

Continued Success of the Teen Outreach Program

By Willa Marth, Director of Education & Organizational Effectiveness

In 2010 Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest (PPGNW) received a Teen Pregnancy Prevention grant from the Federal Office of Adolescent Health to implement the Teen Outreach Program (TOP). This was abstinence-only sex education money reallocated to replicate programs identified as programs proven to reduce teen pregnancy. TOP youth meet weekly over a nine month period discussing topics such as relationships, values, and communication. In addition each youth does at least twenty hours of community service learning.

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Executive Update

A message from Christine Charbonneau, CEO

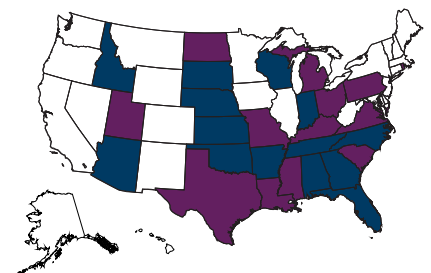
Ahh...just another day in the life of a women's health advocate. Did you know that more state abortion restrictions were enacted from 2011 to 2013 than in the entire previous decade? **That's right. A total of 205 restrictions were passed and enacted by state legislatures between 2011 and 2013 versus the 189 between 2001 and 2010.** Planned Parenthood affiliates across the country are continually fighting anti-women's health bills in state legislatures. Read on to find out about our latest battles in the state legislatures of Alaska, Idaho, and Washington.

Birth Control Benefit Goes to the Supreme Court of the United States

There are two important cases pending before the Supreme Court which, if wrongly decided, could have far reaching repercussions for employer-insured employees across the nation. On Tuesday, March 25, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in two challenges to the birth control benefit brought forward by bosses at Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood Specialties. Both CEOs want to be able to deny their employees access to birth control based on their own personal beliefs. As you may know, the corporations that brought these cases have views that are far outside the mainstream, and the outcome of these cases could have extreme consequences for millions of Americans who need insurance that covers their basic health care. As an employer, I would consider it an immoral act to provide my employees with health insurance that does not cover preventive care.

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In 2000, 13% of women of reproductive age lived in one of the 13 states considered hostile to abortion...



...but, by 2013, 56% of women lived in one of the now 27 hostile states.

- Guttmacher Institute

Legislative Update

From Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest

By Elaine Rose, CEO, Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest



Alaska

Alaska was the last state to start its legislative session, beginning on January 21. Because of Alaska's unique geography, we again held a virtual Lobby Day for activists to contact their legislators from their hometowns without having to travel to the capitol (in addition to some loud and proud in-person activists in Juneau). This year, the Alaska Loves Women Lobby Day took place on Thursday, February 13 and had hundreds of Planned Parenthood activists from around the state contacting their legislators. They spoke to their representatives about the need to enact a Medicaid Women's Health program to provide family planning services to more low-income women.

Since Lobby Day, we're continuing to do some fierce defense against bills that will restrict reproductive health care, including one that would unconstitutionally and unfairly take away abortion services for low-income women.



Idaho

Idaho's legislative session began on January 6. We're working to make it clear to the legislature: they're running out of excuses when it comes to equal rights. Activists have been trying for eight years to pass protections for sexual orientation and gender identity without success. It's past time for the legislature to listen to voters, business leaders, and local communities — it's time to add the words "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to Idaho's Human Rights Act.

We're also intensely focused on defending against legislative attacks on reproductive health and rights. So far we've heard ideas ranging from restricting women's access to emergency contraception to placing religious freedom — including the freedom to restrict reproductive health care — above all our other rights as citizens. Activists from across the state spoke out on these issues at our Human Rights Lobby Day on February 17.



Washington

Washington's legislative session began on January 13, and on that first day we had a committee hearing for the Reproductive Parity Act (RPA), a bill that would require every insurance plan covering maternity care to also cover abortion services. Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest activists wearing pink turned out in force to show their support for this critical piece of legislation that would ensure women can make the health care decisions that are best for themselves and their families. We heard great testimony in support of the bill from religious leaders, health care providers, and women who are directly affected.

