

# PROJECT REALITY

Leader in Abstinence Education Since 1985

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2007 "Teens Speak Out"



## Winning Entries



- Essay
- Music
- Poetry
- Poster Art

*Congratulations!*

PROJECT  
REALITY

Leader in Abstinence Education Since 1985

# 2007 "Teens Speak Out"

Poster Art Category — 3rd Place  
Timothy J. Bourne', 13 years old, Home School Student, Riverdale, IL



## 2007 "Teens Speak Out"

Poster Art Category — 2nd Place  
Raven Sanders, 13 years old, Central Jr. H.S., Belleville, IL



## 2007 "Teens Speak Out"

### 2007 Winners

#### Essay Category

- 1st Place: Elizabeth Sanchez, Chicago
- 2nd Place: Aminat Odunewu, Aurora
- 3rd Place: Samantha Chatman, Chicago

#### Music Category

- 1st Place: Blake Mason, Ethan Grasty, Marco Namowicz, Aurora
- 2nd Place: Cindy Lanehart, Chicago
- 3rd Place: Yarimil Velez, Janethe Contreras, Chicago

#### Poetry Category

- 1st Place: Sarah Halbur, Joliet
- 2nd Place: Hannah Lingafelter, Viola
- 3rd Place: Charis Rich, Chicago

#### Poster Category

- 1st Place: Kimberly Nicole Woodworth, Winchester
- 2nd Place: Raven Sanders, Belleville
- 3rd Place: Timothy J. Bourne', Riverdale

## 2007 "Teens Speak Out"

### Essay Category — 1st Place

Elizabeth Sanchez, 16 years old, Carl Shurz H.S., Chicago

#### *Sex and the Media*

Teenagers today use media an average of about 6 ½ hours per day, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. That means in a year the average American teen will see nearly 14,000 sexual references per year (*Sexuality, Contraception, and the Media. American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Public Education, January, 2001.*) Although 64 percent of all shows include sexual content, only 15% mention waiting, protection, and consequences. (TV Sex Getting "Safer." Kaiser Family Foundation)

The media should communicate to teens the consequences of having sex. Most teens need to be reminded of the consequences of their actions. Teens are being consumed every day by the media. They are being "branded" by what they see on the television, on billboards and by what they hear on the radio. The media should communicate and encourage the message of abstinence among teens. Sex affects teens both physically and emotionally, but you rarely hear the media communicating this.

There are many physical effects that having sex leads to. There are twenty-five different sexually transmitted diseases out there. 10,000 cases of STDs occur each day among teens. Some of the different types of STDs out there, to name a few, are AIDS, Herpes, and Chlamydia. A very important physical consequence that the media isn't communicating is teen pregnancies. About 2,000 teen girls get pregnant every day. The media shows people having "safe" sex, using condoms. Condoms do not protect against STDs and pregnancies 100 percent.

