

Empowering
Young Families:
Our Legacy,
Our Future

The Connection

Newsletter from Teen Parent Connection

Winter 2014

Upcoming Events

- **Vine Event**
Friday, April 11th
Danada House
- **3rd Annual DuPage Human Race**
Saturday, April 26th
Esplanade at Locust Point



Greetings and Happy New Year!

I am excited to announce that Teen Parent Connection has moved its offices to a new location. We did not go far though; our new office is just a few blocks west of our previous location - which had served us well for nearly three decades. Our new address is **475 Taft Avenue** in **Glen Ellyn**. Our phone number remains the same.

Our new office offers us more usable space - in a standalone building that has a very warm and welcoming feel to it. Our Parents' Pantry benefits from the larger storage space available here - and our Healthy Families team has more planning and work space as well. We are looking forward to doing some nutrition education and parent group meetings in the expansive kitchen space located on the lower level. With our new sign installed out in front it feels official!

Getting here was no easy task, we have so many people to thank for helping us pack, paint, move, paint, organize, clean, paint, rearrange and paint some more. *Please see the last page for a list of donors and volunteers that helped make this move possible.

Although moving was a daunting job, we could not be more excited about our new home!

Wish you all the best in the New Year!

Bicky Buitrago

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TeenParentConnection.org



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Vine – Save the Date!

On **Friday, April 11, 2014**, Teen Parent Connection will host **Vine** at **Danda House in Wheaton**. We invite you to support the critical work of Teen Parent Connection by joining us for our wine tasting and food pairing event featuring **My Chef Catering, Coopers's Hawk Winery & Restaurant, Lagunitas Brewing Company and Pinstripes**. Proceeds raised at Vine benefit the programs and services to Teen Parent Connection.

For more information or to sponsor our event, please contact Sarah Pluth at sarahp@teenparentconnection.org or 630.790.8433 x232.



Vine
Growing Together: Our Legacy, Our Future

My Chef Catering
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Board Member Spotlight

Joe Roche is this season's Board Member spotlight feature. Prior to joining the board, Joe and his wife were Teen Parent Connection donors, event attendees, and friends. Now as one of our Board Members, Joe has introduced TPC to countless colleagues and has no qualms about being an ambassador of our mission! We are so grateful for his board service.



Joe, second from left, volunteering with Teen Parent Connection at Naperville's Ribfest

Why Teen Parent Connection?

I chose Teen Parent Connection because I believe in its mission to assist young mothers and fathers in becoming effective parents who can achieve self-direction and independence. I also chose TPC because they are excellent at fulfilling this mission. I am especially gratified by their outreach to the young fathers who are too often ignored.

What is your favorite part of being on the Board of Directors?

One of my favorite parts of Board membership is attending the annual fund raisers and the community after-hours events. This gives me the opportunity to tell others about the wonderful work that TPC performs for the entire community in helping one of our most vulnerable populations become self-supporting and engaged members of the community.

If there was one thing you to accomplish during your Board tenure, what would it be?

One thing that I would like to accomplish during my tenure is to help in recruiting a full complement of committed Board members who reflect the diversity of those we serve.

A Day in the Life... of a Family Support Worker

Healthy Families, a nationally accredited home visiting program, is one of Teen Parent Connection's primary support programs. Teen parents and their children can participate for no cost, receiving weekly home visits from Family Support Workers, until their child is five years old. Get a glimpse into our program, as told by Family Support Worker Tori:

"As a Family Support Worker for over three years, I have the opportunity to build meaningful, unconditional relationships with the young families I serve while providing parenting education and emotional support through regular home visits.

Week-to-week, I prepare individualized curriculum for each family with whom I work, which often includes "screening" families in several areas. I regularly administer developmental screens to ensure the babies and children are "on target" in multiple developmental areas, and create a plan to cope with and improve any potential developmental delays, which often includes making referrals to a partnering agency for developmental therapy. Our goal is to support parents in their child's early learning and development and to connect them with the resources necessary to ensure school-readiness.

Results of these screens are used to develop Individual Family Support Plans in which we work collaboratively with families to address identified needs and set goals for themselves and their children. Home visits are spent taking steps to reach these self-identified goals, including tackling tough parenting issues such as discipline and feeding. Home visitors support young parents in implementing time outs, establishing a sleep schedule, or feeding baby solid foods for the first time.

At times, young families face unexpected obstacles such as homelessness or lacking reliable transportation. Based on the needs of the family, our focus may shift during home visits to identifying and contacting emergency resources, or perhaps serving as a listening, empathetic ear in the time of crisis.

Ultimately, I believe this program's ability to provide satisfying services and retain families for many years is largely due to the relationship that develops between Home Visitors and program participants. Providing a safe, consistent relationship in which to explore parenting techniques with compassion and open-mindedness truly promotes the feeling of success in young families. It is an honor to be a part of such an important investment in our community's future."



Family Support Worker, Tori with a TPC young family

"Taking Control of My Life"

Alyssa Horton is a young mother and full-time student. Growing up in Naperville, IL, she was an athlete from an early age and involved in theater at Naperville Central High School. When she became pregnant at 16, Alyssa received services from Teen Parent Connection, a nonprofit organization in Glen Ellyn, IL. She graduated from high school a year early and began taking college classes while raising her twins.

Alyssa has been called a "success story," and she attributes her success as a parent to her strong family support, as well as the services offered by Teen Parent Connection. These include support groups, home visiting, an incentive-based Parents' Pantry, and a staff that works to be personally involved with each one of their hundreds of participants. She now works for this organization as a Peer Educator, talking to schools and community groups about healthy decision-making and preventing teen pregnancy. Alyssa is currently finishing her Associate's Degree and has been accepted into the School of Social Work at Aurora University.

Alyssa's personal story 'Taking Control of My Life' will be featured in the upcoming publication *Overcoming Mediocrity® Volume II, A Unique Collection of Stories from Dynamic Women Who Have Created Their Own Lives of Significance*. Visit Overcomingmediocrityteam.com for more information on the project.



Alyssa Horton and her family





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Executive Director
Becky Beilfuss:
630-790-8433 x230

Visit our website at
TeenParentConnection.org

Parents' Pantry needs

Our Parents' Pantry acts as a supplemental resource to our teen parent participants, distributing supplies over 1,693 participant visits throughout the year. Our current pantry wishlist is:

- Diapers, all sizes
- Formula
- Wipes
- Baby Shampoo & lotion
- Personal hygiene products
- Baskets for Raffle Items & Picture Frames, new or used
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper

Special thanks to our recent generous in-kind donors, including:

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