

Teen Success, Inc.

2013 Program Report



Our Mission

To help teen mothers and their children become educated, self-sufficient, valued members of society.

Core Values

① *Teen mothers are not lost causes.* All young people have potential regardless of their circumstances or past decisions.

② *Teen mothers deserve to be in a culture of success,* which establishes meaningful expectations, builds confidence, and connects them to social support critical to long-term success.

③ *Teen mothers are capable of being self-sufficient.* TSI prepares teen mothers to maintain a stable and healthy lifestyle even when external support is not available.

Goals

Graduates of Teen Success, Inc. will:

- ① Complete high school
- ② Delay having additional children until emotionally and financially ready
- ③ Develop skills and attributes to be effective “first teachers” to their children
- ④ Build social and emotional assets as the foundation for long-term success.





Teen Success, Inc.
Empowering teen mothers, transforming lives

Dear Friends,

Since founding Teen Success, Inc. in July 2011, more than 250 teen mothers have participated in the program. Powerful transformations take place when these young moms come together, share their strength, and help each other chart a positive path forward. We are pleased to share the life-changing results with you in this inaugural Annual Report.

People often ask “Who are the Teen Success members?” to which we give two responses. The first is basic demographics: the vast majority (79 percent) are 16-18 years old, 12 percent are 19, seven percent are 15, and two percent are 13 or 14. Seventy-five percent are Latina, 10 percent are black, 10 percent are white, and the remaining five percent are mixed ethnicities.

The second response we give is about **who the members really are**: their aspirations, the experiences that have shaped them, and how they are taking care of their families. Teen Success members are:

Talented writers, bakers, scientists, musicians, athletes, students, employees and *mothers*

Strivers:

- * 85% are on track to graduate high school and planning to pursue higher education
- * They are working towards goals, both short- and long-term
- * They are employed in restaurants, retail stores, day care centers, and health care providers
- * More than anything else, they want to give their kids a better life than their own

Survivors:

- * 100% are living in or close to poverty
- * 90% are single mothers
- * 15% have been or are in the foster care system
- * 14% have been sexually abused

TSI's unique approach views teen mothers holistically, as mothers but also as young people with dreams and potential. Our goal is to bridge this potential with opportunity. We are deeply grateful to our supporters and partners who make this powerful program possible.

Sincerely,

Christine Clark
Executive Director

Becky Morgan
Chair, Board of Directors

Education
and career

Pregnancy
prevention

Social and
emotional
assets

Parents as
first teachers



The Four Pillars

Teen Success, Inc. builds on the strengths of teen moms and empowers them to be the drivers of their own change. During weekly support group meetings, teen moms explore their potential, develop skills, and build positive momentum in four key “pillars” of growth:

- 1) **Education and job attainment:** Program members are mentored and supported to complete high school and develop a plan for employment and/or college. High school graduation is the highest short-term priority of Teen Success due to its long-term impact on employment, income, and child outcomes.
- 2) **Health and wellness:** This pillar promotes mental and physical wellbeing necessary for growth, development, and achievement of both teen mothers and their children. Pregnancy prevention is among the highest priorities due to its impact on the future wellbeing of both mothers and their children.
- 3) **Parents as first teachers:** Children of poor and single parents are often at a tremendous disadvantage before they even start school. Woven throughout Teen Success are opportunities for teen moms to develop the skills and attributes that enable them to maximize their young children’s learning and development.
- 4) **Social and emotional assets:** Characteristics such as resilience, connectedness, and growth mindset are key factors that determine which young people succeed. Teen Success, Inc. develops these characteristics as the foundation for long-term success.

About Teen Success, Inc.

There are more than 40,000 births to teenage mothers in California each year, and roughly 350,000 nationally, yet the vast majority of youth and girls' empowerment programs do not serve them.

Teen moms are often written off as lost causes by teachers, family, and society at large. When they are not written off, they are treated as crises to be managed and end up caught in a cycle of low expectations. While many teen moms do face crises, they also need tools to move beyond survival to long-term stability.

Teen Success, Inc. (TSI) helps teen moms find and get on their own path to success. We use a support group model in which 10-12 teen mothers come together to build skills and interpersonal assets, plan for the future, and develop a strong social support network, all of which are critical to achieving long-term stability. The program is intensive: support groups meet every week, all year long.

The group dynamic is the “secret sauce” of the program: trusting, supportive relationships are formed that reinforce positive life steps and help guide members back on track when necessary. Our data back this up. Teen Success is changing teen moms' lives largely due to the positive relationships they form with caring adults and peers.