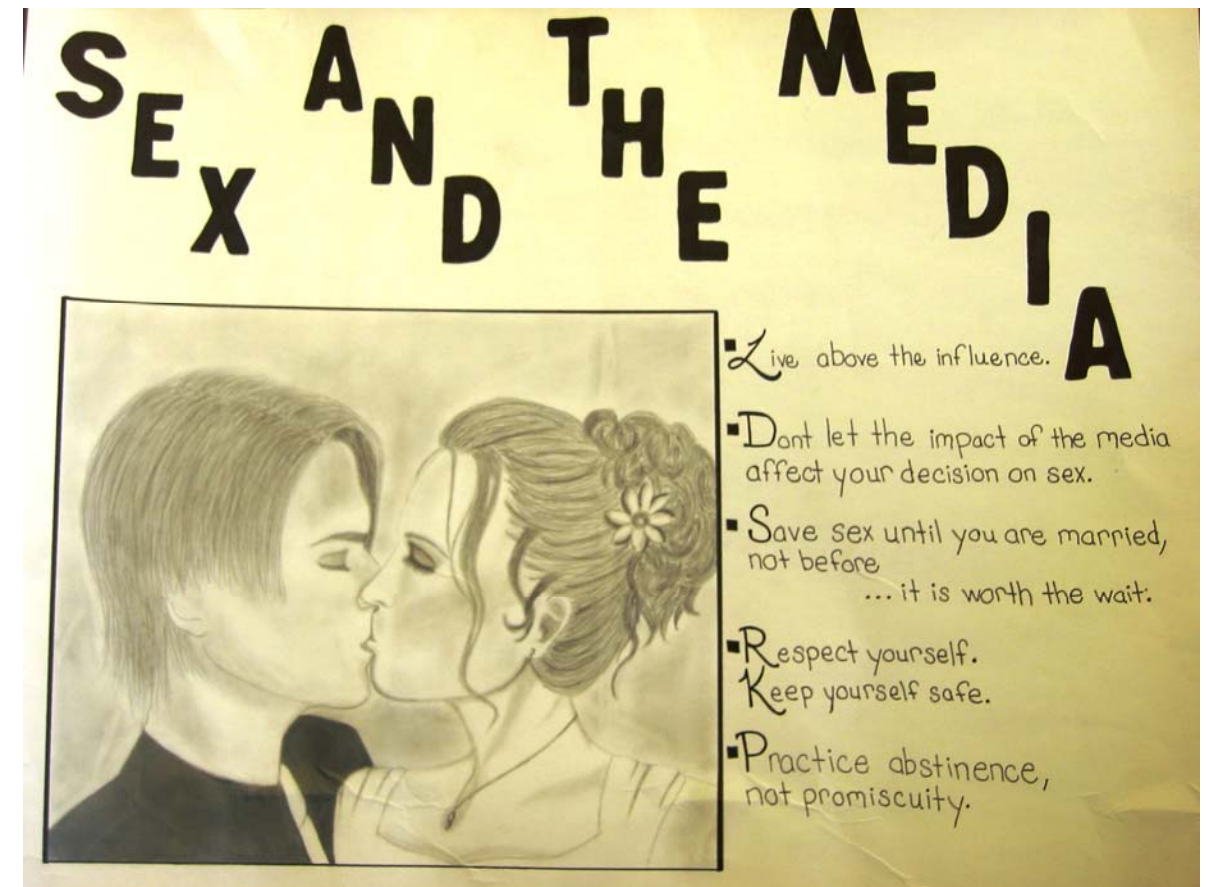
The media should communicate the emotional effects also. A condom does not protect your heart. The emotional consequences are different for guys and girls. For instance, there is a powerful chemical hormone that is released in a female when she is sexually active (Kerstin Uvnas-Moberg, M.D., PhD., The Oxytocin Factor). This chemical forms an emotional bond between the girl and the guy she had sex with. Guys release a chemical similar to oxytocin, called epinephrine. This chemical creates a "Kodak moment" in the guy's head of the girl which he had sex with. Guilt and regret are also emotional consequences which the media is not communicating.

We are on this earth for a purpose. Our bodies are a wonderful creation that should not be harmed physically, nor emotionally. The decisions teens are making today will affect them for the rest of their lives. The media should encourage abstinence until marriage among teens because that is the only way that teens will avoid these consequences. Teens are mimicking what the media is showing. Therefore, the media should encourage teens to be abstinent until marriage and to value their lives.

