

TEENSPEAK

Today for the Leaders of Tomorrow

Volume 1, Issue 3 • \$1.00

Summer Edition ~ 2000

It's A Fact: Teens Need Their Parents

By RACHEL STOCKMAN
Washington, D.C. - May 2

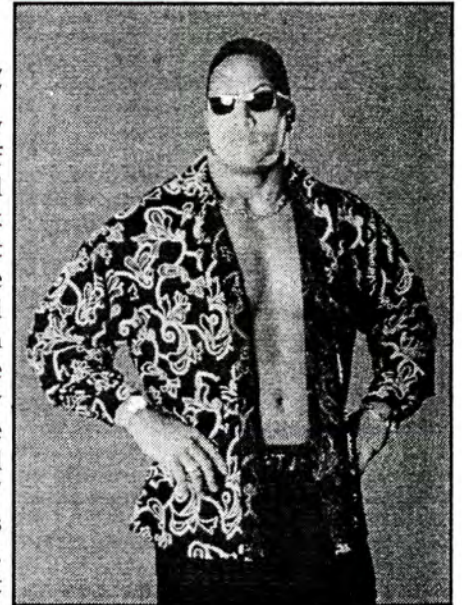
The East Room at the White House was full to its capacity as President Clinton and First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton hosted the first ever conference on 'Raising Responsible and Resourceful Teens.' Attended by members of the President's Cabinet, celebrities, such as Danny DeVito, Rhea Perlman, Andrew Shue, policy makers, experts representing many fields that



One On One with The Great One

by JORDAN
MAMORSKY

Dwayne Johnson, alias, "The Rock," dazzles audiences every week with an array of "people's elbows" and "layin' the smack downs." The mere sight of The Rock at House shows and televised matches results in thunderous audience applause that is typically reserved for only the best in the business. "All it takes is all you've got," The Rock told this TEENSPEAK reporter. "It may seem simple, but hard work results in



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The East Room at the White House was full to its capacity as President Clinton and First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton hosted the first ever conference on 'Raising Responsible and Resourceful Teens.' Attended by members of the President's Cabinet, celebrities, such as Danny DeVito, Rhea Perlman, Andrew Shue, policy makers, experts representing many fields that impact a teen's life, and teenagers, this conference was intended to highlight the challenges that confront today's teenagers and prescribe solutions to overcoming the problems they face.

By almost all measures, teenagers across the country are doing well. Most teens, most of the time, make choices that protect them from harm. Teenagers today are living much happier, prosperous and healthier lives than ever before. School based volunteerism and community service has increased, which has resulted in an improvement in academics.

In contrast, however, growing up today has never been more difficult. Teen violence, school shootings, alcohol, drugs, teen pregnancy, and more can alter the course of a teens' life within seconds. Additionally, teens are fed a steady diet of media. This "meal" plays an important role in the development of a teen's persona.

Nationally representative data indicates that virtually all U.S. teens aged 14-18 live in a household with a TV, VCR, radio and CD player. We, as teens are being raised by media that offers a profusion of negative images: unprotected sex, drug use, and violence. There is no proof that these electronic images are actually making teens more inclined to take part in similar activities, but



First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton speaking on raising responsible teens with President Clinton
Photo by Heimsath Photo Associates News Service

studies do show that teens who consistently watch the "tube" do not make connections to parents and mentors. Devotion to the television, deprives teens of the ability to learn values and morals from their families.

With regard to the media, Mrs. Clinton added that as parents, "We also recognize it is more difficult to keep track of what teens are watching and learning on TV or on their home computer...

Presently, we have so many opportunities for children to see things without any parental supervision, or even without an older brother or sister saying, that's stupid, or how dumb that is, trying to interject some reality into the world that the media conveys to our kids." Mrs. Clinton pointed out that television often obscures reality, thus giving teens a false sense of truth in what is being watched.

Kids still need parents, and in fact, recent information indicates that parents are still the most important adults in a teenager's life, and that three out of four teenagers still turn to their parents in times of trouble. And, believe it or not, while parents list the threat that their teen will become involved in drugs or alcohol as their top concern, teens, in turn, list education

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Jane Fonda: Activist Against Teen Pregnancy

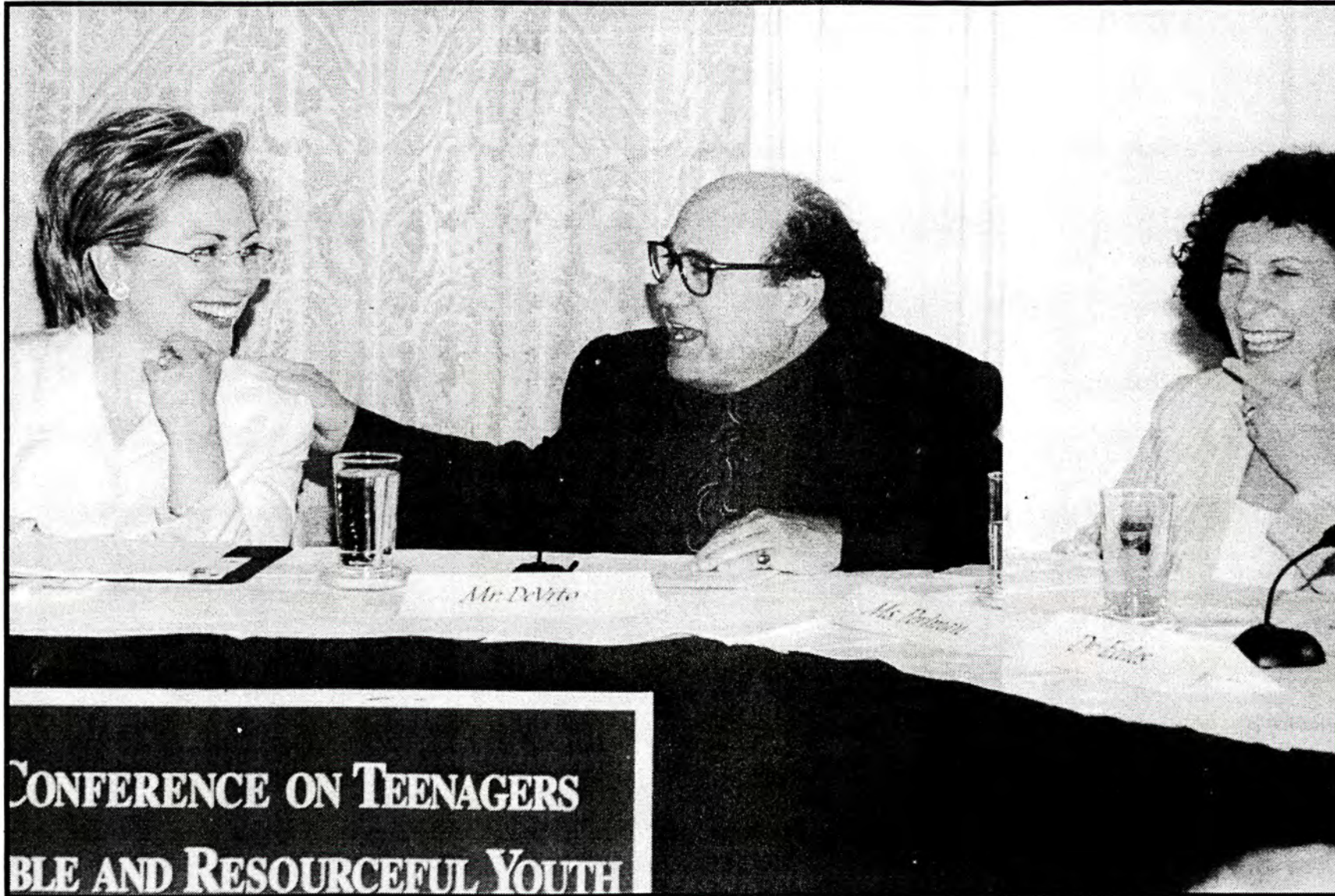
PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA BERNHARD

By JESSICA BERNHARD

Teenagers are lucky that

teenagers. Ms. Fonda is the Founder and Chair for C





*First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton sharing a laugh with Danny DeVito and Rhea Perlman during a panel discussion.
Photo by Heimsath Photo Associates News Service*

Follow the Lead of 14-Year-Old Gabriella Contreras

By RACHEL STOCKMAN

Gabriella Contreras serves as a beacon to teens around the world. She has accomplished more in her 14 years of being than many do in an entire life time. Her devotion to making the world a better place to live is so strong, that she spends endless hours trying to develop ways to solve important teen issues, and develop ways to help hopeful and motivated teens throughout the world make their communities a better place to live.

Chosen as the Arizona Youth Delegate at the President's Summit for America's Future in 1997, Ms. Contreras is the Founder of CLUB BADD (Be Alert and Don't Do Drugs), has been the leader of a peace march, has served as a Chairwoman of a special city-wide Youth Summit that was held in Tucson, and is asked to speak all over the country and around the world on empowering teens to make a difference in their communities.

Gabriella first got involved in community service when she was in the third grade. It was then that she witnessed the horrors of school violence. Drug-related riots had broken out opposite her school playground. In an effort to eradicate this activity from her school environment, she founded Be Alert and Don't Do Drugs.

During an exclusive interview with Gabriella, who TEENSPEAK met at The White House, I asked her why she started BADD. "Many grown-ups think that teens just hang out and go to the movies. Reaching out in our community is not only

First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton

continued from page 1

Danny DeVito, who with his wife Rhea and physical capacities are developed for a

First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton

continued from page 1

and "not having enough time with their parents" as their top concern.

Mrs. Clinton commented, "I believe one of the biggest casualties of modern life has been family time, especially time during meals, when parents and children can check out their busy schedules and check in with each other." Actually Mrs. Clinton's statement is supported by a poll commissioned by The Council of Economic Advisors that said teens that eat dinner with their parents almost daily, are less likely to get involved with smoking drinking, drug use, violence, sexual activity, and have suicidal thoughts. The report also noted that adults say that they spend substantial time during the day with their children, or that they make emotional connections with their teens. In reality, their words do not follow through to the truth. Mrs. Clinton remarked that this kind of talk results from our "non-stop talky culture" in which we may do a lot of talking, but seldom are we connecting because we are not listening.

Danny DeVito, who with his wife Rhea Perlman, helped found the Colonnades Theater Lab and is also involved in the Children's Action Network, volunteered that he makes sure that his kids know that he is around, poking his head inside their rooms, saying, "I'm here if you need me." He admitted that his kids **REALLY** like to be heard. They frequently "perform" run-on sentences in an unfaltering high pitched voice to insure they are not interrupted.

The conference featured many experts in raising responsible and resourceful teens. Giving teens an opportunity to work as a means of developing self esteem, providing after school activities, enabling kids to have more sleep by starting school later, testimonials from parents and teens about good relationships, comprised the morning session which was moderated by Mrs. Clinton. Another point of interest came in the way of new research that demonstrates that, "The teenage brain goes through a critical growth spurt when a teenager's intellectual, emotional

and physical capacities are developed for a lifetime," Mrs. Clinton announced. This would indicate that parents and teens have another ideal opportunity to capture the moment and connect.

Mrs. Karen Pittman, Senior Vice President of the International Youth Foundation argued that our society focuses too strongly on the negativities, such as NOT getting pregnant, NOT doing drugs, NOT smoking, or NOT getting involved in teen violence. She believes that young people need people in their lives, places that are structured, and they need responsibilities. These three aspects, she feels, will dissuade kids from getting involved in the above NOs and begin to make teens more happy, prosperous, and healthy. And in sum, Mrs. Clinton added, "I remembered that so often during the times when our own daughter was growing up — that even if your teenager or your preteen doesn't want you following her or him around, in many ways — they need you around."

The Rock

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The Rock has his own "Rock," and she's his number one fan. She is also his role model in life. "My mother is the rock of our family and the strongest woman I know."

The Rock, who recently turned 28, said that he would probably remain in the WWF for another five or ten years. After wrestling, he wants to pursue a career in acting. In fact, he has already started his acting career, having assumed a role in a new movie, "The Mummy 2". In addition to acting and writing, The Rock is involved in giving back to the community which he finds incredibly rewarding. The Make A Wish Foundation is a charity for terminally ill kids, and they are granted a wish, and sometimes that wish is to meet the person that they admire the most. The Rock has visited with many kids from this foundation

founded Be Alert and Don't Do Drugs.

During an exclusive interview with Gabriella, who **TEENSPEAK** met at The White House, I asked her why she started BADD. "Many grown-ups think that teens just hang out and go to the movies. Reaching out in our community is not only necessary, but fun as well." She remarked that often adults/parents alike are oblivious to the fact that teens want to take part in helping to make important decisions in our communities. "Teens," she said, "should take this important step into the adult world."

Gabriella has worked hard all over the world to enforce her motto, "Even as youth, we can make a positive difference in our homes, neighborhoods, schools, and communities." Most recently, Ms. Contreras headed a town-wide peace march in response to an attempted copy-cat act of violence that occurred in a neighboring school following the Littleton tragedy. More than 1,000 people turned out in support of her effort.

Gabriella also told me that she leads a youth march at the start of every school year in order to set the new year off to a healthy and responsible start. As Arizona State Delegate, it is Ms. Contreras's responsibility to deliver speeches in 8 different foreign countries, telling teens how they can take a more prominent role in their respective communities.

On May 2nd, she spoke eloquently at The White House during a Conference on Raising Responsible and Resourceful Teens. She sat beside the First Lady, serving on a panel with adult authorities in their fields, and spoke before an audience of other adults, sharing her insights as to how teens can be empowered to make positive changes in their own communities.

I believe that Gabriella would agree that we are all responsible for making our communities a better place to live. We all have the ability to put an end to youth violence, bring more awareness about drugs, create stronger families and communities, and in so doing, make our



How schools stop teen violence

■ Recent shootings have prompted districts nationwide to try new programs, and a template for success is emerging.

By **Francine Kiefer**
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
and **Nell Irwin**

WASHINGTON — Across the nation, communities are redoubling their efforts to prevent teen violence — much of it in the year since the shootings in Littleton, Colo. While tragedies such as Columbine are

what often dominate the headlines, experts say a growing number of programs from Florida to Oregon are starting to prove effective in stemming youth violence.

The initiatives vary widely: from simple efforts to reward good behavior with gold-star-like stickers to more aggressive psychological counseling programs. Not surpris-

ingly, the popularity of the initiatives varies too: Some have dramatically reduced violent incidents in schools and been embraced by teachers and parents alike. Others have proven costly for districts and raise questions of too much intrusion into family lives.

But beneath all the experimentation, researchers say they are now starting to identify common elements that make programs work. "Across the country, in every state, there are real pockets of excellence, real

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Programs combat teen violence early — and effectively

TEENS from page 1

pockets of hope," says David Osher of the American Institutes for Research, a behavioral science group based here that has become something of a national clearinghouse of success stories.

In drawing up model initiatives for communities, he and other social scientists have come to one deceptively simple conclusion: By taking preventive measures early on, communities can head off tragedies down the road.

This week, President Clinton and the first lady host a White House conference on teens, aimed at exploring some of those early steps. The meeting will include parents, community leaders, and teenagers themselves.

Amid all the attention, the

Monitor looked at case studies of several schools with impressive violence-reduction records.

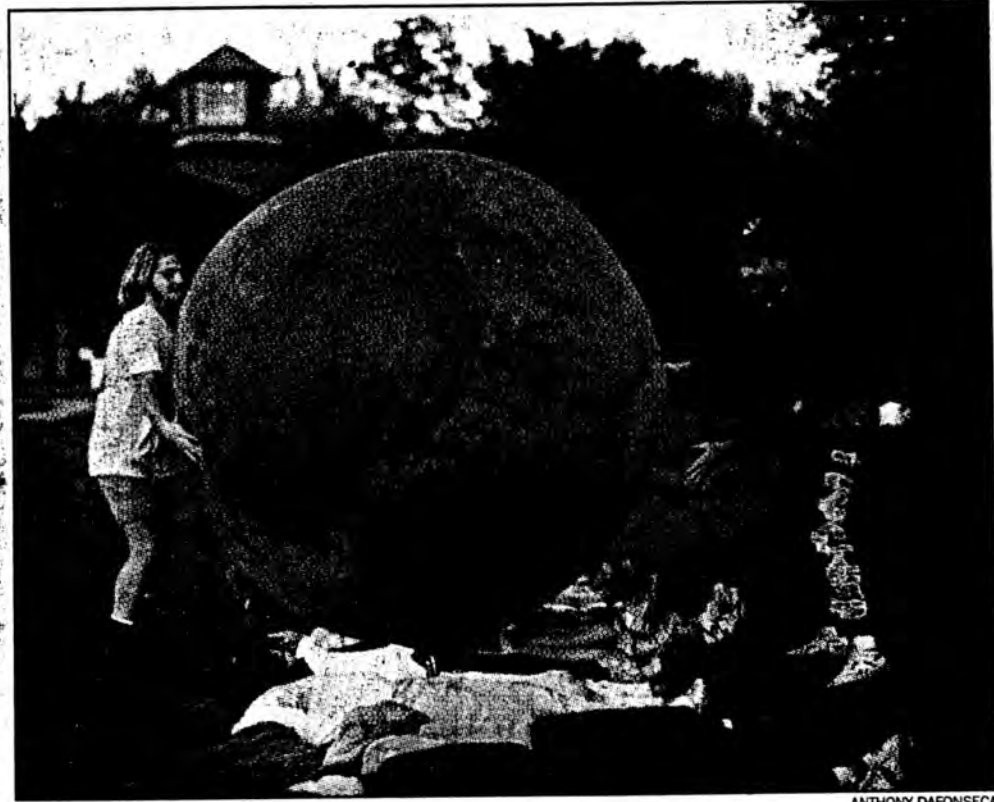
Stop and think

In stopping violence in America's schools, a red sticker in elementary school can be more effective than metal detectors and security guards in high school.

That is, if it's a "Stop and Think" sticker, awarded to students who show exceptionally good behavior at Cleveland Elementary School in Tampa, Fla.

Since 1993, the school has adopted a general approach toward teaching its students — many of whom come from broken homes — how to listen, resolve conflict without fighting, deal with losing, wait one's turn, and otherwise interact with others effectively.

The 20 minutes a day spent learning social skills, along with those prized red stickers to reward students who take the lessons particularly to heart, have reaped big rewards, says veteran second-grade teacher Kimberly Howery. "When they come to a situation, whether it's someone talking to you when the teacher's talking or calling you a name, they stop and think and make a good



ANTHONY DAFONSECA

LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER: Teens in the Positive Education Program in Astabulah, Ohio, learn social skills through trust exercises like this one, involving an Earth Ball.

turn to violence to settle arguments later.

Moreover, the children enjoy the lessons, says Ms. Howery. "They get excited about it and tell the class if they used a skill over the weekend. It's really made a difference in our school."

Response to warning signs

But broad-based efforts to reduce school violence like that at Cleveland Elementary are only

the public schools, there's PEP.

That stands for Positive Education Program, a network of six off-site day centers for kids 6 to 18. Held up by some as a national model, PEP gives intense attention to young people from diverse racial and economic backgrounds, putting them in classes of 10, with two teachers per class.

Their record is enviable. The program takes in 150 to 200 children each year, but behavior improves to such a degree that one-third eventually return to mainstream life. Another third go back to public school but still require a lot of support. A recent study showed that, two years out of the program, half the kids were staying out of trouble.

With its roots in the

1960s, the philosophy at PEP involves the whole community in the "reeducation" of the child. Each participant gets a case worker who keeps in touch with the child's parents, doctor, social worker, church youth worker, and probation officer.

Students get sent home with daily "passports" reporting to parents what went well, and maybe not so well. These kids also work in the community, teaching literacy to adults; volun-

also asked the shover's teachers if her behavior had changed recently — and they said it had. So Mr. Echandia called her home, and found that there had been some domestic turmoil recently.

"Now, the father is coming in, and we have counselors involved, and the father is receptive to what we've proposed. I think our chances of success with this girl are high," he says.

While some may see the

MONITOR.

THE OBJECT OF THE MONITOR IS
TO INJURE NO MAN, BUT TO
BLESS ALL MANKIND.
— Mary Baker Eddy

(ISSN 0882-7729) (ISSN 0896-551X World Edition)
Published daily except Saturdays, Sundays, and
holidays by The Christian Science Publishing Society,
One Norway Street, Boston, MA, USA, 02115. An
activity of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in
Boston, Massachusetts. Maracas Registrados.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.
Periodicals postage paid at Boston, MA, and at
additional mailing offices. Commission Paritaire N°.
(France): 3125 USA. Revenue Canada G.S.T.
Registration Number 126916436.

■ Reader comment line
617-450-2300

■ Subscriptions (US, Canada)
800-456-2220
(Monday through Friday, 9:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M. ET)

Or write: The Christian Science Monitor,
P.O. Box 37544, Boone, IA 50037-0544.

■ Delivery problems (US only)
800-678-3218

Delivery problems only: service@csps.com
In the UK call 0800-96-0866 (freephone) or write to
Treasurer's Representative, Brassey House,
New Zealand Avenue, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey,
KT12 1QD, England.

Rates: Daily edition (US) — 1 year \$189,
single copy 75¢. Daily edition outside US —
1 year \$269. World Edition (weekly, not available
in the US) — 1 year US\$79, single copy US\$1.50.

■ Advertising
Display: 617-450-2644
Classified: 800-762-3555
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REQUESTS FOR BACK ISSUES: Reference library,
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POSTMASTER/ADDRESS CHANGES: Send to
The Christian Science Monitor, P.O. Box 37544,
Boone, IA 50037-0544. Phone 1-800-456-2220.
Periodicals postage paid at Boston, MA, and at
additional mailing offices. The Christian Science
Monitor, Treasurer's Representative, Brassey House,
New Zealand Avenue, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey,
KT12 1QD, England. Freephone: 0800-96-0866.

CANADA POST: Publications mail agreement nr.
1435922.

Online at: www.csmonitor.com

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But do lessons in sportsman-
ship and dealing with embarrass-
ment really help stop student

**'It's better to intervene at
the middle school level.
You have a better chance
of success.'**

— Ron Echandia, school principal

misbehavior? At Cleveland, it
seems so. According to Principal
Phyllis Rodriguez, in 1992-93,
just before the program started,
there were 358 disciplinary refer-
rals at the school. In 1995-96,
there were 85.