95% of Teen Success members say the program makes them feel supported in a way they are not getting in any other aspect of their lives.

The #1 reason our members participate in Teen Success is the mutual support and motivation they share with other teen moms.

Keeping Girls in School

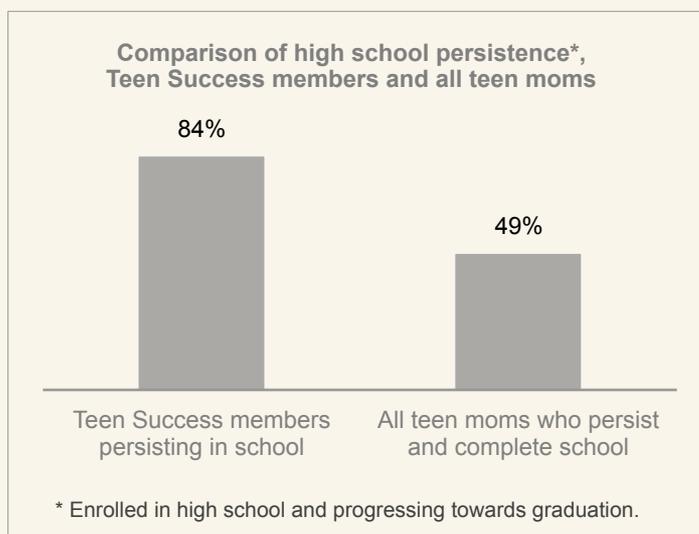
“A girl without an education is a girl who lacks the skills to find a job and build a future for herself and her family and to contribute to her community’s development.”

Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund

Teen mothers face great challenges when trying to complete high school: lack of child care, previous disconnection from school, pressure to become the caregiver to others in the home, judgment from other students and faculty, and discrimination from schools and districts. As a result, **less than half of all teen moms graduate from high school**, and fewer than two percent graduate from college by age 30.

Yet, high school graduation is critical to long-term stability for teen moms and their children. **Research shows that teen mothers who are able to remain connected to their high schools have fewer subsequent births during adolescence, better long-term economic outcomes for their families, and better behavioral, social, and academic development of their children.**

Our support group model helps teen mothers stay in school by establishing accountability, regularly tracking their progress (weekly), and navigating obstacles in real time. Teen Success facilitators and group members are there every step of the way to provide encouragement and keep each other “in check” when necessary.





SPOTLIGHT: TEEN MOMS COLLEGE-BOUND

Travania Martin and Karla Flores never thought they would be “scholarship material”. When their facilitators first told their support groups about the Teen Success scholarship program – made possible by a generous grant from the Reis Foundation – it didn’t occur to them to apply. Despite living on opposite sides of the Bay and having never met before, they both had the same reaction: no one would give me a scholarship to college.

They could not have been more wrong! The TSI scholarship committee unanimously selected Tray and Karla as this year’s scholarship winners. Both are extremely hard workers who are driven to be independent, stable and fulfilled. Tray, a lifelong baker, is attending Diablo Valley Community College, where she is studying culinary arts.

Karla began her post high-school education before she was even scheduled to graduate. She took extra credits so she could finish early. In what would have been her last semester of high school, she enrolled in a full-time, accelerated dental assistant program. A stand-out in her program, she was offered a full-time dental assistant job at the end of her internship. She is now working and attending school, with dreams of becoming a psychologist.

We are incredibly proud of Tray and Karla and look forward to hearing about their many successes to come.

Photo: Travania Martin and Karla Flores and children with TSI founder Becky Morgan.

Preventing Teen Pregnancy

“In my culture, nobody talks about our bodies, sex or birth control. Even though we already have a child, teen moms need to learn how to prevent another pregnancy. We need to focus on making a future for ourselves and the child we already have.”

Josephine, 17 year-old Teen Success member

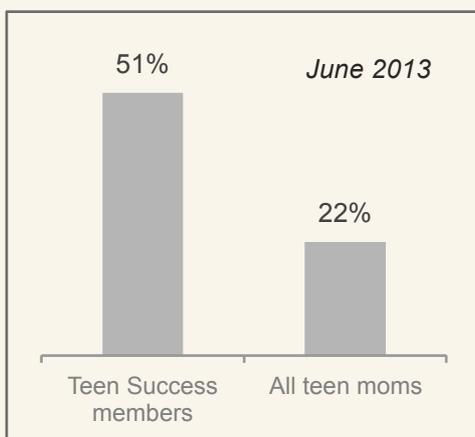
Approximately 20 percent of teen mothers will have another child as a teen, compounding an already challenging situation for them: difficulty finishing high school; insecure employment and income; relationship instability; and greater risk of health problems for the children. As a result, one of TSI’s top priorities is helping teen mothers delay additional children until they are emotionally and financially ready.

