

An Occasional
Newsletter
from CHOICE

AUGUST 2006

CHOICE Chatter

Executive Director's Corner

As we celebrate our 35th year of service to the Philadelphia area, it is with great pleasure that we present to you the first community edition of *Choice Chatter*. As this newsletter reveals, the past year has been one of enormous growth and change for CHOICE! While maintaining the quality and availability of our sexual and reproductive health education, counseling, and referral services, we have also been able to expand our reach into new communities. We are particularly excited about our recent work with members of the Southeast Asian community, our advocacy coalition addressing the reproductive health needs of incarcerated women, and our participation in the public health campaign to eradicate youth homicide, *Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia*. We are very proud of our new and improved edition of *Changes: You and Your Body*, back in circulation for teens after a several year hiatus! This coming fall, we look forward to releasing the findings of our Summer Fels Graduate Student Intern's research that explores adolescent preferences for receiving sexual health information.

Indeed, our 34th year has been one of great momentum for CHOICE. I wish to thank our dedicated Board of Directors and staff, colleagues, friends, foundations, and funding organizations for your ongoing support. Without you, we could not continue to break down barriers that impede access to quality sexual, reproductive, and family health information and care.

With appreciation,



Executive Director

Community Education: Performing Everyday Miracles

Recently, **Kate Murray, Director of Community Education and Training**, and **Alanna Butler, Youth Educator**, were able to respond to an emergency request from a school to help them with pregnancy prevention efforts. In just ONE morning, teaching in two different rooms, Kate and Alanna connected with OVER 200 teenagers, educating them on how to prevent unwanted pregnancies and STIs. As always, during the summer months, our dedicated Community Education team is focusing their efforts on youth programs and street outreach.

Dorothy Mann Named 2006 Gerstley Award Winner

We are pleased to announce that **Dorothy Mann, Executive Director of The Family Planning Council** will be the recipient of the 2nd Annual Louis Gerstley, III, MD, Community Advocate of the Year Award for her many years of dedication in advocating for access to reproductive health services for all women and girls. The award will be given to Dorothy at CHOICE's Sixth Annual Cocktail Reception and Silent Auction on **November 15, 2006**. This year, the fabulous event will be held at the Westin Hotel. The evening will feature wonderful food, spectacular people (like you!), and fabulous items to bid on! Keep your eyes on your mailbox for your invitations with more details.

The Return of "Changes"

After a several year absence, CHOICE's *Changes: You and Your Body* has made its triumphant return to print and distribution. For several weeks, our staff worked furiously to disburse back orders of this wildly popular publication. We have already received considerable positive feedback. As one school assistant told us as she was picking up her order: "This is the absolute best book I have ever seen for my teenagers! Thank you. We've missed them!" We are proud and excited to be back in gear with our signature youth publication. Thanks to the entire CHOICE staff and our Youth Education Program funders for putting *Changes* back in the hands of teens!

CHOICE Fast Facts...

- About 80 percent of all CHOICE hotline callers are female.
- About 30 percent of those reached by CHOICE are women under the age of 18.
- Community Education presented 888 programs in the past fiscal year!

CHOICE Female Prisoner Outreach

CHOICE is actively engaged in helping ensure that female prisoners receive accurate information regarding their own health while in the prison system. We send a health educator to two Philadelphia County facilities that house female prisoners on a monthly basis. The programs cover sexual health and create a relationship between incarcerated women and CHOICE for their needs upon re-entry.

As a part of these efforts to bring attention and services to women in prison, on June 22, 2006, **Kate Murray** participated as a panelist at the "Beyond the Walls Prison Health Care Summit." The panel discussed the current state of health care for women in prisons. She was joined on the panel by Sandi Newsome (Family Planning Council), Naima Black (PA Prison Society), Rev. Carolyn Jordan (REST), and Terry Shorter (Prison Health Systems).

On July 14th, **Lynn Green, Executive Director of CHOICE**, was quoted in the article *Reaching out to HIV Positive Women in Prison* featured in *The Philadelphia Tribune*. She spoke of CHOICE's efforts to educate women in prison about HIV through our female prisoner outreach program. We continue to work with the Pennsylvania Prison Society, the Maternity Care Coalition, Planned Parenthood of Southeastern PA and other agencies in joint advocacy efforts to improve the care of incarcerated women.

Emergency Contraception: Teen Access

In response to the need for emergency contraception information for girls, CHOICE, in conjunction with the Family Planning Council, is planning a teen-focused ad campaign directing young women to call the CHOICE Hotline. This campaign will ensure that teens speak with a professional and compassionate counselor able to explore their needs for other services, e.g., STI testing and treatment, ongoing birth control, etc. EC is safe and, when administered within 72 hours of intercourse, is a reliable form of back-up birth control.

CHOICE Hotlines

CHOICE Hotline

215-985-3300

Outside Philadelphia:

800-848-3367

TTY: 215-985-3309

Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia

1-888-570-BLUE

Children's Health Line

215-985-3301

TTY: 215-985-3309

The State AIDS Factline

1-800-662-6080

Spanish: 215-985-3350

TTY: 215-985-3309

OUR MISSION: CHOICE works to eliminate barriers that impede access to quality reproductive, sexual, and family health care and information for all individuals—regardless of economic status, gender, age, race, religion, culture, or sexual orientation

Member Organization



Hot Stuff from the Hotline: 1-888-570-BLUE

The hotline staff is keeping busy this Summer! The addition of the Blueprint For a Safer Philadelphia hotline this Spring has meant an increase in calls from the community. The Blueprint hotline is part of a ten year public health and social service initiative to reduce youth homicide in Philadelphia. CHOICE serves as a referral center for families who want to keep children involved in positive activities throughout the year. Since the fall, CHOICE has collected information on 120 organizations and activities for urban youth known to have positive effects in reducing youth violence. The hotline has also received calls from concerned citizens who are interested in becoming involved in such prevention endeavors. Publicity for the Blueprint Hotline comes from radio ads, printed materials, and ads on SEPTA buses and trains. More information can be found on the Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia website at: <http://www.phillyblueprint.com>

Congratulations to Laura Lawrence, CHOICE Hotline Counselor and Social Services Liaison. She is the recipient of the 2006 Womens Way Agency Award for serving as a role model for other women. Laura was honored at the Womens Way

Southeast Asian Program Takes Shape

With the generous support of the Samuel Fels Fund, CHOICE has established an education and outreach program to the Southeast Asian community regarding sexual health. On March 11th we participated in a Women's HIV Education Day with representatives from the Philadelphia Chinese Community. We have also translated versions of our menstruation and birth control fact sheets into Chinese, Khmer (Cambodian), and Vietnamese. We are currently gathering feedback from recent information fairs and focus groups and are looking forward to enhancing our services to both women and men in our Southeast Asian communities.

What do Teens Really Want When it Comes to Sex Education?

Alyssa Richman, a doctoral student in Sociology at Temple University, joined CHOICE in May as our Fels Graduate Student Intern for Summer 2006 to assist in collecting information through focus groups and research on how youths prefer to receive their sexual health information. The information gathered will allow CHOICE to enhance the effectiveness of our educational programs and material distribution in reaching teens. The project also includes a gender analysis of such preferences.

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