## 2007 "Teens Speak Out"

### Poster Art Category — 1st Place

Kimberly Woodworth, 15 years old, Winchester Elementary, Winchester, IL



## 2007 “Teens Speak Out”

### Poetry Category — 3rd Place

Charis Rich, 18 years old, Lincoln Park H.S., Chicago, IL

We live... or so we say  
Wanting to do things our own way, we thrive upon  
This pseudo ecstasy of covetous longings over things from which no contentment  
will come Gazing at the artificial celebrity life,  
the fakeness of the media  
Images invade our minds destroying what is sacred

Sexually explicit has been taken to mean mature  
when all it leads to is obsession for more  
What does lust offer? Invasive thoughts, unfulfilled longings,  
fear of disease, lies and deceit, all topped off with a serving of disappointment

We compromise our beliefs to match the state of society,  
saying “This is just the way it is” and leaving it at that  
How empty we feel when saying these words,  
like there’s nothing better, nothing profound  
Love is translated as lust for more  
no commitment all betrayal  
Has selfless love dissipated?  
Not for *all* of us anyway

We know better than to give ourselves away  
We know that condoms don’t solve the problem  
They don’t protect from all diseases  
They don’t prevent pregnancy  
They don’t protect one’s dignity  
Abstinence is a word that is used less and less  
while our society regresses to “safe sex”  
There is true beauty in saving yourself  
for your wedding day.

We *think* we know what we want  
We think the answers lie in society  
or within ourselves alone  
We’ll never find our answers there

What we really want is something other  
than what the world has to offer  
We want to seek  
No masks, no pretension  
We want the real thing

## 2007 “Teens Speak Out”

### Essay Category — 2nd Place

Aminat Odunewu, 14 years old, Mooseheart Academy, Mooseheart, IL

#### *Sex in the Media*

I think that the media can promote abstinence in the same way it promotes premarital sex. The media makes premarital sex seem like a good thing. Instead the media should be talking about the consequences and how it will affect our lives. Some examples that the media uses to encourage premarital sex are showing body parts, couples participating in extreme public displays of affection, and also books that encourage teen sex. Another way that the media supports premarital sex is by airing commercials advertising condoms and saying that condoms are the safe way to go. Also music is an issue. Music has a major effect because it makes young adults think that having sex is the cool thing to do or that it is not a big deal. It is a big deal.

There are many ways that the media can use to instill a positive attitude about abstinence in teenagers. Some people might feel that it is impossible but if the media can influence people to have sex then they can influence teens to have sex after they are married. One way that is possible is by having more commercials stating the negative things about premarital sex and how they can avoid those activities by being abstinent. They can also have celebrities that kids tend to look up to, talking about the positive consequences that come from abstinence. For example, instead of having a commercial with a girl smiling about genital herpes they could have her smiling about being abstinent.

One method that I feel would be most effective that the media can use to promote abstinence is by airing shows on channels that most teens typically watch. If a program promoting abstinence were to air on MTV, VH1 or BET in the evening, more than likely teenagers would watch it being the fact that is when teens typically watch TV. If a show were to continuously air during the same time every day more than likely the average teenager would end up watching and more than likely gain something from it. If TV stations would replace shows like The O.C., One Tree Hill, and The Real World, which contains an extreme amount of PDA (public displays of affection) with shows that promote abstinence and positive choices, I feel that a lot of teenagers would realize that maybe abstinence is not such a bad thing.

Lastly, the media should promote abstinence in magazines. When a teenager walks to a magazine stand and picks up the latest issue of Cosmo Girl, Cosmopolitan, or even Seventeen most headlines say something to the affect of “How to be a good kisser,” “Sex Shockers” or “Which type of contraception is best?” A better choice for magazines headlines could be, “Abstinence: The safest route”, or “Sex, it can wait.” More than likely, if teenagers saw more headlines they might be a little hesitant to pick it up but they will buy it in the end because it is one of their favorite magazines.

## 2007 “Teens Speak Out”

### Essay Category — 3rd Place

Samantha Chatman, 15 years old, Lincoln Park H.S., Chicago, IL

#### *The Media's Impact on Abstinence*

Suppose you have a thirteen year old daughter, and she loves watching music videos with her big sister. After a good hour of watching non stop hip hop and rap music videos, your thirteen year old daughter will be left with one impression about sex, that it is “cool”. That’s what today’s media is advertising about sex. But we don’t see or hear many messages in the media about choosing abstinence? Not many, but this needs to change today.

