



# Formerly known as Teen AIDS Task Force



**Same ...  
Fun,  
Friends,  
Facts!**

**Because...  
Say it with me now,  
KNOWLEDGE IS  
POWER -  
GET SOME !**

Formerly known as Teen AIDS Task Force, TATF has a new name! While we talked about what TATF is, we realized you guys learn about so much more than just HIV/AIDS. And you raise awareness and talk to your peers about so many things. So, we decided we needed a new name that captured more of what TATF is really all about! **Teaching Awareness Through Friends** was the brain child of some of our TATF members that remained active throughout the summer months. They wanted to keep the TATF acronym, which we like, and the name matches the mission of the TATF Program: "TATF is a member-driven, peer leadership program that equips teens with the information and skills needed to understand and prevent HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) while promoting holistic youth development and sexual health. TATF members learn myths from facts, how to make better choices to prevent the spread of HIV and STDs, and how to talk openly and honestly about promoting sexual health and better choices."

We hope you guys are as excited about the new name as we are. To celebrate, all TATF members that complete their 3-hour Peer Educator Training and plan either an educational or awareness raising event will get the new TATF T-shirt!

**KNOWLEDGE IS  
POWER...**

**GET SOME!**

**TATF**

**CHAPTERS:**

**HERKIMER**

POLAND HS

**JEFFERSON**

CARTHAGE HS  
INDIAN RIVER HS  
W.A.G.Y.  
WATERTOWN HS

**MADISON**

BERKSHIRE FARM MADISON  
GROUP HOME  
CANASTOTA  
CHITTENANGO  
HAMILTON  
MORRISVILLE-EATON  
ONEIDA

**ONEIDA**

ANNSVILLE RESIDENTIAL  
CENTER  
BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
CAMDEN HS  
ORISKANY HS  
NEW HORIZONS  
PROCTOR HS  
TABERG RESIDENTIAL  
CENTER  
WHITESBORO HS  
YWCA/GIRLS INC.

**ONONDAGA**

CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
CORCORAN HS  
HENNINGER HS  
JAMESVILLE-DEWITT HS  
NOTTINGHAM HS  
WESTHILL HS

**ST. LAWRENCE**

CLIFTON-FINE HS  
CANTON  
COLTON-PIERREPONT HS  
ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY  
FOSTER CARE UNIT  
YOUTH SERVICES

## 2008 Presidential Candidates on Sexual Health Issues

### BARACK OBAMA

**What is your position on the proposed constitutional amendment that defines marriage as between a man and a woman?**

"I oppose the Federal Marriage Amendment."

**What is your position on civil unions between same sex partners?**

"I support civil unions." Senator Obama supports national civil union legislation, which would grant gay couples similar legal benefits and protections that straight married couples have. He says that equality under the law for gays is a "civil rights" issue. However, Obama opposes gay marriage, and argues that decisions about marriage should be left to individual religious denominations. Though Obama says that he does not personally support gay marriage, he also says that repealing gay marriage after a court has legalized it would be "divisive and discriminatory." He opposes a California ballot initiative to amend the state's constitution by defining marriage between a man and a woman.

**Hate Crimes and Non-Discrimination Laws**

Obama supports defining crimes committed against people because of their sexual orientation as federal hate crimes. He voted for a bill that did so, arguing that the bill would "help us live up to the principle that in this country, we treat all our citizens with dignity and respect." Obama also supports the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit employer discrimination against employees based on sexual orientation.

**Gays in the Military**

Obama supports letting gays serve openly in the military. He opposes the current "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which allows gays to serve if they keep their sexual orientation secret, and has called for its repeal.

**Do you support the Roe v. Wade decision or would you like to see this decision overturned? Why or why not?**

"I have been a consistent champion of reproductive choice and will make preserving women's rights under Roe v. Wade a priority as president. I oppose any constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's decision in that case." He says he would sign the Freedom of Choice Act, which would guarantee abortion rights "before fetal viability" across the country and invalidate many individual state laws that restrict access to abortion. Obama has said that he trusts women "to make these decisions in conjunction with their doctors and their families and their clergy."

**Pregnancy Prevention through contraceptives and comprehensive sex education**

Obama says that he hopes pro-choice and pro-life advocates can "agree on ways to reduce the number of women who felt the need to have abortions in the first place." He would end federal funding for abstinence-only sex education, saying it has not been successful, and he supports "comprehensive" and "age-appropriate" sex education. He also supports requiring health insurance companies to cover FDA-approved contraceptives.

**Adoption & Family Laws**

Obama says that he supports full equal treatment for same-sex couples with regards to adoption and family laws. He says that he will "use the bully pulpit" to try to convince states to pass such laws.

