

The

CONNECTION

News from Teen Parent Connection

Dear Friends,

If you receive our email updates, you probably saw our “Twelve Days of Giving” videos at the end of December. Clearly, Steven Spielberg was not behind the camera directing and our production budget was nonexistent... However, we had no shortage of young parents, staff and volunteers who wanted to let our donors know what their support means to the work and mission of Teen Parent Connection. A sincere thank you goes out to all who participated in filming, and to those so inspired by the videos they generously donated on-line.

I was particularly impressed with the video from one of our young dads groups. Their message could not have been clearer: they want to play a positive role in the life of their child, and Teen Parent Connection is there to support them.

Over the past two years we have seen a significant increase in the number of young fathers who are actively involved in our programs. Our services for dads are focused on building healthy parenting skills, improving their ability to provide for their children, and encouragement to be present and active in their children’s lives. Because we understand that the needs of young fathers are somewhat different than those of young mothers, our program staff have developed a Dads Advisory Group that allows our participants to share their ideas and be a part of the program planning process.

Research shows that children who have a positive, stable relationship with their father display higher levels of self-esteem, perform better academically, and are less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors.

If you’d like to learn more about our services for dads, or any of the other programs featured in our “Twelve Days of Giving,” please contact me at 630.790.8433 x282 or at beckyb@teenparentconnection.org.

Sincerely,



Becky Beilfuss, Executive Director

PS If you missed them, you can watch the videos on our YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/TeenParentNP

Save the Date

VINE 2012
Friday, April 13th, 2012
Danada House & Atrium
Wheaton, IL
6:30 - 10:30 pm

The National Day to Prevent
Teen & Unplanned Pregnancy
Wednesday May 2nd

Visit our new website at
www.teenparentconnection.org

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Volunteer Spotlights

Leah Dodge



Leah Dodge lives in Glen Ellyn with her husband Andrew, and their 2 young daughters, Emma (3) and Caylee (1). She first learned about Teen Parent Connection through the Glen Ellyn Newcomers Club.

“Being a mom was more challenging than I could have expected. It made me realize how hard it must be to be mom at a much younger age.” So, she inquired about volunteer opportunities at Teen Parent Connection. She helped on the Festival of Friends fundraising event committee in 2010, and enjoyed it so much she returned to play a larger role on the 2011 event committee.

“I enjoyed getting word out about the event and introducing friends -- and now potential new volunteers -- to the organization,” she says. “It’s amazing what time and effort goes into soliciting the wonderful raffle prizes at the event.”

Jenifer Domenico

Jenifer lives in Glen Ellyn with her husband Pete, 3 year old son Ronan, and a new baby girl born in January. Unlike Leah, Jennifer didn't know much about Teen Parent Connection when she decided to volunteer. She read about the Festival of Friends event committee opportunity and thought it might be a good fit. As part of her volunteer role, Jenifer took photographs at a Childbirth Education class.

“I was truly able to understand the impact Teen Parent Connection was having in the community when I met some of the participants first hand. I sat in on some of the classes taught by the doulas on childbirth and pregnancy and was so impressed by the amount of knowledge they were passing on to the participants. The classes provide a wealth of information for the expectant teen parents, and all in a supportive and sharing environment. They are making a huge impact in not only the lives of the expectant parents but also their future children. I understand this is only a small portion of the services Teen Parent Connection provides...but what an impact these classes alone have.”

“I walked away knowing that any contribution to this organization was going to impact lives, not just the participants in the program but also their families.”

Both women learned a lot from their experiences with us.

“Volunteers are very welcomed and can make a big impact,” Leah says. Jennifer learned more about what goes into putting on a fundraising event, the importance of a dedicated team of volunteers and the impact they can have with clear communication about the good works of a charitable organization.

“I absolutely enjoyed making some new friends and working together for a great cause,” Jennifer says. “I can't wait to do it again.”

