



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Brigid Riley
Executive Director
651.644.1447 ext. 11

October is National Let's Talk Month

MOAPPP takes the lead in Minnesota to emphasize the importance of conversations about sex and sexuality between young people and the adults they trust

September XX, 2005—During the month of October, the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP) serves as a resource for parents, youth, schools, state agencies, communities of faith and community-based agencies across the state of Minnesota for Let's Talk Month. This national campaign began more than 20 years ago and promotes effective communication about sex and sexuality between young people and the adults they trust, especially their parents.

“There are multiple reasons why teens get pregnant, but there is still just one ‘how.’ A strong, close relationship between parents and children can be the best ‘protection’ of all,” says Brigid Riley, Executive Director of MOAPPP. “Research continues to demonstrate that when young people clearly understand their family’s values concerning sexuality and relationships, they are more likely to avoid risky behavior. Let’s Talk Month is an opportunity for us to join with a cross-sector of organizations to make sure that parents and adults have the resources they need to talk with their children about sex and sexuality. It’s never too early to start or never too late to improve a relationship with a child or teenager.”

Parents continue to have an enormous influence on their children’s decisions about sex. An NBC, PEOPLE Magazine poll surveying young teens about their intimate sexual attitudes and practices was released in early 2005 and found that, nationally, 27 percent of thirteen to sixteen year-olds are sexually active and “have been with someone in an intimate or sexual way.” According to the survey, teens get information about sex and sexual relationships from a number of sources, but parents were the most reported source with 70 percent of teens saying they got a lot or some information about sex and sexual relationships from their parents. However, the survey showed that teens who were sexually active were much more likely to say they got information about sex from their friends and partners.

“We know that often parents are uncomfortable discussing sex and sexuality and Let’s Talk Month is an opportunity for them to be supported, ask questions and learn about the proven approaches to preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS and the consequences of sexual involvement,” Riley said. “It should not be a one-time ‘talk’ about sexuality between parent and child, but a conversation that continues as children grow and mature.”

Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting
1619 Dayton Ave, Suite 111 • St Paul, MN 55104 • 651-644-1447 • fax 651-644-1417
www.moappp.org

In the month of October, MOAPPP—along with Minnesota AIDS Project—is sponsoring conversations with one of the country’s leading adolescent sexual health advocates, James Wagoner. Wagoner is the president of Advocates for Youth in Washington, D.C., which is dedicated to creating programs and advocating for policies that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Anyone interested in these issues is invited to attend the following events:

“Truth or Consequences: What you need to know about abstinence-only sex education”

October 17 at 7 p.m.

Rochester Community and Technical College, Rochester

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October 18 at 7 p.m.

Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter

“A Let’s Talk Month Conversation with James Wagoner”

October 18 from 9-11 a.m.

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, Minneapolis

For more information about these events, how to start the conversation and a list of additional Let’s Talk Month activities throughout the state, visit the MOAPPP website at www.moapppp.org.

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MOAPPP is a non-profit organization founded in 1991 to strengthen the policies and programs related to adolescent pregnancy, prevention and parenting in Minnesota. MOAPPP is the statewide leader in providing adolescent pregnancy prevention resources, training, public policy, community outreach and communications, and supports Let’s Talk Month in Minnesota. The national sponsor is Advocates for Youth, www.advocatesforyouth.org.