

## SPEAKING OUT

*Real Stories From Iowa Teens*

### **My Txt: DBS, WYW — Don't Be Silly, Wrap Your Willy**

“I got tested recently for sexually transmitted infections because I had unprotected sex. Most teens shouldn't have to experience the fear of wondering if you have an STI. Now I practice safer sex to prevent infections and pregnancy. My girlfriend and I talk about teen pregnancy a lot. We look at girls in our town who are pregnant, and every single one of them has dropped out of school. After high school, I want to go to college and pursue music or writing.

“Most of my friends practice safer sex or don't have sex at all, but I also know a lot of people who don't practice safer sex. It's important for teens to be educated about safer sex. The best resource for teens is not the media but the real people who have teens' best interests in mind. There's a lot of disinformation out there about sex. That's why it's important to debunk the myths about sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. Once you know the facts about safer sex, it just makes sense.”

— 16, SIOUX CITY

### **My Txt: WAW — Wait a While**

“I got pregnant when I was 16. Now I have a one-year-old daughter. Before I became a teen mom, my plans were to go to college and then work as a preschool or kindergarten teacher. But now I'm just planning to get a job after high school. Being a teen mom has changed everything about my life. I dropped out of high school last semester because my daughter got really sick and my grades were dropping. As a mom, you don't have any freedom — you can't go out whenever you want, you have no time for yourself, and your relationships with your friends change a lot.

“I really didn't think life would be like this once I had a kid — I thought I was ready. But if I could have waited until I was older and out of high school to have my daughter, I would have. Teens should wait to have sex until they're ready to take that big responsibility.”

— 18, WATERLOO

## TEEN PREGNANCY REVEALED<sup>1</sup>

- Almost one in three girls becomes pregnant at least once before she reaches the age of 20.
- Only one-third of teen moms graduate from high school.
- Nearly 80 percent of single teen moms end up needing financial assistance from welfare.
- Only 1.5 percent of teen moms get a college degree by age 30.
- Eight out of 10 teen dads don't marry their babies' moms.
- 86 percent of pregnant Iowa teens are Caucasian while eight percent are African-American and eight percent are Hispanic.

<sup>1</sup>“General Facts and Stats,” The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2006.  
[Http://www.teenpregnancy.org/resources/data/genlfact.asp](http://www.teenpregnancy.org/resources/data/genlfact.asp).