



SPRING 2012

PLANNED PARENTHOOD
OF THE SOUTHERN FINGER LAKES

online at PPSFL.ORG

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... Learn more about the ongoing battle on the Affordable Care Act.

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... Learn how education and outreach make a difference in preventing sexual assault.

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... We caught up with our former intern Katie Johnson and couldn't be more proud of what she's accomplished!

CHOICE

Need a Safe Restroom? THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

A survey conducted by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission found that nearly 50% of respondents to a survey about restroom safety reported having been harassed or assaulted in a public restroom. Because of this, many transgender and gender non-conforming people avoid public restrooms altogether and can develop health problems as a result. That's why we recently created a GPS enabled iPhone app called Pee in Peace.

The app is designed to help transgender people (and anyone who does not readily fit into expected and conventional norms of gender presentation) easily locate single stall or gender neutral bathrooms in Ithaca, New York. We are committed to working toward removing the barriers to accessing safe restrooms.

Pee in Peace is the premiere interactive map of MOST single stall and gender neutral restrooms in Ithaca. Public restrooms can pose some risks (from cleanliness to safety), but now anyone who needs quick and easy access to a private restroom can pee in peace thanks to our Out for Health program and our talented friends at Ancient Wisdom Productions. From caregivers for people of a different sex, to anyone who just prefers a private place, and especially for transgender and gender non-conforming people who may have a specific need for safe and private restrooms – everyone deserves a place to pee in peace. We are adding more restrooms and regions in our area, and creating partnership opportunities for locations around the country! If you know of a restroom that should be included, please use the feedback button in the app to alert us.



LETTER FROM JOE SAMMONS, CEO

Dear Friend –

A few weeks ago, our very own Rosaire Karij was awarded the 28th Annual Ruth Petengill award by the Human Services Coalition – an award designed to acknowledge “a truly unique individual for her outstanding contributions to Tompkins County as a health and human services professional... known for her innovative ideas, thoughtfulness, and commitment.”

Not only was this a well-deserved honor, but Rosaire showed a packed room at the award ceremony held at the Women’s Building in Ithaca, why she was the perfect award recipient at the right time.

Attacks on women’s health care in Congress and across the country have been dominating the media and airwaves for months, but lost in the rhetoric is the simple truth of how important our work really is.

While accepting her award, these were just a part of the powerful words Rosaire shared with us:

“...This work feeds my soul ... because we treat those who come to us at some of their most vulnerable moments with compassion, with dignity, with skill, and with respect. So many come to us expecting judgment and substandard care because that’s what they’ve encountered elsewhere – because they’re poor; because they’re gay; because they’re immigrants; because they belong to a racial or ethnic minority; because they’re pregnant and need an abortion; because in our schizophrenic culture, sex is everywhere but is still somehow secret and shameful. Working at Planned Parenthood allows me to put some of my deepest values in practice – the belief that we are all connected, that every person should have an equal place at life’s table, that we must be allies to those who have little or no voice or power. I believe the work we do is sacred, in the same way that sexuality is sacred, in that it is deeply intimate and touches the core of who we are as humans.”

This work does indeed feed the soul – and when it is described so clearly and so powerfully, as Rosaire did that day, it lifts the heart and gives us the confidence that our vision and values will never be casualties to a cynical, backward-looking war on women. This is what we do together; we are a family of health care practitioners, support staff, educators and counselors, board members, donors, and volunteers. It’s good to be a part of this family. Thank you all for everything you do!



Warmly,

Joe Sammons
President / CEO

GIVE THE GIFT OF FLEXIBILITY

It’s been a rough couple of years for Planned Parenthood. Between unrelenting political attacks and cuts to our grants, business as usual is anything but. Unfortunately, insurance companies don’t pay us to continue to advocate for women’s health and reproductive rights at the local, state, and national levels, nor do they offset the costs of providing honest, accurate sex education in our community. Here’s where you come in - by supporting our Annual Fund, you help fund all of our essential work.

The Annual Fund is the cornerstone of all fundraising at PPSFL—the foundation upon which other fundraising efforts rest. It allows PPSFL to allocate resources to where the need is greatest. The Annual Fund at PPSFL generates revenue that supports:

- » a comprehensive continuum of vital reproductive health services to all patients regardless of their ability to pay
- » honest, accurate sex education for students, and professionals, and families to help youth make responsible and healthy choices
- » advocacy campaigns to ensure our reproductive rights are protected

PPSFL cares for nearly 12,000 patients each year in Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Tompkins counties, and provides sexuality education to 8,400 people throughout our region. We could not do what we do without your generous support.

