In July 1993 I was hired to bring the idea of Dads Make a Difference to reality – to try and reach young people with an important message. Nine years later, Dads Make a Difference has reached over 30,000 young people with the message of the importance of fathers in children’s lives. It has been an exciting and fun nine years for me, but I now know I am ready to move on to do something else with my work time. July 31, 2002 was my last day working as Coordinator of Dads Make a Difference for the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

What I will be doing next is not yet certain – I am looking for the next challenge in my life. I want to thank all of you that have crossed my path during these nine years for embracing the message of this program.

Good luck to all!

Dads Make a Difference Staff and Trainers send Gary their best wishes.

IT’S TIME TO REGISTER !!
For the November 17 - 18, 2002
Teen Training Conference
See Pages 2 & 5

Thoughts on a Journey with Dads Make a Difference

By John Plasch, DMAD Trainer

During the course of a day, do you ever sit and think about memories? Okay, you are stuck in a small journey down memory lane. I have been involved with Dads Make a Difference for about five years. I still remember those moments at my first training, when I thought I was the only one who felt the way I did.

The time that I’ve spent standing in front of seventh graders, high schoolers, and even adults watching how they react to the curriculum is a feeling like no other. I have watched many youth evolve in the course of these trainings. This program is important in many other ways, some of which I am a first hand example of. The program gives me the strength to deal with my own issues, a lot of which stems from the relationship I had with my dad. The program teaches you to take a step back and look at how you deal with issues when you face them.

I thought about how different my life would be without this program. The relationships I’ve made along the way enrich my life everyday. If people don’t take the
The 2002-2003 school year has started. It’s time to start thinking about bringing teens to the Fall training. Request your registration forms now by phone or using the form on page 5.

**DADS MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

is a positive youth development, pregnancy prevention, paternity education project in which older high school teens, male and female, teach younger youth (grades 6-9) about the importance of fathers in children’s lives; the legal, emotional and financial responsibilities of parenting; and why they should wait to have a baby until they are financially and emotionally ready.

**TRAININGS** are for 10th - 12th grade male and female teens accompanied by at least one adult advisor. An equal number of males and females is preferred.

**FEE INCLUDES** training led by experienced adult and teen trainers, four meals, one nights lodging, a copy of the **DMAD** curriculum, and a T-shirt with the **DMAD** logo. *Travel is not included.***

**FALL 2002 TRAINING**

Sunday - Monday,
November 17-18, 2002
St. Paul, Four Points Sheraton
Maximum 150 teens
Registration Deadline November 1st

?? SPRING 2003 TRAINING ??

Due to the transition at **DMAD**, the Fall training is the only training currently scheduled for this school year. We apologize to those of you who have regularly trained teens in the spring, but urge you to consider the Fall training. A decision will be made about a Spring training by the end of December. PLEASE be patient with us during this transition time.

**AN IMPORTANT COINCIDENTAL FACTOR** of the large 2-day training is the unique opportunity for teens to experience and learn from the many dimensions of diversity participants bring - ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, family type, geographic location, and life experience. **DMAD involvement** also provides opportunities for career exploration.

**DADS MAKE A DIFFERENCE** remains committed to providing a high-quality teen training experience for schools and agencies statewide. We are also committed to promoting **POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT** by providing opportunities for teens to:

- Feel physically and emotionally safe
- Experience belonging and ownership
- Develop self worth through meaningful contribution
- Try new things and learn about themselves
- Develop quality relationships with peers and adults
- Discuss conflicting values and formulate their own
- Feel pride and accountability that comes with mastery
- Expand their capacity to enjoy life and know success is possible

**October is ... Let’s Talk Month**

**NO MATTER THE SEASON THERE’S ALWAYS A REASON TO TALK WITH YOUR KIDS.**

October is Let’s Talk Month, a nationally recognized time to encourage and support parents and caring adults in discussing healthy sexuality with children and teens.

Call MOAPPP at 651-644-1447 or 1-800-657-3697 for more Let’s Talk Month information or materials.

**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DETAILS...**

Send all articles and photos to the Editor:
Jan Hayne
University of MN Extension Service
2020 White Bear Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55109

... AND DEADLINES

The January issue is being discontinued due to budget constraints.

May Issue Deadline: April 15th

September Issue Deadline: August 15th
Thoughts on a Journey ...  
(Continued from page 1)

time to reach out to youth, they may never reach back. I was a teen who had low self-esteem, a bad attitude, and who was slightly nervous about the future. This program taught me to aim high in life and live everyday to the fullest.

So I ask a favor of you, that next time you are doing a training, working with youth, or just in everyday life - take a moment to remember. Understand that youth may be in the same spot that you were in. The profound difference that the Dads Make a Difference staff, trainers, and DMAD family made in my life could do the same for that troubled teen. Thank you to everyone involved with this program. The past five years were great and I can’t wait for the next five!

John Plasch is a Dads Make a Difference trainer and Tartan High School graduate.

Prevention and Intervention of Sexual Violence in Schools: Talking About “It” written by Cordelia Anderson, MA and sponsored by Children, Families and Learning, Human Services, and Corrections can be downloaded and printed from this link - www.mnschoolhealth.com/publications.html?id=2&z=9211

A “LET’S TALK MONTH” UPCOMING EVENT

Co-sponsored by: Ramsey County Sexual Violence Action Team, St. Paul-Ramsey County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project, and the Let’s Talk Month Metro-wide Collaborative

Wednesday, October 16, 2002, 10:00 am. - 12:00 noon
Location: St. Paul Central High
Cost: Free, but RSVP’s will be required
(an additional workshop is being planned for October 24 with time and location to be announced later)

The Topic: Talking About “It” Prevention and Intervention of Sexual Violence

Central’s Black Box Theatre teens will present a creative, interactive, and meaningful workshop for professionals who work with youth and the caring adults in their lives to help us become more effective in addressing issues of sexual violence in the world of young people in our communities. You will also receive new resources designed to help families communicate effectively about sexual violence and its prevention.