Bigger rewards may come
when these students are in mid-
dle school and high school.

"We have a pretty rough popu-
lation. Most are from a nearby
housing project and are from sin-
gle-parent homes, and for many
of them these things are not
taught at home," says Ms. Ro-
driguez. Hence, she argues, it is
important to instill these behav-
iors early so that they will not

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difference in our school."

Response to warning signs

But broad-based efforts to re-
duce school violence like that at
Cleveland Elementary are only
part of the answer, say experts.
Also important is dealing effec-
tively with kids who send out
warning signs by misbehaving.

This means doing more
than assigning detention
and hoping problems will
solve themselves.

"Administrators and
teachers have a lot to deal
with on a daily basis, so it's
easy to neglect or ignore
subtle hints or behaviors
and deal just with major
things like a fight," says
Ron Echandia, the princi-
pal at Kennedy Middle School in
Eugene, Ore.

But, he argues, that's precisely
the wrong approach.

In the past five years, his
school has taken a more aggres-
sive stance toward students who
misbehave, even when the of-
fenses aren't that severe.

For example, he says that re-
cently, several girls had an argu-
ment and one of them shoved an-
other. Under the old way of doing
things, the shover would have
met briefly with a vice principal
and either been suspended or
sent back to class.

But instead, they had all the
girls meet with counselors. They

also asked the shover's teachers
if her behavior had changed re-
cently — and they said it had. So
Mr. Echandia called her home,
and found that there had been
some domestic turmoil recently.

"Now, the father is coming in,
and we have counselors involved,
and the father is receptive to what
we've proposed. I think our
chances of success with this girl
are high," he says.

While some may see the
school's approach as overreacting
— or meddling in a family's private
affairs — the results of this careful
attention to low-level misbehavior
are striking. In the 1996-97
school year, the school had 1,200
disciplinary referrals. Last school
year, there were 500. Similarly, in
1996-97 there were 15 cases of
weapons brought on campus.
Last year, there was one.

This work, school officials
hope, will stop students who
show signs of violent inclinations
from veering further down that
path. "There's a big change when
they enter high school," says
Echandia. "It's better to intervene
at the middle school level. You
have a better chance of success."

Severely troubled kids

But what do you do with kids
whose behavior is so explosive
that their next stop is a juvenile
correctional facility?

In most cases, special-educat-
ion teachers work with them in
public schools. Besides being less
costly, that approach keeps them
in the mainstream — and research
shows segregation doesn't neces-
sarily help severely troubled kids.

But in greater Cleveland, when
individual cases are too much for

gram, half the kids were
staying out of trouble.

With its roots in the
1960s, the philosophy
at PEP involves the whole com-
munity in the "reeducation" of the
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with the child's parents, doctor,
social worker, church youth
worker, and probation officer.

Students get sent home with
daily "passports" reporting to
parents what went well, and
maybe not so well. These kids
also work in the community,
teaching literacy to adults; volun-
teering with the elderly; clearing
trails in parks.

"We place kids in situations
where their good side shines. For
the first time in their lives, they
are not the bad kid," says PEP di-
rector Frank Fecser.

Mr. Fecser admits his program
"is costly, no question." In fact, he
spends about \$12 million to \$18
million a year to serve approxi-
mately 540 kids. But, he points
out, his day program is far less
expensive than residential pro-
grams, and than similar day pro-
grams in other states.

At the centers, academic and
emotional education are com-
bined. Teacher Carole Geraci
concentrates on reading and
math, but also works on social
skills with her students. They
practice sitting still, learning how
to ignore taunts, and even how to
apologize. Then, when real life sit-
uations come up, "it's almost au-
tomatic," she says proudly.

Every day before going home,
students are required to say
something positive about them-
selves, and about someone else.
And Ms. Geraci lays on the praise
when they behave well, even if it's
as minor as going quietly to the
sink to wash their hands.

NEW YORK TIMES / SUN, APRIL 16, 2000

President and First Lady Plan Conference on School Violence

PALO ALTO, Calif., April 15 (Reuters) — President Clinton said today that he and his wife, Hillary, would hold a White House conference on teenagers next month to look at ways to avoid violent outbursts like that at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., a year ago.

"As we prepare next week to mark the one-year anniversary of the tragedy at Columbine High School, our thoughts turn to the safety of our communities, schools and children," Mr. Clinton said in his weekly radio address.

Mr. Clinton said he and Mrs. Clinton, a Democratic candidate for a United States Senate seat in New York, would hold the conference on May 2 and would bring in parents and teenagers, experts in the causes of violence and educators "to talk through the challenges of raising responsible children."

On April 20 last year, two students went on a shooting rampage at the Columbine school near Denver, killing 13 people before killing themselves.

The conference will examine the risks, challenges and anxieties faced by today's teenagers, the impact of the Internet on young people and parenting, what parents, communities and young people can do to avoid risky behaviors and other topics, the White House said.

Mr. Clinton, on a five-day trip to

Georgia, California, New Mexico and Illinois, also announced \$40 million in new grants for 23 school districts to pay for strategies for reaching out to troubled young people.

"These districts are bringing school nurses and counselors together to respond to warning signs like depression or bullying," the president said.

One of the concerns in the aftermath of Columbine and other school shootings is that teachers, students and parents need to pay more attention to warning signs from troubled youths.

"Those of us who are parents have perhaps the greatest responsibility," Mr. Clinton said.

The president last Wednesday marked the coming anniversary of Columbine with a visit to Denver, focusing on ways to keep guns out of the hands of teenagers.

Mr. Clinton also said he was releasing \$60 million from a COPS in Schools program for police officers to work in schools in more than 220 communities.

"The vast majority of our schools are safe places for our kids to learn," he said. "But any violent incident is one too many."

The Times Book Review,
every Sunday

WASHINGTON POST APRIL 16, 2000

President, First Lady to Host Summit On Teenagers

Reuters

PALO ALTO, Calif., April 15—President Clinton said yesterday that he and his wife, Hillary, will hold a White House conference on teenagers next month to examine ways to avert violent outbursts like that at Colorado's Columbine High School a year ago.

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On April 20 last year, two students went on a shooting rampage at the school outside Denver, killing 13 people before killing themselves and leaving a deep scar in the American psyche about the causes behind the violence.

The conference will examine the risks, challenges and anxieties faced by today's teenagers, the impact of the Internet on youth and parenting, what parents, communities and young people can do to avoid risk behaviors, and other topics, White House officials said.

*'To injure no man,
but to bless all mankind'*

BOSTON • WEDNESDAY
MAY 3, 2000

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Teenagers want more ... family time?

■ A majority of American teens today say they are not spending enough time with their parents.

By Francine Kiefer
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON - Here's a surprise for today's parents: Their teenagers want to spend more time with them.

Evidence is growing that increasing numbers of young people feel they are not getting enough parental attention. Many teens now see it as their top concern.

The findings speak volumes about today's fast-paced society and the decline of the nuclear family. Teens, perhaps more isolated from adults than ever before, are saying they need their parents, yet parents - strapped for time by work or single-parenthood - are unable to respond to the degree their kids want.

"This is the surprise: Youth are [saying], 'I want to talk to an adult, but people are zipping by us.' What's interesting is that this research is coming out just as adults are not around," says Lynn McDonald, a psychologist at the University of Wisconsin's School of Education.

See **TEENS** page 4

Teens want more time with parents

TEENS from page 1

The benefits of something as simple as regular family meal-times are significant. Teens who eat dinner with a parent five days a week or more, are less likely to smoke, use alcohol or marijuana, or have sex, according to a study by the president's Council of Economic Advisors, released yesterday at a White House conference on teens.

And kids who say they feel close to at least one parent are far less likely to consider suicide or engage in antisocial behavior such as fighting at school, the

study shows.

A YMCA poll of parents and their children, also released at yesterday's conference, highlights the pivotal role parents play in their kids' lives. Twenty-one percent of teens aged 12 to 15 listed spending more time with family as their biggest concern - the top response, along with education.

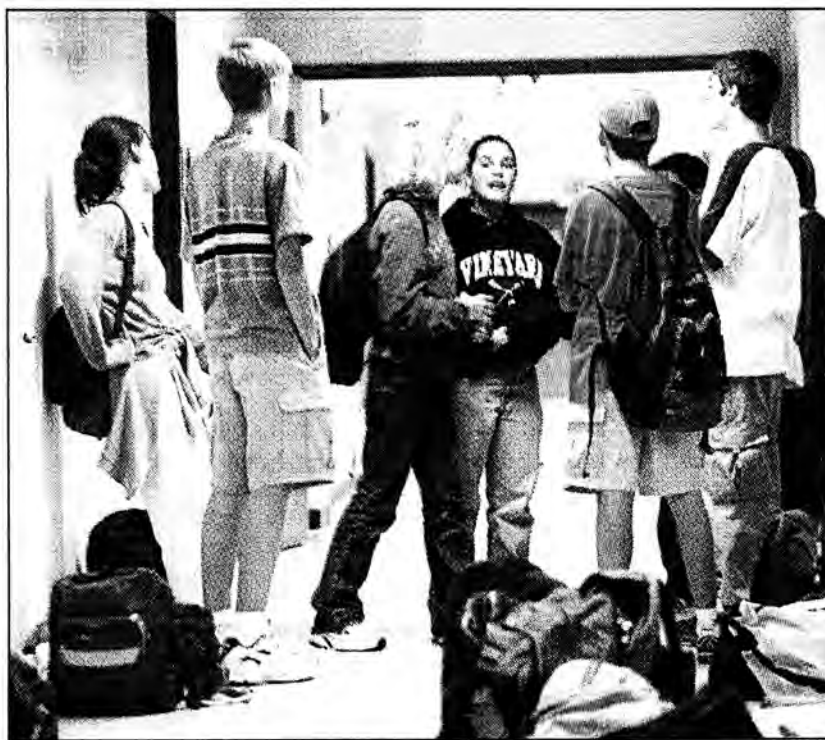
Similarly, in a recent poll by Newsweek, 73 percent of teens aged 13 to 19 said parents don't spend enough time with their children.

Turning to mom for advice

Perhaps as another surprise to parents, kids put parents highest on their list of people they turn to for advice, according to the YMCA poll, though friends are still a major influence (78 percent said they turn to parents; and 58 percent to friends). In both cases, younger teens are more interested in mom and dad than older teens are.

While the popular perception is that parents don't spend much time with their kids, that isn't necessarily true. Although 10 percent of parents say they eat just one meal a week or less with their teens, kids and parents are still finding time for each other - on average about 80 minutes a day.

But it isn't the quantity, it's the quality of the time that may be lacking. Polls continue to show a major disconnect in the way parents communicate with their kids.



PHOTOGRAPH
PRESERVATION

For instance, although many parents say they talk frequently to their kids about important issues like sex, dating, drugs, alcohol, and future plans, their kids don't agree. The same goes for parents' monitoring of their kids' TV and Internet use. Parents think they do this frequently, but kids say they don't.

"The good news is that families are still spending time together," says Kenneth Gladish, national director of the YMCA. "The bad news is that children may not be hearing what we parents think we're saying."

Surprisingly, another sign of the disconnect between teens and adults is that many parents don't even consider spending more time with their kids a top concern. In fact, the

YMCA poll showed that most adults are far more concerned about outside threats such as drugs and alcohol.

But those threats could greatly diminish if parents put in more time parenting. "The two things kids say that help steer them clear [of trouble] are a good relationship with parents and a good relationship with their school," says Ms. McDonald.

Of course, the question is, how can today's already overloaded

parents do this?

Changing the rules

Some experts argue that it's partly society's responsibility to change the rules so that parents can spend more time at home.

That's certainly Hillary Rodham Clinton's view. In a recent Newsweek column about raising Chelsea, the first lady urged lawmakers and business leaders to establish more flexible hours in the workplace.

The societal response is spreading at the community level, as well.

The Dallas YMCAs, for instance, are about to institute a program where parents can pick up their kids from the Y - along with their groceries, dry cleaning, and prescription drugs.

Parents have to agree that the time saved on these after-work errands will be used for family mealtime at home. Inside their grocery bags are talking points to help generate dinner-table discussion - and those points are discussed at the Y the next day.

McDonald, at the University of Wisconsin, is working with schools to hold regularly scheduled dinners with parents and their kids so they have time to talk. It's a program that's spreading quickly.

Parental practices

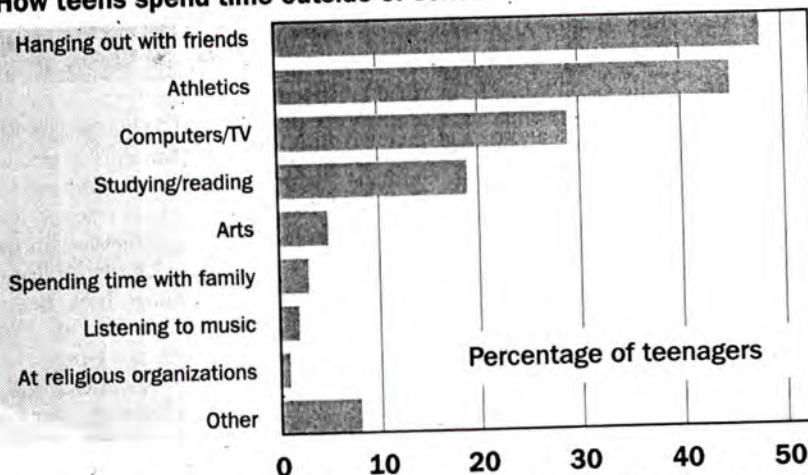
But other experts say it's not just institutions that need to change, but also parental practices and attitudes. Volunteer to be the teen driver as often as you can, turn off the radio in your car when you're driving with your kid, ask your teens open-ended questions, schedule retreats with your children - these are the ways to get to know your children, says Eric Chester, president and founder of Generation Why, a speaking and consulting firm on teens.

Kids have a lot of "stuff," says Mr. Chester, what they need more of is parental attention. "A lot of kids really want more family time. They've heard of the family unit. Here's a generation that wants family, and for all intents and purposes, they've been deprived of it," he says.

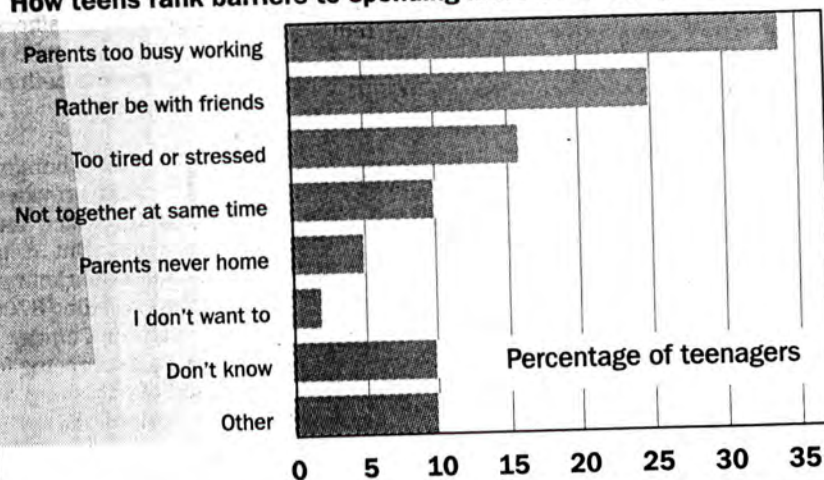
Teens and parent time

A majority of American teenagers ages 12 through 15 say their top concern is not having enough time with their parents. Here are some other findings:

How teens spend time outside of school



How teens rank barriers to spending more time with parents



Source: YMCA - Teen Topline Data Report

PETER KING - STAFF

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

NEW YORK POST, TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2000

POSTOPINION

Real Cures For Teen Problems

LAST week at the White House, the President and Mrs. Clinton held an all-day Conference on Teenagers where he unveiled a shiny, happy report by his Council of Economic Advisers. With only a drive-by nod to the "significant opportunity gap" between white and minority youths, the president focused on the report's "good news." Teenagers, he told the conferees, are "far healthier, more prosperous and look forward to more promising lives than ever before in our history." Who'd they survey — 'N Sync, Britney Spears and the Backstreet Boys?

The world of "far healthier, prosperous teenagers" is not the one Geoff Canada deals with every day. Introduced at the White House conference by Mrs. Clinton as a "hero to many for his groundbreaking work in Harlem," Canada felt that the conference was about one America while the crisis is in another. "It was exciting to have a conference putting children front and center," he told me, "but what I found disappointing is that we did not use the moment to address the plight of millions of our children. Here we are in the middle of this great prosperity, with a \$67 billion budget surplus, and only the most fragile infrastructure supporting huge numbers of our kids."

But instead of a call to action, the conference sounded an urgent call for parents to have dinner with their teens.

"They were speaking to a part of America that feels that's their issue — that they're not connecting with their kids," said Canada. "But they missed the larger issue — this huge disconnect with the other America."

The other America — with its 13.5 million at-risk kids — is the one Canada knows inside out. In his office in central Harlem hangs a color-coded map showing the "Harlem Children's Zone," a 23-block area he has carved out to provide the infrastructure and the personal support that the children there have been missing.

I asked him to explain the different colors on the map. "The yellow squares," he said, "are city-owned housing. We change them to red when we've organized the tenants to apply to become a low-income co-op. Brown means the residents have purchased their apartments." Like many of the hardest battles, it's block by block. It's also a child-by-child effort — one that, with the establishment of a new "baby college," provides support to par-

ents even before their children are born.

It was a rainy day in New York when Canada took me on a tour of his projects. It was like going from one healing outpost to another — from the baby college to the Technology Center to the Employment Center to The Rheedlan University for Community Education (TRUCE) — a building teeming with teenagers bursting with creativity.

Ever since Canada returned to Harlem with a master's from Harvard and a third-degree black belt, he's been telling America through his speeches, his books and his life that "we have failed our children. They live in a world where danger lurks all around them, and their playgrounds are filled with broken glass, crack vials and sudden death. And the stuff of our nightmares when we were children is the common reality for children today."

But what is common reality for these children only touches the middle-class teenagers at the center of the White House conference when the monsters

come out in white suburban schools like Columbine. In fact, tepid as it was, would there even have been a White House Conference on Teenagers but for Columbine?

"The problem cannot be solved from afar with a media campaign or other safe solutions operating from a distance," he said. "The only way we're going to make a difference is by placing well-trained and caring adults in the middle of what can only be called free-fire zones in our poorest communities."

What the embattled teenagers in our inner cities need is fewer hyped but anemic White House conferences and more tangible resources — private and public — of time and money. When one of the children Canada has been working with testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee, he explained how a Rheedlan worker had helped turn his life around: "He made a deal with me. If I went to school and did well, he would take me to a fancy restaurant once a week." When asked what kind of fancy restaurant, he replied, "Wendy's." The senators laughed. "A child's life turned around," Canada summed it up. "The cost: time with a caring adult and a couple of hamburgers."

Surely we can afford this — multiplied by a few million adults and a few billion burgers. Just imagine the sign: "Over 13 Million Served."



**ARIANNA
HUFFINGTON**

Survey: Teens craving parental involvement

They might be in their rebellious years, but teenagers still rely on Mom and Dad for advice, and they wish their parents had more time to spend with them, according to a survey to be unveiled today at a White House conference on teenagers. The YMCA commissioned the telephone poll of 200 12- to 15-year-olds and 200 parents. Among its findings:

- ▶ Parents might underestimate how much time kids spend with TV and the Internet and overestimate how much they discuss issues such as sex and drugs.

- ▶ One in four parents reported eating no more than four meals a week together with family. Teens listed inadequate family time as one of their top concerns.

- ▶ 47% of fathers and 38% of mothers said they are trying to find more time to spend with their kids.

In addition to President Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, the conference will feature Cabinet officers and experts on education and youth policy. Actor Danny DeVito and actress Rhea Perlman, who are married to each other, will discuss their work with the After School Alliance and their experiences as the parents of three teenagers.

— Kathy Kiely

First Lady Shares Ideas on Parenting

By MARC LACEY

WASHINGTON, May 2 — Chelsea Clinton was away at Stanford University today, finishing her junior year, but her ears must have been burning from a conversation that was occurring back home.

At the White House, her mother was using her as Exhibit A in the first White House Conference on Teenagers, a daylong session that brought together academic experts, advocates, parents and young people to discuss the challenges of growing up in this age of school shootings, body piercings and Internet pornography.

"The president and I speak, of course, with great authority: having just graduated from being the parents of a teenager to being the parents of a 20-year-old and having survived it," Hillary Rodham Clinton said as she began the conference.

Mrs. Clinton spoke from personal experience as she talked about

the challenges of balancing work and family and of the disconcerting feeling that parents face when their teenagers would rather spend time with friends.

"You want to hang around just in case they'll deign to say something to you," Mrs. Clinton said, prompting the president, whom she called the "co-parent" of the household, to roar with laughter.

The Clintons have been extremely protective of their only child, who was just 11 when they moved into the White House. But they appear quite proud that she has emerged from a most unusual childhood into an accomplished young woman.

On Capitol Hill, Republican critics complained that the Clintons were playing politics by convening the conference, an accusation that White House aides shrugged off as politics as well.

Mrs. Clinton said it was in the small kitchen in the White House residence where familial bonding

occurred in the Clinton household.

"Before our daughter left for college, the three of us made it a priority to share at least one meal together a day," Mrs. Clinton said.

To spread the word about the importance of sharing meals, or any time at all, with teenagers, she announced a new public education campaign on the issue by the National Partnership for Women and Families.

Despite their official travel schedules over the years, the first couple effectively worked at home as they were rearing Chelsea, increasing the opportunity for interaction. And Mr. Clinton was the top boss, meaning if he decided to attend one of her high school ballet recitals, the rest of the federal government obliged.

Acknowledging that other federal workers face tougher times, the president signed an executive order today barring discrimination against parents in the federal work force.



President Clinton walks into the East Room of the White House with first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, leading a group of teen-agers. AP

Clinton bans bias against parents in federal posts

Conference emphasizes teen welfare

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Parenting teens is just as important as holding down a government job, President Clinton said yesterday in signing an executive order prohibiting discrimination against parents in the federal workplace.

