

# FIRST THINGS

A publication of First Things First

## TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION MONTH



Many parents might be shocked at the findings from a recent survey of teens and young adults commissioned by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl.com.

### Here are some of the key findings from the survey of 1,280 young people:

- Twenty percent of teens surveyed said they have sent or posted nude or semi-nude pictures or videos of themselves.
- Thirty-nine percent of teens say they are sending or posting sexually suggestive messages.
- When asked who they are sending the sexually suggestive messages to, 71 percent of teen girls/67 percent of teen guys say they have sent the content to boyfriends/girlfriends, others say they are sending the material to those they want to hook up with or to someone they only know online.

Young people are seeing and hearing about sex everywhere. Before you think, "No, not my child," you might want to check the content on your teen's phone.

In many instances parents are throwing up their hands and buying into the lie that there is really nothing they can do about all these sexual messages. However, research indicates that 45 percent of teens say their parents influenced their decisions about sex most strongly. The key protective factor for teens is how strongly he/she feels connected to his or her parents.

The month of May is designated as Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. First Things First along with WhyKnow® Abstinence Program and the Moccasin Bend Girl Scouts are encouraging teens and parents to engage in an ongoing conversation about teen pregnancy prevention. The message is straightforward- sex has consequences including legal consequences. This includes the sexual content and messages teens are sending into cyberspace.

Whether you have been having an ongoing conversation with your teen on this topic or you are preparing to begin the conversation, here are some topics your teen is probably thinking about, but may not know how to bring up for discussion:

#### **First and foremost—you matter more than you know.**

Regardless of what you may think, parental influence has not lost out to peers and popular culture.

#### **Remember, it matters what you do, not just what you say.**

Actions do speak louder than words. Keep in mind that as you talk about real life, sex, and relationships you also want to discuss online and cell phone activity.

**Am I ready for a relationship?** When your teen meets someone new, the mantra should be: Friends first, dating and relationships later (if at all). Tell your teens that if they are friendly with someone and are considering moving up the relationship ladder, they should ask themselves these questions: Do you respect each other? Are you honest with each other? Do you communicate well with each other? Do you have friends in common? Answering these questions honestly can help young people decide whether their potential partner is relationship-worthy.

**Am I in love?** This is a very common question. The key here is to help teens understand what they're feeling and to help them make good, responsible decisions. Parents have a wonderful opportunity to share knowledge and guide—don't put your child on the defensive by dismissing their feelings.

**The success sequence.** Research makes clear that young people who finish high school or get a college degree, wait until their twenties to marry, and have children *after* they marry are much more likely to achieve their life goals than those who do not follow this sequence.

**The older partner thing.** The power differences among teens and those even three years older often can lead to risky and unforeseen situations, like unwanted sex. Research indicates among 14-year-olds, 30 percent of girls and 73 percent of boys whose oldest "serious boyfriend or girlfriend" was two or more years older were sexually experienced, compared to 13 percent of girls and 29 percent of boys whose oldest partner was no more than one year older. Although your freshman daughter may be thrilled that a senior asked her out, it might be in her best interest if you put the brakes on things.

**How to deal with pressure.** Lots of teens feel pressured in their relationships to have sex. Many think that having sex is the price of entry for a relationship or the thing that will keep a relationship together. As adults, we know this is both untrue and even worse, extremely unhealthy thinking. **Your advice should be direct: If sex is the price of a relationship, find someone else.**



*Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month continued next page . . .*

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## Gifts and Tributes

A donation was given by Barbara L. Roberts  
In Memory of her Mother, Mrs. Frances H. Lindsey.

*If you would like to honor a loved one, congratulate newlyweds, celebrate a wedding anniversary, birthday or other special occasion with a gift to FTF, please send your donation and honoree's contact information to FTF, 620 Lindsay Street, Suite 100, Chattanooga, TN 37403. When appropriate, a card will be sent to your honoree.*

## Spring Family Challenge

A little more than a year ago my family accepted a challenge from a friend of ours to turn off our television. I'll admit it was a bit challenging at first, but after about the third week I started noticing a difference. I realized I was hearing birds outside my window in the morning instead of news of the floundering economy, rape, murder, war and other tragic events. Instead of starting out the day feeling weighed down about all that was bad in the world, I felt positive about life. I was shocked at the difference in how I felt.