The only reliable way for sexually active teens to prevent pregnancy is to use effective birth control. TSI encourages members to get on a birth control method that will work for them. We do this by:

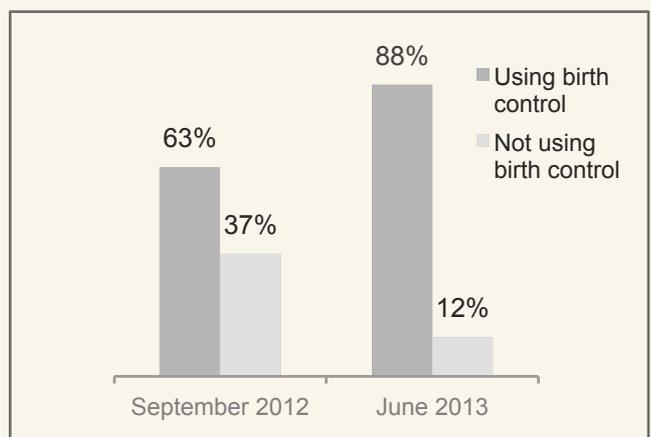
- Fostering a dialogue and exploration of the benefits of delaying additional children
- Having regular “check-ins” to share experiences
- Making sure members have complete and accurate information about birth control
- Taking members to visit a clinic where birth control is provided

As a result of these efforts, there has been a **tremendous increase in birth control use** among Teen Success members, and much higher use of the most effective methods than the general population of teen moms. (See graphs.) To date, less than one percent of Teen Success members have had a second child.

Use of most effective birth control methods (IUD, implants)



Increase in birth control use among Teen Success members over 9-month period





SPOTLIGHT: BRIGHTER FUTURES IN CUTLER-OROSI

A 2012 Hewlett Foundation newsletter perfectly captured the importance of Teen Success, Inc.'s efforts in rural California:

Drive fifty miles southeast of Fresno through countless acres of blooming orchards, and you'll come upon the little town of Cutler-Orosi. Its residents are mostly Latino farm laborers and their families, who move from town to town in a timeless cycle repeated throughout California's Central Valley. Another cycle here is more stubborn. Despite significant drops across California, the teen pregnancy rates here continue to be among the highest in the state.

"One in fourteen girls between the ages of fourteen and nineteen will become pregnant here," says Debra Camarillo, executive director of the Latino Commission. "And by nineteen," Camarillo says, "many will have two kids."

Teen Success is working to change this dynamic in Cutler-Orosi. Within nine months of starting a support group in partnership with the Latino Commission, there was a **sixty-five percent increase in birth control use** among its members – all first-time teen moms who are at very high risk of having another child as a teen.

"In the beginning of the year, most of the girls did not want to use birth control," says Sarahi Ovalle, lead facilitator of the Teen Success group. "Now, almost all of them are."

This type of transformation is taking place in Teen Success groups across the state. The weekly interaction with positive adult role models and supportive peers de-mystifies birth control and helps members understand the importance of delaying additional children.

Social & Emotional Learning

“Illuminating and nurturing ‘sparks’ – inner passions and interests – can give young people joy, energy, and direction. They have the power to change a young person's life from one of 'surviving' to 'thriving'.”

Dr. Peter Benson, Search Institute

Research is increasingly finding that social and emotional “assets” such as perseverance, connectedness, purpose, and growth mindset (the belief that you can learn and grow) are key determinants of future success, influencing employment, happiness, and relationships. Building these assets is at the heart of the Teen Success program and the impact on teen moms is usually seen quickly and powerfully.

Teen Success members explore and develop these assets throughout the program, in both explicit and subtle ways. They do activities such as finding your “spark”, envisioning a “thriving path”, and developing an action plan, while facilitators continually model and use “teachable moments” to demonstrate and nurture these assets.

Social and emotional assets are critical not just for teen moms but also for their children. The skills mothers develop will influence their own parenting, leading to healthier parent-child interactions and nurturing of the children’s development. Through their own journeys of self-exploration and personal development, Teen Success members learn to do the same with their children.



SPOTLIGHT: THE POWER OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

There is extensive research documenting the power of social networks to improve people's health and life outcomes. Having a strong peer support group that encourages you, listens, offers relevant suggestions, connects you to resources, and holds you accountable make positive choices and outcomes more likely and sustainable.

