

Community Youth Focus

Building a network of services for youth

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Premiere Issue

Welcome to the first edition of **Community Youth Focus**, a quarterly newsletter published by the **Family Maternal, & Child Health (FMCH) Community Coalition**, a community advisory committee to Contra Costa Health Services' FMCH Programs consisting of representatives from county and community agencies that serve and involve youth. Our newsletter will provide data, program updates, and resources on adolescent health in Contra Costa County.

In August 2002, the FMCH Community Coalition convened a Planning Retreat to discuss adolescent health issues. The recommendations of the California Adolescent Health Collaborative's "Investing in Adolescent Health: A Social Imperative for California's Future" (see Resources section on p. 2) were utilized as a framework for planning and prioritizing activities around these issues for the coming year.



Planning Retreat participants engaged in lively discussion

The FMCH Community Coalition chose two main goals for its 2002-2003 Work Plan:

- 1) Increase youth participation in local governance and public policy.
- 2) Work with schools and after-school programs to promote stable families that can support teens.

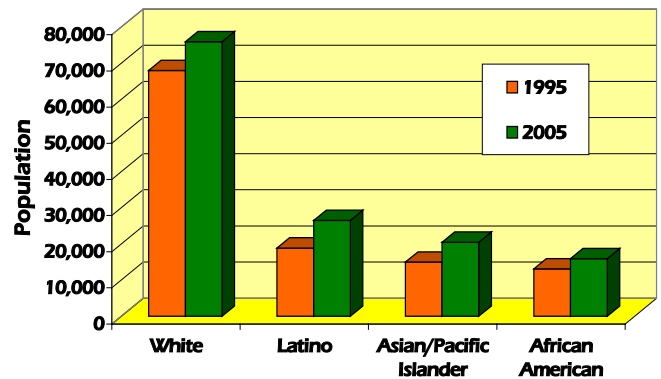
To meet these goals, the Coalition will implement a variety of collaborative projects designed to improve services to youth in Contra Costa and involve youth in influencing local policies that affect their health.

To join us at monthly meetings, obtain more information about adolescent health issues, or learn more about the FMCH Community Coalition, contact Padmini Parthasarathy at (925) 313-6178. ✉

Contra Costa youth population rising, diversity growing

By 2005, the number of youth age 10-19 in Contra Costa County will total 139,403, compared to 115,536 in 1995, representing a **28% increase in the adolescent population from 1995 to 2005**.

In 2000, White youth made up almost half of the county's youth population, Latino youth 22%, Asian/Pacific Islander youth 11%, African-American youth 11%, and other youth less than 7%. However these figures are changing dramatically.



As the graph above shows, between 1995 and 2005 **the largest increase in population will occur amongst Latino and Asian American/Pacific Islander teens**, with increases of 40% and 37%, respectively. Contra Costa County's adolescent health programs and services are challenged with creatively and effectively addressing these dynamic shifts in youth demographics.

(Source: California Department of Finance). ✉

Did You Know?

- ❖ The percent of births to teens in Contra Costa decreased from 8.3% in 1991 to 6.7% in 2001. In comparison, births to teens made up 10% of all California births in 2001.
- ❖ The percent of births to Latina teens in Contra Costa has increased, from 8% in 1991 to 12.3% in 2000 (2001 data not yet available).

Youth Development

Youth Development has been described in many ways. The **National Youth Development Information Center** (www.nydic.org) defines it as “a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent.” According to the **National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth** (**NCFY**—www.ncfy.org), positive youth development is a policy perspective that emphasizes providing developmental services to all young people in order to prepare them for success now and as adults. This approach contrasts with others that focus on the risky behaviors and deficits of youth.

Current Efforts in Contra Costa

Contra Costa is home to a number of different youth development programs, and in this issue we highlight three. **The Center for Human Development (CHD)** implements **Friday Night Live (FNL)** at Clayton Valley, Concord, John Swett, and Richmond High Schools, and Antioch Middle School. Youth in FNL meet once a week after school to plan projects around alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in their community. The youth design and implement the projects with the guidance of an adult advisor from CHD.

Empowerment Through Action (ETA) is a youth group sponsored by **Contra Costa Health Services’ TeenAge Program**. At Middle College High School in San Pablo, teens are working to decrease the influence of the tobacco industry in the community. Recently, the group, in partnership with the Tobacco Prevention Program, successfully persuaded the Richmond Police Department to enforce the Tobacco-Free Youth Ordinance.

Calli House is an emergency shelter for homeless teens sponsored by **Contra Costa Health Services’ Homeless Program** and operated by **Opportunity West**. The shelter’s philosophy is that young people have the ability to make good choices for themselves with gentle guidance, support, and positive opportunities. The staff works to reconnect youth to their families, supports youth in finding healthier living arrangements, and/or assists youth in preparing to live independently.

These programs truly embody the spirit of positive youth development. They allow young people to choose their priorities and the strategies to address them while eliciting the inherent assets and talents of youth.

For more information:

FNL—Patty Garcia, (925) 687-8844, ext. 246

ETA—LaShonda Williams, (925) 231-8672

Calli House—Lavonna Martin, (925) 313-6140 ☞

TEEN CORNER:

The Countywide Youth Commission

The Countywide Youth Commission (CYC), established in 1995 by County Supervisor Mark DeSaulnier, involves Contra Costa youth in policy level decision-making. Its mission is “to give the youth of Contra Costa County a voice and the power to change their world and to be contributing citizens; to provide a link between youth and the Board of Supervisors on issues relating to young people; and to form partnerships with schools, community-based organizations, local governments, and businesses to cooperatively address the concerns of young people countywide.”

For more information about CYC, contact Adam Chow, Program Coordinator, at (925) 640-4228 or adamlchow@yahoo.com. ☞

RESOURCES

- **California Adolescent Health Collaborative:** www.californiateenhealth.org
 - *Improving Health Care Access Through Teen-Oriented Outreach, 2002.*
 - *Involving Youth in Public Policy, 2001.*
 - *Investing in Adolescent Health: A Social Imperative for California’s Future, 2000.*
- **Planned Parenthood—Teenwire** (on-line teen magazine): www.teenwire.com
- **National Center for Victims of Crime:** www.ncvc.org
 - *Our Vulnerable Teenagers: Their Victimization, Its Consequences, and Directions for Prevention and Intervention, 2002.*
- **Fact Sheets for Teen Parents:** www.teenparents.org



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