

# Rights, Respect, Responsibility®

Proposal: Year Two

**Mission: To help Oregon youth develop healthy sexual attitudes and behaviors supported by proven public health strategies that reduce teen pregnancies, births, abortions and sexually transmitted infections**

## INTRODUCTION

During 2001, with generous funding and encouragement from the E. C. Brown Foundation, Planned Parenthood Health Services of Southwestern Oregon (PPHSSO) launched Rights, Respect, Responsibility ® (RRR®) in collaboration with Planned Parenthood of the Columbia Willamette and the Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy Partnership (RAPP) coalitions of Lane, Coos, Jackson and Josephine Counties. Enthusiastic responses throughout diverse Oregon communities, and the resulting opportunities, proposals and support, make it quite clear: this is an innovative and bold initiative whose time has come.

Nearly 3,000 people have participated in the first year of RRR® activities. The vast majority have been stunned by adolescent sexual health outcomes in western Europe as compared to those in Oregon and the U.S.; intrigued by cultural norms and strategies that support responsible sexual choices for teens and adults; drawn to the notion of reclaiming sexuality as a vibrant, healthy, and wonderful part of being human.

We have asked Oregonians to think about the implications of growing up in a society where youth are respected and valued as contributing members with much to offer... where they are seen as partners in finding solutions to the problems that affect them. Picture adults sharing – rather than censoring – knowledge and information about sexuality. Consider the effects of an approach that teaches saying "YES!" to healthy, loving, respectful and responsible intimate relationships... and the outcome of such an approach, embraced in Germany, France, and the Netherlands, is that young people *decide for themselves* – without ever being lectured about abstinence – that sex can wait until they are older.

Imagine that.

These western European countries are by no means perfect in their handling of sexuality issues, and there are serious concerns around their painfully inadequate approach with minorities and immigrant populations. We still have important things to learn from them, for they have made significant strides where we continue to spin our wheels: specifically in the area of unintended teen pregnancies and births, abortions, and the incidence of sexually transmitted infections and HIV disease.

And Oregon is paying attention.

## **PROPOSAL**

Having gotten the attention – and such encouraging response – from thousands of Oregonians, Planned Parenthood Health Services of Southwestern Oregon is coordinating second year activities aimed at continuing the grassroots effort to inform, mobilize and activate key groups including communities of faith, youth, parents and the media around Rights, Respect, Responsibility®.

### ***1. Communities of Faith***

As a result of the Rights, Respect, Responsibility® luncheon forums held in February 2001, PPHSSO has been approached by a number of clergy and faith communities to support them in promoting the vision of Rights, Respect, Responsibility® within their own congregations.

Coos County RAPP sponsored a clergy RRR® education program conducted by Ingrid Tyson, the Coos Bay nurse practitioner who is one of Oregon's European Study Tour team members. Fourteen people attended the session. A more extensive partnership between PPHSSO and clergy from Eugene, Springfield, Cottage Grove and surrounding Lane County communities, Medford, Ashland and Klamath Falls will provide RRR® education/training to clergy and leaders within faith communities, as well as resources, and follow-up support services. This project, which is being designed collaboratively by PPHSSO and clergy groups, will engage teams from various faith communities in developing and implementing RRR® efforts within their congregations. Project activities include:

**A. Leadership Forums** – RRR® education/training dinner events for clergy and faith community leaders (see photocopied attachment). Participants will:

- examine U.S., Oregon and local county trends in the area of adolescent sexuality
- learn about successful European strategies around adolescent sexual behavior and responsibility
- consider possible implications for Oregon, and the value of the Rights, Respect, Responsibility® initiative
- meet in teams to explore ways to effectively address these issues within their own congregations

This forum is being held on January 29<sup>th</sup> at the United First Methodist Church in Eugene and on February 17<sup>th</sup> at the Medford Congregational United Church of Christ.

**B. Manual** – An implementation manual for RRR® will be provided to leadership forum participants to assist them in conducting education and planning sessions within their congregations. (Note: This manual can be readily tailored for use with other groups and organizations interested in advancing RRR®)

**C. Follow-up Support** – Planned Parenthood staff will be available to help with education, facilitation, and/or strategic planning as individual congregations develop plans to implement their vision of RRR®.