In lower-income families, a strong social network is especially critical. It meets needs when money is not available: a neighbor providing child care so a mother can go to work, a pair of teen moms carpooling to college together, a friend making a work connection.

Teen Success, Inc.'s data is consistent with the research: the strong social connections teen moms make in the program have a tremendous impact on them and their children. Many of these connections will also turn into friendships that last a lifetime.

The #1 reason teen moms like Teen Success, Inc. is the network of shared support, motivation and resources they develop with other teen moms.



Parents As First Teachers

“Poorer kids are more likely to have a single teenage mom who is stressed out, who was herself raised in an authoritarian style that she mimics, and who, as a result, doesn’t chatter much with the child.”

Nicholas Kristof, “Do we invest in prisons or preschools,” New York Times, 10/26/2013

Children of poor and single parents are often at a tremendous disadvantage when they begin school. Researchers estimate that they have heard 30 million fewer words than their middle-class counterparts by the time they start school. Many have not been exposed to the socialization needed to be successful in school, particularly those with young parents who are themselves still maturing.

Teen Success, Inc. is helping to prevent this gap. In collaboration with Bring Me A Book and the New Teacher Center, we have developed the “Parents as First Teachers” component of Teen Success. Eight to ten weeks of support group meetings are dedicated to helping teen moms gain the skills and attributes they need to develop their children’s language and intellectual capacity, and make sure their children are ready for kindergarten. We do this by:

- Modeling ways to talk to children that are conversational rather than directional
- Doing interactive activities in which teen moms practice reading, chatting, and playing with their children
- Providing each Teen Success member with three new age- and language-appropriate books each year
- Regularly assessing and providing feedback on teen moms’ parenting skills, attitudes and practices

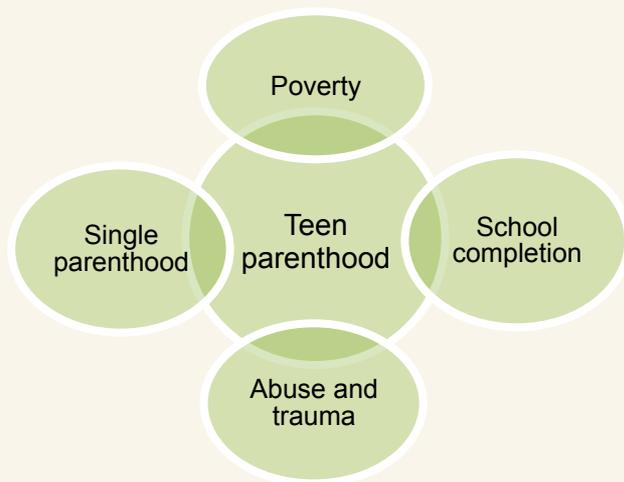


The greatest hope Teen Success members have for their children is a better life than they’ve had.

SPOTLIGHT: A TWO-GENERATION APPROACH

Teen parenthood is at the nexus of a host of intergenerational social challenges: poverty and income, educational attainment, mental and physical health, child welfare, child development, single parenthood, responsible fatherhood, and other risky behaviors.

When a mother experiences adverse outcomes, her children are more likely to experience these, as well. But the reverse is also true: when mothers do better, their children do better. Teen Success, Inc. reaches two generations at once. We break the cycle of poverty by positioning teen moms for success, which in turn improves their children's chances of success.



The single greatest predictor of educational attainment is mother's education level. When mothers do better, children do better.



Partner Organizations

Teen Success, Inc. works in partnership with organizations that are positioned in communities of need and can reach teen mothers who would otherwise not have access to the program. We develop long-term relationships with our partners that allow us to build on existing services and have deeper impact on our members. Our 2013 partners and locations were:

ACT for Women and Girls: Visalia

Boys & Girls Club of the Sequoias: Exeter

Brighter Beginnings: Antioch, Richmond

Community Youth Ministries: Reedley, Dinuba

Fresno Barrios Unidos: Fresno (two groups)