"Believe it or not, there are still some employers who are reluctant to hire or to promote employees who have children at home," Mr. Clinton said at a White House conference on raising and mentoring responsible teens.

"The goal of this order simply says no glass ceiling for parents," Mr. Clinton said.

The order ensures that workers are not discriminated against simply because they are parents. It applies only to federal workers and does not require approval from Congress.

"The job they're doing at home is more important anyway, and if they can do your job, you ought not to stop them," Mr. Clinton said to employers of parents.

Parents, teens, teachers, youth workers and others attended the daylong conference, which was moderated by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Topics included what parents and communities can do to help teens succeed, how parents can spend more time with their teens, and the media's effect on youth and parenting.

Today's teens aren't different, society is, Mrs. Clinton said.

"Rather than trying to make our kids somehow adapt, we should be thinking about ways that our institutions can change and be more supportive of our own kids and provide what our children have always needed — the kind of connectedness and support and love and discipline that every young person really wants and needs from us."

She announced an Internet site (<http://www.americasteens.gov>) to help teen-agers with homework, hobbies and careers. The site is being developed by 17 federal agencies.

"The goal of this order simply says no glass ceiling for parents"

—President Clinton

where parents can find information about media ratings systems.

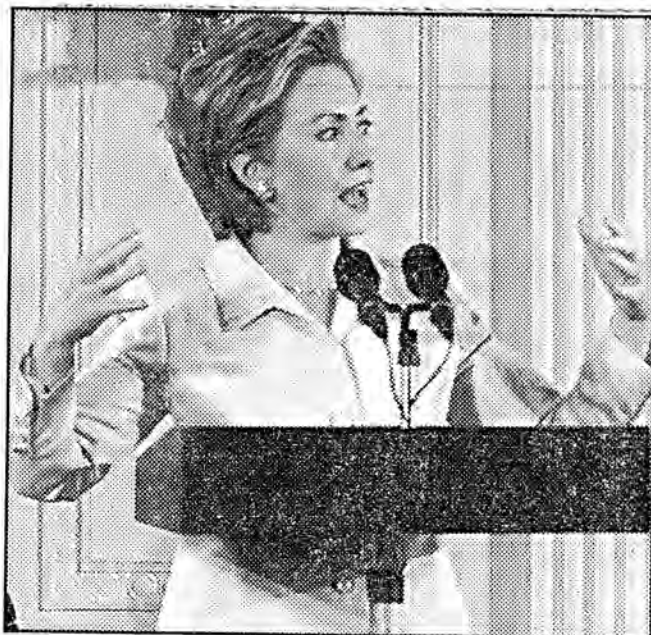
Republican National Committee spokesman Chris Paulitz complained that the conference relied heavily on liberal-minded panelists. Mrs. Clinton "used to say it takes a village to raise a child," Mr. Paulitz said. "Now all it takes is partisan Democrats and Hollywood moguls."

Actor and producer Danny DeVito, father of two teens and a 12-year-old, and his wife, actress Rhea Perlman, spoke in the East Room of the White House about successful after-school initiatives in Los Angeles.

"We have to listen to kids," Mr. DeVito said. "There are so many things going through their heads. They're confused. They're mad, or sad. What do they do if they don't have anybody who they can trust or turn to?"

But just being at home doesn't mean parents are emotionally involved with their teens, said Dr. Robert Blum, director of general pediatrics and adolescent health at the University of Minnesota. Going shopping or tossing a football does not bond parents and teens, he said.

"I challenge adults to include us, encourage us, have faith in youth of all ages," said Gabriella Contreras, a 14-year-old activist in Tucson, Ariz. "Volunteer with us to make a difference in our commu-



FOR THE KIDS: First Lady and Senate candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton yesterday addresses the first-ever White House conference on teens.

AP

Hill's parenting lesson: You be a fine example

By MARILYN RAUBER
Post Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Hillary Rodham Clinton, sitting not far from where her hubby had his fling with Monica Lewinsky, yesterday chided parents who don't practice what they preach.

"People think that talk substitutes for action, that as long as you are a good talker, then it doesn't really matter what else you do," Mrs. Clinton said at the first-ever White House Conference on Teenagers.

"Only by showing [teens] ... do you really have a chance of creating the sort of person you hope to have," Mrs. Clinton told a crowd of experts packed into the White House East Room.

First Daughter Chelsea, now 20, was a teenager during the sex scandal and House impeachment of her dad for lying under oath about his Oval Office affair with the then-White House intern just a few years

older than his daughter.

Yesterday, Mrs. Clinton, who wrote the child-raising best-seller "It Takes A Village," left the New York stump — where she's running for Senate against Mayor Giuliani — to host the high-profile conference, televised on cable TV.

She recalled staying up to catch a "sighting" of Chelsea on the chance she might "deign to say something," forego weekends at Camp David to be with Chelsea, and ensuring the family ate together once a day.

A new study shows teens who dine five nights a week with their parents are less likely to dabble in drugs, booze or sex.

The first lady, wearing little-seen reading glasses, blasted Tinseltown and the news media for "negative" portrayals of teens — and called for a new, uniform rating system to help parents control what their kids watch.

President to Sign Orders On Parents' Rights, Schools

By CHARLES BABINGTON
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Clinton is signing two executive orders this week, circumventing congressional resistance to his proposals to boost parental rights in the workplace and to deal with poorly performing schools.

Congressional Republicans have criticized Clinton's frequent use of executive orders, which they consider a means to thwart the will of the House and Senate. In the latest case, he also is diving into a presidential campaign issue.

Today in Owensboro, Ky., Clinton will announce an executive order designed to "turn around failing schools," White House officials said. The order will direct U.S. education officials to publish data on low-performing schools and to increase monitoring of efforts to improve such schools.

The move is part of Clinton's strategy to target poorly performing schools, giving them federal money to help reduce class sizes, hire better teachers and operate after-school programs. If the schools continue to perform badly, he says, states should close them.

Republican leaders have placed greater

emphasis on vouchers and other means of allowing parents to send their children to different schools. Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the GOP presidential candidate, wants to provide parents of disadvantaged children in failing schools \$1,500 a year to use as a voucher for private or public education. Vice President Gore, whose presidential bid is strongly backed by Clinton, has criticized Bush's plan as "the false promise of private school vouchers."

Yesterday, Clinton signed an executive order directing federal workplaces to refrain from discriminating against employees simply because they are parents. Last year he proposed legislation that would provide such protections in all workplaces, public and private. It would, for example, prohibit employers from "taking a mother or father off of a career-advancing path out of a belief that parents cannot meet requirements of these jobs."

Many business groups criticized the proposal as meddling and unnecessary, and it has gone nowhere in the GOP-controlled Congress. In response, Clinton is using his executive powers to enforce the plan for the one work force he controls, the federal government.

Bruce Reed, a domestic policy adviser to Clinton, said the order will "bar discrimination against parents in all aspects of employment—recruitment, referral, hiring, promotion and so on—and prohibit employers in the executive branch from acting on the mere assumption that parents or those with parental responsibilities can't satisfy the requirements of a particular position."

Clinton has issued more than 300 exec-



BY STEPHEN JAFFE — AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The Clintons converse near portrait of Martha Washington during White House conference on raising teenagers

utive orders, a pace that angers many Republican lawmakers. Michele Davis, press secretary to House Majority Leader Richard K. Armey (R-Tex.), said yesterday: "When they want to circumvent the public will, they bypass Congress by doing executive orders."

Clinton devoted yesterday morning to a White House conference on teenagers. He announced a new government Web site, www.americasteens.gov, designed to provide "a gateway to federal and other publicly supported Web sites for teens."

CORRECTION

The name of Motley Fool co-founder Erik Rydholm was misspelled in the May 2 Business section.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



New twists hit Senate race in N.Y.

Third-party politics play significant role in statewide contests

By Martha T. Moore
USA TODAY

NEW YORK — Just a week ago, the state's U.S. Senate race looked like a simple, if bloody, clash of titans. Two famous candidates, Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton and Republican Rudy Giuliani, were skipping any preliminaries and going straight to a months-long, bare-knuckled election fight.

Things have gotten more complicated. Giuliani's candidacy is in doubt after he revealed last week that he has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. And a third candidate has jumped in to challenge the New York City mayor for the votes of the state's conservatives.

Joseph DioGuardi, a former two-term Republican congressman, said this week that he will seek the nominations of the state's Conservative, Right to Life and Independence parties.

Suddenly a seemingly straightforward race is navigating the Byzantine byways of New York's third-party politics.

In New York, candidates can run on multiple ballot lines and include all the votes in their totals. In a tight race like the Giuliani-Clinton contest, in which polls are showing a statistical tie, minor parties can make a major difference. So even as they continue to campaign — Clinton heads upstate today to log visits to her last four of New York's 62 counties, and Giuliani goes to Rochester to appear on a political chat show — the candidates are busy courting smaller groups such as the Conservative, Independence, and Liberal parties.

If DioGuardi wins the Conservative ballot line, he seems poised to draw votes from Giuliani, who supports abortion rights, gay rights and gun control. The party has 171,000 members but can bring many more votes to a candidate. No Republican since 1974 has won statewide office without Conservative Party backing.

"It's clear there's no real conservative in this race," DioGuardi says. He cited Giuliani's opposition to a ban on some forms of late-term



WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON TEENAGERS RAISING RESPONSIBLE AND RESOURCEFUL YOUTH

By Larry Downing, Reuters

Heading to upstate N.Y. today: Hillary Rodham Clinton listens to actor Danny DeVito during the White House Conference on Teenagers Tuesday. (President Clinton makes announcements at conference, 1A.)



1986 photo by Mario Surlani, AP

Third candidate: Former representative Joseph DioGuardi is challenging Rudy Giuliani for conservatives' votes in the Senate race.

abortion. "There needs to be an alternative, and there needs to be a debate."

DioGuardi, who calls the first lady "a moving van away from the most scandal-scarred administration in the history of this nation," says Giuliani's illness won't prevent him from criticizing the mayor's record. "I don't think people are going to think I'm insensitive if we have a feisty debate on the issues," he says.

Giuliani has only now begun to pursue the endorsement of the Conservative Party.

"I think I can win a Conservative

Party primary," he said this week.

The chairman of the Conservative Party, angered by the mayor's failure to seek his party's nod before now, isn't sure Giuliani will get the chance to compete in a primary. Chairman Mike Long says he is "enthused" about DioGuardi's entrance into the race. "He is clearly closer to the Republican point of view than the mayor is," Long said. Despite the financial and fame advantages of the two other candidates, DioGuardi has a shot, Long says. "All he needs is 35-40% of the vote to win this thing, and that's not impossible," he says.

Meanwhile, both Giuliani and Clinton have sought the endorsement of the 172,000-member Independence Party, the state's arm of the Reform Party. Clinton, however, said she would not accept its ballot line if it meant sharing a ticket with Pat Buchanan, who is seeking the Reform Party nomination for president. That earned her a rebuke from Lenora Fulani, a party leader and Buchanan ally.

Clinton and Giuliani will appear Saturday before the Liberal Party, the head of which, Raymond Harding, is a longtime Giuliani ally. This line has traditionally gone to Democrats, and no Democrat has been elected senator or governor without the Liberal Party line since the party was founded in 1944.

At the same time, Giuliani's campaign is working hard to allay fears that the mayor might not run. On Tuesday, for example, his campaign announced it had hired a veteran Republican operative as its field coordinator, presumably to boost Giuliani's campaign upstate, where he has not spent as much time campaigning as Clinton has.

Giuliani says he won't make a decision on his candidacy before he determines the best course of treatment for his illness. "Running is something I would like to do," he said Monday. "Being alive and healthy is more important."

Marjorie Williams

Parenthood Without Punishment

At first blush, it seems the soul of good sense: Of course parents shouldn't be denied jobs or promotions simply because they have kids. When President Clinton on Tuesday announced an executive order barring discrimination against parents in the federal workplace, to match legislation he proposed last year covering private-sector employees, he was asserting an apparently apple-pie principle.

But on closer examination, this is a mischievous bit of grandstanding. For one thing, we should always be wary when our leaders make a great show of redressing an evil that has not been shown to exist. As Republicans in Congress have pointed out, in letting Clinton's private-sector version of this initiative languish, the White House has never shown (nor made much effort to) that parents are routinely discriminated against in any way clear enough to be susceptible to legal redress.

For another thing, to the extent that this problem exists, there are already some good laws on the books to address it. It is already illegal to discriminate against a pregnant woman; and thanks in part to Clinton, workers are already by law entitled to return to the same or an equivalent job after 13 weeks of unpaid leave following childbirth or family crisis.

But the real mischief in Clinton's executive order is that it perpetuates the myth that most confounds all our debates about work-family conflict, which is the fairy-tale belief that if only there were no mean employers harboring brute prejudices against children, there would be no work-family conflict. There should be "no glass ceiling for parents," Clinton declaimed, in signing the order. But of course parenthood itself, properly pursued, is its own glass ceiling.

Being a parent almost inevitably, for a while, cuts into the professional intensity that younger, more single-focused workers bring to the job, including the willingness to work long hours on

short notice. Parents often bring compensatory skills to their work: the efficiencies of experience; the clarity of purpose that parenthood, at its best, can promote; the insight that some of what they have let go is Dilbertian wheel-spinning to begin with.

But the fact is that work and family are often in competition, and good parents sacrifice work to their families more often than they sacrifice their families to their work. We hate to utter this blunt judgment, but the truth is that all the employer flexibility in the world cannot entirely banish the conflict. Our leaders do us no favors when they suggest that the onus is entirely on others—politicians, bosses, co-workers—to make this conflict seem less sharp.

In the long run, it makes us crazy to look at the world around us and be confronted every day with the suggestion that we act and feel exactly as we did before our lives changed. For women, this myth all too often leaves us wondering, "What's wrong with me?" It sets back working parents' efforts to persuade employers to see them as different but valuable: as people for whom allowances must sometimes be made when a child is sick or when a school conference calls but who return enough value—both on the job and as contributors to the social order—to be worth it. You

can't simultaneously urge employers to give parents some breaks and also hector them for not regarding parents in exactly the same light as non-parents.

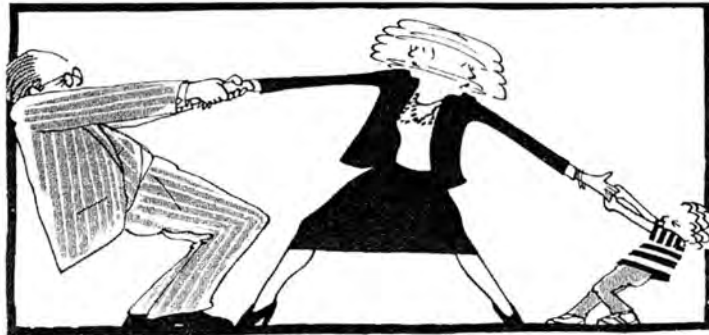
And Clinton's ploy encourages employers to believe that it's fair to expect everyone, without variation, to want to work all the time. Most professional women and men know that the real sanctions against their family lives in the workplace aren't the gross injuries of being fired or denied promotion; they're the insidious suggestions that if you were really dedicated, you would work work work 14 hours a day. Ask yourself whether Clinton's executive order helps or hurts parents' efforts—in the workplace and in their own convictions—to challenge that definition of dedication.

There are always two overlapping debates going on in our discussion of work-family issues. One is the debate over personal choices that is the luxury of middle- and upper-middle-class families. (Should I work? How much? How do I balance what I gain from working against what my kids want or need?) For this debate, Clinton's pandering in the direction of "parents' rights" only obscures what's at stake.

And of course it makes no contribution at all to the second debate, which is the one our public policy should concern itself with: the question of what we can do for the millions of women who work long hours for low pay and, as things stand, have almost no chance of seeing their children adequately cared for during their work hours.

All the "rights" in the world do nothing to help when you have to get your toddler on a bus at 5:30 a.m. so you can get her to her substandard day care in time to get to your own job cleaning hotels by 7:30.

But of course addressing that problem would cost a lot of money. It's much easier to stand up for our comfortable, middle-class denial of the moral weight our choices carry.



BY JOHN OVERMYER

THE NATION'S NEWSPAPER

**USA
TODAY**

NO. 1 IN THE USA

Clinton calls for parental rights

Bans discrimination in federal workplace

By Kathy Kiely
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Saying there should be "no glass ceiling for parents," President Clinton signed an executive order Tuesday banning discrimination against them in the federal workplace.

He urged Congress to extend the protection to all workers by making it illegal to deny jobs or promotions to people because they have obligations at home. "The most important work a society does is still to raise children," the president said.

Clinton's order applies only to federal employees. Legislation protecting parents from discrimination by private employers has been stuck in Congress because of opposition from business.

Pat Cleary of the National Association of Manufacturers said the order targets a non-existent problem and could spawn a wave of costly and frivolous lawsuits. "People are already protected today by a host of anti-discrimination laws," he said. "To create one more is to create one more opportunity for mischief."

Bruce Reed, the president's chief domestic policy adviser, said the president's action is as important symbolically as it is legally. "We wanted to send a clear signal to employers that there is nothing wrong with being a parent," he said.

Clinton made his announcement at a White House conference on raising teenagers. The lack of adult supervision was a major theme of the conference.

"One of the biggest casualties of modern life has been family time," said first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, who took time out of her New York Senate campaign to make one of her increasingly rare official appearances at the White House.

The first lady joked that she and her husband "speak of course with great authority, having just graduated from being parents of a teenager ... and having survived it." Their daughter, Chelsea, is 20.

"I know the experience of hanging around and waiting for a sighting," Hillary Clinton said as the room erupted in sympathetic laughter.

Republicans responded to the conference skeptically. "I think we can find some common ground," said House Republican Conference chairman J.C. Watts, R-Okla. "But the Clinton-Gore administration must stop playing politics with our children."

Among the recommendations at the conference:

- Families should break bread together. A Council of Economic Advisers report found that teenagers who dine regularly with their parents are less likely to become involved with alcohol, drugs, violence or sex.

- Chores give children "the opportunity to be effective, contributing members of our society," said Jacquelynne Eccles, a psychologist at the University of Michigan.

- Employers should provide flextime not just for new parents but for those who have teens at home.

- The entertainment industry should come up with a simpler ratings system.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

▶ TODAY'S ARTICLE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE ◀

Bringing a spiritual perspective to daily life

Raising responsible children

PRESIDENT AND MRS. CLINTON are scheduled to host a White House conference this week that will bring together educators, experts, parents, and teenagers "to talk through challenges of raising responsible children." The conference is clearly in response to the tragic violence at Columbine High School a year ago, and will likely touch on some of the anxieties and challenges teenagers face today.

Almost certain to come up will be the influence the Internet has on youth.

While prayer is sometimes given token acknowledgment in such discussions, is it possible that prayer, at its deepest and purest, deserves more than a peripheral role – if not at the conference, then at least in our own consideration? One way to think of prayer is as insight into the true nature of things. And this spiritual insight into what shapes a young person's nature and actions is at the core of lasting solutions. As we grasp more of the nature and power of real prayer, we'll find it an invaluable aid in the raising of responsible children. We'll find we get beneath the surface evidence of alienation and anxiety and uncover the very best in teenagers today.

The book of Jeremiah in the Bible offers this promise: "I [God] will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (31:33). What's really at work deep inside today's teen – a troubled and turbulent storm, churned by a myriad of violent influences? Not according to that Bible promise. The real thing that shapes his or her nature and actions is God's own law. That law is a force for good that has been placed in the heart of each of us *by God Himself*. It is a law that provides the basis for right action, right behavior, right inclinations. It is a law that gives a foundation for knowing right from wrong.

When we realize the actuality of this law, we find it begins to still anger and complaint and bitterness in ourselves and other people. Even better, it enables us to get beneath whatever turbulence seems to be the source of trouble, and to help ourselves and others find a place of calm, peace, and contentment that is maintained by God. The righteousness and natural good-

ness of us all is based on God's law, realized in prayer.

God, who is divine Love, has placed love within each of us. But our participation can't be passive. Our job is to become more alive to the presence of the moral and spiritual characteristics of this love. Then, to awaken within the children in our experience an awareness of its presence. Sometimes we can do this directly, guiding a young person into more wholesome habits and constructive, not destructive, activities. Our best guidance may be through the example we set. At other times, or when we don't have a lot of direct contact with young people, our contribution may be chiefly in the silent prayers we pray for them, and for all people.

True, the impact of this silent knowing may not arrive with all the flashing light and color and noise of the violent scenes pouring from some Web sites. But the power of God's law of good, in-

Spiritual insight into what shapes a young person's nature and actions is at the core of lasting solutions.

stilled in each heart – a law that supports every impulse for peace and calm and brotherhood – is much more lasting and more deeply transforming, even though it may

scarcely be noticed for all its quietude. It heals.

Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of this newspaper, wrote something that applies to teens and people of every age: "O glorious hope! There remaineth a rest for the righteous, a rest in Christ, a peace in Love. The thought of it stills complaint; the heaving surf of life's troubled sea foams itself away, and underneath is a deep-settled calm" ("Message to The Mother Church for 1902," pg. 19).

Our prayers can forward the raising of responsible children by dissipating threatening storms of emotion that might otherwise explode into violence. This is especially true when we gain in prayer a spiritual insight into the very law that instills in each child the peace and calm of the all-pervading divine Love. When our prayers recognize that God's own law is in each heart, operating as a peace-enforcing presence, they make a measurable difference for the better.



By Karen S. Peterson
USA TODAY

Preschool-age rapport eases strain of teen years

In an era of school shootings and at a time when the White House holds a conference on the importance of good parenting, engaging teens in productive conversation is seen by many as a key to a less violent future.

But how do you communicate with a teen who doesn't seem interested in talking to parents at all?

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton noted at the day-long conference May 2 that conversing with teens can be tough. "You'll want to hang around just in case they decide to say something to you," she said with a laugh.

James Levine, director of the Fatherhood Project of the non-profit Families and Work Institute, calls knowing how to engage teenagers — especially reluctant boys — "one of the great riddles of parenthood."

He also says that, like many great riddles, the answer is "a paradox. If you want to get a teenage boy to talk, do not try to get him to talk."

