

FREE TEENS USA

CHANGING MINDS, TRANSFORMING LIVES

Free Teens USA reaches more than 12,000 teens each year in urban & suburban areas of NY/NJ with messages of healthy relationships, self-leadership and service to others. In the last decade, *Free Teens* has reached more than 100,000 youth, helping them to focus on achieving their future dreams and avoiding the traps that could endanger their lives and goals!



Since 1998 when *Free Teens* began to offer educational and after-school youth development programs in Jersey City and Paterson, **birth rates among unmarried 10-19 year-olds in Jersey City dropped by 37% and in Paterson by 29%** (1998 to 2005). In demographically similar Elizabeth and Passaic City, which had no abstinence ed program, the reductions were only 10% during those years. Overall, births to unmarried girls ages 10-19 in New Jersey dropped 21% in these years.¹

Free Teens Education Saves Taxpayers Millions

The *National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy* has estimated that teen childbearing costs in New Jersey cost NJ taxpayers \$3.3 billion between 1991 to 2004, or \$27,341 per birth.² The average 14% extra reduction in teen births in Jersey City and Paterson (above the state-wide average reduction of 21%) contributed to by intensive *Free Teens* abstinence-centered education (145 less births in 2004, roughly 700 less births from 2001-2005) has resulted in a projected **savings of \$19,138,700** in federal, state and local expenditures for public health care, child welfare, incarceration and lost tax revenue over a 14 year period.

1. <http://njshad.doh.state.nj.us/birmunage1220.html>
2. <http://teenpregnancy.org/costs/tables.asp>

Participants Engaged in '07-'08

- 6,500 Middle School students
- 7,014 High School students
- 52 High Schools and Middle Schools
- 19 Club Sites

Total Students Educated: 13,514

- 560 Parents Educated
- 286 Club Members attended weekly meetings/events

Staff

- 7 Full Time
- 24 Part Time

Finances

- Annual Budget: \$1,273,237
- Administrative: \$101,260 (9% of budget)
- Program Costs (inc. Staff) \$1,134,200

Community/ Regional Affiliations

Free Teens works closely with the Jersey City, Bayonne and Paterson School Districts in New Jersey and the Mt. Vernon and Newburgh School Districts in New York. It works closely with the *Jersey City Community That Cares Coalition* and the *Paterson Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition*.



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Web Sites

www.freeteensusa.org
www.FreeTeensYouth.com
www.CultureMachine.com
www.LoveSmarts.org
www.myspace.com/freeteensusa
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/freeteensusa>

4 Stages of *Free Teens Leadership Training*

Stage One: *Free Teens Leadership Training Presentations & Workbook Activities*

The *Free Teens Leadership Training* powerpoint presentation (available in Spanish & 8 other languages) is used to reach teens about choices and consequences in achieving a successful life as well as the risks posed to future goals by teen sex, as well as alcohol and drug use. Medical facts and real life stories about people who became infected with HIV or other STDS are presented and discussed. Students are asked to clarify their future dreams and life goals. Other topics include dating, refusal skills, dealing with media and peer pressure, discovering self-worth through helping others, and the benefits of healthy marriages, including better physical and mental health, better sex, higher income and better outcomes for children.

Roleplaying of refusal skills & participatory learning using the *Free Teens* and *Relationship Intelligence* student workbooks help students to internalize the ideas being presented and apply them to their own lives.



Stage Two: After-school *Free Teens Clubs*

Teens who have completed the Leadership Training series are invited to join an after-school program that meets at 21 locations in NY/NJ throughout the year. The Relationship Intelligence curriculum is used as the basis for weekly teen discussions in club meetings. Members also participate in Community Service Projects. At the annual year-end banquet club members are honored for keeping their commitments and for contributions to their communities.

Stage Three: Parent Training in "Abstinence Works"

These workshops are designed to motivate parents to take an active part in guiding their children to delay sexual involvement. The program is designed to give parents the information and skills they need to confidently communicate with their children on these topics! Interested parents can join the *Free Teens Village Advisory Council* to create events that increase community support for the abstinence and marriage message.



Stage Four: *Free Teens Media Institute and CultureMachine Activities*

Through the *Free Teens Media Institute*, teens who have come to think more critically about culture in the light of their personal goals and ideals are trained to communicate through one or more of the following media: 1). Video production; 2). Theater; 3). Music; 4). Visual arts; 5) photojournalism, 6). Dance/Performance; and 7) Poetry/Spoken Word. Teen performance groups spread the message of healthy man-woman relationships through theater and dance in New York and New Jersey. *CultureShock* teams visit schools in New York and New Jersey and work with student musicians to write and record music containing positive messages.

Each year students are invited to attend the *Free Teens Media Summit*, where media professionals share their expertise, and to enter their own songs or videos in the *LoveSmarts Media Festival*. Winning songs and videos are posted on *CultureMachine.com* and included in interactive *CultureMachine iMagazine* CD-ROMs distributed to teens around the country.
