

Powerful Choices Curriculum Proven Effective

Recent research has shown that teens who participate in **Powerful Choices** classes are more likely than teens who have not had these lessons to choose to remain abstinent from sex before marriage and from related risk behaviors such as alcohol and substance use. In surveys the teens who had **Powerful Choices** lessons made gains in the positive direction on attitudinal and opinion questions, agreed that youth are not ready for the responsibility of sexual relationships, increased interaction with their parents, identification of STDs and personal decisions about not having sex such as:

"I have had sexual intercourse before, but I plan now to wait until marriage..." and

"I plan to save sexual activity for marriage."

Powerful Choices is a community-based abstinence education program that was implemented in Linn County, Iowa by Equipping Youth; a private non-profit, funded by the federal Community Based Abstinence Education programs of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services during the years 2007-2010. The program provides abstinence-until-marriage education to middle school students in the Eastern Iowa area and creates an environment in the schools and homes that supports youths' decisions to postpone sexual activity until marriage. The evaluation was conducted by researchers at the The University of Iowa School of Social Work, National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and designed to measure changes in knowledge and attitudes associated with the lessons of the **Powerful Choices** curriculum. Students in seventh grade at the time of the lessons in 13 schools completed pre-surveys during the first lesson and post-tests after the 10th and final lesson in the curriculum. Follow-ups were completed at 6 and 12 months following participation in the lessons. Pre-test, six, and twelve month follow-ups were also completed by similar youth not receiving **Powerful Choices** in control groups at comparison schools. Analysis of the data showed positive results for the questions asked of the youth, such as:

Waiting until marriage to have sex gives a person a better chance of reaching their goals for the future. 27.9% strongly agreed with this statement at pre-survey and 36.1% strongly agreed with this statement at the 12 month follow-up

Abstinence from sex is the only certain way to not get pregnant or not get someone pregnant. 21.6% strongly agreed with this statement at pre-survey and 43.4% strongly agreed with this statement at the 12 month follow-up

Have you asked your parents a question about sex? Compared to the pre-survey the number of students who were talking with their parents about sex the answer, "yes" was almost 6% higher at 12 month follow-up.

For more information about Equipping Youth and **Powerful Choices** curriculum, please contact Ruth Anne Eccles MSN at 319-861-2747 or see their website at www.equippingyouth.org. For information about the research contact Brad Richardson PhD at 319.335.4924 or Kellee McCrory MPH at 319-335-4931 or see their website at www.uiowa.edu/~nrcfcp



Men Who Cook Event

Equipping Youth's Annual Fundraiser held on April 14th was a HUGE success. 21 cooks competed with amazing, mouth-watering results. The votes were close for several categories and for the Best of the Best Prize. We salute all the cooks as winners; delicious food! The guests carefully cast their ballots.

The following gentlemen arose victorious...

Appetizers: Peter Eko-Acquah- Spicy Plantain Chips

Soup/Salad: Brian Jones- Yogurt Granola Berry Salad

Main Course: Ted Biderman- Stuffed Pork Chops

Dessert: Gerry Barker-Baklava

Voted overall best - Ted Biderman.



Equipping Youth is grateful for everyone who sponsored the event, cooked, volunteered, and donated prizes, food, and financial support. A special thanks to our speakers; Kellee McCrory a researcher from the U of I and to Savaun Bounds a former **Powerful Choices** student, and to Alyssa Telecky who played dinner music.

Thank you for your support of our efforts for the lives of our communities' youth,

Ruth Anne Eccles

May 2011

equipping youth with the skills to make healthy choices



This is your invitation

to become a Sustaining Partner with Equipping Youth.

We are desperately in need of monthly donations from friends like you.

Why we need monthly donations

Every month we are short several thousand dollars.

We must receive \$6000 monthly to continue to teach youth in public schools, incarceration facilities, and church youth groups and to assist parents and train teachers. At this time we have less than 10 individuals who faithfully contribute every month. A few of you partner with us through occasional donations.

We are grateful!!

We also invite those of you who never or occasionally donate, to partner with us as investors in the youth of Eastern Iowa.

Think of helping this way;

If you would become one of ...

- 600 persons contributing \$10, or
- 240 persons contributing \$25, or
- 60 persons contributing \$100, or
- 30 persons contributing \$200 monthly

...our ministry to youth would be sustained.

And if we find more partners, (individuals and corporations)
we could expand, becoming available to many more communities.

We would love to have you as a partner!

YES, I will invest in the youth of Iowa!

As a financial partner contributing \$_____per month

As a partner giving a gift now of \$_____

___ I need information about becoming a volunteer.

Name_____

Address_____

Phone/E-mail_____