Instead, Levine says, "do something active with him. Wash the car, throw around a football, do an errand. When you're doing things together — even when you are just in the car driving together — he is more likely to start talking spontaneously than to respond to a question you throw out." He is more relaxed and does not feel a parent is putting him on the spot, Levine says.

Many experts, teens and parents agree with Levine.

"I never sit down and say, 'Let's have a talk,'" says Bill Flynn, 53, of Manassas, Va. Flynn has two grown sons and one about to turn 13. "That is just not me. I don't do like they tell you on those TV public service announcements: sit at the breakfast table and talk to your kids about drugs. They just roll their eyes back when you try something like that."

Lucas Ruiz, 16, of Junction City, Kan., says: "Don't make it a big deal. Ask if your kid wants to go to the movies, and maybe afterward you can get something to eat. And then you can get to talking."

Talk sideways

Laura Sessions Stepp says that having effective conversations with teens means "talking sideways." It is important to have dinners together and chat face-to-face, as the White House conference experts said, but "lots of conversations occur alongside a teen while working on some project," she says.

If parents have an issue they want to raise, they can plan a setting that will let a teen talk at his own pace, says Stepp, the author of *Our Last Best Shot: Guiding Our Children Through Early Adolescence*. "Think about how you can structure an environment so the conversation can take place," she says. And remember that "things come out slowly, haltingly, even to parents they love and trust. The kids still worry they will look like fools."

In her book, Stepp talks about a boy suspended from school for a year. "His dad put him to work hanging drywall working alongside him. They had lots of conversations at work about what the son had done. His father came to un-

derstand him much more." George, have been having good conversations with their son "since he was old enough to talk. We have just developed a wonderful relationship through the years," says the 51-year-old mother, from Decatur, Ga.

She has been nearby when he wanted to talk. "I have been involved in everything he has done, from playing in the park as a child to helping with his science fair projects."

Establishing rapport early meant that "when the teen years came about, we didn't have to bridge a gap," she says. The two parents can talk to George II, now 16, "about sex, drugs, alcohol, smoking. We can talk openly about any kind of sensitive issue. Some of the time I maybe have had to pull some things out of him, but mostly it just came naturally."

George II is very tight with his dad, but mother and son also have a special time together, just the two of

them, that she has cherished since he was in kindergarten. It is their "kitchen time," when she is home from her job as a manager with the Federal Aviation Administration. He does his homework in the kitchen while she cooks supper.

George II says: "We talk about my schoolwork, homework, any problems I might be having at my job or playing baseball. Trust makes it work. We've built it up over time."

His mom says: "If he needs help, I am right there. When he is finishing up before supper, I'll sit down and ask him how things are going. It's our kitchen time together, and we both look forward to it."

It is also a time when Pope will casually reinforce the family's values. "We talk a lot about how to bring other people up while not letting them bring you down."

By Karen S. Peterson

derstand him much more."

Be prepared for such sideways conversations to occur at any time and place, says Linda Perlman Gordon, a family therapist and co-author of *Why Boys Don't Talk and Why We Care: A Mother's Guide to Connection*.

In her book, she talks about a teenage boy who burst into his parents' bedroom at 11 at night, reacting to what he had seen on *Jerry Springer*. His dad said it was late and he wanted to sleep, but his mom "followed her instincts and used the moment to draw her son into conversation."

Read your son's cues about when he is ready to talk, Gordon also suggests. Marcia Cohen indicates that she does just that. "I find that when Josh (17) has had lots of sleep, he is ready, wide awake and ready to converse," says Cohen, 43, of Harrisburg, Pa.

Gordon talks in terms of staying con-



By Rebecca D'Angelo

Stepp: Talks occur alongside a project.

nected to sons through "touch points" rather than full-fledged talks. Put a note on the refrigerator saying you've left him a tuna sandwich, or set up a time to touch base on the phone most days, she says. Such touchstones "can be small moments," but they show connection.

Telling family stories is often a good way to get teens to open up, says Mark Wertman, author of *True Confessions of a Real Mr. Mom*. Talking about family members who have dropped out of school or have been engaged in family feuds can get the conversational ball rolling. "And it gives teenagers a sense of their heritage," Wertman says, as well as a reason to share their own experiences.

How moms connect

Drawing out sons can be especially

difficult for moms, Linda Gordon says. Moms aren't usually out tossing footballs with their sons or hanging drywall with them. Moms may not understand as well as dads that "connection for an adolescent boy may not be based on a deep, emotional exchange with another." In fact, connection may be only "a brief moment of agreement about an issue, an incident that reaffirms trust, or even an extended period of comfortable silence."

And moms also may be worried about even trying to stay close, fearing that their sons won't grow up to be strong, independent males if they stay attached to mom as teens, Gordon says. She calls that concept nonsense. "Trust your instincts," she says.

Both parents may not realize that when their sons are talking, often the adults are not really listening, says Kathy McCoy, author of *The New Teenage Body Book*. "As parents, we want to share our wisdom," she says. "But it is all too rare when we really listen. You have to let teens know you value their opinions."

Put the newspaper down and listen, says Brady Welch, 16, of Mount Pleasant, S.C. "Be inquisitive but not too aggressive," he says. "And don't talk down to your kid, like he is inferior. That is an absolute no-no."

Judith Holland says she is lucky. Her son, 15, is very verbal, and it is up to her to do the listening. "Joel is very talkative," says Holland, 50, of McLean, Va. "It is really just a matter of my saying, 'Isn't that interesting?' of my hearing him, showing concern. I am just terribly interested in whatever he has to say."

Just be available

Just because your son is not talking to you doesn't mean he is not talking to other adults, both teens and parents say. "Teens may be talking to somebody else and getting advice they feel comfortable with," says Brannan Jackson, 15, of Cincinnati. "It can be other adults, whoever they feel safe with."

Marcia Cohen says that many of her son Josh's friends come to her to talk. "They tend to open up with me. Josh knows I can get his friends to spill their guts," she says. "Then Josh thinks it is cool to talk with me."

All of the advice about talking to teenagers has one foundation: talking with them way back when they were little kids, says Hara Estroff Marano.

"You can't build a house starting with the second story. You have to lay a lot of groundwork first," says Marano, an editor at large for *Psychology Today* and the author of *Why Doesn't Anybody Like Me? A Guide to Raising Socially Confident Kids*. "By the time they hit 13, their peers are an all-powerful influence. Parents have to establish a line of communication early and keep it open."

More important than trying to initiate some big conversation is just being available when your son wants to talk to you, Brannan Jackson says. And that may not happen often.

"Parents can be supportive of talking to their child," he says. "But teen boys have a lot of pride. It is not like they will always tell what is on their mind. And sometimes parents have to accept that they just don't want to talk."

Watch for subtle cues he's opening up

Opportunities to talk to sons can occur at unexpected moments, say Susan Morris Shaffer and Linda Perlman Gordon in *Why Boys Don't Talk and Why We Care: A Mother's Guide to Connection* (Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, \$14.95). The authors suggest finding and taking advantage of "teachable moments," special times when a son indicates he is ready for conversation:

- ▶ Learn to recognize your son's cues about when he is emotionally ready for you to approach him.
- ▶ Expect your son's cues to be more subtle than your daughter's.

Girls are often more open to discussion than boys.

- ▶ Be open to talking, even at odd hours, about his interest in anything from sports to girls.

- ▶ React to what he says without overwhelming him with comments.

- ▶ Don't make a big deal about his having talked to you. He may not want to feel "noticed."

- ▶ Don't make him feel criticized or patronized or ashamed.

- ▶ Answer his questions honestly, even if they make you uncomfortable.

- ▶ Don't berate yourself for missing a cue. There will be other chances.

How schools stop teen violence

■ Recent shootings have prompted districts nationwide to try new programs, and a template for success is emerging.

By Francine Kiefer
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
and Neil Irwin

WASHINGTON — Across the nation, communities are redoubling their efforts to prevent teen violence — much of it in the year since the shootings in Littleton, Colo. While tragedies such as Columbine are

what often dominate the headlines, experts say a growing number of programs, from Florida to Oregon are starting to prove effective in stemming youth violence. The initiatives vary widely: from simple efforts to reward good behavior with gold-star-like stickers to more aggressive psychological counseling programs. Not surpris-

ingly, the popularity of the initiatives varies too: Some have dramatically reduced violent incidents in schools and been embraced by teachers and parents alike. Others have proven costly for districts and raise questions of too much intrusion into family lives. But beneath all the experimentation, researchers say they are now starting to identify common elements that make programs work. "Across the country, in every state, there are real pockets of excellence, real

See TEENS page 4

TEENS from page 1

"pockets of hope," says David Sher of the American Institutes for Research, a behavioral science group based here that has become something of a national clearinghouse of success stories. In drawing up model initiatives for communities, he and her social scientists have come to one deceptively simple conclusion: By taking preventive measures early on, communities can head off tragedies down the road. This week, President Clinton and the first lady host a White House conference on teens, aimed at exploring some of those early steps. The meeting will include parents, community leaders, and teenagers themselves. Amid all the attention, the

Monitor looked at case studies of several schools with impressive violence-reduction records.

Stop and think

In stopping violence in America's schools, a red sticker in elementary school can be more effective than metal detectors and security guards in high school.

That is, if it's a "Stop and Think" sticker, awarded to students who show exceptionally good behavior at Cleveland Elementary School in Tampa, Fla.

Since 1993, the school has adopted a general approach toward teaching its students — many of whom come from broken homes — how to listen, resolve conflict without fighting, deal with losing, wait one's turn, and otherwise interact with others effectively.

The 20 minutes a day spent learning social skills, along with those prized red stickers to reward students who take the lessons particularly to heart, have reaped big rewards, says veteran second-grade teacher Kimberly Howery. "When they come to a situation, whether it's someone talking to you when the teacher's talking or calling you a name, they stop and think and make a good choice or a bad choice."

But do lessons in sportsmanship and dealing with embarrassment really help stop student



ANTHONY DAFONSECA

LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER: Teens in the Positive Education Program in Astabula, Ohio, learn social skills through trust exercises like this one, involving an Earth Ball.

'It's better to intervene at the middle school level. You have a better chance of success.'

— Ron Echandia, school principal

misbehavior? At Cleveland, it seems so. According to Principal Phyllis Rodriguez, in 1992-93, just before the program started, there were 358 disciplinary referrals at the school. In 1995-96, there were 85.

Bigger rewards may come when these students are in middle school and high school.

"We have a pretty rough population. Most are from a nearby housing project and are from single-parent homes, and for many of them these things are not taught at home," says Ms. Rodriguez. Hence, she argues, it is important to instill these behaviors early so that they will not

turn to violence to settle arguments later.

Moreover, the children enjoy the lessons, says Ms. Howery. "They get excited about it and tell the class if they used a skill over the weekend. It's really made a difference in our school."

Response to warning signs

But broad-based efforts to reduce school violence like that at Cleveland Elementary are only part of the answer, say experts. Also important is dealing effectively with kids who send out warning signs by misbehaving.

This means doing more than assigning detention and hoping problems will solve themselves.

"Administrators and teachers have a lot to deal with on a daily basis, so it's easy to neglect or ignore subtle hints or behaviors and deal just with major things like a fight," says Ron Echandia, the principal at Kennedy Middle School in Eugene, Ore.

But, he argues, that's precisely the wrong approach.

In the past five years, his school has taken a more aggressive stance toward students who misbehave, even when the offenses aren't that severe.

For example, he says that recently, several girls had an argument and one of them shoved another. Under the old way of doing things, the shover would have met briefly with a vice principal and either been suspended or sent back to class.

But instead, they had all the girls meet with counselors. They

also asked the shover's teachers if her behavior had changed recently — and they said it had. So Mr. Echandia called her home, and found that there had been some domestic turmoil recently.

"Now, the father is coming in, and we have counselors involved, and the father is receptive to what we've proposed. I think our chances of success with this girl are high," he says.

While some may see the school's approach as overreacting — or meddling in a family's private affairs — the results of this careful attention to low-level misbehavior are striking. In the 1996-97 school year, the school had 1,200 disciplinary referrals. Last school year, there were 500. Similarly, in 1996-97 there were 15 cases of weapons brought on campus. Last year, there was one.

This work, school officials hope, will stop students who show signs of violent inclinations from veering further down that path. "There's a big change when they enter high school," says Echandia. "It's better to intervene at the middle school level. You have a better chance of success."

Severely troubled kids

But what do you do with kids whose behavior is so explosive that their next stop is a juvenile correctional facility?

In most cases, special-education teachers work with them in public schools. Besides being less costly, that approach keeps them in the mainstream — and research shows segregation doesn't necessarily help severely troubled kids.

But in greater Cleveland, when individual cases are too much for

the public schools, there's PEP.

That stands for Positive Education Program, a network of six off-site day centers for kids 6 to 18. Held up by some as a national model, PEP gives intense attention to young people from diverse racial and economic backgrounds, putting them in classes of 10, with two teachers per class.

Their record is enviable. The program takes in 150 to 200 children each year, but behavior improves to such a degree that one-third eventually return to mainstream life. Another third go back to public school but still require a lot of support. A recent study showed that, two years out of the program, half the kids were staying out of trouble.

With its roots in the 1960s, the philosophy

at PEP involves the whole community in the "reeducation" of the child. Each participant gets a case worker who keeps in touch with the child's parents, doctor, social worker, church youth worker, and probation officer.

Students get sent home with daily "passports" reporting to parents what went well, and maybe not so well. These kids also work in the community, teaching literacy to adults; volunteering with the elderly; clearing trails in parks.

"We place kids in situations where their good side shines. For the first time in their lives, they are not the bad kid," says PEP director Frank Fecser.

Mr. Fecser admits his program "is costly, no question." In fact, he spends about \$12 million to \$18 million a year to serve approximately 540 kids. But, he points out, his day program is far less expensive than residential programs, and than similar day programs in other states.

At the centers, academic and emotional education are combined. Teacher Carole Geraci concentrates on reading and math, but also works on social skills with her students. They practice sitting still, learning how to ignore taunts, and even how to apologize. Then, when real life situations come up, "it's almost automatic," she says proudly.

Every day before going home, students are required to say something positive about themselves, and about someone else. And Ms. Geraci lays on the praise when they behave well, even if it's as minor as going quietly to the sink to wash their hands.

HELPING TEENS' NEEDS

TODAY'S White House Conference on Teenagers has been criticized as a politically motivated event, taking advantage of the recent anniversary of last year's violence at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. Some suspect the conference is largely intended to showcase the concerns and ideas of Hillary Clinton, the first lady, who is now running for the US Senate in New York.

But let's step back from this skepticism that too easily envelops what transpires in Washington. A conference on the problems facing today's teenagers is unquestionably timely, and not only because of the Columbine anniversary.

This is a difficult time for teenagers, and their parents. The world's social, educational, and economic underpinnings are rapidly transforming – even as teens embark on the sometimes harrowing transition to adulthood.

Terrible events like Columbine both reflect young people's inner uncertainties and add to them. School security has shot to a top priority in the past year. New programs, many of them enlightened and successful, have sprung up around the country (see story page 1). Efforts to create more caring codes of conduct within

schools, to help troubled students recognize their worth, and to work more closely with willing parents, deserve high marks. They take school safety a needed step beyond metal detectors and police in the halls.

The White House conference will highlight such efforts. It will undoubtedly also note the huge diversity of experience among American teens – as well as their common needs.

Kids from blighted urban areas, where family structures are battered by poverty and substance abuse, present unique issues. For them, violence can be a daily occurrence.

Well-off kids from the suburbs have vastly different daily experiences. Yet violence has intruded in their lives, too.

The White House gathering – and the wider dia-

logue it ought to stimulate – should focus on the essentially moral and spiritual needs shared by teens of all backgrounds. Chief among these needs is the presence of caring adults who can guide and nurture. Parents have primary responsibility, but teachers, counselors, and mentors can be crucial.

All Americans, from the first family down, have an interest in helping teens find stability and purpose.

A White House conference focuses on ending teen violence.



Victoria L. Valentine
05/02/2000 02:46:42 PM

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Subject: WIRE STORIES -- WH Teen Conference

BC-clinton-parents

Clinton Bans Discrimination Against Parents in Federal Jobs ^By Richard Keil

^c.2000 Bloomberg News

Washington, May 2 (Bloomberg) -- President Bill Clinton signed an executive order today barring federal agencies from discriminating against working parents in hiring and promotion.

``Believe it or not, there are still some employers who are reluctant to hire or to promote employees who have children at home,'' Clinton said. ``The goal of this order simply says, 'No glass ceiling for parents.' The job they're doing at home is more important anyway, and if they can do your job you ought not to stop them.''

The order applies only to the federal workplace; changes in employment law that would apply to private companies would require congressional approval.

Clinton announced the move at a White House conference on teenagers; the president first proposed the change in employment law during his 1999 State of the Union address.

The order bars discrimination against parents in all aspects of federal employment, including recruitment, referral, hiring, promotions, training and discharge. The goal of the move is to prevent employers from assuming that those caring for children wouldn't have the time or commitment to fulfill job responsibilities.

It is based on legislation introduced last year by Senator Edward Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat, and Senator Christopher Dodd, a Democrat from Connecticut; the bill didn't pass.

Clinton administration officials said the order wouldn't interfere with an employer's ability to select workers. --Richard Keil in Washington (202) 624-1884, or dkeilbloomberg.net /rdm /wfs -0- (BN) May/02/2000 13:47

Clintons convene White House conference on teens

WASHINGTON, May 2 (UPI) -- President Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton convened a White House conference on teens Tuesday, releasing reports showing some good news about youth involvement with drugs and smoking but significant problems remaining, including a lack of quality time with parents. Clinton said, "Virtually everybody has some trouble balancing family and work."

^PM-White House-Teens, 1st Ld-Writethru, a0415,590

^White House holds conference on raising teens

^Eds: LEADS with 9 new grafs with Clinton executive order, quotes; picks up graf 5 pvs,

'Adults usually...'

^By DEB RIECHMANN= ^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) President Clinton today ordered a ban on a ``glass ceiling for parents'' in the federal work force, meaning the government cannot discriminate against parents out of concern that home life will intrude on the workplace.

``Believe it or not, there are still some employers who are reluctant to hire or promote employees who have children at home,'' Clinton said at the start of a White House conference on helping families raise teen-agers.

``The job they are doing at home is more important,'' Clinton said, citing studies and a new poll that, he said, confirm that communication and family togetherness are crucial factors in raising responsible, happy teen-agers.

Clinton's executive order applies only to federal workers and does not require approval from Congress.

``Parents are still the most important adults in their teen-agers' lives,'' first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said before introducing her ``co-parent'' in raising daughter Chelsea, 20, who left home three years ago for college.

Mrs. Clinton described occasional frustrations as she and the president dealt with Chelsea's teen-age ambivalence toward them. ``You want to hang around just in case they'll deign to say something to you,'' she said to laughter.

But she said the 30 minutes or so the three of them tried to spend having at least one meal together each day was her favorite part of the day.

Parents, teens, teachers, youth workers and others were invited to the daylong conference to discuss ways to raise and mentor responsible and resourceful youth.

Mrs. Clinton moderated two morning sessions, including one on what parents and communities can do to help teens succeed. Afternoon panel discussions were to address what can be done to make it easier for parents to spend time together, media's effect on youth and parenting and what parents, communities and young people can do to avoid risky behavior.

``Adults usually do not listen to young people and they don't make it their business to help them implement their goals,'' said panelist Dorothy Stoneman, founder of the Boston-based YouthBuild USA, which teaches low-income young people construction skills by building affordable housing in their communities. ``What happens when you listen, young people get engaged and connected and they feel better about themselves.''

The conference also was highlighting recent brain research that says the preteen years are as important in setting patterns for adult behavior as the first three years of life.

Scientists had believed that brain development slowed after the first few years of life that the brain was essentially organized by the time a child enters the first grade. The research, first published late last year and then in the March issue of the journal Nature, showed that in teen-agers up to age 15, there are peak growth rates in areas of the brain associated with language and associative thinking.

`` Sometimes we give up on kids early and feel that they are already doomed for certain fates, but from the biological perspective there are still lots and lots of opportunities for change during the teen years," said Dr. Jay Giedd, a National Institute of Mental Health child psychiatrist who worked on the research.

^=

On the Net:

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov>

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Lisa Ferdinando
05/02/2000 09:16:52 AM

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Subject: Secretary Shalala on Fox Morning News, May 2, 2000

FOX MORNING NEWS
MAY 2, 2000

SPEAKERS: DONNA SHALALA, U.S. SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
LARK MCCARTHY, HOST

MCCARTHY: The White House is hosting an all-day conference today on teenagers. The theme: raising responsible and resourceful youth.

Joining us now from the White House with a preview, the secretary of health and human services, Donna Shalala.

Good morning, Madam Secretary.

SHALALA: Good morning.

MCCARTHY: Well, I'll be listening even more closely than usual since my daughter just turned 13. So what's the goal of this all-day conference?

SHALALA: I think to send a very clear message that parents ought to listen to their young people, that young people want their parents to spend more time with them, and that the years just before the teen years are just as important as the first three years. We now know that there continues to be brain development right up until a youngster is 11 or 12.

MCCARTHY: Yes, talk about that new research. That was sort of one of the factors prompting the idea behind this conference. Looking at these pre-teen years in particular, what does the research say?

SHALALA: What it says is: Your brain really continues to fill out until you're 11 or 12. It doesn't mean that you can't continue to learn, but they're very important years, those pre-teen years, and into your teenage years.

It also tells us that teenagers are saying to us, their parents aren't spending enough time with them. They want their parents to spend more time, to listen to them, to transmit good messages about values and about beliefs.

MCCARTHY: Yes. Another issue I know you're going to be talking about today is violence. We've just passed the Columbine anniversary. What are you going to be saying in particular about violence? How do we begin to attack this issue?

SHALALA: Well, first of all, violence in the schools is actually down, and most people don't realize that. But the way to deal with violence is to concentrate on the development of young people, to be involved in their lives. Parents who are involved in their youngsters' lives are less likely to bring up youngsters that get into trouble in the long run. So being able to spot signs of trouble, but good communications is the key to all of this.