Help us keep people safe and healthy by donating to PPSFL today, with any of these options:

- » Check or money order
- » Credit card – by mail or online at PPSFL.ORG (select PPSFL from the drop-down menu to ensure your gift stays in our community)
- » Stocks or bonds
- » Grant through your family foundation or donor-advised fund
- » Charitable gift annuity
- » Name PPSFL as a beneficiary in your will, life insurance policy, or retirement account

For more information, call our Development Office at 796.0220 x309 or e-mail georgia.rennie@ppsfl.org.

The Affordable Care Act

by Casey Martinson

On Monday, March 26, the U.S. Supreme Court began the oral arguments on the Affordable Care Act. The chief bone of contention in the case is a provision of the law that requires every American to have health insurance, or pay a penalty. Whether or not this provision will be overturned and what impact that would have on the rest of the law is a subject of much debate, and we are not likely to find an answer before the court hands down its ruling. But most observers are betting that regardless of what happens, most of the health care law will remain intact—at least as far as the court is concerned.

More critical to the long-term survival of the Affordable Care Act is public support. At Planned Parenthood, we believe that support is well deserved, and we are working diligently to raise awareness about its positive benefits. Here are a few.

Preventive Services Without Co-pays. Beginning in August this year, all new health plans will be required to cover a number of preventive services without co-pays. That includes birth control, breast and cervical cancer screenings, and annual well-woman exams. By making these services more accessible, the Affordable Care Act will prevent more unintended pregnancies, save lives, and keep more women healthy.

Direct Access to OB/GYN Providers. Women know that OB/GYN care is essential to maintaining their health. Yet many insurance companies used to require that women see another doctor before making an appointment for routine exams with their OB/GYN provider. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, those policies are a thing of the past. Today, women are free to make those appointments without a referral, and without prior approval from their insurance company.

Affordable Health Insurance Options. Under the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid – actually one of the largest health insurance programs in the world – will expand to cover more people who are low-income. Those who are not eligible for Medicaid can buy private insurance at a much lower price through their new state-wide markets known as “exchanges.” Either way, millions of Americans living without health insurance today will have it when health care reform is fully implemented in 2014. Millions of Americans will no longer have to live with the anxiety of wondering what will happen to them or their families if they become injured or sick.

Extended Coverage for Young Adults. For many young people, finding a job with benefits can take some time, and many have gone uninsured as a result. Under the Affordable Care Act, young people can stay on their parent’s insurance plan until they are 26.

No More Discrimination Toward Women. Today, women often pay higher health insurance premiums, just because they are women. Even worse, women have been denied coverage in the past because some insurance providers considered pregnancy or being a survivor of domestic violence to be a “pre-existing condition.”

Starting in 2014, all of these sexist policies will be illegal. In fact, the days of denying coverage to women or men because of pre-existing conditions – including cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. – will be over.

What Else Does the Affordable Care Act Do? It will stop insurance companies from canceling policies for people who get sick. It will prohibit annual or lifetime limits on coverage, and it will put limits on how much people can be forced to pay in overall out-of-pocket expenses like co-pays and deductibles. All in all, the Affordable Care Act is really good news, not just for the millions of women, men, and young people who rely on Planned Parenthood, but for all Americans.

The Supreme Court’s decision may not threaten the Affordable Care Act’s most important benefits, but challenges in Congress aim to do exactly that. We need people to speak out against these challenges now. We need to speak out for a healthier future, for ourselves, for our families, and for generations to come.

Find out how you can help at ppaction.org/healthcare.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2012

HOW EDUCATION & OUTREACH MAKE A DIFFERENCE

IT'S TIME... TO TALK ABOUT IT! CONNECT. RESPECT. PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE. Although many cultural messages contribute to our understanding and experience of sexuality, many of us are at a loss for how to identify or define healthy sexuality. It is important to understand that sexuality is much more than sex. Healthy sexuality is emotional, social, cultural, and physical. It includes our values, attitudes, feelings, interactions, and behaviors.

WHAT IS HEALTHY SEXUALITY?

Healthy sexuality means having the knowledge and power to express sexuality in ways that enrich one's life. It includes approaching sexual interactions and relationships from a perspective that is consensual, respectful, and informed.

PRIMARY PREVENTION AND HEALTHY SEXUALITY: MAKING THE CONNECTION

Healthy sexuality supports sexual violence prevention. Healthy sexuality is free from violence or coercion. Promotion of sexually healthy behaviors can be linked to the prevention of unhealthy expressions of sexuality, such as sexual violence.