Abstinence should be consistently advertised on commercials that run during teen programming. Teens are like sponges. They absorb everything that surrounds them. And if the media would advertise more messages about abstinence, teens would be left with the impression that teen sex is not cool.

Abstinence is what I like to call, “a clear conscience”. If you choose it, a lot of potential problems such as sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, sexual abuse, and a feeling of no self worth would be avoided. The media is challenged with sending positive messages to teens such as me because in this day and age, sex sells.

The television media has a lot of power and influence over teens. They should use that power by sending positive messages to today’s youth. Imagine if the media created reality shows that challenged teens to create a music video that encouraged other teens to abstain from having sex. And imagine a grand prize of a full scholarship to a college of a teen’s choice. That’s using power where it counts the most. Many teens can’t even dream of going to college because there is no money.

Musicians, especially many rap and hip hop artists, have a huge responsibility to relay messages of abstinence and hope to young teens. Many of the rap and hip hop artists today had little to hope for, but someone gave them a chance. These artists should visit schools and churches to deliver the messages that may not have been delivered to them. Many teens idolize rap and hip hop artists. And if they hear messages of abstinence and self worth, many of them will want to be like their idols.

Teens must love themselves and know that their bodies are sacred. Abstinence is the way to go and grow.



## 2007 “Teens Speak Out”

### Poetry Category — 2nd Place

Hannah Lingafelter, 13 years old, Sherrard School, Viola, IL

#### Abstinence

Media shows that sex is good,  
Just look around your neighborhood.  
What’s always shown isn’t always right,  
So be sure to think about this tonight.  
Sex leaves behind a trail of unforgettable,  
It leaves paths both emotional and physical.  
Diseases, weakness and shame it’s all true,  
So be sure that this won’t happen to you.  
It will leave you with an STD,  
Or maybe even pregnancy,  
Worst of all it can leave you alone unhappily.  
Abstinence is a should.  
Sex isn’t always good.  
Be sure to think before you act,  
Even though the media does have a knack.  
If you want your goals to be a success,  
Please, please, please do what’s best.  
Be careful not to grow up too fast,  
Even though the media makes it look like it’s a blast.  
Teens might think that sex is fun,  
But your body, you only get one.  
Hepatitis and Herpes,  
Sex is good? Not always.  
So save sex for a committed marriage,  
It’s the best time for a baby in the carriage.



## 2007 “Teens Speak Out”

### Poetry Category — 1st Place

**Sarah Halbur, 16 years old, St. Francis of Assisi Academy, Chicago, IL**

#### Don't Do It Anyway

One day as I was walkin', I was shocked out of my shoes,  
All the local high schools were broadcasting this news:  
We're hosting an "Awareness Week", come in and celebrate!  
Free birth control we're handin' out, you need it for your date.  
I stood and sighed and wondered: why is this in my face?  
This is not the kind of message that we teens should embrace!  
I finally asked a teacher – do you think that this'll pay?  
She said of course, we must protect, 'cause they're doin' it anyway.

So this is what they're giving teens, to try and help protect?  
I think that this mentality has something quite abject.  
Kids sit through years of classes, one of which is health,  
Doesn't the knowledge they gain there contain anything of wealth?  
I know they tell kids not to smoke, they tell them not to drink  
But when it comes to making love, kids don't know what to think  
They learn to let their passions rule, don't think, yet do and say  
Is this the way that life should be, cause they're doin' it anyway?

If your child wants to put a toy into an outlet socket,  
Do you watch or do you put the toy into your pocket?  
You take away what will cause harm, you teach them what is right  
You gently say don't and then guide on so they can see the light.  
Teens need your assistance, not "safer-sex" for use  
We need the very best way, not just an excuse.  
And there's an even better, safer method you can teach us today  
It's the God-intended method 'cause we need a better way.