Last year the RPA stalled when the anti-women's health Senate failed to bring it up for a vote. While that might happen again this year, we are optimistic that the bill could see a vote on the floor. This year, after seeing the confusion among insurance carriers and consumers about which plans on the Exchange cover abortion, we are urging Senators to do the right thing for Washington women and vote on the RPA. These efforts received a special boost at the annual Reproductive Health and Rights Lobby Day on February 3, when hundreds of activists from across the state met with their legislators at the Capitol. ■



Nikolas Peterson hosts Bar Nun Bingo.

Why I Give: An Interview with Young Professionals President, Nikolas Peterson

Interviewed by Meredith Wisti, Development Officer - Community Relations

Who are the Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest (PPGNW) Young Professionals?

We are ambassadors for PPGNW who represent the organization’s mission, values, and accomplishments through fundraising events, throughout and in partnership with our larger communities. Our core group of approximately 25 individuals creates innovative and community-minded events by combining our skills and professional expertise. Each Young Professionals member contributes a monthly gift to PPGNW and donates approximately three hours of their time each week to further the mission, vision, values, and accomplishments of PPGNW.

What are the primary goals of the Young Professionals?

Young Professionals has two main goals. The first is to increase awareness and educate the community about the spectrum of services PPGNW provides. Second, we independently develop and implement four fundraising events each year. This last year, the events included a bingo night, an 80s concert, Chic for Choice (participating hair salons donated proceeds from one day of appointments), and our signature yearly burlesque show. Both long-term and new supporters of PPGNW attend these events. In addition to these primary goals, this year the Young Professionals will focus on expanding our existing network of monthly donors.

Why do you support PPGNW through your service and donations?

I support PPGNW because it assists thousands of individuals per year by providing reproductive health care services in a safe and non-judgmental environment. Growing up, I knew many people who struggled to get access to these basic services. No one – not a single person – should feel alone, judged, or unsafe when it comes to their personal health care decisions. Politicians on the extreme right have awoken a generation of younger people to the need to be vigilant and speak out. Young Professionals is a great opportunity to use our skills and networks to protect and expand access. We refuse to move backwards.

What inspired you to get involved with PPGNW Young Professionals?

I became interested in the Young Professionals after the increasing number of attacks on women’s reproductive rights in 2012. Fortunately, I believe the Northwest is a beacon of hope and success for Planned Parenthood. I volunteer to further fortify the current support of PPGNW and to help secure its bright future.

Nikolas, a graduate of Seattle University School of Law, currently practices law in Seattle, WA as a solo practitioner and as Staff Attorney at Hanford Challenge. Nikolas has been a member of Young Professionals for one year. Last year, Young Professionals raised \$20,000 for the Someone You Know Fund, which provides – among other things – financial assistance for birth control and STD testing to individuals who would otherwise be unable to afford these services. Although Young Professionals is currently a Washington program, PPGNW hopes to expand similar volunteer opportunities to Alaska and Idaho in the future.

To find out more about Young Professionals and other volunteer opportunities at PPGNW, go to www.ppgnw.org. ■



Young Professionals board members at We Can Dance If We Want To, an 80s party with live music.



Over 100 supporters, Young Professionals members and The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, The Abbey of St. Joan, gathered for Bar Nun Bingo.

Mary's Role

Our Planned Parenthood Global Youth Ambassador shares the story of a young person who is making an impact in Kenya

By Kaleigh Young, 2013 Global Youth Ambassador and Marketing Specialist

Imagine you are on a radio program and the phone lines are open so anyone and everyone can call in to ask you a question. Now, imagine that question is about sexual and reproductive health — teen pregnancy, HIV / AIDS, birth control, healthy relationships, and more.

If you are anything like me, that sounds pretty scary — not only are you on the spot, but you are discussing sensitive topics.

This is what youth advocates with the Network for Adolescents and Youth of Africa (NAYA) in Kenya do every day as part of their volunteer community programs. No, they aren't doing this because they are doctors or have graduate degrees in public health and are getting paid as "on-air experts." Instead, these young people are doing this because they want to create an enabling environment - socially, culturally and politically - that supports the sexual and reproductive health of their peers. They devote their time and energy to education and training, and pass that knowledge on.

Through a fellowship program run by Planned Parenthood Global (the international division of Planned Parenthood Federation of America), I had the opportunity to travel to Kenya to work with these youth advocates. While there, I realized that young people in Kenya are in a unique position. While the country is outwardly becoming increasingly modern and westernized, the cultural and political infrastructure are still deeply rooted in traditional values and beliefs — and it's young people who are bridging this gap between tradition and evolution.