Setting the example. In order to prevent sexual violence, it is important that programming give models of healthy behaviors and actions, while addressing root causes of sexual violence. Providing positive examples encourages young people to grow into sexually healthy adults and helps adults to model these behaviors throughout their lives.

Knowledge = Power. The more information someone has about healthy sexuality, the more likely they are to identify sexual abuse or violence when it occurs. An effective way to increase an individual's comfort level in addressing issues of sexuality is to provide them with information and skills that they can use. An individual who understands healthy sexuality and consent may feel more comfortable taking action and getting involved as a bystander when they witness language and behavior that presents risk for sexual violence.

Society sends mixed messages. We live in a culture where media is highly sexualized, yet many messages around sexuality are shaming and negative. Understanding healthy sexuality can better prepare individuals to be critical consumers of media and to make healthier decisions.

More support for survivors. Discussing sexuality can make those experiencing sexual violence feel more comfortable

about speaking up and seeking help. In addition, families, teachers, friends, and community members may be more comfortable listening to those victimized and better equipped to offer support and resources.

Gender norms impact sexuality. Strict gender norms contribute to sexual violence because of expectations and beliefs associated with femininity and masculinity. Individuals who are taught about healthy sexuality are given the tools to critically examine gender norms and establish that communication and consent are integral aspects of sexuality regardless of gender.

Expanding perspectives. Understanding healthy sexuality supports culturally relevant services and resources for those in marginalized populations, such as the LGBTQ community, people of lower socioeconomic status, and those living with disabilities, who have been affected by sexual violence.

IMPLICATIONS: WHAT CAN WE DO?

Provide healthy sexuality training for advocates, counselors, and educators. Not all adults have received comprehensive sexuality education. This can impact our knowledge, attitudes, and comfort levels around sexuality. Training staff helps prepare advocates, educators, and counselors to deliver messages about healthy sexuality. The Healthy Sexuality and Sexuality Prevention resource list at www.nsvrc.org provides sources and resources to learn more about health sexuality.

Incorporate messages about healthy sexuality into sexual violence prevention. When teaching about healthy eating, we don't just talk about what foods to avoid, but we also discuss how to eat in a healthy manner. This approach can also help strengthen messages in sexual violence prevention. Prevention needs to go beyond the "no means no" model and explain what safe, equitable, and respectful relationships look like.

Recognize that gender norms can negatively impact sexuality. In order to create healthier sexual interactions, it is necessary to create healthier, less restrictive gender



norms. Societal representations of how women and men should act and relate to one another are often unhealthy and unrealistic. Everyone needs the knowledge and tools that will empower them to give and seek clear and enthusiastic consent.

Utilize curricula that teach both healthy sexuality and sexual violence preventions. Seek out evidence based or evidence informed curricula and resources that connect healthy sexuality and violence prevention education for audiences across the lifespan. For more information, check out the healthy sexuality resources list.

Partner with others who deliver messages of healthy sexuality. Creating change takes time and many voices are needed to deliver the message. Many faith-based organizations, schools, and community organizations are already working to help promote healthy sexuality. Build partnerships to address healthy sexuality and ensure the greatest impact.

RESOURCES

- » Planned Parenthood at www.plannedparenthood.org
- » Advocates for Youth at www.advocatesforyouth.org
- » Answer at www.answer.rutgers.edu
- » National Sexuality Resource Center at <http://nsrc.sfsu.edu>
- » National Sexual Violence Resource Center at www.nsvrc.org
- » Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) at www.siecus.org
- » Veto Violence at www.vetoviolenace.org
- » World Association for Sexual Health at www.worldsexology.org

Reprinted from the Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2012 Campaign from our friends at the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY SEXUALITY

The following behaviors, adapted from the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States' (SIECUS) Life Behaviors of a Sexually Health Adult demonstrate health sexuality.

A sexually healthy adult will...

- » be comfortable with their body
- » know that human development includes sexual development, which may or may not include reproduction or sexual experience
- » have access to information and resources to protect and enhance their own sexual health
- » engage in sexual relationships that are consensual, non-exploitive, honest, pleasurable, and safe
- » express their sexuality while respecting the rights of others
- » interact with all genders in respectful and appropriate ways
- » know the difference between life-enhancing sexual behaviors and those that are harmful to self and/or others
- » communicate well with family, peers, and romantic partners
- » express their sexuality in ways that are in line with their values.
- » enjoy sexual feelings without necessarily acting on them
- » be aware of the impact of family, culture, media, and societal messages on thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviors related to sexuality
- » accept one's own sexual orientation and respect the sexual orientations of others.
- » accept one's own gender identities and respect the gender identities of others.

