

# Dropouts Into Graduates



## The Learning Works Pregnant and Parenting Teens Program

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# History of Learning Works



- High-risk youth started to come to our tutoring center in 2005-2006
- Convinced the school district to expand CIS in PUSD to our facility in March 2006
- Operated as a dependent charter through June 2008
- Charter in June 2008 and opened September 2008
- Added middle school: September 2009
- WASC accredited 2010. Renewed in 2013

# History of Learning Works (cont.)



- Added Homeboy partnership: February 2010
- Added artWORKS: Fall 2010
- Added infant program: January 2013
- Added HopeWorks: Spring 2013
- Charter renewed in Spring 2013 for five years

# Dissemination Grant



- Disseminate lessons learned in five key areas based on research and LWCS
  1. A Charter Model for Re-engaging Dropouts—The Learning Works Story with a focus on Rigor, Relevance and Relationships
  2. Prevention and Intervention—What Do We Really Know about Dropouts?
  3. The Chaser Model—How Do We Create Youth-friendly Schools?
  4. Serving Underserved Targeted Populations—Teen Parents, Foster Care, and Probation Youth
  5. A True Community School—A Partnership Model

# Dissemination Grant (cont.)



- Build the capacity of PUSD and John Muir HS to re-engage students
- Become a teaching location or laboratory school where people come to learn
- Develop a middle school parent engagement strategy to prevent dropouts
- Share all school curriculum, materials developed and training electronically
- Continue to research the dropout problem and solutions

# Learning Labs



- The Chaser Model (February)
- Effectively Serving Teen Mothers and their Infants (April)
- Our Homeboy Partnership (May)
- A New Approach to Probation Youth (September)
- Middle School Prevention of Dropouts (November)
- A New Approach to Educating Foster Care (January)

# Learning Works Approach



- Relationship!
- Rigorous curriculum
- Relevance through project and fieldtrips
- Structured like a college, students attend what they need

# Pregnant and Parenting Teen Mother Program



**(Numbers based on the 31 girls currently enrolled)**

- 83% Hispanic/Latina, 17% African American
- 39% under 18 years old, 61% 18 and over
- 13% employed part/full time
- 6% Have their own transportation

**At enrollment:**

- 55% Were/are pregnant
- 45% had a child already



# Pregnant and Parenting Teen Mother Program (cont.)



## Housing:

- 68% live with parents, 23% live with baby's father, 6% live in public housing
- 3% transitional housing

## Support status:

- 58% are in a relationship with baby's father!
- Two teachers, chaser, tutor and two child support providers

# Pregnant and Parenting Teen Mother Program (cont.)



- Program within the regular school with all the same requirements
- Additional supports: taxi and child support
- Parenting and health classes specifically for the girls

# The Children of PPT



- 52% under 1 year old
- 13% one year olds
- 16% two year olds
- 19% three and older
- 45% Female, 55% males

# The Children of PPT (cont.)



Why we were prompted into focusing on the children?

Incidents were witnessed over time. Our concern was increasing regarding the parenting we observed that was unhealthy. As we developed we realized that this is an important concept and child development was just as important as the parenting. Kids being treated like stuffed animals.

Thank you Pasadena Community Health Grant (PCHG)

# Infant and Child Development Program



- Partnership driven: Mother's Club, Pasadena Public Health Department, Planned Parenthood, PCC Child Development Center, Grandmas on the Go CVUMC
- Mommy & Me class
- Thursdays at Mother's Club
- PPHD training and system for monitoring the infants/toddlers
- Home visits

# What Are We Monitoring or Assisting With?

- Healthy infant development
- Age appropriate nutrition
- Self care of the mom





# What Have We Learned About How to Best Serve Teen Mothers?

- Remember that they are STILL teenagers.
- Taking their mental health into consideration and over services accordingly
- Motivation is key: with many speaking on the pregnancy and a "ruined life" one person can keep the dream alive for the teen mom! (aka LW staff)
- Non-judgment is key: they already feel the pressure of being under the scope; our approach must be non-judgmental so that they can learn to trust adults again and be on track with graduation
- Linking privileges with responsibility; providing a reward (transportation) for a requirement (attendance)
- Modeling, not lecturing



# What Have Been Our Successes?

- Creating/maintaining a safe haven for both parent and baby
- Improving attendance
- Improved parenting that is evident to staff
- Helping the girls get to maturity in motherhood (understanding its not playing house)
- Getting the children a library card! (again modeling and not lecturing)
- Time management



# What Have Been Our Challenges?



- Culture! Parents who do not support a mom in school and prefer a stay at home (parenting classes)
- Stable childcare at home (PPTs must make arrangements ahead of time to attend field trips or any off campus activity)
- Access to birth control and misunderstandings about birth control
- Students retaining information (found out how many times we had to model/repeat something for students to accept and practice on their own)
- Consistency in attendance

# What Have Been Our Challenges? (cont.)



- Bringing the mom back to school! The honeymoon phase can make the mom want to stay home all day and be with brand new baby! (Separation anxiety!)
- Exhausted mommies (no sleep at night can/does affect work production)

# Replicable or Not?

What we have learned about the challenges to replicate in non-charter:

- There are constraints in regular school because of unions and hours which is a barrier to effective chasing
- Vehicle concerns about transporting students
- Hiring practices
- This program is not inexpensive; hard to fund in current budget priorities
- Hierarchy is a barrier to equality or kinship
- Implementation of a Fresh Start policy; Our principles
- Liability in regards to handling/caring for an infant

# Replicable or Not? (cont.)



What are the possibilities in non-charter:

- A small childcare assistance room can be established on a school site
- Offering parenting classes as an elective option
- Half-day option for mommies (traditional school hours 9-1 p.m.)

# Questions?