This gap is especially apparent when you consider sexual and reproductive health issues. In many cases, the tools and information exist to address the sexual and reproductive health needs of Kenyans, but it's the cultural and political barriers that prevent dissemination. For example, I heard stories of young women being turned away from getting birth control because the physician believed it's wrong for a young person to have sex. I also heard stories of health centers that were built without buy-in from all levels — government officials, tribal leaders, community elders and community members — so people refuse to visit based on principle.



Mary is a youth advocate with NAYA in Kenya.

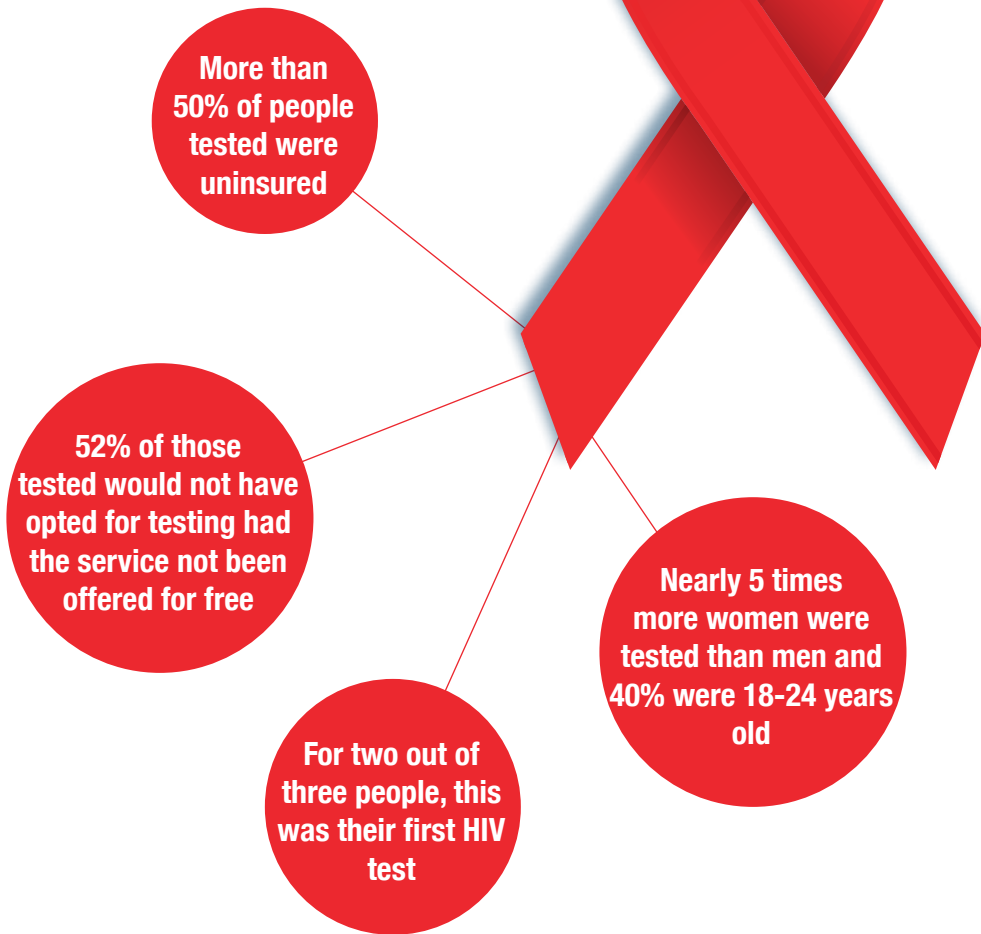
NAYA's goal is to eliminate the barriers that prevent young people from accessing information and services. Youth advocates champion and promote sexual and reproductive health information and services by enlisting the support of policy makers, opinion leaders, donors, the media, and like-minded organizations and individuals. In addition to the radio programs, they host community outreach meetings in which they disseminate information and garner community support for sexual and reproductive health. They also work with government officials to write policy briefs to educate their peers on their rights.