MCCARTHY: You know, Newsweek magazine has a cover story on teens, and they did a survey to go along with it. And one of the findings had to do with violence, and they found that most teens and most parents are concerned about violence. Is that a shift here? Are you seeing most people being concerned about violence to this extent: 82 percent of the parents said it concerns them?

SHALALA: Well, it is a shift. And parents are also concerned about drugs, they're concerned about alcohol. Kids are concerned about whether their parents spend enough time with them. They look to their parents for guidance. That ought to give parents a very clear message about what young people think is important.

MCCARTHY: All right. Let's talk about some of the initiatives that you are hoping to get passed to deal with this. What can you do to promote some of those goals of reducing, you know, tobacco use, drug use?

SHALALA: Well, first of all, to make it very difficult for anyone under age to buy cigarettes, to discourage them; second, we need to discourage the tobacco companies from advertising in places where teenagers will see the advertisements; and third, we need to work with teenagers themselves.

It's extremely important that teenagers be seen as part of the solution. This is a great generation of young people. They have many good ideas. They understand peer pressure. When we design ads, when we work with teenagers in programs, they are the people that are ought to be designing those programs and those advertisements.

MCCARTHY: But where are you now on the question of regulation since it was taken away from the FDA? Are you still fighting to get that restored? Are you going to try to go through Congress?

SHALALA: We need to go through Congress, and I believe that Congress needs to recognize that this is a huge public health program, that we need them to step forward to protect our young people. They have that opportunity.

MCCARTHY: But is that going anywhere this year?

SHALALA: Well, we'll never give up. The president's never going to give up on this issue. This is a very fundamental issue for the future of this generation of young people.

Smoking is still a problem among young people. Teenage pregnancy is down, drug use is down. Alcohol and smoking are the two issues that we really need to work on.

MCCARTHY: Family-friendly policies. Again, what do you think realistically since Congress is coming back here that you can get pushed through this year?

SHALALA: Well, Congress can't be a do-nothing Congress this year. They really have to step up and do some things that will help our families to support their young people. It's a wonderful generation of young people, but they need our help, and we need to help them to grow strong inside, and that's what this is really all about.

MCCARTHY: You know, one of our reporters talked to a local teen who's going to be attending the summit. One of the things that she mentioned is that just so much is available, you know, in terms of access to drugs, but also just information because of the Internet. I mean, is that a genie that's just out of the bottle? How are you going to deal with the Internet in this conference?

SHALALA: Well, yes, it's out of the bottle. But teenagers that are well-educated, that are taught to screen the information, who get help from their parents, who have a chance to talk to their parents during the course of a day, who eat meals with their parents who can talk these things through--they're in the best position to basically negotiate themselves through their adolescence. But they need our guidance.

MCCARTHY: All right. That's a lot of good news for parents in that you really do have some control--right?--if you stay involved.

SHALALA: Absolutely.

MCCARTHY: I will take it to heart.

Thanks for joining us this morning, Madam Secretary--live from the White House.

END

Message Sent To: _____

Lisa Ferdinando
05/02/2000 09:16:47 AM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: Secretary Herman on ABC Good Morning America, May 2, 2000

ABC GOOD MORNING AMERICA
MAY 2, 2000

SPEAKERS: ALEXIS HERMAN, SECRETARY OF LABOR
DIANE SAWYER, ANCHOR

SAWYER: Well, here's a surprise for you. According to a new survey sponsored by the YMCA, the number one problem cited by American teenagers is--are you ready for this?--not spending enough time with their parents. Twenty-one percent of them ranked that as the biggest problem, while only 8 percent of their parents did.

It's all going to be discussed today at a White House conference on teenagers hosted by President and Mrs. Clinton. And with us from Washington now, Labor Secretary Alexis Herman and Deborah Silcox, a single mother of two teenage sons, Dylan and Drew, who are attending the conference.

And we welcome you all.

Secretary Herman, on average, we are told, the American parent spends 80 minutes a day with their teen, and that includes weekends. Is that enough time? And what can the White House do about it?

HERMAN: No, Diane, it's not enough time and we have to do better. We must do better. That's one of the reasons the president and the first lady are having this conference, to put the spotlight on these issues and to say what can we do to help families balance work and family time?

The president today is going to sign an executive order, for instance, demonstrating that the federal government can be a model employer in this regard by stressing more family work arrangements that are more family-friendly and also talking about the fact that we cannot discriminate against parents in the workplace today.

SAWYER: But specifically, what are you talking about? What are you going to ask businesses to do?

HERMAN: Well, we're going to ask businesses to pay more attention to a flexible work arrangement. The very first piece of legislation the president signed was the Family and Medical Leave Act. We want to extend that legislation. We want to be able to give families more time for parent-teacher conferences, to spend more time with their children. And the president and the first lady are going to launch a national campaign working with employers to put more of an emphasis on this issue.

SAWYER: Ms. Silcox, I know that after your husband left, you took on a second job managing a restaurant in the evening in order to keep your kids in the same school and the same apartment. What sort of stress is that on your and their lives?

DEBORAH SILCOX, A SINGLE MOTHER: Well, it can be very stressful because I'm not there. I'm working between 50 and 60 hours a week, so I can't provide the support that especially my younger son needs for homework and even just to fix dinner for him. It can be very stressful.

SAWYER: But is it more important to keep them in the same school and apartment than it is to have the extra time?

DEBORAH SILCOX: Well, we're still in the family home. Yes, it is, it really is. Because they're

around--their peers are around, positive influence where we are now. If I had to relocate, I'm afraid that they would have to have deal with a lot more challenges than they deal with now.

SAWYER: So, Drew, let me ask you: Do you have enough time with your mom?

DREW SILCOX, SON OF DEBORAH SILCOX: Not really, because now that she works two jobs, she gets home late and she's only home a couple hours before I have to go to bed, so it's not really a lot of time to--just to be with her.

SAWYER: And, Dylan, when you all have sat down with her in the past and tried to do, say, homework, what's that like?

DYLAN SILCOX, SON OF DEBORAH SILCOX: It was tough, because she wasn't around that much, so I really didn't get much homework done. But it was--it was tough.

SAWYER: And, Dylan, would you agree that that's been sort of the number one problem you'd cite in your teen years, now that you're heading to college soon?

DYLAN SILCOX: Yes, I would. I would agree that it was one of my number one problems, not having my mother there to--to help me out with my homework when I needed the help and my father wasn't there to help me, so it would have helped out a lot.

SAWYER: So, Ms. Silcox, before we turn back to Secretary Herman, what would you like to see the White House do for you, if you could talk to the president today?

DEBORAH SILCOX: Well, I hope I can. What I'd like to see is: I work for a nonprofit. I work for the YMCA at central Maryland. And I would like to see the government filter some funds through the block grant process for nonprofit organizations so that we're able to provide more programs for our communities.

SAWYER: And, Secretary Herman, is that likely to happen?

HERMAN: I think we're going to discuss programs for the community, yes, I think that's very probable today, after-care school programs and ways just to get parents more involved and to have the time with their kids today. It's so important.

SAWYER: All right. Well, our thanks again to all of you. And at least you have a few minutes now before maybe you have to head off to the conference at 7:30 to spend time with each other.

And we thank you again for being with us.

END

Message Sent To: _____



Victoria L. Valentine
05/02/2000 06:44:02 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: more WIRE STORIES -- WH Conf on Teens

Clintons convene conference on teens

By LORI SANTOS

WASHINGTON, May 2 (UPI) -- President Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton convened a White House conference on teens Tuesday, addressing issues facing parents and young people under today's added pressures of the work place and the Internet, along with the more traditional problems.

As part of the day's events, Clinton signed an executive order barring discrimination against parents in the federal workplace. The order mirrors legislation pending on Capitol Hill and prohibits employers in the executive branch from acting on assumptions that parents cannot satisfy the requirements of a particular position.

"The goal of this order simply says, 'no glass ceiling for parents,'" Clinton said in the opening session. "The job they are doing at home is more important anyway."

Clinton adviser Bruce Reed said the executive action does "for the federal workplace what we would like Congress to do for the country."

He said, for example, a candidate for a job or promotion cannot be penalized for having to be home by 6 p.m.

The Clintons also released two studies as part of the first-ever conference, one a report by the president's Council of Economic Advisors that concluded teenagers whose parents are engaged and involved in their lives are more likely to excel in school and avoid risk behaviors.

A YMCA poll found that parents are most anxious about drug and alcohol use and violence while teens are most concerned about "not having enough time together" with their parents, and their education.

"The good news is that the teenagers are far healthier, more prosperous and look forward to more promising lives than ever before in our history," Clinton said, citing declines in youth violence, homicide, suicide, pregnancy and drug use.

The down side, he said, was teen smoking, drug use and gun violence "are still far too high."

One startling finding, Clinton said, was that teenagers who have dinner with their parents five nights a week are far more likely to avoid smoking, drinking, violence, suicide and drugs. The first lady said she and the president had tried to do just that every evening with their daughter Chelsea, now 20 and a junior at Stanford University. The three would eat together in the small kitchen of the private quarters upstairs in the White House and the Clintons even avoided going out much or to the Camp David presidential retreat to be around for their

daughter.

"All of us are here because we believe there is no group of Americans more full of promise or potential," Hillary Clinton said. "But we also believe there is no group of Americans more in need of the support, guidance and committed efforts of all of than today's teenagers."

The public proceedings, however, broke little new ground, focusing instead on rather standard prescriptions for parents to keep lines of communication open, spend more time with their teenagers and monitor what movies they watch and their use of the Internet.

One teen who took part in the conference, 14-year-old Gabriella Contreros, said she thought it would be helpful if families could eat dinner together every night but some, like her own, are split up and often work late in the evening.

Contreros, an 8th grader from Tuscon, Ariz., said the discussions put little out there she hadn't heard before.

"Being a teenager, I kind of knew a lot of it," she said.

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Message: WWN-UPI-1-20000502-15370400-bc-clintons-teens Content: SRVUPIWASH
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BC-CLINTON-TEENS

^ White House teen conference has tips, research

By Randall Mikkelsen

WASHINGTON, May 2 (Reuters) - Want to raise ``responsible, resourceful'' teenagers? Listen well, and make sure they do their chores.

The first White House conference on teens, presided over by President Bill Clinton and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, featured such time-tested advice, plus new research showing early teenage years are a crucial step in brain development, and called for more government steps to help parents and teens.

``Anybody that thinks that we've done everything we need to do to help parents with teenagers hasn't had teenagers and hasn't been around lately," Clinton said.

The conference brought together experts on adolescents, as well as actors Danny DeVito and Rhea Perlman, who are active in children's issues.

It also showcased Mrs. Clinton, the Democratic candidate for a U.S. Senate seat in New York, who has long made children's issues a cornerstone of her political agenda. She wore a pair of reading glasses, infrequently seen in public, as she moderated panel discussions.

At the session, the president announced an executive order forbidding federal employers from discriminating against workers with families, saying he aimed to eliminate any ``glass ceiling'' blocking advancement of people with children at home.

He called for expanding family-leave legislation and increasing funding for after-school programmes.

Clinton also released a report by his Council on Economic Advisers, which he billed as a good news/bad news snapshot of the condition of American teenagers.

``The good news is that the teenagers are far healthier, more prosperous, and look forward to more promising lives than ever before in our history," he said. He cited figures showing high school graduation and college enrollment rates at all-time highs, and declines in

youth violence, homicide, suicide, teen pregnancy, and, recently, drug use.

Major challenges include still-excessive rates in the United States of teen smoking, drug use and pregnancy. ``And despite a marked decline in teen homicide over the past few years, still far too many communities are scarred by gun violence," he said.

The report highlighted the importance of parents spending time with and listening to their children. ``Teenagers that had dinner with their parents five nights a week are far more likely to avoid smoking, drinking, violence, suicide and drugs. This held true for single-parent as well as two-parent families, across all income and racial groups," Clinton said.

bc-CLINTONS-TEENS

^ Clintons stress quality time for parents, teens

^ Attn: Note Web site address at end of story. YMCA of the USA in 11th graf is cq
BY SERGIO BUSTOS

Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON - The nation's first couple Tuesday urged parents to spend more time with their teen-age children, citing a national poll that found a significant number of families share few meals together and that parents and children seldom talk about sensitive subjects as sex, dating, drugs or alcohol.

The poll was released as part of a daylong White House conference exploring the pressure-filled lives of teen-agers and their parents.

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, taking a break from her New York Senate campaign, led the discussion that included educators, members of Congress, and parents and teen-agers from across the country.

``If you ask teens and you listen to teens, you can hear, directly and indirectly, their voices telling us that growing up today feels tougher than ever before," Clinton said. ``I happen to think that's right."

``And if it's tough to be a teen-ager today, it's probably even tougher to be a parent," she said.

President Clinton, whom the first lady introduced as ``my co-parent," used the conference to announce he had signed an executive order that prohibits discrimination against working parents employed by the federal government.

``The goal of this order simply says, no glass ceiling for parents," said Clinton. ``The job they're doing at home is more important, anyway, and if they can do your job, you ought not to stop them."

The conference, ``Raising Responsible and Resourceful Youth," included sessions that examined such topics as how the news media influence youth and how communities can better support parents and teen-agers.

The national poll, conducted by the YMCA of the USA, surveyed 200 children age 12-15 and 200 parents of children in the same age range by telephone, and found stark differences between the two generations.

Among the findings:

- Teens are three times more likely than their parents to say that ``not having enough time together" is their biggest concern. Family time tied with education as the top priorities of teens.

- Parents are far more concerned by outside threats such as drugs and alcohol than

they are about family time. Quality time ranks fourth among parents' concerns.

- About 36 percent of parents reported that their teens spend most of their free time in front of a computer or television screen. Almost one in three teens agreed.

- 34 percent of both parents and teen-agers blame parents' workload as the main reason families don't spend more time together.

- As teens get older, parents talk to them less about sex. Only one in six 15-year-olds surveyed reported talking to their parents about sex.

- Only three in 10 teens said their parents discussed drugs or alcohol with them.

- While most parents (64 percent) believe their teen-age children share the same basic values, less than half of the teen-agers (48 percent) agreed with their parents' values.

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For more information about the White House Conference on Teenagers: Raising Responsible and Resourceful Youth, visit the White House Web site: www.whitehouse.gov

^AM-White House-Teens,550

^White House holds conference on raising teens

^By DEB RIECHMANN= ^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) Parenting teens is just as important as holding down a government job, President Clinton said Tuesday in signing an executive order prohibiting discrimination against parents in the federal workplace.

``Believe it or not, there are still some employers who are reluctant to hire or to promote employees who have children at home," Clinton said at a White House conference on raising and mentoring responsible teens.

``The goal of this order simply says no glass ceiling for parents," Clinton said.

The order ensures that workers are not discriminated against simply because they are parents. It applies only to federal workers and does not require approval from Congress.

``The job they're doing at home is more important anyway, and if they can do your job, you ought not to stop them," Clinton said to employers of parents.

Parents, teens, teachers, youth workers and others attended the daylong conference, which was moderated by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Topics included what parents and communities can do to help teens succeed, how parents can spend more time with their teens, and the media's effect on youth and parenting.

Today's teens aren't different, society is, Mrs. Clinton said.

``Rather than trying to make our kids somehow adapt, we should be thinking about ways that our institutions can change and be more supportive of our own kids and provide what our children have always needed the kind of connectedness and support and love and discipline that every young person really wants and needs from us."

She announced an Internet site for teen-agers (<http://www.americasteens.gov>) to help them with homework, hobbies and careers. The site is being developed by 17 federal agencies. In addition, she announced that another site will be created where parents can find information about current media ratings systems.

Republican National Committee spokesman Chris Paulitz complained that the conference relied heavily on liberal-minded panelists. Mrs. Clinton ``used to say it takes a village to raise a child," Paulitz said. ``Now all it takes is partisan Democrats and Hollywood moguls."

Actor and producer Danny DeVito, father of two teens and a 12-year-old, and his wife, actress Rhea Perlman, spoke in the East Room of the White House about successful after school initiatives in Los Angeles.

``We have to listen to kids," DeVito said. ``There are so many things going through their heads. They're confused. They're mad, or sad. What do they do if they don't have anybody who they can trust or turn to?"

But just being at home doesn't mean parents are emotionally involved with their teens, said Dr. Robert Blum, director of general pediatrics and adolescent health at the University of Minnesota. Going shopping or tossing a football does not bond parents and teens, he said.

``I challenge adults to include us, encourage us, have faith in youth of all ages," said Gabriella Contreras, a 14-year-old activist in Tuscon, Ariz. ``Volunteer with us to make a difference in our community, to enable us to have a voice ... or just get involved with our daily lives."

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On the Net:

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov>

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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
MAY 2, 2000

White House holds conference on raising teens

By Deb Riechmann
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) -- President Clinton today ordered a ban on a "glass ceiling for parents" in the federal work force, meaning the government cannot discriminate against parents out of concern that home life will intrude on the workplace.

"Believe it or not, there are still some employers who are reluctant to hire or promote employees who have children at home," Clinton said at the start of a White House conference on helping families raise teen-agers.

"The job they are doing at home is more important," Clinton said, citing studies and a new poll that, he said, confirm that communication and family togetherness are crucial factors in raising responsible, happy teen-agers.

Clinton's executive order applies only to federal workers and does not require approval from Congress.

"Parents are still the most important adults in their teen-agers' lives," first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said before introducing her "co-parent" in raising daughter Chelsea, 20, who left home three years ago for college.

Mrs. Clinton described occasional frustrations as she and the president dealt with Chelsea's teen-age ambivalence toward them. "You want to hang around just in case they'll deign to say something to you," she said to laughter.

But she said the 30 minutes or so the three of them tried to spend having at least one meal together each day was her favorite part of the day.

Parents, teens, teachers, youth workers and others were invited to the daylong conference to discuss ways to raise and mentor responsible and resourceful youth.

Mrs. Clinton moderated two morning sessions, including one on what parents and communities can do to help teens succeed. Afternoon panel discussions were to address what can be done to make it easier for parents to spend time together, media's effect on youth and parenting and what parents, communities and young people can do to avoid risky behavior.

"Adults usually do not listen to young people and they don't make it their business to help them implement their goals," said panelist Dorothy Stoneman, founder of the Boston-based YouthBuild USA, which teaches low-income young people construction skills by building affordable housing in their communities. "What happens when you listen, young people get engaged and connected and they feel better about themselves."

The conference also was highlighting recent brain research that says the preteen years are as important in setting patterns for adult behavior as the first three years of life.

Scientists had believed that brain development slowed after the first few years of life -- that the brain was essentially organized by the time a child enters the first grade. The research, first published late last year and then in the March issue of the journal *Nature*, showed that in teen-agers up to age 15, there are peak growth rates in areas of the brain associated with language and associative thinking.

"Sometimes we give up on kids early and feel that they are already doomed for certain fates, but from the biological perspective there are still lots and lots of opportunities for change during the teen years," said Dr. Jay Giedd, a National Institute of Mental Health child psychiatrist who worked on the research.

END

ST. LOUIS POST DISPATCH
MAY 2, 2000

GREGORY FREEMAN : Politicians become critics -- unless the polls disagree

By Gregory Freeman

Politicians are a funny bunch.

Especially when election year rolls around.

Republicans often accuse President Bill Clinton of governing by public opinion poll. But one would have to be unconscious to think that they don't do the same thing.

Want proof? Take a look at America's favorite Cuban boy, Elian Gonzalez.

After hours of futile negotiations, U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno ordered the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Border Patrol to remove Elian from the Miami home of great-uncle Lazaro Gonzalez on April 22.

That order, and Elian's subsequent removal, caused a furor, particularly among Republican politicians. They criticized Reno -- and Clinton -- for overreacting. Some called security forces from the Border Patrol and the immigration service "jackbooted government thugs." Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi compared Clinton with Fidel Castro, and said of the raid that he thought "this could only happen in Castro's Cuba."

Texas Gov. George W. Bush said, "The chilling image of a little boy being removed from his home at gunpoint is not an image a freedom-loving nation wants to show the world."

One by one, the politicians jumped into the fray, calling for hearings, hoping to make political hay out of Elian's removal.

And while the Republicans were the chief culprits, they were joined by a few opportunistic Democrats, including Vice President Al Gore, who told National Public Radio that he "would have handled it differently." Gore, who has been at odds with Clinton and Reno over the case, said that a family court should have decided the boy's future.

All of that was before the polls were released.

Among them, an NBC poll, released Sunday, found that 62 percent of Americans oppose congressional hearings to investigate the government's actions in reuniting Elian with his father, compared with 30 percent who support hearings.

A USA Today/CNN/Gallup Poll released last week showed that 68 percent don't favor congressional hearings.

Meanwhile, other polls found sympathy and understanding for Elian and his father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez. In fact, the incident may actually have created pressure for the United States to restore relations with Cuba. A separate USA Today poll reported 54 percent now favor re-establishing diplomatic relations.

And so, with a symbolic wettened finger in the air, the politicians have been cleaning up their words. After saying last week that he would conduct hearings, Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., now says his House Judiciary Committee will let its sister group in the Senate take the lead in investigating the case.

"We'll wait and see what the Senate does," Hyde said.

That may not be much.

After insisting on hearings last week, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, now says he will need to see the government's documents before deciding whether such proceedings are warranted. In Sunday TV news show appearances, Hatch appeared to be backing away from hearings. So was Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Texas.

Meanwhile, Gore is now saying, well, nothing. "Under the law, whatever I say could be introduced into the proceedings as a possible factor creating bias one way or the other," he was quoted as saying on Saturday -- even though he's said quite a bit about it before now.

After backing himself into a corner with his strong words, Lott continues to say that there will be hearings in the case. That may be true. But you can be sure that the hearings will be quick and to the point, not the lengthy sessions that were promised a week ago.

That's probably for the best. It seems the last thing Americans want these days are more dragged-out, partisan congressional hearings. That's a spectacle we can do without.

END

Clintons lead talks on the challenges of the teenage years

By Mary Leonard, Globe Staff

WASHINGTON - It may take a village to raise a child, but as most parents know, that pales next to the time, patience, and perseverance required to rear a healthy teenager.

