

# PEERS



*Providing Indiana youth with encouragement and positive experiences in order to avoid risky behaviors.*

# Expressions

June/July 2014

[www.peersproject.org](http://www.peersproject.org)



## Letter from the Director

Welcome to the first issue of PEERS Expressions! This publication will keep you informed about what is happening with our youth today and PEERS activities throughout Indiana.

PEERS trains and mentors high school students to serve as Peer Leaders and teaches adolescents how to avoid risky behaviors and cultivate healthy relationships (because they all deserve them!). In effort to reinforce the lessons that parents teach their children, we are currently implementing new programs to help partner parents and Peer Leaders more effectively.

We look forward to partnering and sharing more with you in the future!

Sincerely,

Joe Pickard – Executive Director

## PEER Leader Highlights



Simon Williams

During my sophomore year, I taught a lesson to a group of 8th graders, and later that evening I was approached at a store by a student participant. He shared with me how he thought everything we were teaching was "so cool!" and how interesting class had been. I've also witnessed another student coming up to a

Peer Leader after class and sharing how she believed we are all role models and even asked if they could be friends in high school. It's these small happenings that remind me why I'm a leader.

## It's My Life Campaign...

...is a radio campaign that will be airing on Radio One Indianapolis (96.3FM) and the internet throughout the summer. This gave our PEER Leaders the opportunity to tell their story of how making healthy choices has benefitted their lives.



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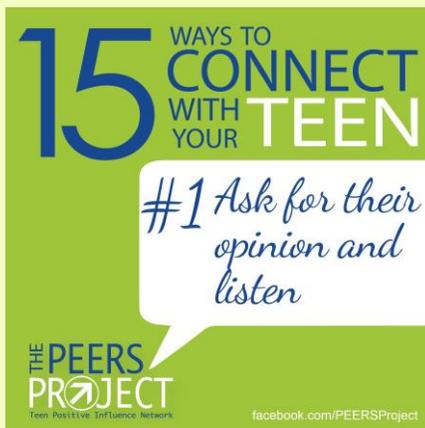
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## Parent Place

We at PEERS want to address the topics YOU are most concerned about! Will you take a moment to fill out a brief online survey from the link below? We appreciate any and all feedback as we seek to provide your children with the highest quality services!

### [SURVEY LINK](#)



### Sustaining Membership Campaign

To keep healthy lifestyle curriculum free and in the schools, we need your help! Would you consider partnering with PEERS financially?

*Any and all help is appreciated!*

Support Suggestions:

- \$48: The cost per student served
- \$100: One Peer Leader's Mentorship
- \$500: Curriculum, Training, Materials

### [DONATION LINK](#)

## Research Update: Family First

*There exists an abundance of information and research regarding relationships, healthy sexuality, and adolescents. This section of PEERS Expressions exists in order to present the most recent studies and to also ensure that we as an organization continue to be in line with the research and sound practice.*

Recently, a long-term study was done in order for researchers to understand the significance that families play in an adolescent's sexual debut. First, it is important to know the proven and undesirable medical and psychological effects of an early sexual debut.

### Quick Facts: Early Sexual Debut Can...

1. LEAD TO MORE RISKY BEHAVIORS
2. INCREASE LIKELIHOOD OF STI CONTRACTION
3. CONTRIBUTE TO LONGTERM SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION

Though behavior cannot be controlled in anyway, protective factors can be provided by the family in order to aid youth in making healthy decisions. According to this study, it was found that youth, especially adolescent girls, seek out romantic relationships when there is a lack of family cohesion in the home.

*Family cohesion is a connection found within the relationship between primary care-takers and adolescents that provides intimacy and closeness.*

The study also found that when romantic relationships are sought out to provide this closeness, many times early sexual debut is the result.

Source:

de Graaf, H., & van de Schoot, R. (2011). Family cohesion and romantic and sexual initiation: a three wave longitudinal study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

## PEERS Currently Serves

23 Indiana Counties

22 School Corporations  
& Over 50 Schools