We are thrilled that Leah & Jennifer have committed their time and talents to help support the work of Teen Parent Connection. Community volunteers like Leah and Jennifer are such an integral part of our success and we are so grateful! Please contact Mary Beth Kraft at marybethk@teenparentconnection.org to learn more about event committee opportunities.



Jenifer Domenico Photography

tix4cause: Turn Tickets into Cash for Teen Parent Connection

Are you a season ticket holder for a Chicago sports team but can't make every home game? Bought tickets to a theatre performance but can't make it any longer? You can turn your unused tickets into support for Teen Parent Connection!



We recently joined tix4cause.com, an e-marketplace service that turns unused tickets, experiences and events into cash donations for Teen Parent Connection. This partnership provides a unique opportunity for us to raise funds and is a fun way for you to support our cause, either through donating tickets or experiences or purchasing them!

Help us get started!

- Visit our page at www.tix4cause.com/charities/teen-parent-connection
- Donate unused tickets for sports, entertainment, concerts, golf, lodging, dining, spas, etc., on our tix4cause site for a 100% tax deductible donation. Teen Parent Connection gets 90% of the proceeds once the tickets are purchased!
- Share our Page: Ask your friends or company to donate tickets to benefit Teen Parent Connection.

You can also find the link to our tix4cause page on the home page of our newly designed website: www.teenparentconnection.org

What is a Peer Educator?

The Prevention Program at Teen Parent Connection teams up with program participants for presentations given in DuPage County middle, junior high, and high schools. These Peer Educators share a prevention-focused personal story in regards to the realities and responsibilities of adolescent parenting. By sharing their story with students, Peer Educators may help other teens make healthy and responsible decisions related to sexuality.

Not only are Peer Educators helping students, they are also developing important life skills and a sense of accomplishment. Peer Educator Emily Marsden says "My experience as a teen mom has been a difficult one and I want to help prevent other teens from having to go through the same thing. It is rewarding to know that someone can benefit from what I am going through." By speaking for the program, Peer Educators also enhance their public speaking skills and build self-confidence.

Participants who wish to become Peer Educators attend an eight hour training to learn how to share their story with a large group. Trainings are held twice a year at Teen Parent Connection, in September and January. A total of nine Teen Parent Connection participants attended the September training this year.

Hear one of our Peer Educators speak when we acknowledge the National Day to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy on Wednesday May 2nd, 2012. Event details will be on our website at teenparentconnection.org.

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*denotes new board member

Meet the Bakers

Teen parents-to-be Stephanie and Quinton heard about Teen Parent Connection through a friend already enrolled in agency programs. In order to prepare for the birth of their child, Stephanie and Quinton attended 8-week Childbirth Education Classes facilitated by Teen Parent Connection's Doula staff. Classes focus on stages of pregnancy, signs of labor, comfort measures, healthy lifestyles, feeding and newborn care.



Quinton says, "Childbirth Education classes really helped to prepare me for what to expect when Stephanie went into labor and how to deal with all the emotional and hormonal changes she would be going through after the birth of our baby." He also felt the classes gave him an opportunity to listen to other teen parents' experiences and relate.

Their son Quinton, Jr. is now 6 months old, and both Quinton & Stephanie continue to receive ongoing support at our West Chicago Parent Group site. This group meets each week, where the Bakers and other young families eat a warm meal together and receive free childcare while they attend the meeting. Our Teen Parent Groups offer a support system and allow young parents to learn about their child's development, make friends, and access important community resources.

Stephanie truly believes that Teen Parent Connection has helped her become a better parent to Quinton, Jr.

"The groups show me how other parents do things, give me ideas of how to do things differently related to parenting issues." She thinks that since she has started attending the West Chicago group, she has more patience with her baby.

Quinton says Group helps him feel better at time management, like juggling multiple jobs, housework, fatherhood, and spending time with his family. Stephanie and Quinton earn 'Baby Bucks' for attending group, that they spend in our Parents' Pantry on diapers, wipes, and baby food for Quinton, Jr.

