

Press Release: May 2, 2007

Menominee Community takes leadership in addressing Teen Pregnancy

The Menominee Tribe has taken great leadership by inviting an abstinence program into their community and now we see the impact of this courageous initiative. Jerry Waukau of the Menominee Tribal Clinic reports that of the 157 teens who participated in the Community-Based Abstinence Culture (C-BAC) program they have a 3.2% pregnancy rate, compared to an overall teen pregnancy rate of 23.5% for Menominee.

The Menominee Tribal School invited Wise Women Gathering Place to bring the Community-Based Abstinence Culture(C-BAC) to their 8th grade students from 2002 to 2007, by a 5year Federal Abstinence Education Grant through the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (OAPP) - Adolescent Family Living Demonstration Project Grant. For the 5 years, the 8th grade students received two sessions every week during the whole school year for a total of @ 64 sessions, with Discovery Dating as a core component. Principal Robert Tucker says, “We want to continue the program and even start earlier with the 5th grade students.”

Discovery Dating created by La Courte Oreilles tribal member Alice Skenandore, is a healthy relationship tool that assists students in discerning character traits and determining what they want for their life. Alice says “Discovery Dating creates opportunities for students to consider deeper the issues in a relationship and practice making decisions before facing life impacting decisions.”

The Menominee Tribe has a history of having the 2nd highest pregnancy rate in the state for years. Today they have shown how an abstinence program can make a significant difference in that situation. The Menominee Tribe received an Abstinence Grant themselves from the state of Wisconsin Abstinence Program this past year and are using it to purchase materials and training to continue the Discovery Dating components of the C-BAC program. Nina White of JobTraining/TANFF says, “The two day Discovery Dating training for 20 of their youth service providers this May, is filled up so we are trying to do another in June.”

Leslie Shawanokasic, Associate Principal at Menominee High School says, “ there are 2-3 negative incidents per day regarding 50 student couples at the school...however, we are training our staff in Discovery Dating this May”. The high school supports expanding the C-BAC program to the high school too.

An Abstinence grant from the State of Wisconsin has supported the C-BAC program for 5 years, and this past year is supporting evaluation of Discovery Dating on its own merits, however all abstinence funds from Wisconsin end June 30, 2007. Alice Skenandore of Wise Women Gathering Place says, “We hope Governor Dolye will reconsider accepting the Title V Block Funding for Abstinence. Success like this needs to be supported.”

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