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The Free to Be Connection

Free to Be Web Cast Takes a National Seat!

by Casey O'Neill, Program Director

Many of you are familiar with our very popular educational component, the Free to Be Teen Panel, which is facilitated by courageous and exemplary Peer Educators who explicitly express their reasons for choosing abstinence (or renewed abstinence) and role-model healthy decision-making and character for their peers.

This past August Free to Be was selected to share, via a web cast format, with other abstinence programs, educators and supporters how we recruit, train and retain our Peer Educators, how we have incorporated a developmental assets approach and character building initiative into our Teen Panel program component, and why we feel it is important to empower youth by providing them with opportunities to serve as leaders for the abstinence movement.

The web cast, titled Free to Be Teen Panels: A Peer-to-Peer Approach, can be accessed through the Pal-Tech web site at any time. Go to <http://abstinence.pal-tech.com/resources/> and click on Web Casts.



Free to Be at the Elsie Allen Health Fair.



Peer Educator Elana and Program Assistant Nicolette at Cornerstone Gardens.

Back to School

by Sue Bisbee, Executive Director

Question: What is better than mom's apple pie on the 4th of July?
Answer: The beginning of a new year in the schools for Free to Be.

Question: What is unique about Free to Be's 08-09 school year?
Answer: We are partnering with three schools to implement a long-term, quality evaluation of our program!

Although we have consistently evaluated our program components, this year's efforts through our federal Community-based Abstinence Education grant represent a more rigorous standard. The analogy that comes to mind is the difference between a Pinto and a Cadillac. Our new plan includes four years of pre and post testing with 2,250 students at Healdsburg HS, Casa Grande HS and Sonoma Valley HS. For the first time we will be using a comparison group in the evaluation. This year's freshman class at Sonoma Valley HS will not receive the Free to Be curriculum, but will be tested in order to compare their outcomes with those students who do receive the curriculum. All students will be post tested at 6 and 12 months, and our Peer Educators will get in on the action for the first time through focus groups and written assessment. When the evaluation concludes in 2012, we will be a significant step closer to our plans for the national expansion of Free to Be!

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"I liked hearing that I'm not the only one deciding not to have sex....I'm not alone."

- 9th grade female

**"Before today, I didn't know about abstinence. Now that I do, I not only respect it but I am going to choose renewed abstinence."
- 9th grade female**

New Peer Educators



Lisa



Benson



Ariana



Vanessa



Caitlin



Lizzy

PE Maria, Program Assistant Nicolette, PE Kelly, and PE Ricky at the YUM event in Fort Bragg.



Program Director Casey and Peer Program Supervisor Christy rock'n out at the PE Social.

Program Assistant Nicolette, PE Maria, and PE Frewini getting comfortable at the PE Social.



PE Ariana, PE Tommy, and Youth Outreach Coordinator Jason playing to the beat at the PE Social.

Program Assistant Erik, PE Mark, and Youth Outreach Coordinator Jason at the PE Social, "Progressive Dinner." Is dessert next!?



Free to be is thrilled to announce the addition of our new Peer Program Supervisor, Christy Wohlert.

Christy grew up in Santa Cruz, California and studied Music and Psychology at Liberty University. She moved to Santa Rosa after she and her husband were married. She has spent the past few years working as a music director for a local church and is now looking forward to working with and getting to know the youth in Sonoma County.

"I'm passionate about working with teens and I am excited to come along side them and help them recognize their potential to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives."

New voices speaking for HEALTHY choices!

A noted poet and accomplished student, Lisa has a passion for abstinence and dispels the media's myths as a role model and abstinent teen. She loves to spend time with her family and help the elderly with their needs, using her many gifts and talents.

Benson is a star athlete, excellent student, great son and responsible big brother. He leads a passion-filled life. He is choosing abstinence because he realizes that he is a role model to his little sisters and he wants to live his life so that it has a positive affect on them.

An avid athlete, Ariana enjoys spending time with her large extended family and cousins. She was raised in Sebastopol where she likes to go to Screamin Mimi's for ice cream. She loves to travel and has fond memories of traveling with her aunt and uncle across the U.S.

A spunky singer and socialite, Vanessa is always ready to share a funny story and give you a great laugh. She plays soccer and loves public speaking. She has a passion to lead as a positive role model in her future singing career and emulates her grandmother as her greatest role model.

Our gourmet chef, Caitlin, loves to cook French cuisine. She also keeps very busy with soccer and dance. Caitlin enjoys listening to music, going to concerts and playing Guitar Hero. Caitlin is bilingual in French and has dreams of going to Paris to attend a culinary institute.

Listening to music and hanging out with friends is what Lizzy enjoys doing in her spare time. She also enjoys relaxing while reading novels. She was born in Russia and came to Cotati with her family when she was five years old. Lizzy is currently a volunteer at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital.

Ricky likes cars and dirt biking. He loves his family and friends and values their support in his life. He has had many different life experiences that have shaped his view of and commitment to abstinence. He desires to share his story with teens, hoping that his personal experiences will have a positive influence in their lives.

Dakota is beginning her sophomore year as a well-rounded and outgoing young lady who has a love for animals. She enjoys dance and spending time with family. Her dream to become a veterinarian is supported by her decision for abstinence!

An ambitious student, athlete and brother to five siblings, Tommy is looking forward to positively influencing his peers by emphasizing the social and emotional benefits of abstinence. His favorite sports to play are tennis, basketball, and football. He also enjoys weight lifting.

Being involved in many different activities is something that Cassie values. She loves to act, read, play sports and sing. Opera is her favorite genre of music to sing, and her favorite memory is when she preformed a duet with her friend at a recital in Ireland.

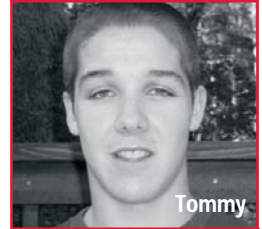
Belinda is a role model to her two younger brothers. She has been working hard in school and on extra-curricular activities, including volleyball, in order to achieve her goal to earn a college scholarship. She is entering her senior year and is looking forward to speaking for Free to Be.



Ricky



Dakota



Tommy



Cassie



Belinda

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Help Sonoma



County youth!



Make an impact.



Donate today!



**SAVE
 THE
 DATE!**

4th Annual STARS Banquet

"Dancing with the Stars"

April 20, 2009

Mary Agatha Furth Center

6:00 - 9:00 pm

2008 FALL EVENTS

Sep. 9th
 Sep. 26-28th
 Sep. 27th

Oct. 30th
 Nov. 21st
 Dec. 11th

F2B @ SSU Service and Internship Fair
 2008/2009 PE Orientation in Santa Cruz
 F2B @ the Southwest Community
 Health and Wellness Fair
 PE Harvest Night Social
 PE Ellington Hall Dance Social
 PE Ice Skating Social



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