



YSB - Helping Teenagers and Their Parents

By Pat Stoiber

McHenry County's Youth Service Bureau (YSB) is celebrating thirty years of service in McHenry County this year. The agency was formed in 1975 by a citizens group interested in providing mental health services to youth. YSB has programs and services for kids ages 4 to 17, and special programs for today's teenagers. YSB will continue to remain dedicated to helping and caring for the children and their families in McHenry County by providing affordable counseling and prevention services to the community. YSB always looks for new ways to help, teach, lead and support the teenagers. Below are descriptions of some of our programs.

T.A.M.I. Program

YSB has been running a program called T.A.M.I. for ten years now. T.A.M.I. stands for Teenage Mothers Initiative. The program is dedicated to helping pregnant and parenting teen moms and dads. T.A.M.I. provides individual and group support for the teens. It has 4 major goals:

- Help them find community resources
- Help them learn about pregnancy and parenting
- Help with school challenges
- Help prevent another unplanned pregnancy

YSB wants the teens to know they are not alone. The group atmosphere of T.A.M.I. is warm and welcoming. Each week time is spent devoted to sharing, discussion and activities. A light meal is provided. It connects the teens with parents their own age. Here are some quotes from participants of the T.A.M.I. group:

"I feel like I'm not alone anymore, everyone else gives you so much support." (Brittany, 17 years old, with a 13 month old infant.)

"The T.A.M.I. Program was at my high school, I wouldn't have graduated without it. It's the best thing I did." (Courtney, 19 with 21 month old.)

Home Visitor Added to T.A.M.I. Program 2005:

YSB has hired Tricia Wallace to be a T.A.M.I. Home Visitor. Tricia will visit teens in the privacy of their homes to help in any way she can. She will work with the family if needed and help the teen to overcome barriers to continuing education and help deal with feelings of isolation.

Tricia has five children of her own, has been a mentor for three years, and worked extensively in social services and child care. Tricia will be an asset to the T.A.M.I. program. The Home Visitor position is made possible by a grant from the Mental Health Resource League. The T.A.M.I. group meets Tuesdays at the First Presbyterian Church in Woodstock from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

YSB Anger Management for Teens

Two anger management groups are available on different days, times, and duration. This is to offer more flexibility and options for teens. Groups are a cost-effective way for youth to get group support and learn about common interests. YSB is presently running an anger management group at the Woodstock High School. The group meets once a week and the program looks at anger styles. The student will keep an anger journal. The group leader teaches them techniques to stay in control and express anger in healthy ways.

Outpatient Therapy

YSB sees many teenagers in outpatient counseling. Problems range from depression, self-esteem problems, acting out in school, delinquency, anxiety, adjustment problems, and mental illness. YSB Counselors receive continuous training in the latest therapy for youth and staying current with teenage issues and trends. Barbara Schmiege of *Family Services* recently visited with YSB therapists about the alarming number of high-school



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students involved with heroin, the signs and symptoms of use, prevention strategies, and therapy for them.

After School Groups

During the school year YSB facilitates an after school group called Teen Night Out. This group is for high school students and the topics discussed are: Healthy Relationships; Making Good Decisions; Communicating with your Family; Avoiding Drugs & Alcohol; Managing Anger; Goal Setting and School Success.

Prevention Team

The YSB Prevention Team spends time in high schools doing class presentations on prevention topics at high schools, elementary and middle. These topics include:

- Healthy Relationships
- Protective Behaviors
- Thinking Errors
- Dating Violence
- Abstinence and Pregnancy Prevention
- Empowerment and Anti-victimization
- School Success
- Bullying

The YSB web-site www.ysb4kids.org has a section on it called Kids Corner accessible from the home page, for all the clients and youth in the area to use. It has articles of interest to teens, a place to display poetry and art work, and the ability to ask a counselor questions.

YSB helps homeless and runaway youth throughout McHenry County. A grant from the Department of Human Services, YSB has contracts with the McHenry County Crisis Line to go to police stations, where the youth appear. The crisis worker meets with the child and his/her family in crisis to negotiate a return home. When this is not possible, YSB arranges for temporary foster or group home care for the child. All runaway youth are referred immediately to the YSB for crisis follow up and to set-up counseling and further support.

For more information, please visit:

www.ysb4kids.org
or call YSB at 815-338-7360.

YSB's Groups for teenagers and parents of teens:

Name of Group (Participants)	Description
Positive Parenting for Teens (parents of teens)	Development, communication, conflict, discipline, decision-making
Redefining Anger (ages 14 to 17)	Warning signs of anger and consequences, constructive ways to express anger
Level II Anger Management (ages 12 to 17)	Comprehensive look at anger triggers and proper responses plan
The Real Deal (males, ages 14 to 17)	Dating boundaries, safe sex, personal health and parent relationships
Girls Special Interest Group (females, ages 12 to 17)	How to deal with uncomfortable situations and feelings
R.A.P. (ages 12 to 17)	Overcoming barriers, making responsible choices and positive life changes
New Pathways (ages 12 to 17)	A drug and alcohol intervention group
T.A.M.I. (Teen parents)	Education & support for pregnant and parenting teens