

2009 YOUTH FORUM

"Life in a Changing World"

presented by
Soroptimist International
of
Fort Bragg, Noyo Sunrise, and Mendocino

March 30, 2009

Ft Bragg Presbyterian Church Community Room



PROGRAM YOUTH FORUM
March 31, 2009
“Life in a Changing World”
Presented by Soroptimist International of Fort
Bragg, Noyo Sunrise, and Mendocino

SCHEDULE

8:45-9:00 Registration, continental breakfast
9:00-9:15 Welcome and Introduction of Topics
With Small Group Formations
9:15-9:45 Small Group Discussions Begin

Topic 1: SEX, DIET, AND DRUGS

9:45-10:15 Large Group Discussion of Topic 1
10:15-10:30 Break
10:30-11:00 Small Group Discussion Begin

Topic 2: POLITICS

11:00-11:30 Large Group Discussion of Topic 2

-- LUNCH --

Topic 3: FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS

12:30-1:00 Small Group Discussions Begin
1:00-1:45 Large Group Discussion of Topic 3
1:45-2:00 Evaluations and Presentations of Certificates

-- ADJOURN --

Topic Session One--morning

SEX, DIET, AND DRUGS

(Choose one the following 3 topics in this category)

A. Diet and Nutrition

This excerpt was taken directly from a Catholic Social Worker's Magazine:

Body Issues

Teens are under a lot of pressure from peers and advertising when it comes to body image. Teens are often unsatisfied with the way they look, especially with so many advertising campaigns geared at teens that are all about image. Teen body issues can result in low self esteem, which can lead to a number of other problems such as teen sex issues. A teenager with body issues or low self esteem might be more inclined to have teen sex issues because they either feel unattractive or shy away from the opposite sex, or they crave attention from the opposite sex and end up going too far to please a boyfriend and girlfriend. Teen body issues are normal and inevitable.

Does education about teen sex issues help or does it need to be improved or eliminated?

What about peer counseling as the solution?

Are you aware of “bullying”, as in people intimidating others to do things or feel things they wouldn't normally do or feel? Have you seen it on the internet or on the school grounds? How do people deal with it? What do you think can be done?

Suggested activities: (all optional, but must present the table's poster or outline to group)

- Do a poster on 'being okay'.
- Pick a boy and girl volunteer from your table, and counsel them publicly about being fat, tall, big, plain, curly hair or whatever.
- Discuss effects of extreme diets, anorexia and bulimia. Self-abuse
- Discuss “peer pressure” to look good, dress right

B. SEX DRUGS AND BABIES IN HIGH SCHOOL

Research shows the following 'Teen Trends' over the last 35 years (ages 8-23)

- Percentage of teens involved in sexual activity has nearly doubled
- Average age that teens begin having sex has decreased
- Physicians are seeing more 12 and 13 year olds who are sexually active
- Average number of sexual partners during teen years has increased
- Sex with high-risk partners, such as injecting drug users and people with HIV, has increased
- Illegal drug use in teens has escalated the Rate of infection with STDs has increased substantially
- Teen pregnancy has increased
- HIV/AIDS is likely to surpass the Black Death, the most severe plague in history, and become the worst epidemic ever.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS (optional, but must present the table's poster or outline to group)

- Is this all just adult hype to try and keep teens from having sex?
- Is there anything wrong with teen sex?
- Should the school/society help/educate in some way?
- Is there enough education and mentoring?
- If a girl gets pregnant, should there be government or school-sponsored childcare, or should the mom and dad stay home and do independent study?
- Is Domestic Violence and child abuse a consequence of too much early responsibility or bad training?
- Is there a responsibility to report family rape?
- What can you do to help a friend who has such problems?
- Would teenagers be more careful with sex if abortions were not legal or available?

C. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

According to the federal government:

On an average day, about 1.2 million adolescents, age 12 to 17, smoke cigarettes, 631,000 drink alcohol, and 586,000 use marijuana. In addition, about 49,000 adolescents use inhalants, 27,000 use hallucinogens (e.g., Ecstasy and other club drugs), 13,000 use cocaine, and 3,800 use heroin.

Why does the government care which drugs people use? Is drug abuse a problem in your school, in your circle of friends, or at home? Why are certain drugs illegal? If drugs were legalized, would everyone get high all the time? Should the government legalize and tax these drugs to make money, like with alcohol and cigarettes?

Suggested activities: (optional, but must present the table's poster or outline to group)

- Discuss any benefits or consequences to the public from legalizing (currently) different types of restricted drug use, such as financial dependency, public intoxication, domestic violence, medical care, increased performance, improved taxation income, affect on black market and crime, etc.
- Play-act how the school would respond before and after legalization of a drug of choice. Can do different drugs in different scenes.
- Describe a fantasy drug that would solve all the problems of teens today.

Above are the 3 free choice topics for Session One

Topic Session Two--morning

(Choose one the following 3 topics in this category)

POLITICS

A. First priority for Obama?

President Obama has chosen your table to be an advisory committee and represent all teens in America to his cabinet.

What would you tell the president needs to be done?

Suggested activities: *(optional, but must present the table's poster or outline to group)*

- Play act the interview with the president, presenting issues of concern with suggestions
- Make a list of burning issues that you want handled, and how it can be done.
- Discuss the plight of the schools and the previous administrations "no child left behind" program.
- Suggest solutions for the depressed economy, high unemployment, and global warming, for example.
- Write up a government entrance examination (test) that one must pass before being eligible to run for president.
- Make a pitch for new regulations/funding to improve schools and attractiveness to stay in school. What must the school cut and not be allowed to cut to save money? Why do kids drop out? What would make them stay? Variety of classes, or alternative education classes. Better school hours, programs, sports, etc. Better teacher training/screening?

