



Not Yet Net Youth Advisory Council

What is the Not Yet Net?

Fourteen young teenagers from across Minnesota are working with the Minnesota Department of Health's MN ENABL program to steer the new public education campaign for preventing teen pregnancy. Created in 2003, the Not Yet Net youth advisory council provides feedback on campaign materials including MN ENABL's Web site (www.saynotyet.com) and develops outreach activities in the members' communities. Each teen also serves as a campaign spokesperson for his or her local media. The council's name stems from MN ENABL's message to teens: "Say not yet to sex."

Alexandria

Kreig Katchmark, age 13

"My friends and parents have made sure to make me feel good about not having sex at a young age. I think that if you love somebody enough to have sex with them, you should also love them enough to get married to them. Teens should know that even if others are pressuring you, not having sex is the right way to go. I think teens should talk straight to their parents, and that parents should listen to their questions and then talk about not having sex—but don't yell or demand anything."

Baudette

John Clark, age 14

"I think teenagers should enjoy what they have in their youth and wait until marriage to have sex. Often, teenagers have so many abilities and talents that could be used in the future but are ruined if they have sex before marriage. It's beneficial for teens to know the facts about sex, so that if they get in a situation that pressures them, those facts will go through their minds and influence their decisions."

Duluth

Alexandria Corbett, age 14

"It takes a great deal of maturity, patience, and knowledge to raise a child; you need to be an adult to do this. I've been brought up knowing the impact of having a baby and why I should wait until I am ready. I have other things going for me that I wouldn't be able to do if I had a baby. My advice to parents on how to talk with their teens about waiting to have sex is, don't beat around the bush, just say what you're trying to say."

Jesse Miller, age 13

"My parents and friends have influenced the way I feel about waiting to have sex by showing me that there's a lot to do besides having sex! I want to go to college and go live in Alaska—having sex could ruin my plans. I'm going to wait until I graduate and get married and can support my family. My main advice to parents is to be direct when talking with your teens about sex."

Grand Rapids

Becky Schneider, age 14

"Waiting to have sex is important to me because I want to finish school, and I want to know that the person I have sex with will be with me for the rest of my life. If a teen is feeling pressured to have sex, they should know that it's OK to say no to your friends. Teens should talk with their parents about sex. Parents should pick a time when their teens want to listen—not at the dinner table! For example, ask them to sit with you on the couch and just talk."

International Falls

Katrina Marquez, age 13

"I think 12- to 14-year-olds are too young to be emotionally involved in sexual relationships. Kids my age should just be thinking about school. Teens shouldn't give in to peer pressure to have sex, because they'll be making a mistake. I want to have sex when I am married and positive about my decision. My main advice to teens on how to talk with their parents about this is to be open. Parents should just tell their kids all they know, and they should be happy about the relationship they have with their kids."

Minneapolis**Elton Bell, age 12**

“I am not ready to be a father yet! Kids my age are not able or responsible enough to take care of a kid. My advice to teens is, if someone pressures you to have sex, don’t listen to them. Some teens will want to wait to talk with their parents about sex, waiting for their parents to start talking about it. Parents shouldn’t come off very harshly when talking with their teens about waiting to have sex.”

Zeke Cato, age 12

“I am aware of the consequences of having sex at a young age, so it’s important to me to wait. If a teen feels pressured to have sex, I would say bear through it, don’t do it. And if a parent is wondering how to talk with a teen about sex, I’d say just do it, they will listen.”

Svea Holmwig-Johnson, age 12

“My parents have always talked to me about sex since I was little, so I’ve always known that it’s OK to wait. I think all my friends’ parents have talked to them too, so we’re all alike in that sense. Teens have enough to worry about without being parents. If they’re feeling pressured to have sex, they should know that whether or not to have sex is their own decision to make, not someone else’s. They should know that if they choose to wait, they’re not alone.”

Ogilvie**Samantha Welinski, age 14**

“My parents always tell me to wait until I’m married. My friends talk about having sex, but they always say that they’re going to wait. Teens should know that even if they don’t like to talk with their parents about sex, they should do it because they’ll feel a lot better. I would tell parents, if your teens don’t talk, you should keep talking, because you will get through to them. Living in Kanabec County where teen pregnancy is extremely high, I feel it’s a responsibility and a privilege to speak with my peers about waiting to have sex.”

St. Cloud**Laura Brand, age 13**

“I have seen people I know get pregnant as teenagers and have a very hard time after that. Waiting to have sex is important to me because I know the hardships the kids are, and I want my life as simple and easy for now. It’s OK to just be friends. I think teens should know that they can trust their parents and tell them everything, because they will always be there for you. My advice to parents is to talk to their kids, and keep talking even if the kids don’t want to talk.”

Chelsea Mach, age 13

“My friends and I have talked about the whole issue of sex, and we all agreed that we need to wait. It’s important for parents to take this seriously and be able to say directly what you want to get across—kids want to hear what their parents want to say, but it’s a lot harder to handle if they’re picking at the subject instead of just coming out and saying it. Then, it’s easier to talk about it again, if you’ve already opened up.”

St. Paul**Ngoc-Hien Le, age 14**

“It’s important to talk with 12- to 14-year-olds about waiting to have sex, because during that time of age, we’re just starting to develop and we don’t understand the needs of our own bodies. I have taken classes on health, and they talk about sex and then talk about preventing getting pregnant. My tip for teens is just listen to your teachers and parents, because they know what is good for you. As a teen, I would want my parents to talk to me about sex. But, if parents are uncomfortable, a teen could say, I wish you would tell me about your life, because I want to learn what you did.”

Willmar**Vanesia McCray, age 12**

“My parents have helped influence the way I feel about waiting to have sex, and teachers are great. I want to grow up and graduate from high school and go to college. And, I want to have a baby with that ‘special’ person. I would advise teens to ask their parents to tell true and talk straight, but try not to make it feel weird. No more Mr. Stork!”