### JOHN MCCAIN

**What is your position on the proposed constitutional amendment that defines marriage as between a man and a woman?**

I believe the institution of marriage should be protected and defined as a union between

one man and one woman. This definition recognizes the fundamental role of the traditional family in shaping, stabilizing and strengthening our communities and our nation. I agree with the Founding Fathers that, as with most issues critical to the preservation and health of our civil society, the basic responsibility for preserving and strengthening the traditional family should reside at the level of government closest to the people. Where State and local governments act to preserve the traditional family the Courts should not overstep their authority and thwart the Constitutional right of the people to protect the traditional family. If the Supreme Court should ever exceed its Constitutional authority and strike down state or local laws designed to protect the traditional family, I would support a Constitutional amendment to define the family as a union between one man and one woman.

### **What is your position on civil unions between same sex partners?**

While, as a federalist, I recognize the right of the states to regulate the institution of marriage and to pass civil union laws, I strongly believe in the current law that declares that no other state should be legally bound to recognize same sex marriages or unions that might be legal in other places. But while the citizens of each state should decide this question, I personally oppose civil unions that for all intents and purposes confer the same status as traditional marriage. I am not against people entering into contracts or exchanging powers of attorney, a right that most states already afford to all citizens, regardless of sexual orientation.

### **Hate Crimes and Non-Discrimination Laws**

Senator McCain voted against defining crimes committed against people because of their sexual orientation as federal hate crimes. He also opposes the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which would prevent discrimination against employees based on sexual orientation. McCain has not commented publicly on these issues, but many Republicans argued that the scope of ENDA was too broad.

### **Gays in the Military**

McCain has expressed strong support for the current "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on gays in the military, which allows gays to serve if they keep their sexual orientation secret. He has said that any change of policy might prove disruptive to the quality of military service and threaten its ability to fight the war on terrorism.

### **Do you support the Roe v. Wade decision or would you like to see this decision overturned? Why or why not?**

As someone who has consistently and strongly been pro-life, I fully believe that Roe v. Wade is a flawed decision that should be overturned. Roe v. Wade is the most egregious example of judges who impose their own views by legislating from the

bench rather than strictly rule what the Constitution says. The Supreme Court ruling on the horrific practice of partial-birth abortion in April was a victory for those who cherish the sanctity of life and integrity of the judiciary. The ruling ensures that an unacceptable and unjustifiable practice will not be carried out on our innocent children. It also clearly speaks to the importance of nominating and confirming strict constructionist judges who interpret the law as it is written, and do not usurp the authority of Congress and state legislatures. Although critical, I also believe that the reversal of Roe v. Wade would represent only one step in the long path toward ending abortion. The Hyde Amendment, which prohibits your federal tax dollars from paying for abortions, has done more to reduce abortion than any other action taken by the federal government. I oppose the use of tax dollars to fund abortion and, if elected, I would veto any congressional attempt to provide federal funding of abortion. Furthermore, once the abortion issue is returned to the states, the fight for life will be one of courage and compassion - the courage of a pregnant mother to bring her child into the world and the compassion of civil society to meet her needs and those of her newborn baby. The pro-life movement has done tremendous work in promoting adoption, and in building and reinforcing the infrastructure of civil society by strengthening faith-based, community, and neighborhood organizations that can provide critical services to pregnant mothers in need. I believe this work must continue and government must find new ways to empower and strengthen these armies of compassion. If elected, I will work to find new ways to empower and strengthen these armies of compassion and to build the consensus necessary to end the human tragedy of abortion.

### **Pregnancy prevention through adoption and abstinence-only sex education**

Sen. McCain says that he will work to promote adoption as an alternative to abortion, and says that he is motivated to do so by his own experience in adopting a child. He does not support requiring health insurance plans to cover contraceptives. And he supports President Bush's policy to federally fund abstinence-only sex education programs.

### **Adoption & Family Laws**

When asked whether he supports allowing gay couples to adopt children, McCain initially said that "both parents are important in the success of a family, so no, I don't believe in gay adoption." His campaign later issued a statement saying that McCain would leave adoption laws to the states, and that though he preferred children be raised by a mother and father "whenever possible," he would allow gay adoption because there are "many abandoned children who have yet to find homes."

# Who would you vote Presidential elector



**"I'd vote for Barack Obama because he said change first and that's what we need**

**in the country is change. Because look what Bush has done: nothing but gotten us into a lot of "Police Action" [In Iraq]—it was never declared a war, I guess. Obama said change first and now McCain is saying it. Barack in '08 baby."**

**-Kira Aldous, Canton TATF**



**"I would vote for Obama."**

**-Kelsi Robert,  
Clifton-Fine TATF**

**"I would choose Obama for President because I think that the United States NEEDS a change. Regardless if it's Hillary Clinton or Obama. I think that Obama is a very good candidate for President and will make good decisions for our country."**

**-Carmeshia Motes, Indian River TATF**



# Who to vote for in the upcoming election and why?

**"I am looking forward to Obama being President, because he is a very smart man. He appears to me to work well under pressure as well as being able to handle abusive questions. He is a calm and collected man that would do well as a leader."**

**-Ryan Dunn, Indian River TATF**



**"I would vote for John McCain because he is familiar with the foreign policy, and he knows how to treat the soldiers overseas. McCain and V.P. Sarah Palin both stand for everything I agree in: Anti-abortion, gun rights, etc. I also know that the**

**Democratic Party puts smears on the republicans for doing what they believe is right, or being sexist."**

**-Rachael Tranter, Poland TATF President**

# Taking Action in the North Country



The Canton TATF Chapter hosted another blood drive last month. At left are TATF members Kate and Maleena working the registration table.