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Ithaca 273-1513

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Horseheads 796-0220

Sexuality Education & Outreach

Tompkins County 216-0021

Chemung County 734-3313

Steuben County 962-4686

Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier

888-810-0093

TRIBUTES

Jan. 24, 2012 - Mar. 23, 2012

IN HONOR OF

Rosaire Karij, Ruth Pettengill Award Recipient

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PPSFL'S CHOICE NEWSLETTER IS

REACHING MORE THAN 3,000 READERS!

Thank you for being a part of the PPSFL family, reading along to keep up on our news, our friends, our work, and our cause. Your continued support and feedback are deeply appreciated. We hope you have enjoyed reading CHOICE and that you will continue to follow along with us through 2012 and beyond!

Where is She Now?

AN UPDATE FROM A FORMER INTERN

You may remember reading an article by our fabulous intern, Katie Johnson, a couple years ago in which she shared the challenges she had faced being a teen mom, returning to school, and working to make ends meet - then adding to that an internship at PPSFL. She worked hard to find her place as a professional in one of Ithaca's human services organizations, and we are proud to say that she has arrived. Here's what she has to say...



Two and a half years ago, I was highlighted in the CHOICE newsletter. At the time, I was interning in Planned Parenthood's Education Department and was just about to graduate from TC3 with my A.A.S. in Human Services. A lot has happened since finishing my internship at PPSFL.

Immediately upon graduating, I started applying for human services jobs in the community. In January 2010, I was hired at Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services (CARS) Residential Services Unit. The facility is located out in Trumansburg; it serves 60 clients who will receive addiction treatment for 6-8 months. I loved working there! I felt like a positive role model for the clients. A majority of my clientele had been like me; high school drop outs and teenage parents. I was able to relate, but also show them a different perspective.

There were many times that I was able to draw up knowledge gained from my internship. I was able to talk about safer sex practices with ease. My experiences allowed me to be comfortable asking questions and discussing topics that might have made others uncomfortable. After working at CARS for a couple months I was hired for a second position as a Case Manager at the Supportive Living Program in downtown Ithaca. This program is the last level of care. Clients live in supportive housing which helps them meet and maintain treatment goals. It was here that my administrative skills learned during my internship came into play. Before interning, I had not even used a copier, I'd never faxed anything - I barely knew how an office worked. I was able to apply the clerical skills I gained at PPSFL in my new job and it allowed for a smooth transition from student to professional.

During this time, I also applied and was accepted to SUNY Cortland to continue my studies, majoring in Human Services and minoring in Sociology. I should graduate next May, and I plan to further my education with a Masters Degree in Community Health. I worked my two jobs at CARS until early this year, when I saw a job posting for a Syringe Exchange Technician at Southern Tier Aids Program (STAP). I couldn't believe it - I have wanted to work for STAP for about four years. I was also excited to learn that they often partner with PPSFL for workshops and community outreach. I applied and was hired. Although I was sad to leave CARS, I was ready for a positive change. My first day at STAP was March 5th, 2012. In such a short amount of time, I have felt so welcomed by my co-workers. They are all amazing people doing beautiful work and I feel honored to be involved. I feel like I am part of something significant in my community. It reminds me of when I was interning with Planned Parenthood!

Working with these agencies gives my life a purpose. I gain intrinsic rewards daily. My whole life, I have wanted to help others, give to my community, share my energy to those underserved, and I am allowed the opportunity. I am now a single parent. Yet, I feel stronger and more empowered than ever. My three sons continue to get to see their mother grow, to reach for her goals, and attain them. As a parent there is no better lesson for your kids than that. Thank you PPSFL for giving me the jump start to my career and the confidence boost I needed. I am forever grateful.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* will be presented by staff, volunteers, and friends of Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier on April 20th and 21st at 8:00 p.m. The performance will take place at 171 Cedar Arts Center in Corning. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door, and can be purchased at 171 Cedar Arts Center or by calling RCST at 1.888.810.0093.

Our Out for Health program is partnering with the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) to offer an amazing **two-day local training opportunity** on May 15th and 16th in Elmira. The program will provide information, resources, tools, materials, and a community networking opportunity for teachers and youth-serving professionals who are committed to working together to make our schools and communities better, safer, and more welcoming places for LGBT youth! This training opportunity is made possible by a grant from Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Fund for the Future. For more information, e-mail lgbt@ppsfl.org.

Details and invitations for the May **annual spring luncheons** will be coming soon!



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