



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF OKLAHOMA COUNTY



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2017

### **BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB TO HOLD TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION EDUCATION EVENT**

*Community Partners Rally to Bring Awareness During National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month*

**OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA.**— The Boys & Girls Club will host an interactive event to raise awareness among teens about reducing birth rates in central Oklahoma on Thursday, May 21 from 4 – 6 p.m. at 3535 N. Western Ave. The Choices – Teen Pregnancy event will include a National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy quiz, Price is Right game, poster contest, as well as a pizza party, take-home grab bags, and gift cards.

May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month, an advocacy push to promote reproductive health and address the nation's disproportionately high rate of unintended pregnancies among young people. A united collaboration of local organizations passionate about decreasing birth rates among teens in central Oklahoma – Variety Care Teen Clinic, Oklahoma City-County Health Department – Wellness Now, Teen emPower, the Institute for Child Advocacy, Planned Parenthood of Central Oklahoma and the Kirkpatrick Family Fund – will host the awareness event.

“Boys & Girls Clubs of Oklahoma County provide safe, positive places for kids and teens to develop their potential,” said Jane Sutter, President & CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Oklahoma County. “Through our dynamic programs and nurturing staff relationships with over 3,000 Club members, we share a responsibility to encourage our youth to make healthy choices that will lead to positive futures for themselves and our community.”

In 2012, Oklahoma was ranked second worst in the nation for teen birth rates. In central Oklahoma alone, the teen birth rate is twice as high as the national average with one out of every five teen births in the state.

“When you have one of the highest teen birth rates in the developed world, it is a big deal and very definitely not the kind of distinction we want for central Oklahoma,” said Dr. Kyle Stewart, pediatrician at Variety Care. “Every single person in this community has the potential to play a role in teen pregnancy prevention, whether they realize it or not. From being a mentor for your church's youth group to being a coach for your kid's soccer team; simply encouraging healthy relationships, healthy activities, and being a trusted adult can change the world.”

For teen mothers and their children, early pregnancy often means living with poverty, child abuse and neglect; school failure; health and mental health issues; and poor preparation for the workforce. For

central Oklahoma, it means bearing the social and economic costs of those issues. In 2010, teen childbearing in Oklahoma cost taxpayers at least 169 million dollars and Oklahoma County's cost estimated at nearly 40 million dollars.

"Teen pregnancy is a large and complex social problem affecting our entire community," said Liz Eickman, Director – Kirkpatrick Family Fund. "We believe addressing the societal and health challenges that arise from teen births through evidence-based, age-appropriate programming and solutions will improve opportunities for youth, lessen economic costs, and lead to better overall public health."

A united group of community partners, government agencies and service providers have begun a planning process to make teen pregnancy prevention a priority in central Oklahoma. Their "As a Matter of Fact" report, recently published during National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month, seeks to inform, educate, and rally the community to achieve an aggressive goal: To reduce teen births in central Oklahoma by one-third by 2020.

"With the collaboration of local government, service providers, community partners, and civic and faith-based leaders to provide comprehensive, age-appropriate, evidence-based initiatives, we can support the health and well-being of young men and women by helping them understand the gravity of their choices and empowering them to steer their futures toward their dreams," said Eickman, who with her co-chair Penny Voss worked alongside Wellness Now Coalition Adolescent Health Workgroup members to produce the "As A Matter of Fact" report.

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*For more information on the "Choices – Teen Pregnancy" event or the "As a Matter of Fact" report, please contact Rachel Shortt with the Kirkpatrick Family Fund: [shorttcommunications@outlook.com](mailto:shorttcommunications@outlook.com) or (405) 760-6338.*

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