When asked about their future, Stephanie and Quinton each developed personal goals, and goals for little Quinton, Jr. Stephanie wants to get her GED and enroll in cosmetology school, and Quinton wants to continue working in the labor union he belongs to in order to gain the maximum benefits for his family. As for Quinton, Jr., both his mom and dad are looking forward to him rolling over, crawling, talking, and getting his first tooth.

"As a parent, you never know what to expect," Quinton says. "Every day is something different." His advice to other young parents is to take advantage of all the programs Teen Parent Connection offers in order to better understand their role as parents.

We hope that you will consider giving to the best of your ability to support the mission of Teen Parent Connection.

\$1-\$99	Teen Parent Connection Supporter	\$1,000-\$2,499	Advocacy Circle
\$100-\$249	Teen Parent Connection Friend	\$2,500-\$4,999	Achievement Circle
\$250-\$499	Impact Circle	\$5,000-\$9,999	Leadership Circle
\$500-\$999	Growth Circle	\$10,000+	Legacy Circle

Check enclosed My company participates in a matching gift program

Company Name

Please charge my donation to Visa MasterCard American Express

Name on Card

Account Number

Exp. Date

Signature

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

E-mail

Holiday Room Success

Our annual Holiday Sharing Program was held for 3 days in December and offered program participants the opportunity to use their "Holiday Bucks" to purchase gifts for their child and family members. This special holiday currency is earned through 100% participation in Teen Parent Connection programs -- such as Childbirth Education Classes, home visits with a Family Support Specialist, and group support services. Hundreds of toys were donated by local community groups and corporations. Thanks to our community's generosity, 150 families were able to put presents under their tree.

**Here is a special thank you
to all who donated
to our Holiday Shopping Room:**

Me and my family would like to thank everyone for helping make our holiday season joyful. Please have a Merry X-mas and a happy New Years. Your donations were a blessing.

God Bless
Jones & Collins Family.

Thank you so much for the gift this year has been really hard for our family and with your generosity my daughter will have a wonderful Christmas.

Thank you so
Much.

Nelly & Camila
TamaYO.

12-20-2011

Thank you so much for making it possible for my son to get presents for Christmas from his mommy! Without this program, it would not be possible!

Also, we were able to get a gift card that I can use for diapers!

THANK YOU SO MUCH!
Dina
&
Jeremiah



Parenting, Prevention, Progress

739 Roosevelt Road, Bldg. 8
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137

Services: 630-790-8433 x310

Prevention Program: 630-790-8433 x371

Development: 630-790-8433 x269

Executive Director Becky Beilfuss:

630-790-8433 x282

Visit our website!

www.teenparentconnection.org

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VINE save the date

The second annual VINE fundraising event will take place at the beautiful Danada House & Atrium in Wheaton, IL on Friday, April 13th, 2012.

This year, sip wine selections from **Cooper's Hawk Winery**, **Lynfred Winery**, and **Pinstripes**, and taste craft brews from **Two Brothers Brewing Company!** Culinary delights from My Chef Catering are specially paired with these wine and beer selections. Outstanding silent auction items pack the room and entertainment by SkyBlonde Productions' Gregory Hyde make for an evening to be remembered.



All proceeds from the event support Teen Parent Connection's mission, programs, and participants. So come wine, dine, mingle, and support the agency you love. Purchase your tickets for \$85 by Wednesday, April 4th! Tickets will be \$90 after that date and at the door.

Don't miss your chance to get involved – we are seeking sponsorships, silent auction items, and event committee members. Please contact Mary Beth Kraft at 630.790.8433 x269 for more details and to purchase tickets.

Parents' Pantry needs

Our Parents' Pantry acts as a supplemental resource to our teen parent participants. Our current pantry wishlist is:

- Diapers, all sizes
- Formula
- Jarred Baby Food
- Wipes
- Baby Shampoo & lotion
- Personal hygiene products