Here is a picture of the WAGY/TATF table at the Thompson Park Zoo on September 7th. The members walked to raise awareness for Teen Suicide in the LGBTQ population and were given LOTS of good community feedback!



# Disturbia in the U.S.



The nation's campaign to get more teenagers to put off having sex and to use condoms seems to not be working, threatening to undo the highly successful effort to reduce teen pregnancy and protect young people from STDs.

New data from a large government survey (CDC—Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2007) show that by every measure, a decade-long decline in sexual activity among high school students leveled off between 2001 and 2007, and that the rise in condom use by teens flattened out in 2003. The survey found disturbing hints that teen sexual activity may be creeping up and that condom use among high school students might be edging downward, though those trend lines have not yet reached a point where statisticians can be sure, officials said.

“Since we’ve started pushing abstinence, we have seen no change in the numbers on sexual activity,” said John Santelli, chairman of the department of population and family health at Columbia University. “The other piece of it is: Abstinence education spends a good amount of time bashing condoms. So it’s not surprising, if that’s the message young people are getting, that we’re seeing condom use start to decrease.” Proponents of abstinence programs dismissed the criticism, blaming “comprehensive” sex education that emphasizes contraceptive use. Others blamed the onslaught of movies, books, advertising and cultural messages that they say glamorize sex.

Coming on the heels of reports that one in four teenage girls has a sexually transmitted disease and that the teen birth rate has increased for the first time in 15 years, the data are triggering alarm.

Current trends in teen sexual activity:

- Nearly HALF (48%) of all high school students in 2007 reported ever having had sexual intercourse.
- 62% of high school students used a condom the last time they had sex- 69% of guys and 55% of girls.
- Research has shown that guys and girls who use condoms the first time they have sex are more likely to consistently use condoms in the future.

- The average age of having sex for the first time is 16.9 for boys and 17.4 years for girls.
- Over half of guys (55%) and girls (54%) ages 15-19 have had oral sex with someone of the opposite sex.
- 1 in 10 guys and girls ages 15-19 have had anal sex with someone of the opposite sex.
- Almost one-quarter (23%) of currently sexually active high school students reported using alcohol or drugs during their most recent sexual encounter— 28% of boys and 18% of girls.
- The U.S. continues to have the HIGHEST teen pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates in the developed world.
- In 2004, 57% of teen pregnancies ended in live births, 27% in induced abortions and 16% in fetal losses.
- An estimated 9.1 million young adults ages 15-24 got an STD in 2000 (most recent year stats are available), which equals almost 50% of new STD cases.
- In 2008, a study done by the CDC showed that 1 in 4 girls ages 14-19 either has HPV, chlamydia, herpes or Trichomoniasis—the four most common STDs.
- Despite the high rates of STDs, only 31% of teens ages 15-17, and 53% of those ages 18-24, who are sexually active, say they were tested for STDs.
- There were more new cases of HIV in 13-29-year-olds (34% of new cases) than in any other age group in 2006—most were infected by having sex.
- That same year, only 16% of young adults ages 18-24 reported they had been tested for HIV in the last 12 months.
- 1 in 10 high school students reported having experienced dating violence.
- 9% of students have been physically forced to have sexual intercourse, with females (11%) more likely than males (5%) to report this experience.

(Kaiser Family Foundation, 2008)



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.

Funded in part by Madison County Youth Bureau



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## Upcoming Events

**OCTOBER 15, 2008**  
National Latino HIV/AIDS  
Awareness Day

**OCTOBER 19, 2008**  
First Frost AIDS Walk  
When: October 19 at 1 p.m.  
Where: Thompson Park Zoo,  
Watertown

**NOVEMBER 3, 2008**  
Holiday Angel Drive Begins

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2008**  
Indian River: AIDS Quilt and  
Student Directed HIV Play  
Where: Indian River HS

**DECEMBER 1, 2008**  
World AIDS Day

**DECEMBER 1-3, 2008**  
Syracuse NAMES Project  
AIDS Memorial Quilts Display  
Where: OnCenter in Syracuse

**DECEMBER 2, 2008**  
Holiday Angel Drop-off



## Support Groups

### SYRACUSE YOUTH GROUP MEETINGS:

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

### UTICA YOUTH GROUP:

Sundays, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.  
For locations and further  
information, contact Mary  
Doody at 800.475.2430 or  
[glbtqyouth@aidscommunityresources.com](mailto:glbtqyouth@aidscommunityresources.com)