To explore the issue, Hillary Rodham Clinton yesterday hosted the first White House Conference on Teenagers, which assembled specialists, activists, adolescents, and even actors who offered more counsel to concerned parents than criticism of the teenage culture.

There was common-sense advice (eat meals with your teenager); new research (the brain's gray matter expands at puberty); and an executive order aimed at ending discrimination against parents in the federal workplace.

"Believe it or not, there are still some employers who are reluctant to hire or to promote employees who have children at home," said President Clinton, who was introduced by Mrs. Clinton as her "co-parent." The president said he signed the executive order to say, "No glass ceiling for parents. The job they are doing at home is more important anyway."

The daylong event followed the teenager killings at Columbine High School by a year and the shooting of seven children at Washington's National Zoo by a week. It also takes place in the thick of the political season when pollsters see work-family pressures emerging as a potent issue, especially among women voters. In addition, Mrs. Clinton is running for the US Senate in New York as an advocate of families and children.

The first lady said she understands that it is hard being an adolescent today - harder than when she was a girl - and that the teen years can be times of great stress, alienation, and confusion. But, speaking as the mother of a daughter just turned 20, Mrs. Clinton said her heart goes out to parents of teenagers.

"Parents are worried about the movies their children are seeing, the Web sites they are visiting, the music they are listening to," said Mrs. Clinton, who moderated two panels for several hundred guests in the East Room of the White House.

"There is a lot of worry that all those heart-to-heart talks and those efforts to communicate, which are sometimes so awkward and difficult, about values and good behavior, are getting drowned out by a popular culture filled with gratuitous sex and violence," she said.

Mrs. Clinton shared some personal observations. One was that even with their hectic schedules, she and the president always tried to eat at least one meal a day with Chelsea before she went to college. And Mrs. Clinton said the reason she and the president didn't plunge into the Washington social scene during the first term was that they needed to stay in the White House, "hanging around, waiting for a sighting" of Chelsea.

"You know, when you have one in your home, you want to hang around with the hope that just maybe they'll deign to say something to you," Mrs. Clinton said of teenagers. "Occasionally it worked, but not always."

A survey released yesterday by the YMCA of the USA showed teenagers are concerned about the lack of time they spend with their parents and the depth of their communication. In responses from 200 parents and 200 teens, the poll found that 61 percent of parents

said they talk frequently to their children about values and beliefs, but only 41 percent of the teens report having those conversations.

Ellen Galinsky, head of the Families and Work Institute in New York, said her studies show teenagers want strong relationships with their parents and value quality over quantity time.

"Psychological connectedness" of parents to children - talking to them on the phone, leaving notes on the refrigerator, assigning them responsibilities and chores - is the best prescription for lowering the risk of unhealthy teen behavior, said Dr. Robert Blum of the University of Minnesota. Access to weapons in the home, peer drug use, and sexual victimization all raise the risk, he said.

The Rev. Jeffrey Brown, pastor of Union Baptist Church in Cambridge and co-founder of Boston's Ten Point Coalition to check youth violence, said Blum's message was one he would carry home. Brown said the message he himself brought to the conference was that "building a dialogue between families and teenagers relates to transforming neighborhoods and communities."

Three teenagers, all success stories, spoke about the strength of their family bonds. Edwin Speaker, 17, of Los Angeles, said he was nervous - "How many kids get to fly six hours and stand right next to the first lady?" - but not afraid to speak up about his relationship with his single father: "It takes a man to raise a man," Edwin said.

Actor Danny DeVito, the father of three teenagers, said parents need to tell children "they weren't always so perfect, like they are now." DeVito and his wife, Rhea Perlman, are leading a group called the After School Alliance, which aims to provide quality, after-school care in all of the nation's elementary schools by 2010.

The president said his 2001 budget request to Congress includes doubling the funds to \$1 billion for after-school and summer-school programs.

Clinton said a new report by his Council of Economic Advisers presented a mixed picture of today's teenager. "The good news is that teenagers are far healthier, more prosperous, and look forward to more promising lives than ever before in our history," he said. But he cited "a significant opportunity gap" between white and minority students, and he said the incidences of teen smoking, drug use, pregnancy, and gun violence remain "too high."

END

Challenge from right could hurt Giuliani

By Fred Kaplan, Globe Staff

NEW YORK - He's running a neck-and-neck Senate race against the first lady. He's facing the battle of his life against prostate cancer. What an irony, then, that Mayor Rudolph Giuliani may find his political future dashed by an obscure former congressman who hasn't won an election in 13 years.

Joseph DioGuardi announced this week that he will seek the nomination of the New York Conservative Party, with the blessing of the party's iron-fist chairman, Mike Long.

The Conservative ballot line tends to pull around 5 percent of the vote in a statewide contest. But given how tight this Senate race is, and given that most of this vote would probably come at Giuliani's expense, that could be enough to hand victory to Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Long and DioGuardi insist they do not mean to run a "spoiler" campaign. They say New Yorkers are already so tired of Giuliani and Clinton that the former congressman could beat them both in a three-way race.

More to the point, to Long's mind, is that the question of who wins this election takes second place to long-term principles.

A self-avowed "Goldwater Republican," Long is most reluctant to support the mayor because, as he put it, "Rudy Giuliani is no conservative.

"Hillary and Rudy are the same on gays in the military, they're the same on the Second Amendment, they're the same on abortion - on issue after issue, they offer no difference," he said.

Moreover, Giuliani has run in the last two mayoral races not only as a Republican but also on the ticket of the Liberal Party - which, years ago, was truly a liberal party but is now a one-man fiefdom controlled by Giuliani's ally and adviser, Raymond Harding. This weekend, the mayor will seek the Liberal endorsement again. And one of Long's hard and fast rules is that his party will not endorse anyone who is also favored by the Liberals.

"You can't run north and south at the same time," he said.

In 1993, the Liberal line was crucial to Giuliani's first victorious run as mayor of New York City, where Democrats outnumber Republicans 4-1.

However, in a statewide contest, where more voters tilt to the right, no Republican has won without the Conservative Party's support since 1974.

Clinton may have her own third-party problem: Not since 1944 has a Democrat won statewide election without the Liberal Party's support.

Giuliani's dilemma is probably more severe, though. The first lady, whose liberal credentials are secure, is unlikely to lose much support on the left simply because Giuliani is on the Liberal line. However, the mayor could lose support on the right if the Conservative candidate loudly tags him a liberal.

Long has said for months that he would back Giuliani if the mayor dropped the Liberal Party and supported a ban on late-term abortion. "We will compromise on everything else - and that's a lot to compromise," Long said.

Giuliani has refused both conditions.

Conservative Party members who support Giuliani as the lesser evil say they would challenge DioGuardi's candidacy at the party's convention this summer, and possibly demand a primary with Giuliani's name, or a blank space for a write-in, on the ballot.

"He's welcome to do that, but most of the Conservative voters will reject him," Long said of Giuliani.

DioGuardi, 59, comes into the race with a tiny war chest compared with those of Giuliani, who has raised nearly \$20 million, and Clinton, who is not far behind. He was narrowly elected to Congress in 1984 from suburban Westchester County, won reelection in 1986, then lost in 1988 to Nita Lowey, who still holds the seat. He tried to run again in the next three races, twice as the Right-to-Life Party candidate after losing the Republican primary.

END

THE FEDS VS. MICROSOFT: BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO

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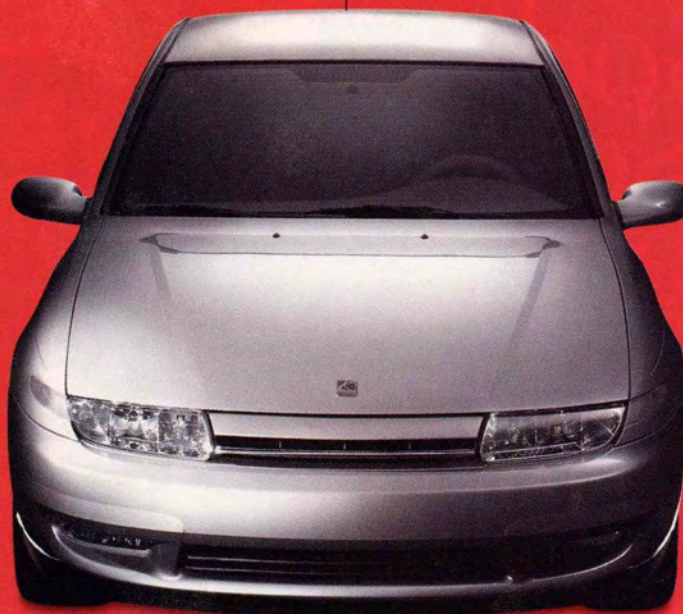
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SPECIAL REPORT

A World Of Their Own

They're spiritual, optimistic and ambitious. How teens want to shape the future.

By Sharon Begley

T

HE TEMPTATION, OF COURSE, IS to seek The Teen, the one who can stand as a symbol of this generation, who exemplifies in a single, still-young life the aspirations, the values, the habits and outlook of the 22 million other Americans 13 to 19. Who, then, shall we offer up? Perhaps Vanesa Vathanasombat, 17, of Whittier, Calif., who spends her free time going to the beach and hanging at malls with friends. "You are who you hang around with," she says. "Before, parents made you who you are. Now, teens are pretty much defined by their friends. I see my mom maybe an hour a day and not at all on weekends." Or maybe Zoe Ward, 15, of Shoreline, Wash., who takes road trips with a friend (they sleep in the car) and sells her poetry on the street: "I can't decide if I want to be famous or if I want to go live in the mountains. That's what it's like for a lot of high-school kids: we don't know how

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAKE CHESSUM

MAY 8, 2000 NEWSWEEK 53

to get there, what it's really going to be like." Or, finally, Marcus Ruopp, 16, of Newton, Mass., who would like to be an engineer or maybe a teacher after the Peace Corps, in order to "give back to the community."

Style counts

Teen cliques are more fluid than adults think, but each has its own distinctive tribal markings, from hippie chic to body art to buttoned-down prep

seldom volunteer. There are teens who are emotional wrecks, or even mentally ill. There are teens to whom "Instant Message" means Mom's telling them right away who phoned while they were out. And there are teens who belong to no clique—or "tribe." But, according to a new NEWSWEEK Poll as well as sociologists who have studied tens of thousands of the kids born between 1981 and 1987, those teens are the exceptions. As much as is possible

world of the Web and videogames. Aminah McKinnie, 16, of Madison, Miss., attends church, loves gospel hip-hop and hopes to work in the computer industry. She doesn't "hang out," she says. "I shop on the Internet and am looking for a job on the Internet. I do homework, research, e-mail and talk to my friends on the Internet." She is not unusual. Data released last year from the Alfred P. Sloan Study of Youth and Social Development found that teens spend 9 percent of their waking hours outside school with friends. They spend 20 percent of their wak-



No one teen incorporates all the attitudes and characteristics that the teachers who teach them, the parents who raise them, the researchers who study them and the kids who *are* them name as the identifying marks of this generation. In large part that is because "today's teens may have less in common with each other than those in generations past," says psychologist William Damon of Stanford University. "[Some] are absolutely on track: they're bright-eyed, genuine and ambitious. But a significant number are drifting or worse." Innumerable teens, then, will not recognize themselves in the portraits that follow. Yes, of course there are teens for whom adults are a strong presence, and teens who

when you are talking about 22 million human beings, a portrait of the millennial generation is emerging.

They were born at a time when the very culture was shifting to accommodate them—changing tables in restrooms, BABY ON BOARD signs and minivans. Yet, as a group, they lead lives that are more "adult-free" than those of previous generations. "Adolescents are not a tribe apart because they left us, as most people assume," says Patricia Hersch, author of the 1998 book "A Tribe Apart." "We left them. This generation of kids has spent more time on their own than any other in recent history."

When today's teens are not with their friends, many live in a private, adult-free

ing hours alone. "Teens are isolated to an extent that has never been possible before," says Stanford's Damon. "There is an ethic among adults that says, 'Kids want to be autonomous; don't get in their face.'"

This generation is strongly peer-driven. "This is much more a team-playing generation," says William Strauss, coauthor of the 1997 book "The Fourth Turning." "Boomers may be bowling alone, but Millennials are playing soccer in teams." That makes belonging so crucial that it can be a matter of life and death. In Littleton, Colo., a year ago, the two teenage shooters stood apart, alienated from the jock culture that infused Columbine High School. Yet in a landmark study of 7,000 teens, re-



searchers led by Barbara Schneider of the University of Chicago found that teen social groups are as fluid and hard to pin down as a bead of mercury. "Students often move from one group to another, and friendships change over a period of a few weeks or months," they write in "The Ambitious Generation." "Best friends are few." As a group, today's teens are also infused with an optimism not seen among kids in decades (it doesn't hurt to have grown up in a time of relative peace and the longest economic expansion in U.S. history). "I think a lot of adolescents now are being taught that they can make a difference," says Sophie Mazuroski, 15, of Portland, Maine. "Children of our generation want

to. I am very optimistic." Still, the law of teenage angst is still on the books: 4.3 percent of ninth graders make suicide attempts serious enough to require medical treatment.

Sound and Fury

“There’s a lot of anger in my generation. You can hear it in the music. Kids are angry for a lot of reasons, but mostly because parents aren’t around.”

Robertino Rodriguez, 17

This generation of teens is more spiritual than their parents, but often less conventionally so. Many put together their own religious canon as they would a salad from a salad bar. Yet despite their faith, teens, as well as those who study them, say that “lying and cheating are standard behavior,” as Trisha Sandoval, 17, of Santa Fe Springs, Calif., puts it—more so than for earlier generations. Elsewhere on the values front, teens today are less likely than those in 1992 “to get somebody pregnant, drive drunk or get into fights,” says Kevin Dwyer, president of the National Association of School Psychologists. And teens, says Strauss, “had harsher opinions about the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal than any other group.” Coming of age in a time of interracial marriages, many eschew the old notions of race; maturing at Internet speed, they are more connected than any generation. Both may bode well for tolerance. “Prejudice against homosexuals, bisexuals, African-Americans, Latinos—this is a big issue,” says Kathryn Griffin, 18, of Palo Alto, Calif., who hopes to make a career in advertising or marketing. “It’s insane that people have these feelings [about other people] when they don’t even know them.”

What do they want out of life? Schneider and coauthor David Stevenson found that today’s teens “are the most occupationally and educationally ambitious generation” ever. Most plan to attend college, and many aspire to work as professionals. A majority identify “happiness” as a goal, along with love and a long and enjoyable life. But many doubt that marriage and career will deliver that, so they channel their energies more broadly. About half of teens perform community service once a month by, for

In Living Colors

“We don’t care about skin, man. I know a lot about my heritage, about who I am. I’m more than just some black dude who is good at sports. I’m the future.”

Marcus Robinson, 17

instance, delivering meals to the homeless or reading to the elderly. But does their volunteer work reflect real compassion, or meeting a school requirement?

Regardless of what their terrified parents suspect, the belief that today’s teens “are more sexual, rebellious and inebriated is flat-out wrong,” says pediatrician Victor Strasburger of the University of New Mexico. In 1997, 48 percent of high-

school students had had sexual intercourse, compared with 54 percent in 1991, according to the CDC. More are smoking (36 percent, compared with 28 percent in 1991), but the percentage who are drinking alcohol remains at 51 percent. The social surround, though, may be different now. “A lot of my friends are into drinking a lot,” says Marcus Ruopp. “Kids don’t see it as a big problem.

It’s a regular thing, not like they’re rebelling. There is no pressure to drink.”

Some sociologists believe that each generation assumes the societal role of the generation that is dying, as if something in the Zeitgeist whispers to the young what is being lost, what role they can fill. Those now passing away are the children of the Depression and of World War II. They were tested, and they emerged with optimism, and purpose, and a commitment to causes larger than themselves. As Trisha Sandoval puts it, “We want to accomplish something with our lives.” Teens today, with their tattoos and baggy shorts, could not seem more different from their grandparents. But every generation has a chance at greatness. Let this one take its shot.

With PAT WINGERT in Washington, HOPE WHITE SCOTT in Boston, ANA FIGUEROA in Los Angeles and DEVIN GORDON, SUSANNAH MEADOWS and MICHAEL CRONIN in New York

A Snapshot of a Generation

In the Internet age, teens seem to be coming of age ever earlier. A recent NEWSWEEK Poll explores what concerns today’s youth and asks if their parents have a clue.

■ Stress: Do teens today face more problems than their parents did as teens?

	TEENS
More	70%
Fewer	5
Same	24

■ Family: Do your parents spend enough time with you?

	TEENS
Enough	61%
Too little	24
Too much	15

■ 48% of teens say they use a computer almost every day at home

■ 21% have looked at something on the Internet that they wouldn’t want their parents to know about

■ Worries: How concerned are you about the following?

THOSE RESPONDING ‘A LOT’	TEENS	PARENTS
Not having enough money to buy the things you (they) want	34%	35%
The cost of your (their) college education	54	68
Violence in society	59	82
Not being sure about your (their) future job opportunities	43	49
Your (their) getting into trouble with drugs	25	66
Your (their) drinking or abusing alcohol	26	64
Sexual permissiveness in society	33	72
Sexually transmitted diseases	58	75

■ Identity: How much peer pressure from friends do you feel (does your teen feel) today to do the following?

THOSE RESPONDING ‘A LOT’	TEENS	PARENTS
Have sex	10%	20%
Grow up too fast	16	34
Steal or shoplift	4	11
Use drugs or abuse alcohol	10	18
Defy parents or teachers	9	16
Be mean to kids who are different	11	14

If you had to choose between fitting in with friends or becoming outstanding in some way, which would you (your teen) choose?

	TEENS	PARENTS
Fitting in	26%	43%
Becoming outstanding	69	50

■ 21% of teenagers polled say that most of the teens they know have already had sex

FOR THIS SPECIAL NEWSWEEK POLL, PRINCETON SURVEY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INTERVIEWED A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF TEENS 13-19 AND 509 PARENTS OF SUCH TEENS BY TELEPHONE APRIL 20-28. THE MARGIN OF ERROR IS +/- 5 PERCENTAGE POINTS FOR PARENTS; +/- 6 FOR ALL TEENS. COPYRIGHT 2000 BY NEWSWEEK, INC.

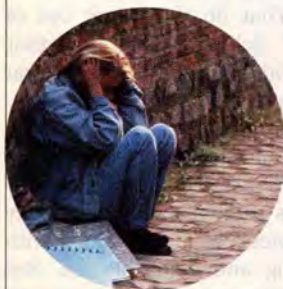
■ Hostility: Many teens these days feel a lot of anger. How angry are you?

	TEENS
Very	3%
Somewhat	25
Not too	43
Not at all	29

■ Faith: How important is religion in your life today?

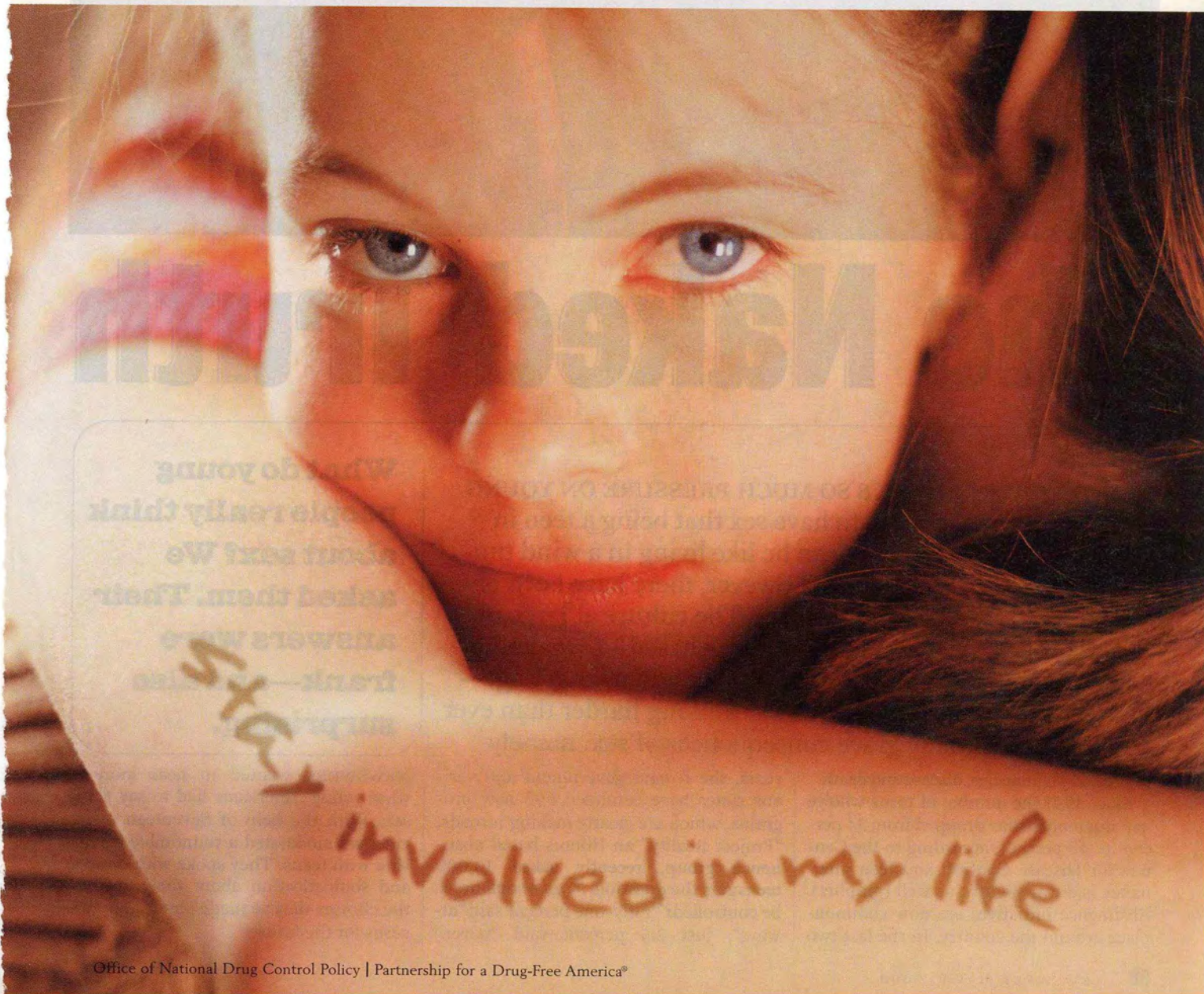
	TEENS
Very	43%
Somewhat	35
Not too	14
Not at all	8