Mary is one of the youth advocates with whom I met. When Mary first started with NAYA, some of the older members of her family were disappointed — not only was she not going to become the lawyer they wanted her to be, but now she was out in the community talking about and demonstrating how to use condoms. Like many Kenyan adults, Mary's family members are more traditional and think sexuality should not be talked about in private, let alone public spaces.

Before I left for Kenya, I knew that I'd be working with bright young people, but as I was listening to youth advocates speak about teen pregnancy on the radio, it hit me. This isn't just a group of intelligent young people — these are the leaders that are poised to change not only sexual and reproductive health, but also what it means to be a youth in Kenya.

Mary is not only a NAYA youth advocate, but she has used what she learned with NAYA to create further employment for herself with other sexual and reproductive health organizations. Mary says she has struggled to be in a position to do something as a youth and a woman in Kenya, but as she is speaking with me, I know she's in that position now. Mary and her fellow advocates are leading the charge for change so that young people in Kenya can exercise their rights, including sexual and reproductive rights. ■

One in six people with HIV don't know they have it.



500 Free HIV Tests

To commemorate World AIDS Day, PPGNW health centers offered free HIV testing

By Sandy Rhyneer, Director of Marketing & Communications

One in three women who chooses to be tested for HIV does so at a women's health center like Planned Parenthood. The Centers for Disease Control recommends all Americans ages 15-65 receive routine HIV testing, not just those most at risk.

PPGNW offered free HIV testing at its 28 health centers in recognition of World AIDS Day in December. The epidemic continues to affect millions of people around the world and across the Northwest, with some communities impacted more than others. By offering free testing, PPGNW is working to increase access to education and health care, reducing stigma, and helping to create the "Healthiest Generation Ever."

During the week of free testing, PPGNW screened nearly 500 people for HIV. The free HIV tests were made possible by the PPGNW Someone You Know Fund, which is supported by private donations to provide preventive health services like HPV vaccines, sexually transmitted infection tests, vasectomies, and birth control to those who are uninsured or of low-income in the Northwest.

To make a gift to the Someone You Know Fund, please contact Liz Reilly at liz.reilly@ppgnw.org or 206.328.7737. ■

"I really appreciate being able to get tested for free because I am on a limited income and have no insurance."

"I had unprotected sex and if it wasn't for this program, I wouldn't have gotten tested."

"Thank you! The free testing is very helpful and makes it so that I can do it while I'm here."

- Patients who received a free HIV test

Continued Success of the Teen Outreach Program



TOP youth fixing donated bikes at the Boise Bicycle Project.

In the fourth year, our TOP partnership with five Planned Parenthood affiliates across a five-state region (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington) has allowed us to reach 4,401 youth in communities with the highest teen pregnancy rates.

We have received national attention due to our ability to support TOP facilitators and managers across such a large and diverse geography. The PPGNW TOP Training Team provides support related to adolescent development, classroom management, facilitation, and of course community service learning. Their spectacular support is done via webinars, phone calls, and in-person.

What makes TOP unique is not only the close relationships between youth and caring adults, but also the youth's ability to take action in their own communities on issues that matter to them. Community service learning is key to the program's effectiveness and in previous research was the component that had the greatest impact on behavior outcomes. This service is as varied and unique as the youth and communities they live in. Here are just a couple examples from this year:

- At Borah High School in Idaho, TOP youth learned about the resources for refugees and people experiencing homelessness in their community. They decided to contribute to those resources by helping sort donations and setting up mannequin displays at a local thrift store and fixing donated bikes at the Boise Bicycle Project.
- In Anchorage, TOP students decided to perform random acts of kindness by sharing inspirational quotes with strangers.



TOP provides teens with the necessary support and opportunities to prepare for successful adulthood and avoid problem behavior.

- In western Washington, students glazed mugs as part of a fundraiser to support a local organization that helps homeless teens find food and shelter.

Recently, we received our preliminary evaluation data on our first cohort of TOP youth. We are excited to say it is promising! TOP youth are significantly more likely to delay onset of sexual behavior and to have sex less frequently. Both are very exciting public health outcomes. Everyday our TOP facilitators see the difference this program is making in the lives of the young people with whom they work. We are thrilled to see our preliminary data telling us the same story. ■

“The most important message I am taking away from this program is that my voice is important! What was most meaningful was being able to help and support others in some of the services we did.”