As I sat down to write this column, I picked up the paper to see what was going on in the world. There was an article about one of the broadcast networks that sent out a message to its viewers asking them to help out with some "good news" stories. The network executives were shocked to receive literally thousands of emails. Viewers told the network that all of the bad news was a huge burden on them and they had grown weary of it.

There is no question these are tough times. But, I wonder how much harder we make it by constantly subjecting ourselves to the ongoing drone of "the sky is falling." I think human beings can only take so much bad news before we start taking it out on the people we love the most.

So, here is my challenge to you. Be intentional about putting some fun in your life. Put your family to the test. Make it a contest to see who can come up with the best, low cost ways to have fun. Here are a few suggestions to get your creative juices flowing: Turn off the television for an extended period of time or significantly limit the time it is on. Dust off the board games and invite friends over for an evening of fun. Instead of traveling a long distance for a get-away, try visiting one of the amazing parks nearby. If you have never camped, borrow some equipment from a friend and give it a try—who knows, you might like it! Challenge the neighborhood kids to put together a talent show for all of the parents. Let your children take turns planning menus and cooking meals. See who can come up with the most creative low-budget meal.

Don't get me wrong, I am not saying I think we should just pretend everything is great. Although we can't snap our fingers and fix the world's problems, we can control the scenery in our own backyard and home. So perhaps the best thing we can do is keep things in perspective and continue to put one foot in front of the other, being intentional about keeping fun and laughter in our lives during these challenging times.



**Julie Baumgardner**  
FTF Executive Director

## First Things First wants to help you

# GO GREEN!

If you would prefer to receive FTF's quarterly newsletter, *First Things*, electronically, please log on to [firstthings.org](http://firstthings.org) and sign up for the e-mail edition or call us at 423.267.5383. Help us do our part to GO GREEN!

# CHAMPIONSHIP FATHERING

More than 300 fathers gathered at the Brainerd BX on January 22 to hear Carey Casey, CEO of the National Center for Fathering, discuss how to be a Championship Father. Attendees enjoyed hearing stories of Casey's high school and college playing days and how his experiences on and off the field helped mold him into the father he is today.

First Things First and The National Center for Fathering encourage fathers to commit to the Championship Fathering Challenge. We believe that every child in America needs a dad they can count on. The research is clear: children thrive when they have an involved father—someone who loves them, knows them, guides them, and helps them to achieve their destiny.

We're asking **ALL dads**—to join us by making a commitment to join the Championship Fathering team for your children (and grandchildren) and for at least one fatherless child.

Our goal is to change the future for America's children by calling fathers and father figures to be the engaged and involved fathers their children need. We'd like to see 6.5 million fathers—10 percent of all the dads in America—make the commitment to meet the needs of their children by **Loving** their children, **Coaching** their children, and **Modeling** positive behaviors for their children. Dads striving to be Championship Fathers can also **Encourage** the fatherless children they know and **Enlist** other dads to join the Championship Fathering Team.

*Log on to [firstthings.org](http://firstthings.org) to make your commitment to join the Championship Fathering team.*



Grab your blankets and lawn chairs, round up your family and friends and join us on the banks of the Tennessee River for a wonderful Chattanooga summer tradition. Ride the carousel, splash in the fountain and just relax in beautiful Coolidge Park.

There is no charge for admission, and budget-friendly concessions are available. A family movie will begin at sundown on the following Saturdays: July 11, 18 and 25.

Keep checking [firstthings.org](http://firstthings.org) for the announcement of movie titles! See you there!

# COMING IN JULY!

## *Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month continued . . .*

**Be respectful and talk honestly about relationships.** Teens consistently gripe that parents don't take teen relationships seriously. They want parents to know that just because they are young doesn't mean they can't fall in love. Teens want parents to know that the feelings they have are very real to them. Let them know that you hear them and that you are respectful of their feelings. At the same time, don't be shy about telling them what you think and *why* you think the way you do. Remember, it should be a *conversation*, not a lecture.

### **Let them know that you are on call 24/7.**

While teens often come across as knowledgeable about a topic, there is only so much information they can know at this point in their lives. Helping them determine values, goals and a vision for the future is one of the best things parents can do to assist them in navigating adolescent relationships.