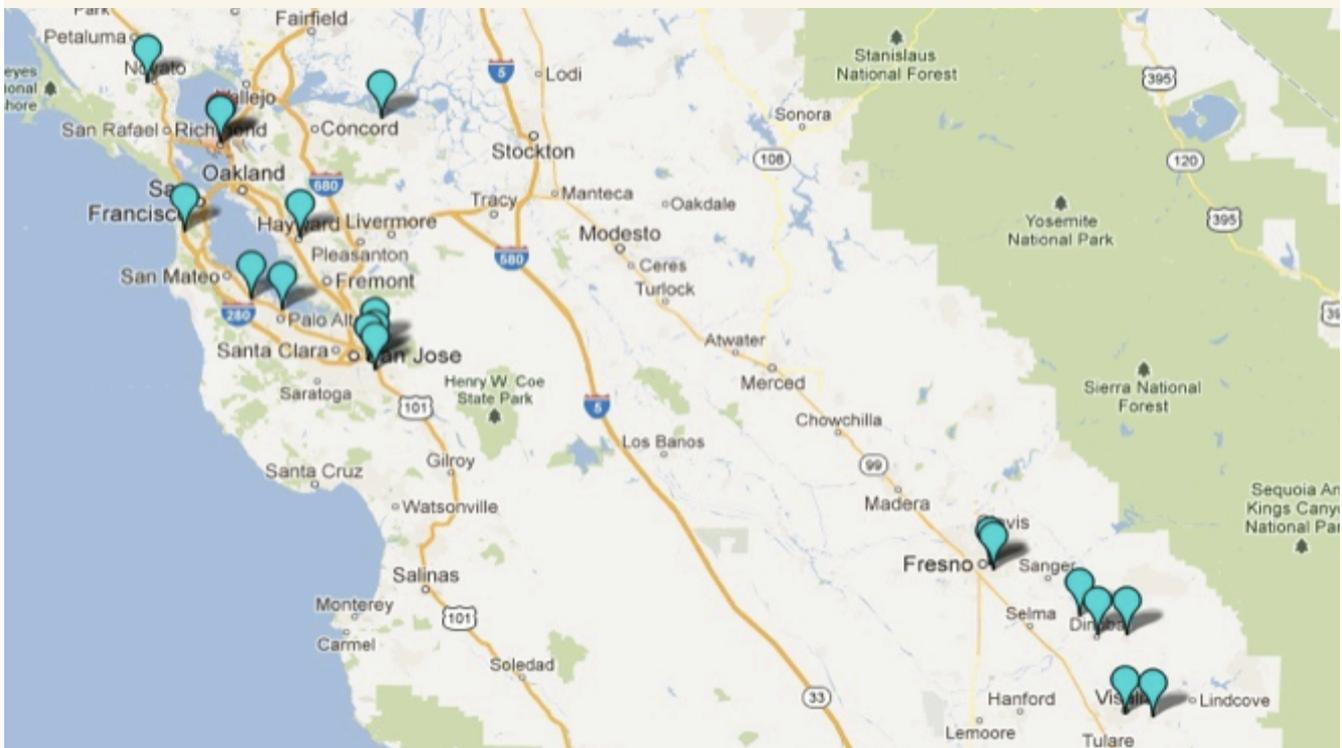
The Latino Commission: Cutler-Orosi

Novato Youth Center: Novato

Teen Talk Sexuality Education: East Palo Alto, Redwood City, South San Francisco

Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center: Hayward (two groups)

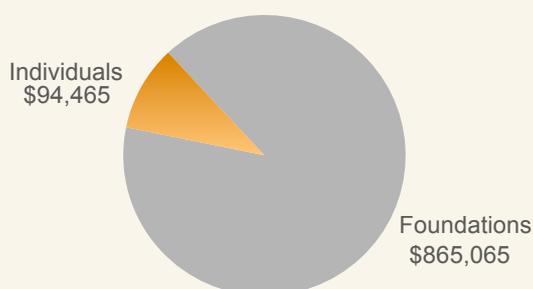
YWCA of Silicon Valley: San Jose (four groups)



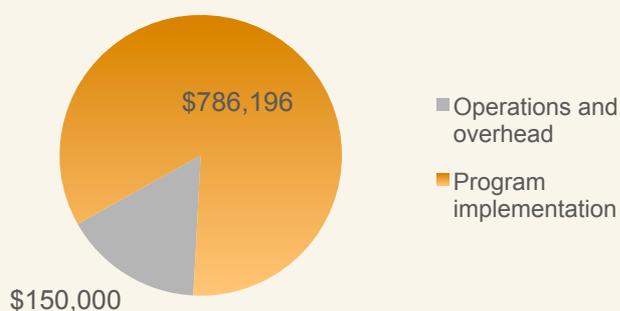
Summary of Financial Activities

Teen Success, Inc. is funded entirely by contributions from individuals and private foundations. We are deeply grateful to all of our donors for their invaluable support of our work.

FY13 Contributions: \$959,530



FY13 Expenses: \$936,196 total



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