“I feel like TOP is my second family... since I began this program I have become a better person and I get better grades.”

“TOP opens your eyes and makes you realize you're capable of doing more than you think.”

- TOP youth in Alaska, Idaho, and Washington

Executive Update

PPGNW v. Streur et al.

On January 29, PPGNW filed a lawsuit against the State of Alaska challenging a harmful new regulation that would severely restrict abortion access for low-income women. The Department of Health and Social Services' new regulation seeks to circumvent a 2001 decision by the Alaska Supreme Court that says the state cannot discriminate in the provision of services under the Medicaid program. The new regulation seeks to define a 'medically necessary' abortion by compiling a list of 22 medical conditions that in and of themselves would mean a woman would already be very medically fragile. We all know that no two women are alike, and no two pregnancies are alike, and certainly a list of 22 conditions cannot possibly take into account the myriad of circumstances that women could face in their pregnancies. **That's why determining what's medically necessary is a decision that's best left to women and their doctors — not politicians or government bureaucrats.** Beyond that, we also know that the Alaska state constitution protects women against discrimination in the provision of insurance coverage for the full range of reproductive health care. **Every Alaskan woman, regardless of income, should be able to make the pregnancy decision that's best for her health.** That's why PPGNW is back in court. "Women's rights and access to reproductive health care are meaningless if bans on coverage keep high-quality, safe, legal abortion services out of reach," said Janet Crepps, senior counsel with the Center for Reproductive Rights and co-counsel for PPGNW.

PPGNW is being represented by our Chief Legal Council, Laura Einstein, the Center for Reproductive Rights, the National American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the ACLU of Alaska, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and Susan Orlansky of Anchorage.

Enrollment for the Affordable Care Act Coverage is Up

PPGNW health centers have ACA In-Person Assisters helping patients through the enrollment process for ACA benefits. This January alone, we helped over 700 patients enroll in private insurance or expanded Medicaid. We've seen a giant leap of insured clients seeking services with us, both Medicaid / Medicaid Managed Care recipients, and privately insured. Although our Take Charge Program (Washington's family planning waiver program for low-income uninsured women) application numbers are down, the number of our newly insured patients is up. That's better for our patients – they now have access to a much wider range of health services. Unfortunately, both Idaho and Alaska elected not to participate in the expanded Medicaid programs, leaving the most vulnerable low-income people uninsured and uncovered.

National Abortion Rate Continues Downward Trend

However, there is good news! Between 2008 and 2011, the U.S. abortion rate hit its lowest level since 1973, *Roe v. Wade*. The abortion rate [and the number of abortions] fell 13 percent and the decline spans almost all 50 states. Why is this happening? (And, before antis try to take credit, their abortion restrictions happened *after* the study, and we know restrictions don't actually lower abortion rates.) The study attributes the decline in part to better access to long-acting reversible contraceptive methods like the intrauterine devices and implants available today. The researchers say the down economy most likely was also a significant contributor because people tend to adhere more strictly to birth control during tough economic times. Thank you for all you do to give couples in tough circumstances great contraceptive access. ■



The ACA's Impact, One Patient at a Time

A patient came into a health center to get her IUD removed, but she didn't have insurance and didn't have the money to pay for the removal. She was distraught and worried — the IUD had been in place for several years and it was time to remove it. She had no idea how she would pay, when the removal could be scheduled, and she had no answers. Conveniently, a PPGNW In-Person Assister (IPA) was right there to help her solve her problem. The IPA worked with the patient to see if she qualified for subsidies for health insurance, and found that she actually qualified for Medicaid expansion coverage. When the patient heard this, she began to cry with relief - she no longer had to worry. The patient came back to the health center and had the procedure after January 1.

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We welcome the chance to talk to you about our work. Feel free to contact us anytime:

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Matching Miles for Choice



If you could book your next flight, keep all of your bonus miles, and allow PPGNW to receive a match, would you do it?

Through Alaska Airlines' EasyBiz, we receive the same bonus miles you do. PPGNW uses those miles for necessary staff travel – saving us thousands of dollars that can be used for essential reproductive health services instead!

Sign-up is easy. Simply send an email to miles4choice@ppgnw.org. When you get a reply, just follow the instructions.

Questions? Email miles4choice@ppgnw.org.