

Teen Pregnancy Month a time to raise awareness

May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. The Regional Prevention Center will raise awareness regarding the issues involving teen pregnancy, not just for the girls but for the boys and the parents of these teenagers.

Despite recent declines, four out of 10 girls in the United States get pregnant at least once by age 20. Among the problems associated with adolescent births are:

- Inadequate prenatal care.
- Low-birth weight babies.
- Higher public costs for out-of-wedlock pregnancies, health care, and welfare support.
- The "hidden costs" of delayed education or work force entry on the part of teen parents.

Among the many decisions our children make in their lives, deciding if or when to become a parent



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• prevention center

should be a choice they make with great thought and planning. They must understand that parenting is a life long commitment.

It means they agree to take responsibility for their child and to do what is best for their child. Before making this decision, they should explore some reasons for having a child.

- What do you have to offer a child at this point in your life?
- What would be difficult and what would be easy?

• How will parenthood change your life, your relationship now or in the years ahead? And are you ready for the

changes that would result? Teen parenting isn't easy. The parents must live two lives in one, as a teen and as a parent. A teen mom faces so many more issues than an older mother.

Raising a child isn't an easy thing to do. Raising a child while the parents are still in their teens is even harder. Dealing with the day-to-day chores that involves a baby and trying to work and get an education is very stressful on any teen.

A teen mom faces more than just

the bills and the baby. A teen mom often deals with becoming stereotypical in the eyes of those around her, strangers, friends and all.

Many people don't wish to acknowledge the fact that it only takes once to get pregnant, which may very well be the case for the girl in question. Yet many people will look at her as lowly, assuming she got pregnant on purpose and slept around often.

Her parenting skills are doubted, even if she follows the most popular of the parenting experts. Being the "talk of the town" often hurts and is rarely justifiable.

Closer to home, teen moms have to deal with relationship problems that may not be such a problem for a mom to be who has been in a relationship for a longer period of time. Boyfriends tend to drop out of the

picture or promise to be around, only to leave later.

Often the mom will realize he isn't the best person in the world to be a dad, so she doesn't push the issue. Child support is a problem, since most young dads, like the mom, are still in school or not making very much at work. There are some great teen dads out there, but unfortunately, they are few and far between.

If the mom decides to stay with her parents, she deals with relationship issues on this front too. All too often grandparents want to take over.

How can they not? It's extremely hard to step back and let your teen parent another child while you know they're so young, especially if the parenting styles they have aren't what the grandparents prac-

ted on their own children. Babysitting, parenting styles, doubting the ability of the teen — all these can truly affect a teen mom in a negative way.

Finishing school and working to support a baby is also a big problem. In today's world, a college degree is almost a must to get a job that pays well. A high school education is even more important.

If a teen mom still has to go to school and work, she has very little time to be a mother. Most teen moms don't want to be part of the statistics. They don't want to be looked down on. They do want to take care of their children, in hopes that they grow up to be strong people. They do want to be good parents and do what's best for their children.

May baskets of paper with candy and cookies stir up neighborly love

May first was Saturday. I spent Thursday and Friday doing something not done for years. I decided to make some paper baskets for the friends that have been so faithful to me these past seven months.

I sure wasted a lot of paper until I figured out how to make the size I wanted. Then I proceeded to make 16 of them. Neighbor Reta got me the candies and cookies for the baskets.

I spent Friday afternoon filling them to get ready for Saturday. The girls from the corner were the first to get theirs, then Pat and Bud, Lucille and Ila, John and Reta and finally, the McClungs.

It was fun to see the faces of both adults and kids. One of the adults said it had been such a long time since he had gotten one, he almost didn't know how to behave.

Another adult said he liked it



jan zwetzig

• goodland gazette

since it really made him think about the feeling of caring that was shown.

Just before noon on Saturday, the doorbell rang. Since it takes a little time to get to the door, there was no one at the door. I looked around but couldn't see anyone.

Just as I was going back into the house, I spotted a darling little basket hanging on the knob on the outside of the front door. I looked around but saw no one. Then I saw a little bit of a blonde head peeking into the porch and a few fingers waving hello.

I knew it was the girls, and we just waved to each other and smiled at each other. Not a word was spoken, but the love in their eyes said it

all. What a wonderful place I live at with all of those dear friends that have been my legs for these past few months. God loves you all; me too.

After church Sunday, we went out for the noon meal. I got home in time to get an hour of rest before Bud and Pat took me along to hear the kids singing songs of World War II.

They certainly did a good job, and I was glad I got to go. By the time I got home, I was exhausted, and my leg was really getting ouchy. I finally had to resort to a pain pill, but

it didn't do much good.

I had to take another pill to get to sleep, but it wasn't a restful sleep. Come morning, it was still very ouchy but finally made it through the day. I saw and visited with several folks. It sure was good to do that. I really enjoyed myself in spite of the ouchy leg.

My sprinkler man is going to get the system ready to turn on in a day or two. Gary and the boys mowed Monday evening, so if the lawn needs a drink, it will be ready.

According to the television, it is supposed to get very warm by the weekend, so a drink for the lawn will probably be needed. I'll just take it day by day.

Just a week from this coming Saturday will be graduation. I got my first card and can't believe he's old enough to graduate. I hope I'll be

okay to go.

There are just a few birthdays this first week of May, and they are Brian Imel, Audrey Engel, Leah Gutsch and Leslie Watkins. Best wishes to these and any others so celebrating. I have no anniversaries on record.

I hope all mothers are remembered Sunday. One should honor his

mother each day, as you'll know your loss if she is gone. Best wishes to all mothers, and God's love to all.

There are no known deaths, but I do wish comfort to any who are mourning a loss that I don't know of.

There's nothing further, so I will close until next time. Happy Mother's Day.

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