

Building Youth Capacities for Healthy Futures and Responsible Parenthood

Two of the major causes of children living in poverty are too-early parenting and absentee fathers. Preparing young people to become caring, competent parents may be the single most effective way to prevent child abuse and other violence, increase mental health, advance school preparedness, and achieve academic success for future generations.

ANNOUNCING

A service-learning, youth development, leadership opportunity for teens **DADS MAKE A DIFFERENCE Teen Peer Educator Training**

Focusing on the role of fathers in raising children, Dads Make a Difference educates young men and women about the responsibilities of parenting and the challenges of parenting too soon. Young people who understand parental responsibility are more likely to form strong families that are emotionally and financially secure. These families are the backbone of productive, nurturing communities. DMAD builds the capacity of trained teen peer educators to focus the attention of younger youth on the personal, economic, and social impact of the decisions they make before becoming a parent. DMAD helps youth develop attitudes, behaviors, and skills vital to their social and emotional well-being and provides youth with knowledge and resources necessary for them to thrive and make successful transitions to adulthood and future parenthood.

DMAD provides important protective factors for youth including connections with caring adults, a way to develop their talents, honest and respectfully presented information, the opportunity to look at life planning, development of skills useful in a variety of life arenas, connection with an engaged community of young people, the chance to be a role model for younger youth, and a safe environment in which to learn and explore new concepts.

UPCOMING DMAD TEEN PEER EDUCATOR TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Winter/Spring 2013 – Flexible 1-day and 2-day Training Options Locations and dates TBD based on interest

Cost: \$45 per participant – teen or adult bringing teens for 1-day training or 2-day with no overnight

Trainings are open to groups of high school-age teens, male & female, with at least one adult advisor from schools, agencies, and faith-based groups statewide. Actual training value is \$150-200.

****Sliding fee or scholarships are available if needed.****

Registration fee for participants outside of MN is \$100 for either training.

Dads Make a Difference (DMAD) is a statewide nonprofit whose Mission is to promote the positive involvement of fathers and to educate youth about responsible parenting.

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION completed June 2002

High School Peer Educators (Pre & Post Training Surveys, Year 1 & Year 2 Follow-up Surveys)

Measured knowledge (paternity / child support), attitudes (paternity / fatherhood), and skills (leadership / decision-making), and included questions about the teens own lives (sexual behavior / contraceptive use / pregnancy / parenting). Outcomes demonstrate:

- DMAD training prepares teens well for peer educator teaching.
- DMAD influences the lives of teens, whether they only attend the training or go on to be a Peer Educator of middle school-age youth.
- A majority of Peer Educators take steps to prevent becoming a parent too soon.
- After two years, teens have difficulty recalling factual information, but desired attitudes remain strong.

Middle School Youth (Pre & Post Teen Teaching Surveys, 6-Week Follow-up Surveys)

Measured knowledge (legal fatherhood / child support / risk), attitudes (too-early parenting / paternity / dads), and feedback on Peer Educators and the curriculum. Outcomes demonstrate:

- DMAD makes strong, short-term changes in youth knowledge/attitudes about dads, parenting & paternity.
- Middle school youth strongly indicate they value peer educators' involvement in DMAD.



A positive youth development, pregnancy prevention, paternity education program in which male and female high school-age teens teach middle school-age youth about the importance of fathers in children's lives, about the responsibilities of being a parent, including legal responsibilities, about healthy relationships, and about the importance of making responsible choices about risky behavior so as not to become a parent too soon.

YOUTH SERVED from October 1994 through December 2012

- High school teens in Minnesota trained 3,014
- Minnesota schools and community agencies 170
- Middle school youth taught by trained teens 76,000
- Teens from other states trained by Minnesota 205

PEER EDUCATOR DEMOGRAPHICS

- Average age 16.5 years of age
- Gender 53% female, 47% male
- Race/Ethnicity 50% white, 50% youth of color
- Currently a parent 7% of teens trained
- Geography 70% metro, 30% greater MN

CURRENT EVALUATION

DMAD regularly conducts a pre/post test at teen trainings. One question we ask is - **At what age do you think you would be emotionally and financially ready to support a child?** (recent responses)

Age ready	Pre-training responses	Post-training responses
• 18-20 years	7%	4%
• 21-23 years	15%	6%
• 24-26 years	50%	35%
• 27-29 years	16%	37%
• 30+ years	12%	18%

For every training since we began using this measurement tool in 2003 the percents for the later age ranges have increased pre to post, while the percents for the earlier age ranges have decreased pre to post, indicating the intent to delay parenting. Increased knowledge of the responsibilities of being a parent helps teens better understand the benefits of delaying parenting until they are ready, for themselves and for their children. Another evaluation question we ask is – **What do you feel is the most important thing you've learned about what it means to be a responsible father?** Response themes include: being there for your child, providing financial support, co-parenting with the child's mother, being a responsible father so you can positively impact your child's life, and waiting to be a parent until you are ready for the commitment and responsibility of parenting.

TESTIMONIALS

What Peer Educators have said ...

- DMAD made me realize how permanent and expensive parenthood is.
- DMAD has helped me to know the consequences of my actions before I take them and I know what risks not to take to protect my future.
- Through DMAD, I have been able to realize what I want to find in a husband and the way I desire my future husband to be toward me and his children.
- By going through this program and then teaching it, I have spent a lot of time reflecting on my own father. I have a better understanding and appreciation for everything he has done for me in my life.
- Speaking in front of groups and directing people in activities is a valuable skill to have that I will use throughout my life.
- I discovered that I have a love for teaching and that's what I want to do as a career.
- Being active in DMAD has reaffirmed my decision to choose a career in the Social Work field.
- DMAD made me realize that young teens really need older teens in their lives as positive role models.

What Middle School-age Youth have said ...

- What I learned from DMAD is don't have sex too early and don't be a Dad who leaves.
- I realized the dangers of sex and found out if I had a child how much my life would change.