

# TATF

TEEN AIDS TASK FORCE

APRIL 2008

## 1 in 4 girls in the US has an STD?!

*Having “safer sex” means more than just not getting caught...*

Maybe you’ve heard the recent news that one in four girls between the ages of 14 and 19 in the United States has a sexually transmitted disease (STD).<sup>1</sup> That’s 3.2 million girls! What’s that about?! The two most common STDs overall were human papillomavirus, or HPV (18%), and chlamydia (4%).

### So, why are so many teens getting STDs?

Are teens missing the safer sex message...and how? Turns out, they may be. As of February 29, 2008, only 17 states in the US refused federal money tied to “abstinence only” sex ed programs.<sup>2</sup> But a 2004 report found that over 80% of these abstinence-only programs teach false, misleading, or

distorted information about reproductive health.<sup>3</sup> If you don’t get factual information about how to protect yourself from STDs, you’re more likely to be among that one in four with an STD.

“Just Say No” sure doesn’t stop all teens from using drugs and alcohol. Why would it be stopping teens from having sex?

Then there’s the whole debate about what actually IS sex. A

lot of teens who want to stay virgins, or who are not ready to go “all the way,” have oral and/or anal sex instead. FYI, oral sex is sex, and yes, you can get an STD doing it. If you’re having unprotected oral sex, you can get chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, syphilis and HIV.

STDs can spread through vaginal, oral and anal sex, as well as genital skin to skin contact. Condoms can help prevent the spread of STDs, but they’re not 100% effective, especially if you’re not using them the right way. A lot of teens think if a condom gets on the penis, they’re in the clear, but that’s not always the case. For a condom to protect you from most STDs, it has to be used correctly each and every time you have sex. And if you’re having oral sex, you should definitely know how to use a Sheer Glyde dam.

Many sexually active teens are more worried about pregnancy than STDs. Maybe because teens hear more about preventing pregnancy than they do preventing STDs! One study found the majority of teenage girls seeking emergency contraception after having unprotected sex (sex without condoms or birth control) were NOT given information about HIV and other STDs.<sup>4</sup>

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**KNOWLEDGE IS  
POWER...  
GET SOME!**

## **TATF CHAPTERS:**

### **HERKIMER**

POLAND

### **JEFFERSON**

CARTHAGE

INDIAN RIVER

W.A.G.Y.

WATERTOWN

WATERTOWN TEEN CENTER

### **MADISON**

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GROUP HOME

CANASTOTA

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ONEIDA

### **ONEIDA**

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NEW HORIZONS

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### **ONONDAGA**

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### **ST. LAWRENCE**

CLIFTON-FINE

CANTON

COLTON-PIERREPONT

YOUTH SERVICES

# 1 in 4 girls in the US has an STD?!

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To reduce the risk of an unwanted pregnancy, some teenage girls use the birth control pill. While this is a great way to prevent pregnancy, it does not prevent STDs. In fact, a female using the birth control pill has a higher risk of getting or passing HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, if she and her partner are not using condoms every time they have sex.<sup>5</sup>

With 74% of US teens reporting the use of alcohol at least once and 43% reporting ongoing alcohol use, alcohol can play a big role in STD transmission.<sup>6</sup> You are 7 times more likely to have sex after you've been drinking or using drugs. If that's not bad enough, 6 out of 10 young women who have an STD report that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time that they had sex with the infected person.<sup>7</sup>

We all know alcohol impairs your judgment. It's hard to make good decisions about safer sex when you can't even walk a straight line, let alone carry on a responsible conversation with your partner. A study conducted in Great Britain revealed that after drinking alcohol, one in seven 16-to-24-year-olds have had unprotected sex, one in five have had sex they regretted, and 1 in 10 have been unable to remember if they had sex the night before.

If you can't even remember if you had sex, you probably aren't looking for signs of an STD. Unfortunately, most STDs have no symptoms. The oozing sores, huge warts and rancid smelling discharge you hear about aren't as common as a lot of teens

think. You or your partner could have one or more STDs and have no idea. Some untreated STDs can result in infertility (not being able to have children), pelvic inflammatory disease in women, and even death.

If you're not too shy to have sex, then don't be shy about getting tested for HIV/STDs. The sooner the better when it comes to detecting STDs so you can start treatment and prevent future problems. If you don't know where to go for STD testing, log onto [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org) or call 1-800-230-PLAN (1-800-230-7526) to locate a clinic near you.

Unprotected sex is everywhere. Turn on the TV, go to the movies, open a magazine, or check out your friend's most commented on MySpace picture—sex sells! And you don't often see anyone using or talking about condoms on TV or in films, or the consequences of not using them. Just keep in mind that we live in the real world, and the consequences for not having safer sex are real, too.

If more girls and guys had accurate information about STDs and safer sex, then maybe fewer girls would get STDs. Because really, who wants to be just another statistic?

