


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 3, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 57 : ALEXANDRIA CAMPAIGN ON ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

This memorandum is in response to Councilman Krupicka's request for information on the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP), its budget and other programs that focus on adolescent pregnancy prevention.

BACKGROUND

The City of Alexandria has one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the Commonwealth as well as the Northern Virginia area. However, the trend is downward in the rate of adolescent pregnancies. Attached is a graph of the adolescent pregnancy trends over the last 10+ years that illustrates downward trends in Alexandria's adolescent pregnancy rates. Although there have been spikes up and down in individual years, the trend is generally downward which is the desired outcome (see Attachment I).

In order to combat the high rate of adolescent pregnancy, the City's youth programs and other nonprofit youth-focused programs that serve the City have met on a regular basis for the past 15 years to ensure that a uniform and comprehensive approach is used. This organizing body was initially called the Inter-Agency Consortium on Adolescent Pregnancy (ICAP).

In 1999, Mayor Donley formed the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force, which was created to provide a community-wide awareness and education campaign about the issue of adolescent pregnancy. These two organizations (ICAP and the Blue Ribbon Task Force) were shortly thereafter combined and formed a coalition called the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP). The purpose of ACAP was not to implement pregnancy prevention programs or to be a direct service provider. Instead, ACAP's mission is to work with existing programs (i.e. Project Stepout/Manhood (Office on Women), Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs (Health Department, Resources Mothers (Urban League)) to:

- Strengthen existing services and ensure a comprehensive offering for youth;
- Identify any holes in services and develop recommendations to address these issues; and
- Develop and implement a comprehensive and cohesive community education efforts and message.

Mayor William Euille currently chairs this coalition and its members include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Department of Human Services,
- Alexandria Health Department,
- Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Substance Abuse,
- Department of Parks and Recreation,
- Alexandria City Public Schools,
- Inova Health Systems,
- The Urban League,
- Planned Parenthood,
- NOVAM,
- Alexandria PTA,
- Project StepOut/Manhood,
- Court Services Unit,
- Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN),
- Campagna Center,
- Sexuality Information Education Council of the United States (SIECUS),
- Northern Virginia Family Services,
- Commission for Women, and
- Other concerned citizens.

ACAP currently has four workgroups that are working on specific areas of focus, including: (1) Community Awareness and Education; (2) Targeting Key Population Segments (Latino youth, males, older teens and parents); (3) Strengthening Community-wide Comprehensive Programs and Services; and (4) Improving Adolescent Pregnancy Outcomes and Deferral of Subsequent Pregnancies.

BUDGET

Initially, City Council provided a budget of \$100,000 to be used for community awareness, education and marketing efforts. In the City Manager's FY 2007 Proposed budget, there is approximately \$65,000 for personnel costs and \$65,000 for non-personnel costs for a total budget of \$130,000. This is the same amount as provided in FY 2006.

The \$65,000 for personnel provides for one full time staff member, housed at the Office on Women, who provides oversight to the work of ACAP. In addition, the ACAP staff member, provides presentations to classrooms at the elementary, middle and high school level; to after-school programs; faith-based youth programs; teen town meetings; and Court Services Unit Day Reporting Program. This staff member also participates regularly in health fairs and community events. The Office on Women has recently begun a Parent Education program to assist parents on how to talk to their children about sex, love and relationships. This has been very successful and we have been asked to extend the program to Latino parents. In addition, one staff member

from Human Services and one staff member of the Health Department assist with staffing on an as needed basis.

“GET REAL” MAGAZINE

“Get Real”, a magazine produced by ACAP several years ago, was extremely popular with youth and adults, but costly to produce. As a result, only three editions were published with the last one being issued in Winter 2003. “Get Real”, however, will now be available on the website. The website development has been done by City staff, so there has been no direct cost to the ACAP budget.

EFFECTIVENESS

ACAP works to achieve its mission through a number of activities, including local media campaigns, the development of a website for both teens and parents, and a text-messaging information line. The local media campaigns, which include local cable messaging for both parents and youth by encouraging them to refrain from early sexual involvement; interviews on local radio and cable stations; and a Washington Post “blow-in”- an insert into the Sunday ad section of the newspaper that is delivered to over 90,000 residences in the City of Alexandria. The campaign also provides “giveaways” for youth with the ACAP logo and tagline on it for various social and sporting events in the City.

Last year, the Office on Women instituted a “Healthy Lifestyles Teen Summit” which was very successful, having over 100 youth participate in its first year. The second annual summit will be held again this May. ACAP also is hosting a Mother Daughter workshop at Maury and George Mason Elementary Schools serving girls in grades 6-12 and their mothers to help open the dialog about sex, love and relationships.

A significant undertaking by ACAP has been the development of a website for both parents and youth about the issues of sex, love and relationships. Nearly three years ago, a telephone survey and then subsequent focus groups were done of parents in Alexandria and youth (this research was funded by a one-time grant). Many indicated that they receive a substantial amount of information about sex, love and relationships from the Internet and so ACAP set about developing a website. The site will have information, resources, and be interactive.

Additionally, ACAP and the Office on Women have established a text-messaging information line so that youth can text message their questions to staff about sex, love and relationships. Research has shown that today’s youth are less likely to telephone in to a hotline than to text message. All calls received to date on the hotline have been teen pregnancy related. Melva and other staff have begun an awareness campaign with the youth of our community about the text-messaging program as well as the website, which will be launched in May.

Again, please refer to the attached graph, which illustrates downward trends in Alexandria’s adolescent pregnancy rates over the last 10+ years.

Attachment: Ten Year Teen Pregnancy Trend

Ten Year Trend

Overall, in the past ten years the rate of teenage pregnancy in Alexandria has decreased.

