

## **HELP YOUNG PARENTS EARN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

Our League is one of the founding community organizations participating on the St. Vrain Valley Teen Parent Achievement Task Force that is bound and determined to increase the graduation rate of pregnant and parenting teens. Thirteen community agencies have been working with the St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD) for over a year by networking, problem solving, working primarily on issues related to education and childcare. League member Kay Forsythe co- chairs the Task Force along with Mark Mills, SVVSD Assistant Superintendent.

### **Why Longmont?**

- 68 babies were born to 15-17 year olds in Boulder County in 2009;
- 60% of these births were to teens from the Longmont area;
- But only 24% of these county teens live in the Longmont area.

### **Why these teens?**

- Parenthood is the leading cause of high school dropouts among teen girls;
- Less than half of all mothers having children before 18 will graduate from high school;
- Without a high school diploma, they are at higher risk of receiving public assistance and living in poverty;
- Almost 43% of teens below age 18 who gave birth in our county received inadequate prenatal care, more than twice the rate for all women;
- Children of teen parents are likely not to perform as well academically, developmentally, and socially;
- Over the course of a lifetime, a single high school dropout costs society approximately\$260,000 in lost earning, taxes, and productivity.

### **What does St. Vrain Valley School District offer?**

- A Teen Parent Program that can enroll16 young mothers for only one school year;
- This program helps them learn the basics of responsible parenthood while staying in school;
- Licensed, onsite childcare is provided for 10 babies with moms in this program;
- Pregnant students may remain in their regular school with minimal support.

### **The Questionnaire Project --**

The Task Force developed a survey that has been completed by 147 pregnant and parenting teens (moms and dads) residing in the school district asking them what would help them stay in or return to school until graduation. This is the first time that an organized effort has been made to ask the teens themselves and listen to their experienced voices.

**Money, money, money** -- This needs assessment is a critical phase for the work of the Task Force. We have not been able to find funding to have this survey assessed and evaluated. We have investigated grant possibilities (26), written grants (9), and contacted 13 top employers in

the Longmont area. Hopefully, some will come through. But so far, only Workforce of Boulder County has pledged \$500 of the \$5,372 that we will need.

### **A bright light!**

The Education Foundation for the St. Vrain Valley has “adopted” this Task Force and is the fiscal agent for grants and donations. Contributions that individuals make are tax deductible.

### **Are you willing to pitch in?**

Kay Forsythe and Paula McKey are our League’s representatives on this Task Force, and we are asking for your help!

Making a donation to the Education Foundation and The Questionnaire Project is easy.

To make a donation by check:

- Make it out to the Education Foundation for the St. Vrain Valley 7
- Write Teen Parenting Task Force on the *For* line in the bottom left hand corner
- Mail it to EFSVV, P.O Box 2598, Longmont, co 80502
- You will receive a tax receipt in the mail.

To make an online donation with a credit card:

- Go to the website [www.efsvv.org](http://www.efsvv.org)
- Click on Donate Today (in the top choice bar)
- Click the Donate Online option to get to GivingFirst.org to make an online donation
- (GivingFirst is a secure site & does not charge a processing fee)*
- Enter the amount of your donation
- Answer “Where do what the funds directed? by selecting Program
- Answer “Any comments or special instructions?” by typing in Teen Parenting Task Force

You will receive an online donation receipt for the donation from GivingFirst, which will later be followed up, by a formal tax receipt from the Education Foundation.

*---- written by Kay Forsythe*