

## WORKING TO MEET OUR COMMUNITY'S CRITICAL NEEDS

Ashley is 15 years old. She recently ran away from her abusive home to live with her 18-year-old boyfriend. They tried to make it on their own, but struggled to make ends meet. Ashley started selling her body to pay for food and shelter and was picked up by the police. Not long after, she was incarcerated at the Anoka County Juvenile Correctional Facility.

And that's when we had the privilege of meeting her.

**The Birds & Bees Project provides weekly sexuality education sessions at the correctional facility.** We create a safe space to talk about sex, trust, intimacy, healthy relationships and young people's rights to sexual health care.

Like many girls, Ashley had a lot of questions. She didn't receive any sexuality education in school and was given wrong or misleading information by others. Her boyfriend told her that if she trusted him, she wouldn't worry about his herpes sores. A friend told her that there was a cure for HIV, and she didn't need to use condoms. And Ashley often wondered if it was true that she was "bad" because she wasn't a virgin.

Ashley had a lot of questions, and she needed accurate and honest information.

She attended every Birds & Bees Project sexuality education session throughout the summer in order to learn as much as she could.

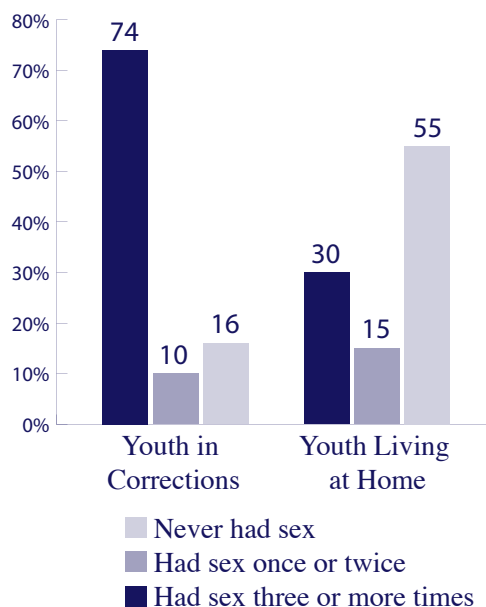
**We were able to answer her questions and provide the information and resources she wanted and desperately needed.** Armed with new tools and a fresh outlook, Ashley's self-confidence bloomed.

Now she's planning for the future.

**The Birds & Bees Project is the only program in the state providing comprehensive sexuality education to outstate incarcerated girls.** We do it because we believe young people like Ashley deserve accurate, evidence-based information. We do it because information changes lives. We do it because incarcerated youth have the least access to high-quality sexuality education. But most importantly, we do it because we care about all of the youth in our community.

Ashley will transition into a new living situation this winter, and she plans on going back to school. She's excited for a new beginning, and we're excited for her.

By reaching out to youth like Ashley, we believe we are truly making a difference and making our community stronger as a result.



Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs: *Youth in Minnesota Correctional Facilities: Responses to the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey.*

## SEXUALITY EDUCATION: TEACHING THE TEACHERS

Over the past year the Birds & Bees Project staff has provided six multi-day curriculum training sessions to teachers and college students training to be teachers throughout the state. These include training all of the middle school teachers in two of the largest school districts in the state: the first in collaboration with the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting on the Making Proud Choices curriculum, and the second in the nationally recognized "What's the REAL DEAL about Masculinity?" curriculum in collaboration with the developers, Scenarios USA. We also continue to provide the only national pre-service teacher training program in sexuality to college students training to be teachers. Contact Karen Law at karen@birdsandbees.org or 612-825-2000 to learn more.

## Our After-Abortion Support Group Continues to Thrive

One in three women in the U.S. will have an abortion by age 45. Abortion is more common than people think, but rarely is it talked about. PCR has been having the conversation within our community through our after-abortion support and discussion group called Emerge. Currently, Emerge is in its fifth year; the group continues to thrive and be one of only a handful of pro-choice after-abortion resources in the U.S., and the only resource in Minnesota.

Our last group was the largest ever with eight women ranging in ages from 19 to 45. Yet as we celebrate the group's success, it's also necessary to recognize the incredible need. Over the past year, women have driven to the Twin Cities from Hudson, WI and Milaca, MN. These women want to talk about their experiences, and they are willing to drive more than an hour once a week for six weeks to do so.

The women who participate often develop supportive friendships beyond the group as well as work to ensure that this type of service is available for other women in the future. For example, a group of former Emerge participants had a Bowl-a-Thon (PCR's fundraiser) team this year to raise funds for the Emerge program. Way to go, ladies!

We continue to respond to the increasing need for after-abortion conversations by expanding our services. We're thrilled to announce that we will be expanding to Tubman's Maplewood location—our third meeting place and first suburban area—in early 2011.

As Emerge embarks on its fifth year, we promise to keep the conversations going by bringing women together, creating space to have real conversations about abortion and reducing the stigma around this common experience.

*"It is comforting to meet people like yourself who can talk so openly and honestly and count on being there every week. It has done SO much more for me than I ever could have anticipated. I have NO regrets and only wish I could have had a group of girlfriends like these around me or nearby when I need them all the time. THANK YOU for providing the space and the support."*

- Emerge Participant

**The next Emerge group will begin on November 16th at Tubman located in South Minneapolis. If you or someone you know is interested in participating, please contact Melissa at [melissa@birdsandbees.org](mailto:melissa@birdsandbees.org) or 612-825-2000 for more information.**

## Volunteer Spotlight: Danielle TenCate

*Danielle has been volunteering as an Emerge after-abortion support group facilitator for four years. Thank you, Danielle!*

### How did you start volunteering with PCR?

I started volunteering with PCR through Tubman (formerly Chrysalis) where I had been a volunteer for many years co-facilitating depression groups. They were looking for a volunteer co-facilitator to help with Emerge—ideally, someone with comfort and experience with groups and counseling around issues of abortion. It was through co-facilitating the Emerge group that I got to know more about PCR and the great work they are doing.