*For more information about preventing teen pregnancies visit [firstthings.org](http://firstthings.org) or [thenationalcampaign.org](http://thenationalcampaign.org)*

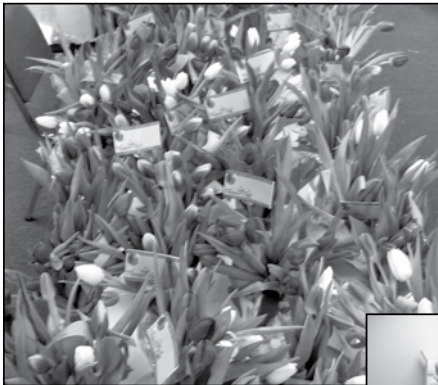


*\* Visit [whyknow.org](http://whyknow.org) to learn about their recent name change and re-launch*

# Flower Fest

The results are in for 2009! We had a PHENOMENAL year with many, many highlights. Because of our committed company leaders and loyal customers we were able to sell nearly 1,500 arrangements and increase revenue by 20 percent. Our post-event survey polling both company leaders and individual buyers yielded very impressive results as well. 100 percent of our company coordinators rated the event highly with 90 percent of respondents rating the event as excellent. An equally impressive 96 percent of individual buyers were happy with their purchase.

Thank you for your incredible support of this event. Plans are already underway for Valentine's weekend 2010! Look for exciting details to roll out after Labor Day!



## Special thanks to the following companies for their extraordinary support.

### Unum

Our "flagship" company with the largest participation  
Jody Walton, Sabrina Herndon, Donna Mathena, Todd Crawford, David Eargle, Ray Goodpasture, Amber Barnett, Kevin Sullivan,

Wendellyn Ladapo & Carol Evans

**Artech Design Group**, Kelly Fitzgerald

**BB&T Huffaker & Trimble**, Darline McGinnis

**Campbell & Associates**, Lou Ann Hoodenpyle

**Card Monroe Corporation**, Mitzi Young

**Chambliss Bahner & Stophel**, Tammie McClendon

**Chattanooga Bakery**, Beverly Sanders

**Chattanooga Police Department**,

Nathan & Danna Vaughn and Pat Shackelford Gray

**Comcast**, Kathy Jacobus

**Cornerstone Community Bank**, April Gooden

**Cornette & Associates**,

Cindy Cornette & Sandra Vastano

**EMJ Corp.**, Sue Holder

**ERMC**, Kim Charlton

**Gold Bond Inc.**, Karen Sherrill

**JDS Design**, Jim Sanders

**Jones Printing**, Terry Haupt & Team

**Joseph Decosimo & Company**, John Henegar

**Luken Holdings**, Lynda Childress

**Morgan Keegan**, Debbie Brown

**Parkridge Valley Hospital**, Angelia Strickland

**Southern Champion Tray**, Brenda Ledwell

**Spears, Moore, Rebman & Williams**, Robin Holcomb

**WDEF**, Gary Downs, Rachel Oesch,

Brian Smith & Team

**WUUQ**, Joe Mule, Dale Mitchell & Team

### With extra special thanks to:

Lynda Sattler, *our event chair and the following volunteers*: leisha Alexander, Ashley Baumgardner, Vickie Blalock, Kelly Brexler, Jim and Kathy Sanders, Ann Caldwell, Margaret Ferguson, Karen Godwin, John "Cupid" Henegar, Monique Lea, Angelia Strickland, Drew Thomas and Kim Thomas



**Family University**  
offers a variety of classes  
to help 21st Century  
parents in their efforts  
to be the parents their  
children need them to be.

