towards some solutions.
2. Talk to boys and girls and men and women of all ages about the following "facts of life": There are only two things that keep people from becoming pregnant: (1) Not having sex and / or (2) Always using protection. Both approaches are important and can live side by side.
3. Decide which of the community solutions listed above you want to begin working on. You can start with your own life, with your family and friends, or with churches, schools and other community agencies.

On the power of one

"My footprints will someday vanish from this trail, but the seeds I sow will grow and bear fruit that will remain."

- Evelyn K. Dudley, "The Journey", as it appeared in the Funeral Program for Mrs. Coretta Scott King