### What's been your most rewarding experience?

I often read this quote at the end of a first group: *"As a woman experiences her life, it is important for her to name her experiences in words. When one woman puts her experiences into words, another woman who has kept silent, afraid of what others will think, can find validation. And when a second woman says aloud, "Yes, that was my experience too," the first woman loses some of her fear"* (from *Diving Deep and Surfacing*). Abortion is something that is so taboo. It can be so hard for women who have reactions to their experience

to have it normalized because of how little it is talked about in our culture. It's rewarding to watch how healing it can be to have women connect and share a common experience that was previously so isolating.

### If a friend asked you why they should volunteer, what would you tell them?

PCR is advocating locally on a daily basis for women to have the power and control over their sexuality and reproductive rights through education, advocacy and direct support to women and girls. There is a great deal of strength and power in joining your voice, time and talent to the empowerment of women and girls and their rights and education!

### If you could have a super power, what would it be?

As a social worker and a new mom, I wish I could read minds/emotions. It would have to be a power I could turn on and off at will though, but if that were possible it would make my work at my job and home so much easier!!



## ➔ Helping Zuri Pay for Her Abortion

*PCR's Hersey Abortion Assistance Fund helps pay for abortions, and we do this with donations from people like you. With your support, we're able to help a wide variety of women and girls get the health care they seek.*

We recently received a call from a Child Protective Services social worker who was working with a 17 year-old high school student. Zuri is an exemplary student and her school's senior class president.

Shortly after she and her mother came to the U.S. from Africa, Zuri's mother died. Her father continues to live in Africa, so she was placed in foster care.

While Zuri was mourning the loss of her mother and trying to deal with a new living situation, she became pregnant. She carried her pregnancy to term, and her child lives with her in foster care. Unfortunately Zuri's living

situation became abusive, which is how the social worker became involved. Soon after, Zuri found out she was pregnant again. She decided to end the pregnancy this time because she wasn't able to care for another child.

Zuri didn't feel safe talking to her foster parents about her situation. They didn't know she was pregnant or planning to have an abortion. She also didn't have a way to pay for it, and that's when the social worker called us.

*"Honestly, I don't know what she would have done if you were not there to help."*

- Zuri's social worker

We were able to give her \$150 through the Hersey Abortion Assistance Fund. But even with our help, she was still short \$330. We worked with other abortion funds in the country to raise the remaining money.

Thankfully, we pulled together the money Zuri needed to have the abortion she felt was best for her and her daughter's future.

## Time for Change!

The organization you know and love is in the process of movement-building – to bring more people along with us in our pursuit for social change through our sexuality work. Part of our movement building plan includes changing our name and look. Our core services will remain the same: sexuality education, sexuality resources, funding abortions and after-abortion support. And we'll continue doing what we do best, but with some fresh flair.

The decision to rename the organization was made for a variety of reasons. We spent the past year talking to our donors, volunteers, supporters and people we help, and found out that people are more likely to know the name of our programs (such as the Birds & Bees Project) rather than our organization. We also learned that our current name doesn't encompass the wide array of services we provide or the personality of our organization. Additionally, some people attributed our work to other nonprofits organizations. That's problematic.

So we're going to freshen-up how we look and what we're called, but not who we are. We'll announce our new name and look during early Summer 2011; but, we'll make sure to keep you in the loop as things progress.

And as always, we appreciate your support!

## Thank You State Fair Volunteers!

A HUGE thanks to everyone who staffed our table at the MN State Fair! Because of you we connected with over 10,000 people and gave out 7,000 condoms-on-a-stick. We'll see you at next year's Great Minnesota Get Together.

Katie Barrett Wiik  
Suzanne Betz  
Hal Bichel  
Lisa Boyton  
Kate Bruce  
Jeff Cawhorn  
Phoebe Chastain  
Ruth Colby  
Bobbie Coleman  
Rachel Durkee  
Beth Edwards  
Tiffany Elste  
Faith Einerson  
Suzanne Ford  
Gene & Charlotte  
Frampton  
Amy Gavel  
Angela Guetner  
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Serena Howe  
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Donna Seabloom  
Jen Shea  
Maura Shramko  
Jane Skogstrom  
Bill Sorem  
Erika Staub  
Susi Stuart  
Kate Sykes  
Avis Thomas  
Pam VanderGriend  
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Jodi Winship  
Patrick Woods

# Pro-Choice Resources

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## Did Someone Say Bowl-a-Thon?!

Mark your calendars bowling aficionados and PCR supporters extraordinaire! The **Bowl-a-Thon dates are set for March 30th and 31st**, and no, that's not a typo.

We're holding the community's most awesome sexuality fundraiser at the Bryant-Lake Bowl for two days this year. That's right: **TWO DAYS**. That means double the fun, more time for each team to bowl and double the awesomeness!

Details will be coming your way in January, so start practicing your cheers, creating your costumes, and assembling your teams.



**Cheer Contests!**



**Awesomeness!**

**And don't forget to say,  
"I'm pro-choice and  
that's how I roll."**



**Costumes!**