**April 13**, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**Communicating Effectively  
with Your Children**  
Janet Bales, LPC

**April 16**, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**Preparing for the Parenting  
Journey**  
Julie Baumgardner, CFLE

**April 23**, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**Planning Family Rules**  
Janet Bales, LPC

**May 4**, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**Six Rules to Raise Your  
Children**  
Julie Baumgardner, CFLE

**May 7th**, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**For Dads Only—Daddy  
Download: Learn keys to  
keeping your kids safe  
on the internet**  
Todd Agne and Andre Dantzler

**May 19**, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**Survival Skills for Healthy  
Families: Parents as Leaders**  
Julie Baumgardner, CFLE

**May 21**, 9:30 a.m.–11 a.m.  
**Communicating  
with Your Child**  
Janet Bales, LPC

**June 1**, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**Rules of the Road for the  
Information Super Highway:  
A Guide for Families  
on Internet Usage**  
Dr. Elizabeth O'Brien

**June 16**, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**Survival Skills for  
Healthy Families**  
Julie Baumgardner, CFLE

**June 22**, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**Correcting Your Child  
without Criticism**  
Janet Bales, LPC

# How can you have an **AWESOME, AMAZING, MIND-BLOWING Marriage?**



Participants who attended Celebrate Marriage learned tips on how to build an awesome marriage, the keys to an amazing marriage and insights on how to create a mind-blowing marriage.

The seminar, hosted by FTF on Feb. 21 was designed for singles as well as engaged or married couples who wanted to empower themselves and learn how to support others in creating healthy relationships. Breakout sessions included: *Can You Hear Me Now?*, *Guarding Your Heart*, *Two Hearts Beating as One: Building a Vision for Your Marriage*, *Opposites Attract*, *Humor in Healthy Marriage*, and others.

*Keynote speakers included: Julie Baumgardner, David L. Banks, Janet Bales, and Gena Ellis.*



## Love & Respect

Cracking the communication code between husband and wife involves understanding one thing: that unconditional respect is as powerful for him as unconditional love is for her. It's the secret to marriage that every couple seeks—and that hundreds of thousands of couples are just beginning to find through Dr. Emerson Eggerichs' *Love and Respect* conferences.

First Things First will host Dr. Emerson Eggerichs live and in person for a *Love and Respect* conference on Friday and Saturday, October 9th and 10th. At this conference you'll learn how to:

- stop the **Crazy Cycle** of conflict
- initiate the **Energizing Cycle** of change
- enjoy the **Rewarding Cycle** of new passion

*Stay tuned. . . . More details to follow*

# BOOT CAMP FOR NEW DADS



First Things First is proud to announce new partnerships with Hutcheson Medical Center and Erlanger Women's East to provide more Boot Camp for New Dads classes!

Boot Camp for New Dads is a program in which veterans (new fathers who bring along their infants) orient rookies (fathers-to-be) on the realities of fatherhood.

***GUYS ONLY! No women allowed (except for the infants!)***

### Upcoming classes:

- Saturday, April 18** at Erlanger Women's East, 9 a.m.–Noon
- Saturday, May 16** at Parkridge East, 9 a.m.–Noon
- Saturday, May 16** at Erlanger Women's East, 9 a.m.–Noon
- Saturday May 30** at First Things First, 9 a.m.–Noon
- Saturday, June 20** at Hutcheson Medical Center, 9 a.m.–Noon

**Check [firstthings.org](http://firstthings.org) for more class dates**

## LEARN TO PLAY AT AT&T FIELD



### First Things First and the Chattanooga Lookouts are hosting a baseball camp at AT&T Field on June 17, 18 and 19.

Big League Dreams at AT&T Field includes hitting, fielding, pitching, throwing and situational practice.

#### This camp will include:

- ▶ Instruction from current Chattanooga Lookouts players and former major league players
- ▶ Behind the scenes stadium tour
- ▶ Free Lookouts ticket package
- ▶ Camp t-shirt
- ▶ Autograph session with the Chattanooga Lookouts
- ▶ "Fantasy Camp Day" where kids participate side by side with Lookouts players

**The price is \$120 per child. Sign up your boy or girl age 7-12 today by logging on to [firstthings.org](http://firstthings.org) or calling 423-267-5383.**

**Early Bird  
Special  
\$95**  
Register by  
April 30th

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**Sign up for our e-news today!**  
to register, visit:  
**[www.firstthings.org](http://www.firstthings.org)**



## SAVE THE DATE

### September 24, 2009

#### FIRST THINGS FIRST'S 12TH ANNUAL FALL BANQUET

Mr. & Mrs. Richard W. Bethea, Chair Couple

*Special Guest:*

Michael O'Brien and The Tour De Romance  
featuring songs from his album  
*Something About Us*

**Call for more information!**  
**423.267.5383 or [firstthings.org](http://firstthings.org)**

