



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 11, 2012

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Jason Natelle, Communications Specialist
(860) 560-5636; cell: (860) 597-2762
Email: natellej@crtct.org

Forum Helps Parents Talk About Sexual Health

City of Hartford Teen Pregnancy Prevention Youth Leadership Team (YLT) Partner with Planned Parenthood of Southern New England to Get Parents Talking

HARTFORD— With the proliferating content streaming on the Web, the rise of mobile sharing of texts, pictures and videos—some parents find themselves at a loss when trying to figure out how to have that “birds and the bees” conversation with their kids.

In an effort to help motivate those parents while aiming to reduce community-wide teen pregnancy rates, the Hartford Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (HTPPI) invited parents to a free community forum Dec. 6 to get conversations going at home about sexual health. The Community Renewal Team’s Generations Campus for grandparents raising grandchildren in Hartford’s North End hosted the event and invited their residents to join the conversation.

Approximately 20 parents along with 11 teens from the Hartford Teen Pregnancy Prevention Youth Leadership Team (YLT) participated in the two-hour workshop led by Planned Parenthood’s VP of Education & Training Pierrette Silverman. The parents reflected on their own upbringing and discussed the challenges related to engaging the younger generations on these sensitive topics.

“We have to get away from the idea that these topics are off limits to talk about at home because teens are talking about sex with their peers,” Silverman said. “This is about changing that dynamic—opening up the dialog to relate to teens on their level in an honest and thoughtful way.”

Some of the talks HTPPI have organized this year targeted only youth participants from local schools, but this particular forum focused on the parents’ role in the process, and Silverman stressed that they have the most influence for their children when it comes to sexual decisions during adolescence.

-MORE-

“Teens who report having conversations with their parents about sex are more likely to delay sexual activity, have fewer partners, and use condoms and contraceptives when they do become sexually active,” Silverman said. “While these conversations can be uncomfortable, with practice, they become easier.”

Some parents on hand had young children in pre-adolescent stages while others had grown children but were caring for grandchildren. Silverman highlighted the idea that at every stage of a child’s life parents have the opportunity to be factual when answering questions that arise, rather than side-stepping or ignoring what a child may be trying to mentally sort out.

“While it is best to start talking with your children about sexuality in early childhood, it's never too late to start,” Silverman said.

Organizers from the event said such discussions between parents and children can help young people delay sex and avoid unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and that adolescents prefer their parents to be their sex educators.

The youth component to HTPPI, the YLT, is made up of teens living and/or going to school in Hartford looking to help reduce the teen birth rates of unintended teen pregnancy by providing direct links to youth in the community being served for engaging, educating, and building youth support for the project.

Similar events are being planned for January, and those looking for information or resources on the topic should visit: www.hartford.gov/hhs-divisions/585-teen-pregnancy-prevention-initiative. The entire effort is part of a 5-year CDC grant that aims to reduce Hartford rates of teen pregnancy, HIV and STIs by 10 percent by 2015.

###

About HTPPI:

This event was made possible by Grant/Cooperative Agreement Number 5U58DP002895-03 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Office of Adolescent Health. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC or HHS.

About CRT:

Community Renewal Team, Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency’s mission is Preparing Our Community to Meet Life’s Challenges. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families become self-sufficient while making sure basic needs are met. CRT’s programs include Head Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut. www.crtct.org