

A DEFINING MOMENT



Rallying Communities for Purity
Abstinence & AIDS Eradication

True Love Waits Takes the Town



PROBLEM

The United States still has the highest rates of teen pregnancy and births in the industrialized world. According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, four in 10 girls become pregnant at least once before age 20—over 900,000 teen pregnancies annually. About 40% of pregnant teens are 17 or younger. These pregnancies not only result in personal pain to these teenagers and their families, but also have severe economic and social costs, as well as negatively affecting the business, church, medicine, government and education communities.

According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and The Guttmacher Institute:

- Teen childbearing costs taxpayers at least \$7 billion each year in direct costs associated with health care, foster care, criminal justice and public assistance, as well as lost tax revenues.
- A study estimating the cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit of one particular curriculum found that for every dollar invested in the program, \$2.65 in total medical and social costs were saved. The savings were produced by preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

SOLUTION

True Love Waits has established itself as a credible approach to confront and deal with inappropriate sexual behavior. Conservative estimates are that 2.5 to 3 million young people have signed commitment cards adopting lifestyles of purity since True Love Waits was founded in 1993. National results of their actions speak for themselves:

- *A study by the nonpartisan research center ChildTrends shows that the number of U.S. teens having sex declined from 54 percent in 1991 to 46 percent in 2001.*
- *The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (NCPTP) reports that between 1991 and 2003 the teen birth rate decreased 32.5% to a record low of 41.7 births per 1,000 teen girls aged 15 to 19.*
- *There also has been a decline in the number of U.S. teenagers contracting sexually transmitted diseases, as well as a decline in the number of teenagers having abortions.*
- *Research clearly indicates that students who sign a pledge like the True Love Waits commitment significantly delay sexual involvement.*

The True Love Waits pledge is a promise to maintain sexual abstinence until marriage.

“Believing that true love waits, I make a commitment to God, myself, my family, my friends, my future mate, and my future children to a lifetime of purity including sexual abstinence from this day until the day I enter a biblical marriage relationship.”

It is a simple pledge, but has had a profound effect on the national stage.

True Love Waits Takes the Town can fight AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; teen pregnancies; as well as a number of emotional, social, psychological and spiritual problems by helping young people change their attitudes and behavior related to sexual expression.

GOALS

- Target and train leaders in 10 communities per year for a total of 50 communities in five years.
- Reduce rates of teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases (AIDS) and sexual activity among teenagers by 5% over the next five years.
- Obtain commitments from 15% of the youth population in each targeted community/town.
- Connect 25 communities in the United States with 25 communities in Africa.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology is similar in concept to DARE where communities come together to keep youth off drugs. The True Love Waits Takes the Town team will initiate contact with leaders in targeted communities to encourage them to establish local coalitions. The selection of the communities to be a part of the program will be based on the following criteria:

- Communities with high rates of teenage pregnancies.
- Communities with high rates of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.
- Communities where churches have been involved with True Love Waits.

The goal is for 50 communities to be involved in True Love Waits Takes the Town during the first five years of the campaign, during which time 15% of the youth population in each targeted community will make the True Love Waits pledge.

LifeWay will provide consultation throughout the program, but leading each local program will be people recruited from local churches. They will comprise a coalition from the various facets in the respective fields of faith, medicine, business, government and education.

- The coalition will be responsible for funding community activities.
- The coalition will meet regularly to determine how they may use their circles of influence to assist Takes the Town in the execution of the project.
- Coalition members must speak with one voice to present the message of sexual abstinence before marriage.

EVALUATION

At the conclusion of the first two years of the program, leaders will gather reports on the number of young people who have signed True Love Waits commitment cards as well as the reductions in the numbers of HIV/AIDS cases, teen pregnancies and other health-related, social and psychological problems that result from sexual activity outside of marriage. This information will guide the continued efforts of True Love Waits Takes the Town.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

Personnel	\$245,000 (annually)
Administration	\$120,000 (annually)
Travel	\$ 90,000 (annually)
Publishing Support	\$100,000 (annually)

Annual Total: \$555,000

Five Year Total: \$2,775,000

+ National Event: \$375,000

Total True Love Waits Takes the Town: \$3,150,000

Note: Financial information does not include personnel and other administrative costs of current LifeWay employees working with True Love Waits.