**D. Resources** – Planned Parenthood will purchase and loan to congregations copies of the following resources:

- Advocates for Youth Video: **Teens and Sex in Europe: A Story of Rights, Respect, Responsibility®** - designed to educate the community about successful strategies that dramatically reduced teen pregnancies, births and abortions in western Europe;
- Multimedia Group of Canada video: **The Joy of Life** - designed to support parents in communicating with their children about issues around sexuality;
- United Church of Christ sexuality curriculum, K-12 and Adult series: **Our Whole Lives** - Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, *Our Whole Lives* provides not only facts about anatomy and human development, but helps participants to clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality.

PPHSSO is collaborating with Planned Parenthood of the Columbia Willamette to carry out this project in the Portland area. We will expand our effort to other Oregon communities as resources allow.

## **2. Youth and Parents**

**A. Teen Theater** – PPHSSO’s award-winning teen theater (based in the Medford office) has been promoting healthy and responsible messages about sexuality throughout Oregon since 1997. These messages emphasize positive self-image, taking care of oneself, developing affirming attitudes around sexuality, and respecting self and others. Traditionally, Planned Parenthood’s Teen Theater has been peer education at its finest, with the primary emphasis being on performances to youth. In 2000, the E. C. Brown Foundation provided generous funding in support of this effort.

In 2002, Planned Parenthood will focus teen theater as a vehicle for promoting Rights, Respect, Responsibility®. While the troupe will continue its performances at schools and youth organizations, it will increase its outreach to adult audiences at conferences and community shows. Adult audiences are not only entertained, but often deeply moved by scenes that depict the life and personal issues of today’s youth. Messages resonate with adults as they recall their own growing up experiences, some of which may have been quite painful and challenging. At the end of a performance, the audience is often wanting to “do something”... perhaps talk more openly with their own children, advocate for youth, support education efforts that help young people better understand and appreciate their developing sexuality... something that may ease the transitions of growing up.

Planned Parenthood proposes to seize that opportunity to inform and activate audiences around Rights, Respect, Responsibility®. This will happen in a variety of ways that will evolve over time, and will include specific scenes created to emphasize RRR®, an appeal from actors addressing what young people need from the caring adults in their lives, and an education/activation piece that will offer resources and concrete activities to engage participants in the RRR® movement. In addition to this increased effort with adults, the theater will activate youth audiences with RRR® opportunities and resources that support them in becoming involved.

**B. Dr. Sol Gordon** – Sol Gordon is a psychologist, lecturer, author ([Facts About Sex for Today’s Youth](#), [Girls are Girls and Boys are Boys: So What’s the Difference?](#), [How Can You Tell if You’re Really in Love?](#), [All Families are Different](#), [The Teenage Survival Book](#), [Raising a Child Conservatively in a Sexually Permissive World](#), and several others) and long-time icon in the field of sexuality education. Having heard about the good work going on in Oregon, Dr. Gordon approached Planned Parenthood staff at the Advocates for Youth Conference offering to assist us in our RRR® efforts.

Planning is underway to sponsor the following events, March 4-9:

- an all school assembly at South Eugene HS (to be cosponsored by South's peer educators and Parent Council) and Churchill Alternative HS;
- evening event at SEHS auditorium open to the community and cosponsored by the peer educators and Parent Council ("How to Be an 'Askable' Adult" – essentially about communicating with young people about sexual issues);
- a program for university and LCC students to be held at UO (we have agreement with Greek Life to incorporate this presentation as one option to meet their "social issues" requirement, and are working with a number of instructors on campus to offer this as an optional assignment for credit);
- community presentation at the Smullin Center in Medford;
- book signing at Barnes and Noble in Medford;
- presentation at Rogue Valley Community College;
- evening session for parents in Grants Pass ("How to be an 'Askable' Adult");
- Portland Planned Parenthood and its Rights, Respect, Responsibility® coalition are coordinating events for Portland including presentation to students and professionals;
- extensive media coverage, including two call-in radio talk shows to be aired in southern Oregon.