#### Endnotes

1 Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2008 National STD Prevention Conference, 3/11/08

2 Iowa Independent, Iowa Refuses Abstinence-Only Sex Education Funding, 2/29/08

3 The Content of Federally Funded Abstinence-Only Education Programs, US House of Representatives,

Committee on Government Reform—Minority Staff, Special Investigations Division, December 2004

4 Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2008 National STD Prevention Conference, 3/11/08

5 International AIDS Society

6 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 2005

7 Planned Parenthood, [www.teenwire.com](http://www.teenwire.com)

# TATF QUESTION OF THE MONTH

## What condom myth do you hear your friends talking about?



"That the condom was too small."

- Eyrn



"Condoms aren't always effective so - you really don't have to use them. Which I know is totally false."

- Zachary Doubleday



"A boy said he thought he could wear 2 condoms."

- LaNyra



"I don't hear boys talking about condoms."

- Mekkah



"If you put the condom all the way down (on the penis) it will bust and if the date has expired its still ok to use it."

- Jessica Riley and Mercedes Stevens



"You can't feel nothing with a condom."

- Niria

"I really don't hear any myths, but I want to know why would somebody risk their life using a thin piece of plastic. Sex is not that important, why can't they just wait and get tested."

- Kortney

# Clifton-Fine TATF challenges their classmates to some serious wrestling!

**Did we mention it involved a large pool of JELL-O?**

Clifton-Fine TATF continued their fundraising efforts last month for their trip to New York City this May. Their latest and greatest money-maker involved WWE imitated moves as they splashed and slammed in a huge pool of JELL-O! Kids and adults of all ages looked on in fits of laughter as contestants entered the "ring" as respectable young adults and left soaking in a greenish slime. Their TATF Coordinator, Angela

Foster, who was tossed in by some either very brave or very stupid TATF members, reported the smell of the goo was quite possibly worse than the look of it...we can't even imagine!

Included are some pictures of another fundraising venture held by Clifton-Fine TATF—Bowl-A-Thon 2008!





# Jamesville-Dewitt hosts a PLWA



The TATF at Jamesville-Dewitt hosted a PLWA (Person Living with AIDS) last month to raise awareness among their peers. Cari Knight, TATF Coordinator in Jefferson County, attended the event. "It was a great experience for those in attendance. Having someone tell you her personal story let's you know it can happen to you, too, and helps break down the stereotypes about 'who' gets HIV/AIDS," she said.

Services at AIDS Community Resources, by phone at 1-800-475-2430 or email, [volunteer@aidscommunityresources.com](mailto:volunteer@aidscommunityresources.com). There is a minimum donation of \$50.00 for each speaking engagement to be given directly to the speaker.



If your TATF chapter would like to host a speaker, contact your TATF Coordinator. You can also call Mary Doody, Director of Volunteer



## What you've been up to....

Watertown TATF had the largest turn-out in the history of their chapter this year for the Peer Educator Training.



We'd like to extend a warm welcome to the latest addition of the TATF chapter family, the ACR TATF! This group, which is open to any teen in the Syracuse area, meets at the AIDS Community Resources office in Syracuse. If you or someone you know would like to join this chapter, or you just want to know more about it, contact Desiree Henry, TATF Coordinator for the Syracuse Region, at 475-2430 or by email at [dhenry@aidscommunityresources.com](mailto:dhenry@aidscommunityresources.com).

# The Safety Bug

**The Camden High School's TATF/SADD group had a big statement to make to their peers and did it with a hands-on approach. They had a special guest visit their school called the *Lookin' Out Safety Bug*.**

The *Lookin' Out Safety Bug* is a Volkswagen Beetle rigged to mimic what it would be like to drive under the influence of alcohol. The parking lot of the school was blocked off and had cones marking out a short course. The licensed students were able to attempt to drive this car through the course to experience what it would be like to drive under the influence without the actual devastating effects.

Although there were a lot of giggles of watching peers trying to drive the rigged car, it had a serious effect on those who participated.

Many students hit a whole line of cones, sending the cones flying around the parking lot and driving the car off course. One driver actually hit the cone so hard; it was stuck underneath the



**“AN IMPAIRED MIND IS  
AN UNPREPARED MIND.”**

~DUANE ALAN HAHN

car, dragging through the parking lot and was wedged in the wheel well. One student who just rode in the car said, “It was pretty bad, all of a sudden the cones were in the middle of the car and he hit them all!”

Another student who drove the car said, “It goes faster all of a sudden and then it turns, the wheels feel detached and then it catches you off guard. But it was a cool experience.”

Other students said they felt like the car would turn without really steering too hard. The facilitator explained that, “When people are under the influence, they are caught off guard and then they overcompensate for their mistake and then often end up in accidents. Even I drink makes a difference, it literally impairs your judgments and skills, and most people don't really feel it until they are actually put into the situation where they have to react quickly, such as in driving a car.”

