



## Highlights from MN ENABL 2004 Annual Report Minnesota Department of Health

### Community Grantees

Twenty-three grants were awarded through a competitive community application process that happened in September 2002. The grant cycle began January 1, 2003. The original grant period was for two years with renewal, contingent upon program performance, for an additional three years through December 31, 2007. Applicants were able to apply for up to \$45,000 per year in 2003 and 2004 with a 25% required match. Four of these 23 were new grantees while 19 had been MN ENABL grantees in prior years. Thirteen grantees were from communities in Greater Minnesota and ten from Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Grantees are required to adhere to a number of requirements as part of their contract with the MDH. The target audiences are 12-14 year old males and females, and their parents and other primary caregivers. Each Grantee is expected to report their activities quarterly. Grantees complete this work by:

- Using an approved teen curriculum with 12-14 year olds, often taught by older teens. The minimum requirement is that a youth curriculum must be administered at least once per quarter. The number of lessons for the curricula ranges from 4 to 8 depending on the community.
- Holding sessions for parents using a state approved parent curriculum or materials. A parent curriculum must be administered at least once per quarter.
- Provide school and community-wide media/public relations promotional activities that support the MN ENABL message and complement the statewide public awareness campaign. Grantees must do at least three public awareness activities each quarter.

### Abstinence Curriculum

Each grantee selects one of the approved teen curricula to use in their community. – *Postponing Sexual Involvement, Worth The Wait, and Making a Difference*. Several utilize more than one with different age groups. Classes are delivered mostly in schools or in after-school programs, usually to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> graders. In 2004, 16/23 of the grantees trained older teens (9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade) to teach most of the classroom lessons. Usually once during the year, the Project Coordinator recruits new teen teachers and provides training for them with the assistance of their experienced teen leaders and with help from MN ENABL state staff if requested. During 2004, several groups switched curricula to *Making a Difference*, the newest of the approved curricula. In September 2004 MN ENABL staff arranged for Trainers from the Minnesota Department of Education to lead several trainings in the new curriculum for teens and adults.

Based on grantee reports, in 2004, **5300** middle school-aged youth were taught one of the approved curricula. Older teen teachers taught a majority of the 5300 youth. Grantees noted about **275** older teens were trained and taught the curriculum, sacrificing either school or free time to deliver the abstinence message.

Grantees report that many of these teens stay involved as peer educators for two to three years. Many of these older teens are also involved in planning other MN ENABL events in their community. Working with schools can be challenging for outside agencies such as a non-profit or public health agency. Several grantees noted as accomplishments for 2004 that they were finally able to get into a school to do the program where it has been difficult to get in previously. Several county-based programs related that they are very proud that every 8<sup>th</sup> grader in their county

### Reaching youth through other events

Every grantee was required during FFY 2004 to hold 3 Community Organizing Events per quarter. "Community organizing" pertains to events or activities that engage people in behaviors or efforts that change

social norms. Many of the Community Organizing activities that MN ENABL grantees conduct involve youth and are targeted at youth. From submitted reports, the 23 MN ENABL grantees conducted events that directly reached **12,860** youth in FFY 2004. Here are some of the many examples that took place:

- **Cottonwood County** hosted an all-day retreat for 55 middle school students, providing information on abstinence, drugs/alcohol and other health topics.
- **Parenting Resource Center** hosted an overnight Lock-In for 12-14 year olds, which included speakers, videos, a Carnival that involved games like "Abstinence Jeopardy" and Wheel of Fortune where "contestants" answered questions about STD's and refusal skills. 91 youth attended.
- **Mid State Health Services, Koochiching County, and St. Paul Urban League** have active teen Improv troupes – teens that develop and perform skits on issues relating to teen pregnancy, peer pressure, and abstinence for various community groups or youth events.
- **American Indian Family Center** held a summer program where 20 youth came twice a week for 6 weeks to learn part of an Abstinence curriculum, along with reflecting on key Indian Virtues and concluded with a service project where each youth made a "stone" which formed a walkway
- **St. James school district** hosted a "Wise Guyz" retreat just for middle-school-aged boys and a "You Go Girl" retreat for young women. Older teens help lead it.
- Several grantees hosted Healthy Teen conferences with speakers. **Koochiching County** reached 750 youth at theirs. Several grantees participated in youth Health Fairs where information on Tips for Abstaining were handed out.
- To increase the perception that peers support abstinence, **Cass County** gave away "Valentine Bags" to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders at a dance and later sponsored a "Puttin on the Glitz" dance at the end of the school year, attended by 183 teens.
- **Catholic Charities** produces a "Peer Edition" newsletter that is sent to area youth and their parents

## Programs for Parents and Adults

Grantees embrace one of the key goals of MN ENABL, which is to reach out to parents and help them to talk with their teens about sex and abstinence. Each grantee in 2004 was required to host at least 1 educational session per quarter for parents. Beginning in July 2004, they were required to use the "How to Teach the Facts of Life" curriculum as their source for these sessions. All grantees were trained in this curriculum on day two of their summer community organizing training that MN ENABL staff led in June 2004. Both **Kanabec County and Parenting Resource Center** conducted their first sessions with "Facts" in September 2004 and were excited that both had over 20 parents show up. **Lutheran Social Service**, working in a poor urban neighborhood of Minneapolis reports "16 teen mothers and 114 adults attended interactive presentations/discussions about communication with their child about age-appropriate messages about sexuality and postponing sexual involvement." Other grantees have had success with a variety of methods to reach adults.

