

August 28, 2013

Dear SBHS Parents and Guardians:

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England is excited to announce the expansion of our latest education endeavor: a Peer Education Program for high school youth in South Burlington. PPNNE's Peer Education program seeks to empower high school students with accurate, factual reproductive and sexual health knowledge to benefit themselves, their peers and the community. The program is in its second year at Burlington High School and we are excited to expand to South Burlington this year.

We know that parents and schools are already working to educate young people about reproductive and sexual health. Despite these efforts, condom use among sexually active South Burlington High School students remains at 64% (YRBS, 2011). Common myths persist; this program will empower youth with the knowledge and skills to address these myths and misconceptions in spaces where adults rarely have access.

Vermont teens who took a recent Planned Parenthood survey do feel that their parents are approachable when they have questions; 43% of students in the survey said they would talk to a parent, second only after 54% who said they would ask their friends. Students are supportive of the program; when asked "If you knew a friend or classmate went through a training at Planned Parenthood where they learned about sexual and reproductive health, would you trust them to have good information?" 87% of students responded they would. The remaining 13% said "Maybe." We know that peer education is just as effective as education provided by adults; we also know that teens receive most of their information from other teens.

Volunteer students in the Peer Educator Program will receive specialized training in reproductive and sexual health to prepare them for their role as Peer Educators. Additionally, students will be able to engage in self-directed learning through opportunities to develop and deliver programs of their choosing, with guidance and support from PPNNE staff. This training will give participants the opportunity to practice empathy with others, to gain practical experience in the field of public health and health care advocacy, and to complete their annual volunteer hours requirement.

Applications must be received by October 4th. Permission must be given in order for an individual to participate and there will be a parent/guardian orientation meeting for participating students before training starts. Peer Educators must attend and successfully complete a training program scheduled to begin late October 2013 which will be handled by PPNNE staff.

We are excited to begin this program and are happy to answer your questions. If your teen would like more information or an application, please contact us or visit www.ppnne.org and click on Education & Training. We're also looking for parents who are interested in volunteering on our program Advisory Committee. Let us know if you're interested!

Sincerely,



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