

***TEEN PREGNANCY TASK FORCE***  
***Meeting Minutes***

May 19, 2010

**I. Call to order**

Marcia Spector called to order the seventh meeting of the Teen Pregnancy Task Force at 2:05 PM on May 19th, 2010 in the Suffolk County Department of Labor in the North County Complex in Hauppauge, NY 11788.

**II. Roll call**

The following Task Force Members were present:

Janet P. Cassidy, SC One-Stop Employment Center, Jennifer Freeman, County Executive Assistant, Lorraine Gariboldi, Life Center of LI, Inc., Laura Giardino, Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Penny Ilberg, Department of Social Services, Judith Specht, RN., Stony Brook Hospital, Marcia K. Spector, SNAP, Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, Legislator, 5<sup>th</sup> District

The following Members were present:

Resource to Task Force - Sandra Gil, Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Clerical Staff - Ann Maurren, Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Ginny Suhr, Legislative Aide

The following visitors were present:

Maria Barbara, Legislative Aide to Tom Cilmi, Gina D'Andrea Weatherup, Planned Parenthood, Detective Margaret Kirk, Special Victims Unit, Suffolk County Police Department, Dari Schwartz, Bureau Chief, Child Abuse and Domestic Violence, Suffolk County District Attorney, Andrea Ramos Topper, Director, Child Advocacy Center, EAC

**III. Approval of minutes from last meeting**

Minutes were reviewed with no changes. J. Specht made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by J. Cassidy, minutes were unanimously approved.

**IV. Chairperson's Report:**

- a) M. Spector discussed future task force meeting dates and time lines. Leg. V. Vilorio-Fisher has requested an extension until October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010. It

was decided to schedule a meeting on Wednesday, June 30<sup>th</sup> and schedule one meeting per month in July and August.

- b) M. Spector distributed copies of the 2010 Illinois Report and Recommendations on Sexuality Education as a guide for all Task Force members to review.

#### **V. June 1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing in Babylon**

- a) The next public hearing will take place on Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, from 7:00-9:00 PM at the Babylon Town Annex. Since transportation and the evening hours may be a barrier to having teens represented at the hearing, Task Force members are encouraged to attend the “Teens Speak Out” session on Thursday, May 20 to hear thoughts and concerns from teens in the community. Flyers were developed by Planned Parenthood for distribution to potential contacts of Task Force members.

#### **VI. Presentation by Detective Margaret Kirk and Dari Schwartz on Statutory Rape, Sexual Abuse and Adolescent Pregnancy**

- a) M. Spector introduced the discussion by describing current observations regarding statutory rape. She requested clarification regarding the legal implications and reporting of cases. D. Schwartz commented that there is a different attitude towards sexual behavior today. Several factors contribute to this behavior including early and frequent access to the internet and lack of supervision at home due to parent schedules. Language barriers and lack of skill with computers may occur in some families (parents may not speak English and therefore are unaware of what their children are doing on computers.)
- b) D. Schwartz discussed some of the problems incurred in investigations which include multiple partners with the victim who claims sexual activity with just the perpetrator as indicated by the DNA. This may lead to unsympathetic juries if it goes to trial. The victim does not want to press charges for multiple reasons – fear, ‘he loves me’. Cultural factors – it may be considered a ‘family issue’ vs. a criminal issue.
- c) D. Schwartz reported that there are also some positive results since the DA’s office give direction and support through advocacy. M. Kirk remarked that education is very important for both clients and their families. They are referred to the Child Advocacy Center; the police department follow up to make sure the contact was made.
- d) M. Spector questioned the consent laws on medical treatment and M. Kirk responded that there is implied consent; however, the teen must always consent to charges. M. Kirk remarked that CPS will always intervene for a

family matter. D. Schwartz commented that if parents are not doing the “right” thing, they can also be arrested.

- e) M. Kirk reported at least 1000 preferential sex offenders were reported yearly not counting family incest. 500-700 were child sex abuse. M. Kirk commented that girls are involved with gang members because of fear and acceptance. They are afraid of ramifications if they report a gang member. M. Kirk reported that they mostly work with children below the age of 17 who are involved with child abuse and domestic violence. The age of consent in New York State is 17 and there are many different laws regarding criteria for the assaulter and the victim.
- f) D. Schwartz and M. Kirk recommended that parents must get as much education as they can regarding rape, sexual abuse and adolescent pregnancy. Sex education in the schools is a high priority. Suggestions included collaborating with other agencies and task forces, working with corporations to encourage financial contributions and development of mentoring programs and seminars for educators.

## **VII. Presentation by Andrea Ramos Topper, Director, Child Advocacy Center, EAC**

- a) The Suffolk County Child Advocacy Center is located on Wheeler Road in Central Islip where child victims of physical and /or sexual abuse are brought to be interviewed or examined. The purpose of the CAC is to lessen the trauma a child victim experiences during the investigative process. The CAC also serves as a base for the Suffolk County Multidisciplinary Strike Force, which is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases.
- b) The members of the Multidisciplinary Team consist of representatives from the District Attorney’s office, the County Attorney’s office, the Police Department, the Department of Social Services Child Protective Services, Medical Staff and EAC (Education & Assistance Corporation).
- c) The Center also hosts periodic public education forums on issues relating to child abuse, referrals, accompaniment to court and much needed emotional support to the child and family. Kids 2 Kids Peer support groups for child victims and their non-offending parents are also offered.
- d) The Center is supported by the County of Suffolk, NYS Crime Victims Board and by private donations from individuals and corporations.
- e) The Center serviced 561 clients in 2009. Most are girls ages 10-15 and the boys range in age from 5-9.
- f) S. Gil addressed the issue of how many children with special needs are served. There is no documentation to provide this information. M.

Spector suggested we obtain opinions from various agencies and schools for their input.

#### **VIII. New Business**

- a) The summer schedule of meetings was discussed. The group agrees that committees need to be formed to prepare recommendations for the report to be compiled for the legislature. Areas to be considered are: education, statistics, parent involvement, venues such as parent and teacher conferences, development of a Super Task Force and a family fair. Task Force members are requested to email their suggestions to M. Spector for committee topics.
- b) M. Spector suggested a retreat format for a summer meeting. Discussion was held regarding who would participate at this retreat – Task Force members and/or previous speakers that have presented at Task Force meetings.
- c) S. Gil requested a speaker regarding immigration issues that will tentatively present at the June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting. She also distributed a handout promoting Suffolk Baby Showers to take place on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 at the Patchogue-Medford Library from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM.
- d) Leg. V. Vilorio-Fisher suggested we contact the Office of Women’s Services for any additional information they might provide.
- e) M. Spector presented at a 3 day conference targeted at the future of African American girls. It was presented by the Office of Minority Health and the focus was on encouraging education and teen pregnancy prevention.
- f) The June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting is tentatively scheduled for the Legislator’s Office in the North County Complex. A. Maurren will email the location of the meeting when the minutes are sent.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Ann Maurren