In 2015, the Mary Black Foundation was awarded a grant from the HHS Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) Program to implement a coordinated, community-based teen pregnancy prevention program. The Mary Black Foundation collaborates with community partners to implement several evidence-based programs: Adult Identity Mentoring (Project AIM), Love Notes, Making a Difference!, Making Proud Choices!, Nu-Culture Sexual Health and Adolescent Risk Prevention (SHARP), and Seventeen Days. Through a Community Advisory Group and Youth Leadership Council, the Mary Black Foundation actively engages youth and adults in the community to prevent teen pregnancy.

About the Mary Black Foundation’s Connect Initiative
The Mary Black Foundation is an independent grant making organization focused on improving the health and wellness of the people and communities of Spartanburg County, SC. They play a leadership role in a number of community collaborations, including Connect—their OAH-funded initiative to reduce teen pregnancy. Connect partners with local adolescent-serving agencies in Spartanburg County to build their capacity to implement evidence-based programs as well as to promote adolescent-friendly services and supports. A wide variety of community stakeholders are engaged including health care service providers, schools, faith communities, non-profit organizations, state agencies, law enforcement, employers, teen advocates, and community health workers.

“...It’s actually helped me as a parent just really build on what I can do in my own home for my kids and the direction that we are going....It is really helping me embrace the community as a health educator.”

– imatter, Health educator
“Connect provides teenagers with the resources they need to make positive choices. It gives a solid foundation for them to lean on during tough times and hard decisions.”

- Senior at Brynes High School

**Why It Matters?**

The OAH TPP Program and the Mary Black Foundation’s Connect initiative are important investments in reducing the rates of teen pregnancy. The work that Connect does:

- **Addresses Disparities in the Teen Birth Rate.** Although the overall teen birth rate in Spartanburg County declined 47% from 2010 to 2015, disparities persist for certain zip codes and sub-populations, such as African-American teens and older teens. By focusing on the communities with the greatest need, the Connect initiative is making a larger impact on teen pregnancy prevention.

- **Serves a Community Need.** Prior to the creation of the Connect initiative, there was a lack of after school programs for middle school students in the areas being served. The Connect initiative developed strong partnerships that have expanded and enhanced efforts to serve vulnerable youth with evidence-based interventions at middle schools and clinics and positive youth development programming at community partner sites in schools and recreational facilities.

**Connect By the Numbers**

- National Teen Birth Rate (2015): 22.3 per 1,000 females age 15-19;
- South Carolina Teen Birth Rate (2015): 26.1 per 1,000 females age 15-19;
- Spartanburg County Teen Birth Rate (2015): 24.9 per 1,000 females age 15-19;
- Teen Birth Rate for targeted zip codes (2013*): 42.7 per 1,000 females age 15-19.

*reflects the most recent year for which data are available.

"By increasing communication between youth-serving organizations Connect is creating a network of non-profits working collaboratively to provide support resources for adolescents and families. I believe that holistically looking at the needs of our teens is critical for reducing disparities and promoting positive outcomes.”

- Taylor Dockter, Drug Free Communities Project Coordinator

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**For more information or to schedule a site visit, contact:**
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**About the Office of Adolescent Health TPP Program**

The OAH Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program is a national, evidence-based program that funds diverse organizations working to prevent teen pregnancy across the United States. OAH invests in the implementation of programs identified as evidence-based by the HHS Teen Pregnancy Prevention Evidence Review, and provides funding to develop and evaluate new and innovative approaches to prevent teen pregnancy.