■ 17% of teens and 37% of parents say they worry a lot about safety at school



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Feeling the heat: *It's hard to make safe choices in a sexualized culture*

The Naked Truth

THERE'S SO MUCH PRESSURE ON YOUNG people to have sex that being a teen in America can be like living in a wind tunnel. Lately, however, there have been encouraging signs. The culture at large may seem increasingly debased—sexualizing singers, actors and models at a younger and younger age—but teens themselves appear to be thinking harder than ever about the potentially grave consequences of sex, namely

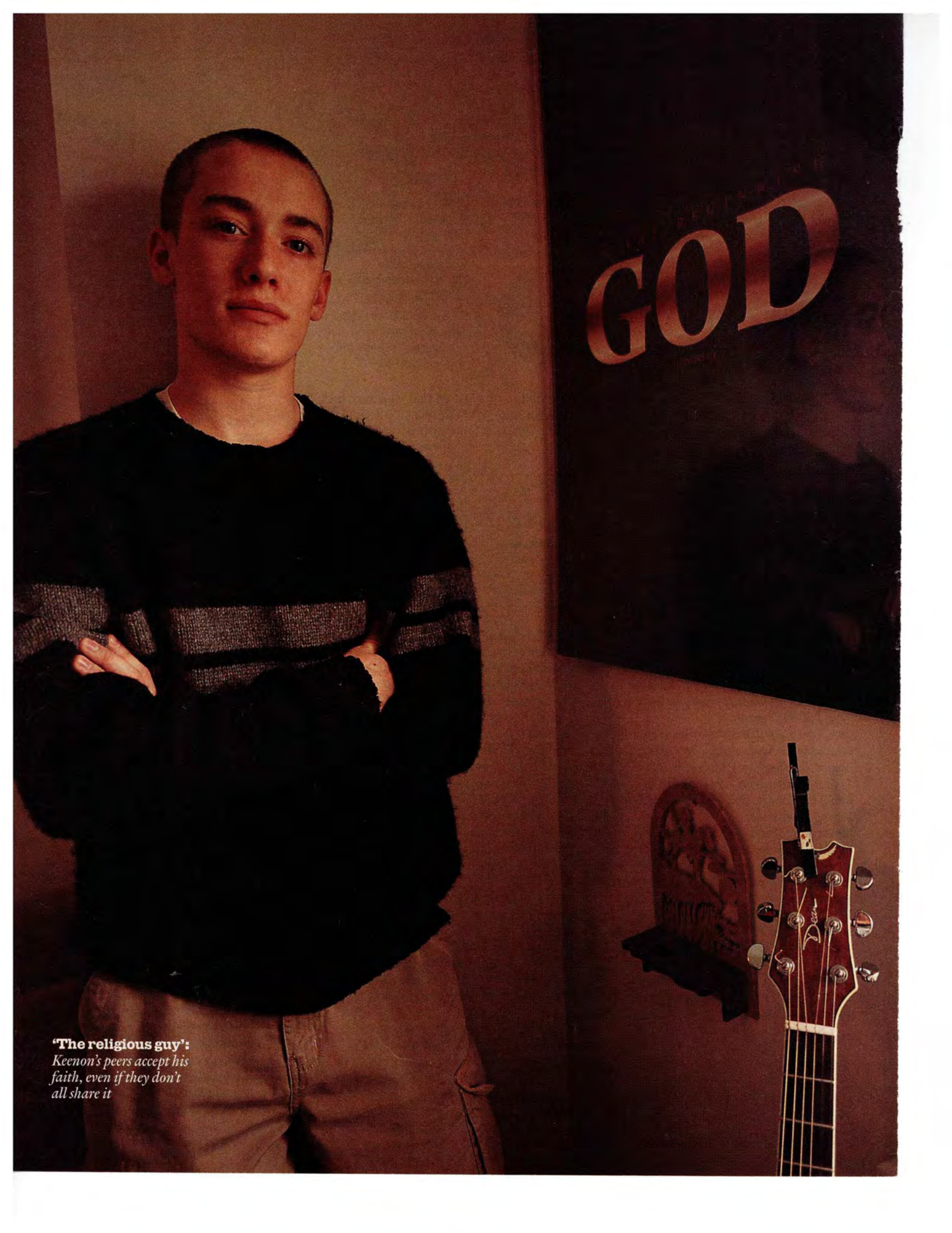
unwanted pregnancies, disease and death.

Since 1991 the number of teens who've had intercourse has dropped from 54 percent to 48 percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control, and teen pregnancy is down slightly, as well (graphic). Abstinence initiatives are now commonplace around the country. In the last two

years, the federal government and various states have cofunded 698 new programs, which are clearly making inroads. "Project Reality," an Illinois-based abstinence group, recently asked 10,000 teenagers the question, "Can sexual urges be controlled?" Fifty-one percent said "always"; just 3.5 percent said "never."

What do young people really think about sex? We asked them. Their answers were frank—and also surprising.

NEWSWEEK wanted to hear more of what young Americans had to say about sex. With the help of Seventeen magazine, we moderated a roundtable discussion with teens. They spoke with honesty and sophistication about their feelings, the choices they've made—and their concerns for the future.



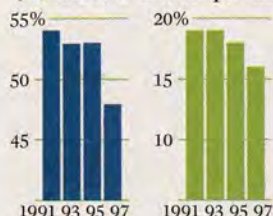
GOD

"The religious guy":
*Keenon's peers accept his
faith, even if they don't
all share it*

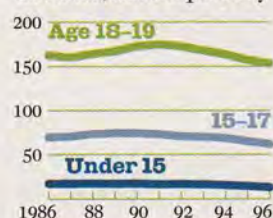
There's Something About Sex ...

Parents can breathe a little easier. Today's teens seem to be the most safe-sex savvy of generations. Contraceptive use is up, pregnancy rates are down. But there are still dangers. An overview:

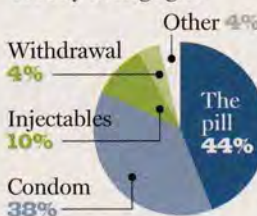
■ **Sex:** Percentage of teens who've (A) had intercourse; (B) had four or more partners



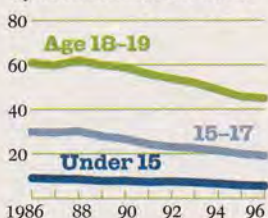
■ **Pregnancy** per 1,000 teens is falling due to less intercourse, some experts say



■ **Contraceptives:** The most popular methods used by teenage girls



■ **Abortion** per 1,000 teens has also been in steady decline since the 1980s

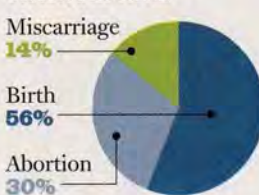


■ **STDs:**

■ **3 million** teens, or about 1 in 4 of those sexually experienced, acquire an STD every year

■ Teenagers have higher rates of gonorrhea than do sexually active men and women aged 20-44

■ **Births:** More than half of the 905,000 teen pregnancies in 1996 resulted in births



SOURCES: THE ALAN GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE, CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION SURVEYS, CHILD TRENDS, RESEARCH BY FE CONWAY—NEWSWEEK

Then finally I got through to her. It was like she didn't care. I was like, "Well, you should care."

Moderator: Have you ever had difficulty buying condoms?

Ben: The first time I went to buy them I was still only 16. I realized I really wasn't ready to have sex because I was embarrassed to buy the condoms. So I made my girlfriend go to it. [laughter] This is the one that pressured me so she was more than ready to. But, I don't know, I guess I overcame that fear. Just go to the CVS.

Chu Hui: I just assume that [guys] are always going to have a condom. And if they don't, then we won't have sex. It is the dumbest thing you could possibly do in this age. It's like ... life.

Moderator: What is it that you think would surprise people about the role that sex plays in your lives?

Susan, 16: Maybe they'd be surprised by the fact that we're all saying that using a condom is just a given—something so automatic that it doesn't even have to be discussed sometimes. I think my friends would agree that it's a given.

Moderator: What would you do if your partner said he didn't want to wear one?

Susan: I think I would refuse to have sex with him.

Ben: Good for you.

Moderator: Do guys feel pressure to have sex?

Ben, 18: The first time I had sex, it was with a girlfriend and she had had sex before and it was her choice ... I was sort of iffy about it. It wasn't like she blatantly pressured me. But I guess I did feel [pressure].

Nick, 17: I did feel pressure—from everything around me. Friends, media, everything. It was almost like afterwards it was almost a relief ... I did it, it's over, good. I'm not a virgin anymore. I've done it, there's no anxiety about having sex anymore.

Moderator: Was it what you'd hoped?

Ben: Well, it wasn't something to laugh at, but maybe I wasn't at my best. [laughs] You put all this expectation on it and the sex never meets your expectations.

Chu Hui, 19: My first time was pretty bad. That was when I was 17, I think. It was just bad in, like, every way possible. The person was bad, the timing was bad. But I didn't realize that at the time. I was kind of like under the spell, or something ... I really regret having been that intimate with him.

What do teens do when they realize they're not ready for intercourse? Some may choose to abstain from sex altogether. Others? Recently, there have been some media reports suggesting an increase in oral sex among

teens. The reports, however, have been almost entirely anecdotal. "The supposed recent oral sex trend is coming from no data at all," says Debra Haffner, president of Siecus, the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States. "The government study only asks about coitus. There is an inability to do research on other sex behavior, because you're not allowed to ask."

Still, everyone agrees that the Monica Lewinsky scandal has affected the mind-set of many young people—and not for the better. Many teens believe, as President Clinton apparently does, that oral sex is not sex. They were far more cleareyed on the subject of condoms. The CDC reports that 57 percent of sexually active teens are using condoms, up from 46 percent in 1991. Any increase is welcome news—and not just because of AIDS. According to the Guttmacher Institute, a teenage girl who has sex without birth control has a 90 percent chance of getting pregnant within a year.

Moderator: Have you ever disagreed with a partner about whether to use a condom?

Nick: This one girlfriend was over and she was just like, "I don't care," you know? I talked to her. I'd done it before, and I was like, "What? You want to get pregnant?" She was like, "No, no."

If teens are becoming more cautious, if they're making more well-informed decisions—and the evidence suggests that they are—it's partly because of the guidance of parents and educators. Haffner makes a familiar point that's worth repeating: "You should be talking to your kids about their behavior, your expectations, your values. Being involved in your child's life is necessary. Often parents stop asking questions when children become teens. Parents cannot stop being parents because their kids are in high school." Despite the encouraging news about abstinence and contraceptives, young people are still subject to pressures—and bad role models—at every turn. Some teens at the roundtable worried more for their younger siblings than for themselves.

Moderator: What's new from the time you were 11, 12, 13?

Chu Hui: I don't recall having sexuality pushed in my face when I was 10 or 11. But I have a younger half-sister who is 11 years old, and she's a very big fan of Britney Spears and the Spice Girls, and she tries to emulate them in the way she dresses and the way she acts ... I see her wanting to wear clothes that I would never have considered wearing. I don't remember going through that at her age.

Searching For a Holy Spirit

**Young people are
openly passionate
about religion—but
they insist on defining
it in their own ways**

By John Leland

ROB RIENOW, A PASTOR AT Wheaton Bible Church outside Chicago, tells a story to describe the beliefs of the teenagers he sees. Rienow, 28, has been ministering to adolescents in the area for six years. He recently asked a group of kids from troubled homes the question, Who do you think God is? Their answers were as individual as the kids themselves. One thought God was like his grandfather: "He's there, but I never see him." Another took a harder view, describing "an evil being who wants to punish me all the time." Two more opinions followed. Finally, the last teen weighed in: "I think you're *all* right, because that's what you really believe." In other words, as Rienow relates it, God is whatever works for you. On this, all of the youths agreed.

The unsung story of today's teenagers may be how religious or spiritual they are. "We're witnessing a new revival of religion," says Conrad Cherry, director of the Center for Study of Religion and American Culture at Indiana University/Purdue

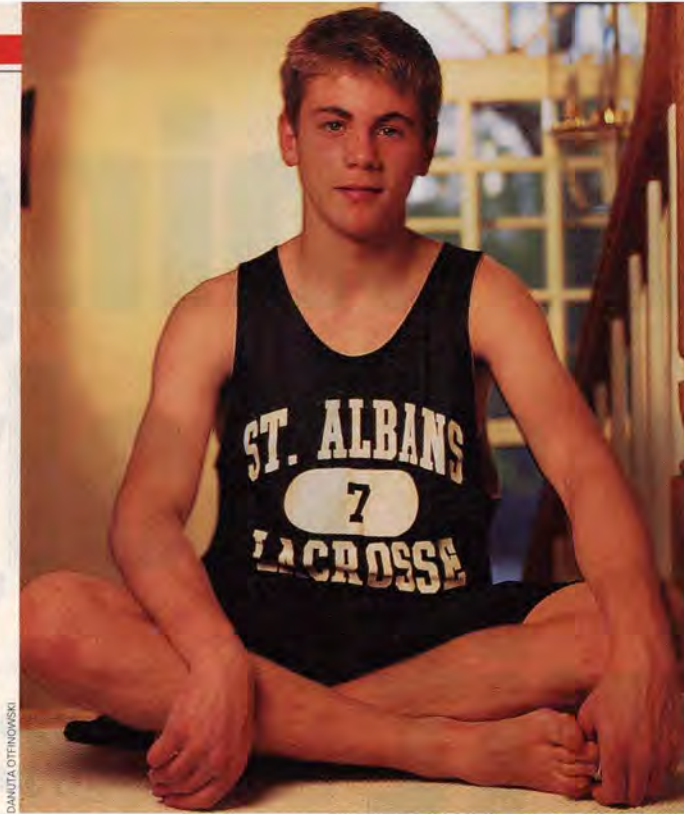


Ye of many faiths: Salman thought she'd feel singled out in a public school, but her Troy, Mich., school had dozens of Muslims, and a vibrant religious diversity

University. Prayer circles and faith-based groups like True Love Waits or Fellowship of Christian Athletes have proliferated in high schools and college campuses like so many WWJD bracelets; Christian rock festivals and CDs rival their secular counterparts, bringing the message out of the pulpit and into the mosh pit and tattoo tent. Three decades after the rebels of the baby boom appeared to run away from organized religion, "a lot more teenagers are becoming more willing to say, 'Hey, I'm a Christian,'" says Jacintha Bavaro, 16, who sings in the choir of her Roman Catholic church in Glen Ellyn, Ill. Jacintha's mother, Laura, 37, concurs. "They talk about it and seem a lot more into it than when I was a teenager," she says. "We used to pretend we were going to church and go to Dunkin' Donuts."

But the generation's spiritual profile, as Pastor Rienow found out, is quite complex, and often improvised on the fly. In a new *NEWSWEEK* Poll of teenagers, 78 percent said their religion was important to them, but only half said they attended services regularly, a figure that has declined since the 1970s. These numbers reflect several conflicting currents. Fundamentalist groups—Christian, Jewish, Muslim—have become more attractive to teenagers, as they have to adults. For a generation raised amid decay in families, schools and the streets, strict doctrine offers an anchor. "Where the youth movements of the '60s and '70s were liberationist, movements are now constrictive, all about setting limits," says Wade Clark Roof, author of "Spiritual Marketplace" and professor of religion and society at the University of California, Santa Barbara. "There is a hunger for guidelines that parents haven't offered."

At the same time, though, a much broader swath of the teen population is reacting to the collapse of institutions as a license to experiment. Rather than seek absolute



Service generation: Teens like Gillis are volunteering in their communities, often through religious groups or through their schools

truths in doctrine, they cross denominational boundaries, savvy consumers in the broader marketplace of belief systems. Many describe themselves as spiritual rather than religious. "I believe there is a higher power at work in my life, but I do not have a name for it," says Amy McKinney, 18. "When I pray I do not ask a god to make everything all right. Instead I ask myself to be strong." In place of strict adherence to doctrine, many teens embrace a spirit of eclecticism and a suspicion of absolute truths. In a 1999 poll of teenagers by the religious researcher George Barna, more than half agreed with the statement "All religious faiths teach equally valid truths." Where explorers of the baby boom tried on Zen today, Methodism tomorrow, teens might cobble together bits of several faiths: a little Buddhist meditation or Roman Catholic ritual, whatever mixture appeals at the time. Tommy Greenberg, 16, who says he's one of few Jewish students in his Minneapolis high school, has attended Lutheran services with a friend, just to see what it was like. "If they'd been saying

things in Hebrew," he says, "I'd have thought I was at Temple Israel. The atmosphere was the same, a sense of something powerful, uplifting."

Even more than their baby-boomer parents, teenagers often pick and choose what works for them. At the Ramona Convent Secondary School in Los Angeles, Ashling Gabig, 16, receives a traditional diet of Catholic doctrine. But like many of her peers, she is as likely to identify herself as "spiritual" as "Catholic." And she has customized her own path to faith. "My perceptions of God and religion are quite different from those of a devout Catholic," she says. "I don't think of the pope as this holy man who is closest to God. I believe in Darwin's theory of evolution, and the possibility of God being a woman. I never believed in the story of Adam and Eve, because it was so demeaning towards women." She does, however, believe in prayer and karma.

As they sample from various faiths, students have become more accepting of each other's beliefs, even when those beliefs are stringent. Clayton Keenon, a high-school junior in Glen Ellyn, Ill., says he is known among his classmates as "the religious guy," but this does not make him the odd man out. Keenon, 17, an evangelical Christian, is one of a growing minority of teenagers who are vowing to defer sex until marriage. "There really is an atmosphere of 'whatever you think is OK,'" he says. "Just don't tell me what to think. I'll figure it out for myself." In increasingly diverse communities, religious teens are just part of the mix. Zaynab Salman, 17, a Muslim who wears a scarf and prays five times a day, says her faith and its proscriptions against dating and vice serve as a constant reminder that "even though I am living here, I am not a typical American teenager." Yet even so, she says, at her high school in Troy, Mich., "I've heard some Muslim kids get teased about their scarf, but I haven't. I just get questions."

Many of the teenagers who are picking and choosing are the children of mixed marriages, a growing slice of the American population. About half of all Jews, for example, now marry outside the religion; the figure for Catholics is nearing 50 percent. For these teens, the religious smorgasbord begins

Too Much Info

“I’ve gotten into a million fights because of Instant Messenger, when the person reading it misinterpreted my message.

Now I just use e-mail.”

Brad Bennett, 18

➔ **SUBMIT QUESTIONS NOW FOR A LIVE TALK ABOUT TEENS ON NEWSWEEK.COM. THEN LOG ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, AT NOON EDT.**

Through Their Own

HOW DOES THE WORLD LOOK TO TEENS? We asked teenagers from Seventeen magazine's Teen Advisory Board to take photos of their daily lives showing the things that are most important to them, that represent money and status, and that make them feel pressured. Here are some of their pictures and their words:

Money & Status



Miriam Raisner, 14 ▲

“Expensive clothing is one of the only ways that people can express their wealth in school. (Also, those who have them bring cell phones.) This is not a bad thing because people in my school do not judge people on the basis of what they're wearing.”

Victoria Eck, 15 ▼

“I chose my brother's game platforms and my electronics (laptop, stereo and Discman) because these are all things that I associate with money and status, as well.”



Bryan Welsh, 14

“I took the photo of all my sports trophies and medals because I think the hard work of each of these events gives me status among my friends, coaches and teachers. This shows other teenagers that hard work and discipline really can pay off.”

Most Important



Katie Lukela, 14 ►

“I took a picture of my hula instruments because hula is a release for me. When I'm having a bad day I just dance my sorrows away and I feel better.”



at home. Ashley Rosenberg, 14, a biracial eighth grader in Farmington Hills, Mich., works a spiritual calculus that would have baffled previous generations. The daughter of a Catholic mother and an adoptive Jewish father, she began attending a Baptist church when she was 5. Now she goes to a Catholic church every Sunday, but still considers herself Baptist. "I'm in a Jewish youth group because most of my friends are Jewish," she says. "They don't care that I practice a different religion, but it's weird at times. Like when I had to explain that I couldn't go to a meeting because it was Palm Sunday."

This broad pattern of belief—the simultaneous rise of both fundamentalism and eclecticism—accelerates through the Internet. Religious chat rooms and Web sites like Faithnet or Beliefnet act like spiritual supermarkets, offering an assortment of belief systems all within one click. "Here's exposure to pluralism in a way that no generation has had it before," says Roof. In the face of the Web's unprecedented multiplicity of truths, he says, "either you go the fundamentalist route, and say, 'By golly, we are right,' or you develop a consciousness that the world is a complex place, so it makes sense to look around at what else is in the marketplace." The Web's influence will only

Watch Us Go

“ Maybe we are more cynical. But I think this generation is also smarter. We will accomplish a lot. We're going to surprise a lot of people. ”

Mina Sisouvong, 18

grow as online faith-based services become more sophisticated, targeting ever more select micro-congregations. George Barna, the Christian researcher, predicts that within the next decade, "cyberchurches" will account for as much as 10 to 20 percent of all organized worship.

In the meantime, many teens are less interested in the good word than in connecting with faith through good works. As many as 60 percent do some kind of community service, primarily through faith-based organizations. "Teens think more about things than they get credit for," says John Gillis, a freshman at St. Albans School in Washington, D.C., where he has to do 60 hours of community service in his first three years to graduate. He also did 20 hours before being confirmed in the Catholic Church, and will do an additional 100 for an

Eagle Scout project. Some teen service, certainly, is padding for a college application or fulfilling school requirements. But where doctrine has lost its authority, says James Youniss of Catholic University of America, many youths do service "for a connection with history, with a meaning system. Religion is one. Politics is one, ethnicity is one." Sarah Austin, 15, a Christian who is involved in gay and feminist causes in Decatur, Ga., rejects the stereotype that kids just care about clothes and hair. "You know, a lot of 40-year-olds care about these things, too, in addition to culture and activism. But they get credit for being interested in all those things. We don't."