Questions? Please contact Grit Youngquist, 651-266-2407

Communication Tips for Parents When Talking About Sexuality with Their Children

* Take the time to think about what you want to teach about sexuality.
* Understand that there is a difference between childhood sexuality and adult sexuality.
* Use words and ideas that are appropriate for your child’s level of development.
* Don’t just wait for the questions.
* Find teachable moments.
* It’s okay if you don’t know the answer.
* It’s okay to feel uncomfortable.
* It’s okay to make a mistake.
* Facts are not enough.
* Educate both your sons and your daughters.
* It is both parents’ job to teach children about sexuality.
* There is no such thing as too late.
* Sexuality education is an ongoing process.
* Don’t forget to talk about the joys of sexuality.
* Practice.

Excerpted from: From Diapers to Dating: A Parent’s Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children  
Author: Debra Haffner
A PROGRAM …

“Dads Make a Difference made me realize that young teens need older teens in their lives as positive role models. I learned how important it is for us to reach out to them now, before it is too late.”

AN ATTITUDE …

“I wish I could have gone through this program when I was in junior high. I know it would have helped me to really think about the future and to make good decisions.”

“Dads Make a Difference made me realize how permanent and expensive parenthood is.”

A WAY OF LIFE …

“Dads Make a Difference has helped me to know the consequences of my actions before I take them, and I know what risks not to take to protect my future.”

“I have made wiser decisions because I am more aware of the consequences.”

UNIQUE …

Dads Make a Difference is the only paternity education curriculum using the youth-teaching-youth model for curriculum delivery.

INFLUENTIAL …

“My relationship with my father has changed. By going through this program and then teaching it, I have spent a lot of time reflecting on my own father. I have a better understanding and appreciation for everything he has done for me in my life.”

“I now know just how much my dad means to me. I know what he does for me and I love him more.”

VITAL …

“What I learned from Dads Make a Difference is don’t have sex too early and don’t be a dad who leaves.”

“From the Dads Make a Difference lessons I realized the dangers of sex and found out if I had a child how much my life would change.”
For the first time ever and in connection with Let’s Talk Month activities, Dads Make a Difference will offer a parent workshop for parents of teens attending the November 2002 training. The workshop will include dinner and will be held on Sunday evening at the teen training site. Gloria Ferguson, a Health Educator with HealthStart Clinics in St. Paul, will be the facilitator of this 1.5 hour session. Interest level and participant evaluations will determine if we continue to offer this workshop in the future.

This participatory workshop is based on the premise that parents are the primary sexuality educators for their children. It explores normal sexual development, the need for sexuality education, and current trends in school-based programs. It also helps parents consider their own experiences with sexuality education and messages they’d like to convey to their children, and offers practical suggestions for helping children learn to make responsible decisions about their sexual behavior.

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:
1. List 3 reasons for providing comprehensive sexuality education.
2. Clearly state the primary message they’d like their children to receive from them about sexuality.
3. Discuss normal sexual development.
4. Identify opportunities for sharing information and values around sexuality, even when children don’t ask questions.

Workshop flyers will be sent out with training registration forms. Please help us promote this to parents.

Return the form below to: DMAD * University of MN Extension Service * 2020 White Bear Ave. * St. Paul, MN 55109

REGISTRATION: Dads Make a Difference 2-day TEEN Training
Cost: $50 per participant - teen or adult(s) bringing teens
      $85 per participant - adults attending w/o teens OR out-of-state teens & adults

Please send me registration packets for: _______ # Teens _______ # Adults
For the teen training:
☐ NOV. METRO, Sunday - Monday, November 17-18, 2002, St. Paul, Four Points Sheraton
   * Registration Deadline November 1st

PRINT NAME: _________________________________ EMAIL: _________________________________

SCHOOL / AGENCY: _________________________________

ADDRESS: _______________________________________

CITY / STATE / zip code: ___________________________

PHONE WITH AREA CODE: ___________________________ FAX: ___________________________
Lots of things are happening in the lives of our wonderful group of Dads Make a Difference trainers. Here’s the latest news:

**Derek Fisher** became a DAD himself in May when his daughter Kaylee was born. Now he really knows how much DADS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

September is Wedding Month for two DMAD Trainers - **Sabrina Jones** and **Leah Sweet** will each be married around mid-month. We wish them years of LOVE and HAPPINESS with their new husbands!

**Leah Sweet, Amy Kodet**, and the rest of the Annex Teen Clinic staff were the recipients of the First Annual Partners in Prevention Award given by the National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Research Center. The award was presented by Dr. Michael Resnick to the Annex at the 2002 Summer Institute in Adolescent Health and Sexuality Education in August. The Annex is located in Robbinsdale. WAY TO GO!!

**Amanda Mackenthun** is engaged and will graduate from the University of Minnesota in December. Hang in there Amanda … the end is in sight.

**Natalie Flohrs** is studying abroad in England this Fall. We’ll miss her at the November training and are envious of her worldly adventures.

There’s a new teacher among us … **Amy Budinger** graduated this Spring from St. Cloud State with her teaching degree and has landed a job teaching middle school Science in the Mounds View School District. Amy credits DMAD for her interest in teaching as a career. The kids will LOVE her.

**Phyllis Braxton** moved into a beautiful new home in north Minneapolis this summer. SWEET DREAMS and MANY BLESSINGS …

After attending one year of college out east, **Burgette Perkins** is back and will be attending the University of Minnesota this Fall. WELCOME BACK.