B. Global Warming, alternative energy, vehicle emissions

Not one scientist debates that global warming is real and accelerating at an alarming pace. Scientists predict the sea level will rise 5 feet over the next 50-100 years.

What has to change if anything?

Suggested activities: *(optional, but must present the table's poster or outline to group)*

- Make a list of life-style changes that you are willing to commit to for GW
- Discuss how your future life with GW may change your plans or lifestyle
- How much effort (none, some, a lot) should we put into accommodating sea level rising and the loss of land under water (explain your answers).

C. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The 3 strikes law in Calif. has filled the jails to overflowing. One of the most highly paid state-worker jobs today is a prison guard, requiring no formal education. Not all, but most incarcerated people in the state jail system are in for drug-related offenses (e.g., sellers, violence, and theft). The State of California is broke and considering the repeal of the 3 strikes law or early release of prisoners to save money..

Discussion topics: Do you agree with the governor's idea? What would be the consequences or benefits of early release? How do you feel about juveniles being tried as adults? How do you feel about kids with weapons in school, police presence on campus, added security etc.? Do you feel safe or threatened in your school and community, from kids, from the peers, police, predators, gangs, authority figures? What is the best way to deal with kids who problems that interfere with the schools and community, such as gang behavior, anger management, homelessness, drugs. Do you think there should be group homes for young offenders instead of juvenile detention centers or jail?

**This page and the facing page are the 3 free choice
Topics for Session Two**

Topic Session Three—afternoon (Free choice tables)

(Choose one the following 7 topics in this category)

FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS

A. ETHNIC GROUPS AND HOW THEY GET ALONG

- How do group ethnicities affect the way in which we relate?
- Do you believe in the “Melting Pot” theory, in which the ingredients in the pot (people of different cultures, races and religions) are combined so as to develop a multi-ethnic society?
- RACISM—are there different forms within various groups?
- Is SEXISM a result of ethnic barriers? How does clothing/hair style, language, skin color, religion, etc. create barriers between people?

B. COLLEGE COSTS AND LIMITED ADMISSIONS

This year the state school funding has been cut to the point that they were forced to minimize freshman admissions. Most of the UC's and State colleges were affected. Junior Colleges have had to cut classes and teachers.

- If you are planning to go to college, does this change your mind about where to apply or what subjects to study?
- How will you pay for college?
- Are you more apt to go to Junior College?
- Is anyone you know affected by these cutbacks?
- What can be done to fix the problem?

C. FOSTER KIDS

- Does the “Foster Care” system work?
- Is there sufficient screening for providers?
- Do people do foster care just for the money?
- Has it saved or hurt anybody you know?

D. WHEN ARE YOU OLD ENOUGH?

In some countries and states, you can drink before the age of 21. In the US you can drive at 15, vote at 18, and drink at 21 years, and be jailed as an adult for certain crimes. In comparison, Denmark allows 16 to buy alcohol, but you can't get a driver's license until you are 25, and not get a government job until you've served 2 years in the military. In Brazil you can vote at 16, but it's mandatory if you are 18-70 or they will cut off your power if you don't vote in the public elections!

- If you could change the law, what ages would you pick for which activities, and what laws would you change?

E. GAY RIGHTS

- Can a gay person come out in high school safely today? Why or why not?
- Should gays be allowed to marry legally?
- Is this the government's business?
- Don't ask don't tell policy? Is that valid?
- Should children be given gender-neutral toys? Do certain gender-specific toys (e.g. guns and dolls) shape a child or reveal anything?

F. HEALTHCARE IN THE US

More and more, congress is getting closer to proposing government-sponsored healthcare in the US.

- Do you get adequate health care for your whole family?
- Do you see government healthcare leading to cookie-cutter healthcare socialism, where all people get the same benefits? Or will it guarantee a minimum healthcare level, with freedom to seek better, such as a specialist or better than minimum?
- What are the problems with these scenarios—e.g. will there be any family doctors in the future if they cannot get decent fees from the HMO's or Government controls?

G. MEDIA—Freedom of Speech

Certain radio personalities are quite caustic and one-sided in their views, sometimes convincing people they know what they are talking about. The news media is more and more becoming corporate-controlled, and some say the news is slanted or purposely lacking in detail.

- Should people have the right to say whatever they want on the radio or internet, such as distorted or lies or sensationalism?
- Should such people be put off the air for right or left opinions, corporate or line falsities, cover ups, news national security—etc?
- When does the 'freedom of speech' become slander or inciting to riot?
- What can be done to protect the constitution without jeopardizing public safety?

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Topics for Session Three**

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March 30, 2009

Ft Bragg Presbyterian Church Community Room



PROGRAM YOUTH FORUM

March 26, 2008

“Life in a Changing World”

Presented by Soroptimist International of Fort Bragg, Noyo Sunrise, and Mendocino

SCHEDULE

- 8:45-9:00 Registration, continental breakfast
9:00-9:15 Welcome and Introduction of Topics
With Small Group Formations
9:15-9:45 Small Group Discussions Begin

Topic 1: HS ENROLLMENT DROPPING

- 9:45-10:15 Large Group Discussion of Topic 1
10:15-10:30 Break
10:30-11:00 Small Group Discussion Begin

Topic 2: WHAT IS COMMUNITY SERVICE?

- 11:00-11:30 Large Group Discussion of Topic 2

-- LUNCH --

Topic 3: FREE CHOICE (See List)

- 12:30-1:00 Small Group Discussions Begin
1:00-1:45 Large Group Discussion of Topic 3
1:45-2:00 Evaluations and Presentations of Certificates

-- ADJOURN --

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