

Depale 6/10/08

**TESTIMONY PREPARED BY
GREATER NEW BRITAIN TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION, INC.
also known as the
PATHWAYS/SENDEROS CENTER, 100 Arch St., New Britain, CT 06051
3/11/08
on behalf of increased funding for successfully-evaluated teen pregnancy prevention
methodologies**

Good afternoon, honorable Committee members. My name is RoseAnne Bilodeau. I am the founder and executive director of Greater New Britain Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Inc., also known as the Pathways/Senderos Center. We are a neighborhood-based program situated in one of New Britain's poverty-stricken areas where, prior to our existence, teens typically dropped out of high school, got pregnant, were involved with drugs or other illegal substances, and/or were arrested for youth violence and other juvenile crimes.

Operational for 15 years, we have often been credited for being instrumental in turning around the area youths' outcomes. We provide successfully-evaluated primary prevention services daily, 52 weeks per year to low-income, minority, mostly Latino girls and boys, ranging in ages from 10 to 18 years old.

We follow Dr. Michael Carrera and the Children's Aid Society's, highly successful teen pregnancy prevention methodology which includes comprehensive, holistic, long term, services designed specifically to prevent teen pregnancies among those most at-risk, poverty-stricken youngsters who come from families started by teen parents.

Our evaluated results have been exemplary including: a 95% teen pregnancy prevention success rate with only 3 pregnancies ever being created; while 100% of the students who remain in our program graduate from high school and

68% of our graduates have gone on to higher education. Most are the first in their families to graduate from high school and all are the first to attend higher education. Our youngsters also rank well below the national averages for their involvement with tobacco, drugs, alcohol, violence and crime. All graduates are fully employed.

The “Carrera” methodology is the only nationally recognized teen pregnancy prevention model that demonstrates both short and long term effectiveness, not only for teen pregnancy prevention but also for assisting poverty-stricken youth to graduate from high school, stay out of trouble and move on to post-secondary education. After all, low-income teens need more than teen pregnancy prevention to move up out of poverty. They need to stay out of trouble and make the right decisions when the street pressures are great to do the wrong thing. And, they need to be properly prepared, academically and socially, to go on to higher education.

They need to get all of these services from one qualified primary prevention provider. Unfortunately, our social services are broken down into little domains such as drug prevention, school drop out prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, etc. and our youngsters are shuffled around from one six month activity to another and we wonder why nothing works. Children are whole people and respond best when involved in small groups, with the same adult staff who give consistent messages over a long period of time. Low-income youth are marginalized and need to learn about the mainstream society and gain the skills and abilities to succeed within that society.

This June, five of our participants will graduate from high school – four have been accepted to their first-choice universities, and the fifth graduate has joined the Marines. Several of our prior graduates are now college graduates who are professionally employed, own property and are working on advanced degrees. Simultaneously, we have a number of former graduates currently attending college.

Again, these statistics never occurred for Arch Street kids prior to our arrival and because of our great success, our Board of Directors wants to increase the number of youngsters that we serve.

It is my hope that you will be equally impressed with our success at saving low-income youth from lifelong poverty by assisting them to replace risk-taking behaviors with the will, determination and motivation to stay out of trouble, graduate from high school pregnancy-free and enroll into post-secondary education; and, that you will vote to increase funding for research-based, successfully-evaluated teen pregnancy prevention implemented under the authority of the CT Department of Social Services, our oversight department who has years of leadership experience in the field.

I'd like to close by thanking you so much for all of your support throughout the years. Without it, we would not have been able to do this valuable work. And also to thank you for listening to me today.