- Mother-daughter daylong retreats were successfully sponsored by several grantees. The focus is to help mothers start the conversation with her young daughter about the meaning of body changes and developing positive values towards abstinence and marriage. **Project Sight and St. James** both held two Latina mother/daughter retreats reaching 34 adults. **Project Sight** also held 2 Anglo mother/daughter retreats.
- Parent Newsletters are a popular way to reach parents. **Crookston Schools** sends a newsletter monthly to parents of all 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 650 households, with tips on talking with teens and news of MN ENABL activities. **Crow Wing County, Wadena County** and several others do quarterly newsletters reaching large numbers of parents. **Koochiching County** has their teen leaders write the articles particularly asking adults to take time to talk with and listen to their teens.
- **Parenting Resource Center** has developed a "Parent Warm Line", in both English and Spanish, which provides toll-free telephone support and problem solving help for parents of adolescents. In 2004, they touched about 300 parents per quarter.
- 519 parents in Faribault and Northfield were asked to complete homework assignments with their 6<sup>th</sup> graders who were receiving Worth The Wait curriculum from **Project Sight** teens.
- Urban grantees have booths and displays at community ethnic events such as **St. Paul Urban League** at "Rondo Days". **Minneapolis Urban League** participating in a teen health parade during the Juneteenth African-American celebration in Minneapolis; and the **Association for Advancement of Hmong Women**

**in Minnesota and Lao Family Community** promoting abstinence during the huge Hmong New Years celebration in St. Paul. These efforts reach both youth and adults.

The result of all of these creative efforts is that during FFY 2004, the 23 MN Grantees directly reached **6,755** parents/adults with the message encouraging them to talk with their teens and share their values.

### Grantee Media Awareness Events

Grantees have been very creative in finding ways to reach large numbers of people with a message designed to increase community support for the Abstinence message. Most grantee efforts utilized the materials developed by MN ENABL in 2003 with the help of a contracted media consultant. The statewide effort provides posters, public service announcements, and artwork, which grantees can use in their communities. Many grantees have a special media emphasis over the months of May and October to highlight Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month and Let's Talk Month. Here are some of the more creative awareness efforts accomplished in FFY 2004.

- **Crow Wing County, Crookston** and others take out Movie Theater ads produced by local teens. **Crow Wing County's** ads show on all 13 screens before every movie meaning that an estimated 360,000 people see them each year.
- **Freshwater Education District** takes out a one-page ad in the Community Education catalog that goes out to 1,000 households.
- Many other grantees take out ads in local newspapers, and on local cable TV and radio stations. Austin, Minnesota, home of **the Parenting Resource Center**, has a Sunday paper with circulation of 7,877. The **Parenting Resource Center** provides a catchy ad, such as "Not Everybody's Doing It – You'll be Glad you waited", on the front page of the comics right below Garfield. **Crookston's** MN ENABL coordinator writes a regular newspaper article and many others write letters to the editor.
- Wadena County and other grantees put information or tips for talking with parents on bookmarks that are given with each library book checked out in the county library
- Teens from **Lao Family Community** produced a Public Service Announcement on Hmong Radio with information for parents on communicating effectively with their children about the value of abstaining from sex before marriage. Teens from **Koochiching County** regularly are invited to tape PSA's for the local radio station.
- During October 2003 and May 2004, **Cottonwood County** had 5 highway billboards displaying a message from one of the state produced posters such as "No worries: Sex What's the Hurry. It's OK to Say Not Yet to Sex."
- **Itasca County** provides MN ENABL brochures to medical clinics during sports physicals to promote abstinence and talking to parents about sex for 12 to 14 year olds.
- To coincide with the Fishing Opener in May 2004 and Teen Pregnancy Prevention month, **Cass County** teens passed out baggies containing "gummi worms" with a note attached "Don't Take the Bait... Wait" at local bait shops.
- Many grantees pass out small footballs, basketballs or hockey pucks with the MN ENABL logo on them at High School games
- For Let's Talk Month, **Project Sight** worked with a local video store to provide a complementary bag of microwave popcorn, with "Talk Straight to Me" messages taped to it, that were given to everyone renting a G, PG, or PG-13 movie during October 2003.
- **Wadena County** was able to place inserts in the paychecks of local businesses to bring awareness about teen pregnancy

Because of these local MN ENABL efforts we can estimate that at least **690,000** youth and adults were exposed to an abstinence message.