Abstinence is the answer; it really, truly is  
It encourages communication so she'll be really his.  
Don't tell him it's wimpy, don't tell her it's mean  
Tell them it's the best way that ever has been seen.  
It's totally safe and true and real, and doesn't cost a penny,  
If you decide to try it, you'll be better off than many.  
Make a promise to yourself, 'cause love is not for play  
And your spouse will someday thank you...for *not* doin' it anyway.

## 2007 “Teens Speak Out”

### Music Category — 1st Place

**Blake Mason, 16, Ethan Grasty, 15, Marco Namowicz, 16  
Mooseheart Academy, Mooseheart, IL**

#### *Lies of This World*

#### Verse 1

Standing there I could see her pain  
Feelings lost in her lonely game  
Walking down that narrow road  
Doesn't know which way to go  
Lies keep falling truth unspoken  
What should she believe

#### Chorus

Temptations rising the blinding confusion  
Media broadcasting this illusion  
Lies of this world keep falling and falling  
Over and over again  
Lies of this world keep falling and falling  
Over and over again

#### Verse 2

We need to get on that righteous path  
Spreading lies is in the past  
The truth is what will set you free  
That's what we believe  
Lies are broken truth is spoken  
That's what we all need

#### Chorus

Temptations rising the blinding confusion  
Media broadcasting this illusion  
Lies of this world keep falling and falling  
Over and over again  
Lies of this world keep falling and falling  
Over and over again

\* About this song: This song is about a girl and how she is confused on whether to believe in herself or the media. Then we explain that if the media were to tell the truth it would be easier to believe, and influence the world in a better way.

## 2007 “Teens Speak Out”

**Music Category — 2nd Place**  
**Cindy Lanehart, ABJ Community Services, Chicago, IL**

### *Sexual Intentions*

I came over to your house,  
Just to see how you were doing.  
You said you had some things on your mind,  
But all I was worried about was what I was wearing

I asked would you mind sharing?  
The more we seem to talk,  
The more things seem to get intense.  
And while I was hollering at you,  
I was trying to get rid of my sexual intentions.

*You finally broke out of your spell,  
And told me something that I didn't expect  
You said that you love me,  
I didn't know quite what to say.  
You all know I wasn't ready for that.*

Moving closer to me  
Hinting for a kiss  
As good as it sounds  
I couldn't follow through with this

My parents taught me right from wrong,  
Mentors showed me the way.  
But in the back of my head I hear the same old song,  
Do I give it to you?

(Chorus)  
Abstain from sex, it's what we do  
Everybody knows it's up to you. (x4 times)

Hanging in my bedroom preparing for my doom  
It feels so good I don't know what to really do  
There's right and there's wrong  
There's no in between  
I'm only a teen  
I've got a whole life ahead of me.

(Chorus)

## 2007 “Teens Speak Out”

**Music Category — 3rd Place**  
**Yarimil Velez, Janethe Contreras, “Turn It Up” Music Program, Chicago, IL**

### *Worth the Wait*

#### Verse 1

Love has many ways to express itself  
There's a lot of ways to show it  
No need to buy me this or buy me that  
Like those diamond rings or expensive things  
Cause love's not about that

Love has many ways to express itself  
No need to take things too far  
If you love me you can wait a little while  
Like the day that we'll exchange our wedding vows

#### Hook

I'm worth the wait  
If you really love me  
Take things slowly  
No need to rush  
We can take our time  
Because I am worth the wait  
I am worth the wait

#### Verse 2

Love has many ways to show itself  
Let's take it easy and slowly  
Goin' there with you is not the right thing do to  
We make sure and take our time  
Love has many ways to show itself  
I know you love me and I love you  
So let's be strong and control our desire  
'Cause I am worth it and you are worth it  
We can wait

#### Bridge

I know it seems too hard for us  
And at times we want to take it there  
Our love is more than a physical attraction  
That's why I can save myself for you  
And you can save yourself for me