



## Success Story: Central Louisiana Area Health Education Center *Program Sustainability through Partnerships, Marketing, and Branding*

[Central Louisiana Area Health Education Center](#) (CLAHEC) formed an important partnership with the [Louisiana National Guard's military-inspired Youth Challenge Program](#) (YCP) to provide evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programming to their "cadets." Supported with funding from the [Office of Adolescent Health](#) (OAH) in the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program, CLAHEC implements the Be Proud! Be Responsible! (BPBR) curriculum with more than 1,400 cadets ages 16-19 each year in National Guard YCP campuses located throughout Louisiana. The close partnership with YCP has helped CLAHEC reach high-risk teens in need of sexual education services, market their program to new partners, and garner support for sustained programming.

Since 2010, CLAHEC has been dedicated to increasing knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward sexual responsibility among adolescents in their state. The six-hour BPBR curriculum focuses on building knowledge and a sense of responsibility regarding STD/HIV risk, abstinence, and contraceptives; BPBR was found to increase condom use and decrease number of female sexual partners. CLAHEC implements BPBR through small group discussions and culturally appropriate didactic and experiential activities, brainstorming, videos, and role play. By operating in a state with one of the highest teen birth rates in the country,<sup>1</sup> CLAHEC's partnership with YCP has allowed them to reach youth at risk of having an unintended pregnancy (or getting a partner pregnant). All youth served by YCP have limited education and are attempting to complete a GED program. Many come from low income, single parent homes; all factors that make these youth at higher risk for teen pregnancy.<sup>2,3</sup>

This partnership between CLAHEC and YCP has been mutually beneficial. Operating through YCP allows CLAHEC to retain nearly all participants. CLAHEC Project Director Jeanne Solis noted that because the teens choose to take part in YCP, they want to be there and this leads to high retention and engagement. Additionally, BPBR fulfills one of the core components of the YCP program (improving cadets' health and sexual responsibility) and thus, CLAHEC is a welcomed addition to YCP. The YCP staff also appreciate having CLAHEC facilitate the BPBR curriculum. Ms. Solis explained "In this residential, military-inspired setting, the teachers that work with the cadets on a daily basis aren't always comfortable discussing sexual responsibility; they like having someone else teach the subject." CLAHEC facilitators are of diverse ages, race/ethnicities, and genders with experience in public health and/or education.

The YCP and CLAHEC partnership has led to the creation of a strong leadership team dedicated to seeing CLAHEC's mission succeed and be sustained. This leadership team, consisting of both YCP and CLAHEC members, is co-hosting roundtable meetings across Louisiana with diverse audiences including potential stakeholders, businesses, parents, and community members to gain support and spread the word of the program's successful partnership. To assist in these efforts, CLAHEC has recently developed several marketing and branding tools including a brochure, a presentation, and [a short promotional video](#). Ms. Solis noted that the video has been particularly useful in generating conversation.



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The program staff has been able to strategically show the video to potential stakeholders, allowing them to quickly and clearly understand the partnership's mission and services. Doing so helps to gain support from a wide variety of individuals. Ms. Solis notes, "The relationship with YCP has been vital; video viewers have been supportive of the program and what we're doing."

In the future, CLAHEC will continue to expand their branding to garner support for sustaining their adolescent health efforts. Recently, the grantee was featured in a one-hour television segment on a statewide public broadcasting channel. This broadcast focused on the CLAHEC and YCP partnership as one way Louisiana is working to help prevent teen pregnancy and HIV/STDs. As evident, CLAHEC is using their new marketing tools to explain their mission and goals to diverse audiences in order to bolster the sustainability of their program.



Cadets participating in BPBR activity. Source: Megan Ready, PR Director, LA National Guard YCP

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, J. A., Hamilton, B. E., Osterman, M. J. K., Curtin, S. C., & Matthews, T. J. (2015). Births: Final data for 2013. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 64(1). Retrieved February 19, 2015, from [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64\\_01.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64_01.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Kirby, D., & Lepore, G. (2007). *Sexual risk and protective factors: factors affecting teen sexual behavior, pregnancy, childbearing and sexually transmitted disease*. Washington, DC: ETR Associates and The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. Retrieved September 6, 2014, from [http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/ea2007/protective\\_factors\\_SUM.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/ea2007/protective_factors_SUM.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Martinez, G., Copen, C. E., & Abma, J. C. (2011). *Teenagers in the United States: sexual activity, contraceptive use, and childbearing, 2006-2010 National Survey of Family Growth*. Washington, DC: National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved February 6, 2015, from [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr\\_23/sr23\\_031.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_031.pdf)