### Reaching Youth and Adults of Racial/Ethnic groups

The total of all youth reached by MN ENABL in 2004, which includes older teen teachers (275), middle school youth receiving curriculum (5,300), and youth through other events (12,860) is **18,435**. Based on reports from community grantees, at least **3,264** of those youth were from other racial/ethnic groups besides Caucasian, which is **18%**. This is a minimum number because what is not clearly reported is the ethnic make-

up of every classroom in which MN ENABL curricula were delivered. Of the 3,264, 50% were African-American, 24% American Indian, 15% Asian, 10% Hispanic, and 1% listed as Multi-racial.

Of the **6,755** Parents/Adults reached directly by MN ENABL, a minimum of **769**, or **11.3%**, were from racial/ethnic groups. Of the adults, 45% were African-American, 36% were Hispanic, 11% American Indian, and 8% Asian. Several grantees listed specific ethnic media outlets that they targeted. **Lao Family Community and Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women in Minnesota** provided programs on a Hmong radio station. **St. James Schools** sent regular articles to *Conexion Latina*, a Hispanic newspaper in their county.

#### Statewide Public Awareness Efforts

MN ENABL professional staff continued to maintain the [www.saynotyet.com](http://www.saynotyet.com) website which reaches a broader audience with the abstinence message. On the front page, there is a quiz for teens and a quiz for adults that visitors can take. Any visitor can submit a comment or question through the web site that is quickly read by MN ENABL staff. Occasionally, teens write in with serious questions about how to handle the pressure from others to have sex or where they can find resources in their community. These questions are not limited to teens from Minnesota. MN ENABL staff provides email answers to these questions in a timely fashion.

During FFY 2004, **782** adults and **2,422** teens took the MN ENABL Quiz. Web tracking software recorded that there were **16,201** unique visitors to [www.saynot.com](http://www.saynot.com) in FFY 2004.

#### Key Events in 2004

- From January through May 2004, five meetings of the 10 grantees from the Twin Cities Metro area were held to strengthen program coordination and networking and to positive advocacy messages
- In March 2004, videoconference training on the new E-Chronicle reporting system was held for all grantees. Since the training, grantees have reported ease in entering their data quarterly
- In April 2004, three Regional one-day training were held to provide networking time and to jointly prepare programming for Teen Pregnancy Prevention month in May
- In June 2004, the two-day community organizing training was held. Grantees could bring two or more members, including teens, from their group. 55 people attended. Day One provided updated information to the grantees on STD's, Using Peer Education, and Involving Males. Day Two was led by three of the Grantees who piloted the "How to Teach the Facts of Life" parent curriculum to orient the rest of the grantees on this curriculum.
- MN ENABL staff provided orientation to approximately 4 new MN ENABL local coordinators
- In September 2004, all 2004 grantees were asked to submit their intention to continue as a MN ENABL grantee for the next three years (2005-2007).

#### Barriers perceived in carrying out an Abstinence program

- It is hard to get schools to commit to more than 4 or 5 classes of an abstinence curriculum at any one time. Health teachers are tasked with covering lots of topics in a small amount of time and time for sexuality-related materials is small. Also for grantees that use older teens to teach during the school day, there is always the difficulty related to getting those teens out of class. While many local staff members relate that working with Peer Leaders is one of their most fun parts of the job, it also requires skill, time and patience.
- Grantees find it difficult to get parents to come out for a separate educational session on abstinence or on talking with their teens about sex. They have better luck piggybacking on other events for parents
- Some grantees report the challenge of negative publicity from the media about abstinence programs
- MN ENABL staff and local coordinators regularly deal with the barrier of Minnesota's geography. Koochiching County is 5-1/2 hours away from St. Paul making it very difficult to do more than one site visit per year or to attend an event. It is also hard to get grantees to come together due to limited budgets for mileage. One coordinator has over 500 miles to cover from one end of her county to another.
- Budget cuts at all levels make it harder and harder to maintain good local staff

#### Trends observed during 2004

- Several grantees felt that teens are embracing the abstinence message more than before. Leaders who have been working in this field for four or more years have seen a positive shift in attitude.

- Once MN ENABL is in a community for three or four years, high school teens remember being taught the curriculum when they were in middle school and are more eager to volunteer to be a peer teacher. Many see this as a sign that the “Positive Youth Development” message of building on the strengths of youth and providing them with opportunities for service is gaining ground within local communities.
- One trend that local coordinators are aware of in dealing with youth is that it is more and more necessary when talking about “abstaining from sex” to be more specific about what “sex” is. Teen teachers must state clearly that when talking about abstaining from sex, they mean “oral, anal, and vaginal sex.”
- A related trend is that the type of information that MN ENABL provides is important at an earlier and earlier age. Many of the urban grantees provide programs to 5<sup>th</sup> graders. The need is moving from 12 year olds down to 10 and 11 year olds.