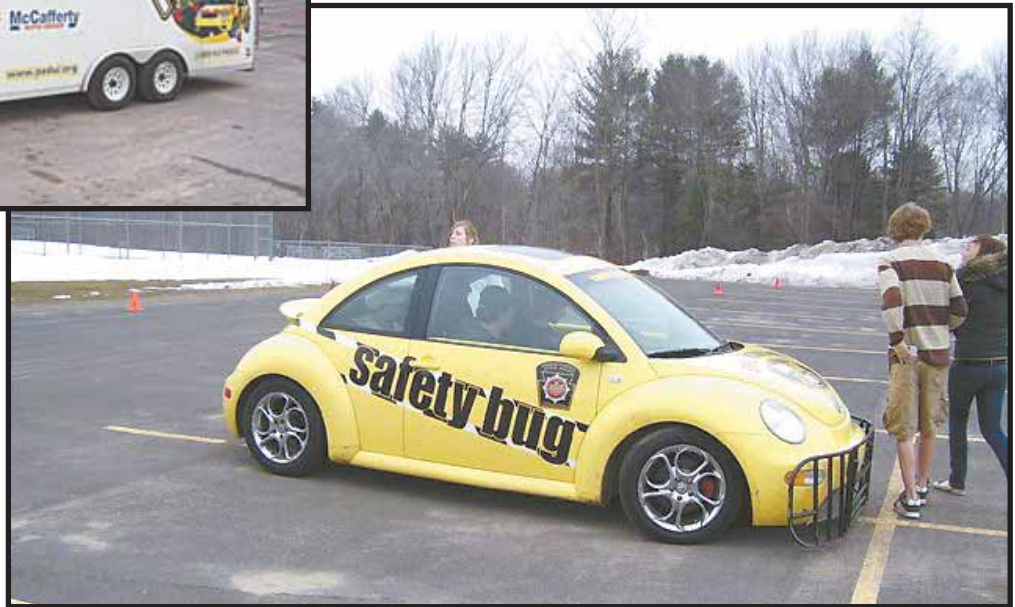
The facilitator even had beer goggles to mimic a .17-.20 BAC (blood alcohol content). Some students were, who were really confident, tried to drive with the goggles on and didn't make it too far. They went off the course 100 ft into it!

The TATF Coordinator had an opportunity to drive the bug too. TATF Coordinator, Leean Sack, said, “I was scared so I was driving really slow at first and then I sped up and that is when the car started playing tricks and I hit a whole row of cones! But I can definitely see how challenging and realistic it is to have an accident while under the influence. The radio wasn't even on, my cell

phone wasn't around, I was actually concentrating on driving and I went off course! So I can imagine if I was also a distracted driver and under the influence how bad things can really get!”

**“Alcohol is a good preservative  
for everything but brains.”**

*Mary Pettibone Poole*



For information on this program  
contact the Pennsylvania DUI  
Association @ 1-800-62-PA DUI.  
This program is run by Erie Insurance  
Group *Lookin' Out Safety Bug.*



ACR offers its services to anyone without discrimination based on age, race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political affiliation, marital status, handicapped status, or mode of transmission.

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## Upcoming Events

**APRIL 24, 2008**  
**AIDS Hike for Life pre-event registration** – 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
ACR, 401 Columbia Street, Utica and Hamilton College Beinecke Village

**APRIL 26, 2008**  
**AIDS Hike for Life pre-event registration** – 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. ACR, 401 Columbia Street, Utica

**APRIL 27, 2008**  
**10th Annual AIDS Hike for Life**  
– a 5K fundraising walk at Hamilton College. [www.aidswalkcny.com](http://www.aidswalkcny.com)

**JUNE 1, 2008**  
**16th Annual AIDS Walk/Run**  
– a 5K fundraising walk, 10K run at Beaver Lake Nature Center. [www.aidswalkcny.com](http://www.aidswalkcny.com)

**AUGUST 10 – 16, 2008**  
**Empire State AIDS Ride** – 560-mile bicycle ride from Niagara Falls to New York City. Join the ACR Spokes Team! Call Carrie at 800.475.2430 or email: [clarge@aidscommunityresources.com](mailto:clarge@aidscommunityresources.com)

**OCTOBER 19, 2008**  
**9th Annual First Frost AIDS Walk** – a 5K fundraising walk at Thompson Park Zoo in Watertown. [www.aidswalkcny.com](http://www.aidswalkcny.com)



## Support Groups

### SYRACUSE YOUTH GROUP MEETINGS:

LGBTQ (ages 13-18): Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30  
Transgender (ages 14-24): Wednesdays, 5:30-7:00  
Steppin' Out (ages 19-22): Thursdays, 7:00-9:00  
For location and further information:  
[qcenter@aidscommunityresources.com](mailto:qcenter@aidscommunityresources.com)

### UTICA YOUTH GROUP:

Sundays from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.  
For locations and further information, contact Mary Doody at 800.475.2430 or [glbtqyouth@aidscommunityresources.com](mailto:glbtqyouth@aidscommunityresources.com).