### **3. Media**

**Mass Media Campaigns: Learning from our European Colleagues:** A key component of the successful European approach to adolescent sexuality is education, much of which is communicated through mass media campaigns – TV, radio and print ads, infomercials, public service announcements, bus ads, billboards, video, posters, postcards, pamphlets, CD-ROMs... the vehicles are many and varied. Media campaigns in Germany, France, and the Netherlands provide positive, accurate and effective messages about the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies. They also help shape the social norms that reinforce healthy sexual attitudes and behaviors among the general population. These campaigns are thoughtful, well researched, responsive to public need and incredibly entertaining. They have evolved over time as each year's campaign is evaluated to determine what worked, what didn't, and what the focus might be for the next round.

How mass-media in Germany, France and the Netherlands came to be a major partner in the provision of sexual health messages is in itself an important story which may inform and direct us in our own efforts. All three countries have invested heavily in mass media campaigns as an avenue to break down societal taboos about discussing responsible, protective sexual behavior. The degree of cooperation – and commitment – by entertainment industry professionals in this effort is remarkable and refreshing to see.

Planned Parenthood will coordinate a week-long series of educational forums that feature professionals from Germany, France and the Netherlands who will detail each of these countries' mass media efforts, their history, evolution and adaptability to other cultures. We will invite each of the three presenters we met with during the European Study Tour: Jan Silbers from Strichting SOA (Foundation for STI Prevention) in the Netherlands; Dr. Wolfgang Mueller from BzgA (Federal Centre for Health Education) in Germany; and Benoit Felix from CRIPS (Regional Center for AIDS Prevention Information) in France. In addition to sponsoring events open to the public, we will provide sessions geared toward

professionals working in education, advertising, electronic and print media, and college/university students who are preparing to enter these fields.

These forums will enhance the RRR® grassroots effort and help us set the stage for the social marketing campaign that will be a critical piece of the initiative.

#### **4. Program Expansion and Support**

**A. Staffing** – Additional staffing is required to coordinate Rights, Respect, Responsibility® in Oregon. Planned Parenthood added 1.5 FTE divided between the Eugene and Medford offices and is seeking funds to support those positions.

**B. Travel** – As Oregon team members travel around the state to provide RRR® presentations, mileage reimbursement and occasionally food and lodging costs become an issue. Team members have picked up local travel costs, however a number of requests are requiring long distance travel and an overnight stay. A travel fund will allow Planned Parenthood to reimburse those costs.

**C. Opportunity Fund** – The appeal of Rights, Respect, Responsibility® has resulted in a number of important opportunities that are presenting themselves – opportunities that require funds to pursue. An example of this is the faith community project. This is an effort we have felt compelled to move forward with, trusting that the funding will follow. Other examples include Dr. Sol Gordon’s visit, projects proposed by the developing Josephine County RRR® coalition, and the proposal by interested folks in Douglas County to start a local RRR® coalition. As coalitions begin to build and additional opportunities come our way, it is important that Planned Parenthood have a fund available to provide a timely response.

**D. RRR® Committee** – At Planned Parenthood’s board retreat/strategic planning session in October, the proposal to establish a Rights, Respect, Responsibility® committee was unanimously approved. This decision is another reflection of Planned Parenthood’s deep commitment to focusing our organization on the vision of Rights, Respect, Responsibility®. The RRR® committee, consisting of PP board, staff and community members will provide guidance and support to advance a coordinated, thoughtful and well-planned RRR® effort. The committee will also provide an important vehicle for moving RRR® ownership beyond Planned Parenthood.

**5. European Study Tour** – Nearly unanimous feedback from Oregon RRR® team members indicated that the EST was an invaluable experience for preparing them to work on the initiative. I think this is essential for building our team throughout the state. Planned Parenthood has approved sending two staff on the 2002 EST – the staff who are coordinating RRR® efforts in the north and south. I am continuing to seek funds to support additional team members, and have approached Northwest Health Foundation to sponsor a total of eight Oregonians on the tour.

#### **6. Evaluation**

**A.** Planned Parenthood will approach University of Oregon to work with us in developing and implementing an evaluation plan that measures the progress of the overall RRR® grassroots effort. Outcomes of individual strategies (such as the faith community events, teen theater performances, etc.) will continue to be determined through participant feedback and tracking of follow-up activities.

**B. Telephone Survey** – Planned Parenthood will continue to track adult and youth attitudes around adolescent sexuality in areas where RRR® is being promoted. This data will help guide decisions around RRR® activities. It will also offer insight, direction and support to those working with youth and families.