Sociologists and educators talk about the "faith factor": kids involved in religion are less likely to take drugs, have early sex or engage in delinquent behaviors. In this respect, the details of theology are less important than conviction itself. Fayneese Miller, a professor of education and human development at Brown, says kids latch on to faith systems not just to lead them from temptation, but to justify their abstention. "I don't go to church every Sunday, but if it wasn't for God I wouldn't be here," says Charmaine Green, 17, a sophomore in East St. Louis. "Before, I didn't like school. Then I put my life with the Lord recently, and he has helped me understand why I need my education."

In a culture obsessed with tracking what teens buy, what crimes they commit or what they do in bed, this search for faith may be the generation's most important signature. "Their belief systems are in the long run much more important than fashions, tastes or even behavior," says William Damon, director of the Center on Adolescence at Stanford. "Behaviors come and go." For the bulk of the nation's 22 million teenagers, religion and spirituality entail a quest not for absolute truths but for ways to live among relative truths. When the Backstreet Boys and the last eyebrow stud have faded from view, this quest will still be giving shape to a generation.

With PAT WINGERT, LAURA GATLAND,
JULIE WEINGARDEN, JAMIE RENO,
MARGARET NELSON and D. J. WILSON



ANN STATES—SABA

Reaching out: Austin found a church that welcomed gays and lesbians. "They encourage you to think about God in your own terms. No two people have the same perception."

n Eyes



▶ **Trang Nguyen, 16**

“My little sisters and I just happened to be washing the car, and it dawned on me that this was a good photo opportunity. Family is one of the most important things in my life. My sisters freaked out since they were in rags. They wanted to change into something nice, but I thought that would just lose the natural effect.”



▶ **Elizabeth Lardie, 16**

“This shows me and my friends having fun. I like being able to smile and fool around, not caring that you look like an idiot. My friends and I do that stuff a lot.”



▶ **Lindsay Galin, 15**

“I took this picture because it shows the stick-thin and perfect bodies in the magazines that teens read. I think this is part of where the pressure to have the perfect body comes from. I was thinking about a girl I knew that had an eating disorder. I think they should put a few more ‘realistic’ bodies in the magazines to show teens that not everyone is this skinny.”

Pressure

▶ **Laura Bogen-schutz, 17**

“Pressure to receive college responses and scholarship information is constant in my life so I chose to photograph this mailbox. It represents what I hope to achieve. I’m a junior and I’m filling out questionnaires and sending them back to colleges. They send packets of information to me.”



▶ **Kathryn Griffin, 18**

“If I’m not at school or at work, I’m at home on my laptop, typing essays, looking up French words online or researching for information. I took my laptop to Boston when I visited schools, and I took it to the beach. When I think of pressure I think of school and its deadlines.”

Unhealthy Habits

How well are teens taking care of themselves? Here's a report card on some of their choices.

By Claudia Kalb

OK, THERE ARE THOSE DREADED PIMPLES AND THAT MESS OF RAGING hormones. But most American teens aren't battling the scourges of adulthood—cancer, heart disease, arthritis. What young people are facing is their own minefield of health risks: an overwhelming array of behavioral and lifestyle choices and pressures from what to eat to whether or not to smoke or use illegal drugs. What they decide now could affect their health for a lifetime. Here's a look at how they're doing:

Eating: Snack foods and sodas rule. On a scale of zero to 100 in the government's Healthy Eating Index (80 and up being "good"), teens scored in the low 60s, earning them a big fat "needs improvement." Only about one in 10 adolescents gets the recommended two to four daily servings of fruit. They do slightly better with veggies, with about one fourth scarfing down the recommended three to five. But that doesn't mean they're filling up on carrots and spinach—french fries, potato chips and pizza sauce all count.

Even more worrisome are a disturbing duo: eating disorders and rising obesity. More than half of all teen girls say they are or should be on a diet—incessantly battling the 40 pounds they naturally gain as they grow between the ages of 8 and 14. About 3 percent take it to the extreme, spiraling into bulimia or anorexia. There are no precise numbers, but researchers say eating disorders appear to be on the rise and are affecting children as young as 8. The health effects include osteoporosis, organ failure—even death. While far more common in girls, boys are also vulnerable. And they have their own obsession: the muscular look. Jackie Berning of the American Dietetic Association says creatine, an amino acid

supplement used by athletes to build muscle power, is now "the hot new thing" among teen boys. Most assume it's harmless, but its safety hasn't been tested long term.

Experts are increasingly worried about obesity, too. Today a record one in five teens is overweight (as defined by a weight-to-

height ratio), putting them at increased risk for heart disease, the nation's No. 1 killer. The immediate effects are already evident: weight-related type II diabetes—once called "adult-onset"—is now being diagnosed more frequently in adolescents. Sedentary lifestyles are a big part of the problem. Daily

Just Say No

Teens tend to fill up on sugar and fat, leaving less room for important vitamins and minerals



Teen staple: Onion rings and french fries count as veggies, but the good is outweighed by the bad: huge amounts of fat



Better burger: Skip the bacon and add lettuce



Empty calories: Soda's high in sugar, which can contribute to tooth decay



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN CAPUICILLI
FOOD STYLING BY JEANNE VOLTZ

What It Takes

Good eating requires a balanced mix of the food groups. Teens, especially, need iron and calcium.

Healthy fare:

Water flushes out waste, carbs provide energy and veggies are packed with vitamins and fiber. Teens don't get nearly enough.

Nice nutrients:

Meat, chicken and fish provide protein; fruits are filled with vitamins

Critical calcium:

Teens need extra amounts to strengthen bones

enrollment in high-school P.E. classes dropped from 42 percent in 1991 to 25 percent in 1995. And when teens aren't working after school or slogging through homework, many are watching TV or surfing the chat rooms. Burning energy? Not.

Sleeping: Given the hurried-up, tech-driven lives they lead, adolescents aren't exactly well rested. They should get at least nine hours of sleep every night, but only about 15 percent do. And a full quarter get less than six, says Dr. Mary Carskadon of Brown University. They're "hugely sleep deprived," she says. High-school students, whose biological clocks keep them up later at night, have it the worst. Nearly 40 percent go to sleep after 11 o'clock on school nights, but have to be alert at their desks as early as 7:15. "It's equivalent to sending adults to a business meeting at 4 a.m.," says Dr. Mark Mahowald, director of the Minneapolis Regional Sleep Disorders Center. Some schools are changing their clocks to address the problem. At Broughton High in Raleigh, N.C., the opening bell was moved from 7:30 to 8:15 last August. A little more sleep—and maybe even time for break-

fast. "They seem more awake and ready to learn," says assistant principal Mike Ludwig.

Drinking, drugs and smoking: There's some preliminary good news here. Drinking, some drug use and cigarette smoking either held fairly steady or declined slightly last year after climbing in the early- to mid-1990s, according to the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. Many teens are getting the message and deciding it's cool to stay clean. But still, there are more than 3,000 new young cigarette smokers *every day* in this

country. One third of high-school seniors have used marijuana and about the same number now qualify as binge drinkers, consuming five or more drinks in a row over the course of two weeks. About one in 20 high schoolers has used the club-drug ecstasy, and heroin use, while small, has doubled since 1991. "You can't go to a party where someone isn't smoking weed or getting drunk," says 17-year-old Marcus Robinson, a peer counselor and junior at Westlake High in Ohio. The side effects are huge: both smoking and drinking make kids much more likely to have sex, placing them at higher risk for STDs.

Mental health: Eating disorders, sleep

Clothes-Minded

"I know it sounds terrible, but possessions are important to me. I admit it: I love clothes. I'm shallow. Oh, we're gonna sound like dorks."

Jane Foody, 15



problems and substance abuse can all be critical clues to mental turmoil. Anxiety disorders are the most pervasive psychiatric problems in teens: 13 percent of children between 9 and 17 suffer conditions ranging from chronic worrying to severe social phobia. The big concern is suicide, which is highly associated with depression. Every year, one in 13 high-school students at-

tempts suicide—girls try to kill themselves more often than boys, but boys succeed far more frequently. “An amazing number of kids are either thinking about suicide, making suicide attempts or even dying,” says Dr. David Shaffer, a child psychiatrist at Columbia University. Shaffer is hopeful that a decline in teen suicides over the last few years will continue downward, but the rate

is still staggering—three times higher among males in the 1990s than it was in the early 1960s.

In the end, teens should and will make their own choices. But they’re more likely to make the best ones if the adults in their lives do the right thing—communicate, pay attention and set a good example themselves.

With JOAN RAYMOND and LISA BERTAGNOLI

Mind Expansion: Inside the Teenage Brain

AND ALL THIS TIME they thought it was raging hormones. Or existential angst. Or resentment of authority. But the more fundamental explanation for much of what goes on in the heads of teenagers lies ... in their heads. No sooner have teens made their peace (sort of) with the changes that puberty has inflicted on their body than their brain changes on them, too, reprising a dance of the neurons very much like the one that restructured the brain during infancy. “Brain maturation continues into the teen years and even the 20s,” says Jay Giedd of the National Institute of Mental Health. As a result, although today’s teens mature physically at younger ages than their parents, and although they take on many of the behavioral trappings of adulthood, “that does not mean that they understand the full implications of their behavior,” says psychologist Deborah Yurgelun-Todd of McLean Hospital outside Boston. “The regions of their brain responsible for judgment, insight and planning are still immature.”

Both the pattern of brain use and the structure of brain regions change through the teen years. The good news is that,

around puberty, the brain blossoms with new brain cells and neural connections, something that was thought to happen only in the first 18 months of life. Then, between puberty and

cient, well-organized circuitry. The teen years are, then, a second chance to consolidate circuits that are used and prune back those that are not—to hard-wire an ability to hit a

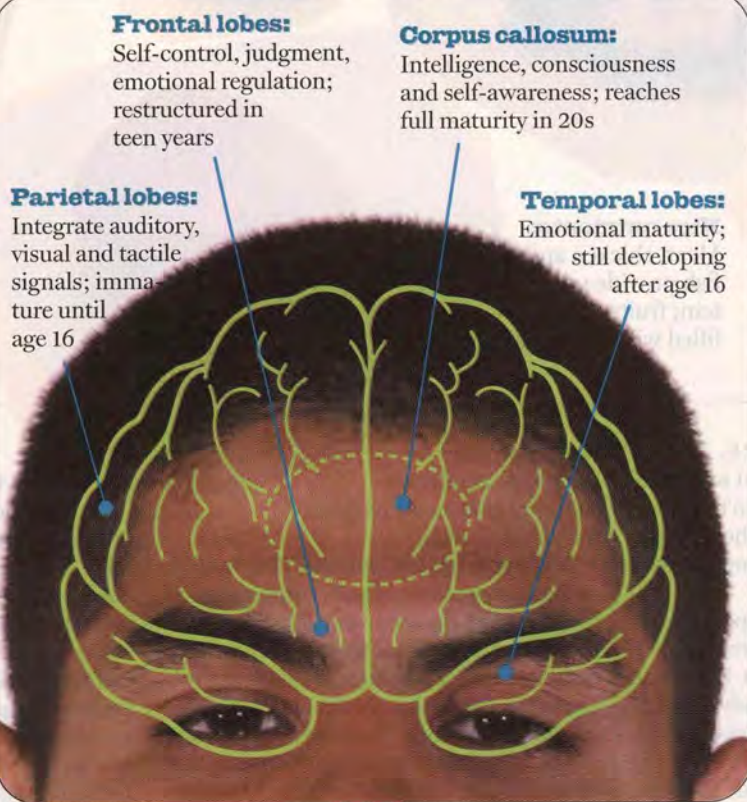
The immaturity of the frontal lobes during the teen years may explain why the brain regions that teens use for several tasks differ from the regions adults use. McLean’s

Yurgelun-Todd and colleagues showed pictures of people wearing fearful expressions to teenagers between 11 and 17. Compared to adults, she finds, the teens’ rational, thoughtful frontal lobes light up less and their amygdala, which registers emotions such as fear, light up more. Yet the teens often misread facial expressions, seeing sadness or anger or confusion where there was fear. The results, says Yurgelun-Todd, suggest that “in teens, the judgment, insight and reasoning power of the frontal cortex is not being brought to bear on the task as it is in adults. Teens just process information differently from adults.”

Developing the ability to plan, to organize, to manage emotions, to understand others, to exhibit judgment and even to master logic and algebra

requires more than slipping software into existing hardware. That’s what learning is. Instead, it requires changing the very hardware of the brain. The brain you have when you enter your teen years is not the one you have when you grow out of them. Thank goodness.

SHARON BEGLEY



young adulthood the frontal lobes—responsible for such “executive” functions as self-control, judgment, emotional regulation, organization and planning—undergo wholesale renovation. They shrink. The reason seems to be that extraneous neuronal branchings get pruned back. Pruning also occurs in infancy, creating effi-

cient, well-organized circuitry. The teen years are, then, a second chance to consolidate circuits that are used and prune back those that are not—to hard-wire an ability to hit a curve ball, juggle numbers mentally or turn musical notation into finger movements almost unconsciously. “Teens have the power to determine their own brain development, to determine which connections survive and which don’t, [by] whether they do art, or music, or sports, or videogames,” says Giedd.



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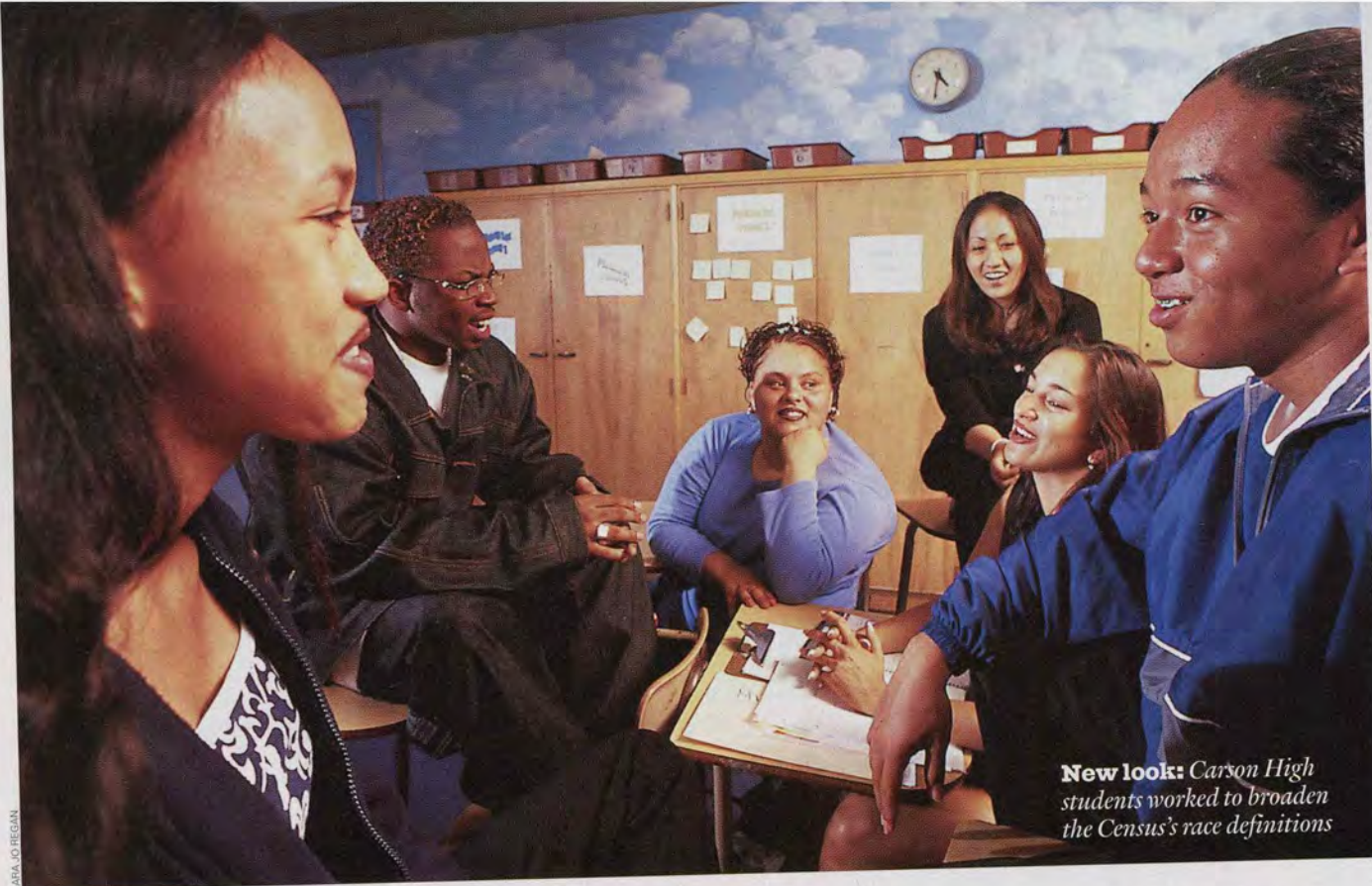
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New look: Carson High students worked to broaden the Census's race definitions

Color My World

IT WAS ONE OF THE TOUGHEST ASSIGNMENTS of senior year—a 4,000-word argumentative essay on a controversial topic. Groans echoed down the halls of Denver's George Washington High School, but Nicole Caldwell was secretly pumped. All her life she had been required to categorize herself by race. Sometimes the ivory-skinned, green-eyed teen checked black. Sometimes she checked black and white, the races of her father and mother. Occasionally, when she was feeling defiant, she checked simply "other." None of the choices felt quite right. This was Caldwell's chance to speak up. Race

is a divisive tool of "outdated institutions," concluded the outspoken 18-year-old on page 12 of her polemic against race politics. It "doesn't really even exist anymore."

OK, racial divisions still exist. But "people don't trip on it so much now," says Ian Simmons, a 17-year-old biracial student from Oakland, Calif. "It's like everybody is mixed these days." Thirty years

ago, only one in every 100 children born in the United States was of mixed race. Today that number is one in 19. In states like California and Washington it's closer to one in 10. The morphing demographics give many teens a chance to challenge old notions of race. But these fluid notions of identity also create new tensions of their own.

The promise and perils of life in the new multiracial mainstream

By Lynette Clemetson

Multiracial kids still catch their share of grief, and ugly slurs like "Oreo," "half-breed" and "mutt" are still slung in school parking lots, bathrooms and locker rooms around the country. And there are still pressures to "hang black," "go white," "kick it Latino" or "roll Asian." But the rising numbers of mixed-race kids translate into something all important in the teen universe: a tribe with which to identify, headed by sexy pop icons like Mariah Carey and Tiger Woods.



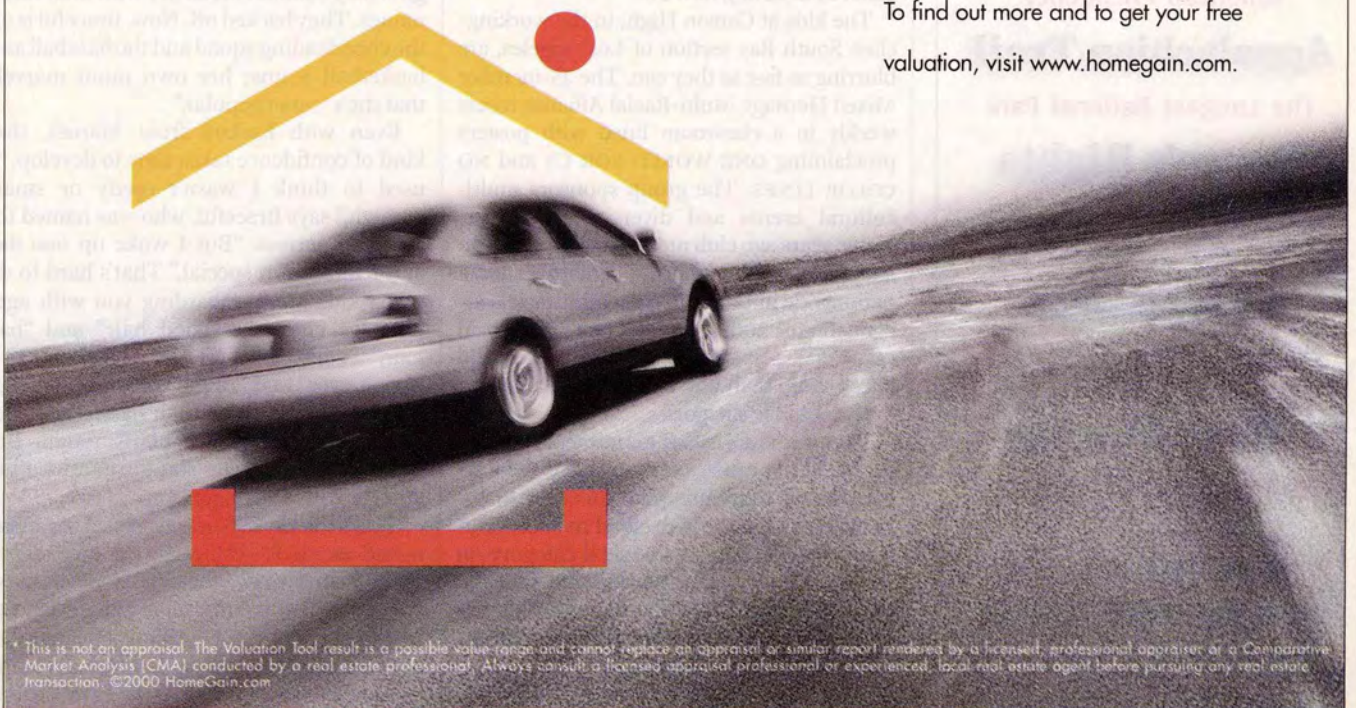
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SPECIAL REPORT

The relative comfort level that teens experience now is new. Most of today's mixed-race adults didn't have other biracial kids in their schools and neighborhoods, let alone on their favorite TV shows or on the covers of magazines. "Back then there was more of a sense of isolation, of being ignored," says author Pearl Fuyo Gaskins, 42, who was born in Tennessee, the daughter of a Japanese mother and white father. "There wasn't a consciousness that being mixed was, in and of itself, an identity. It was lonely." The organized push for acceptance started in the late '70s with the formation of I-Pride, the first social and political organization for mixed-race adults. More than 30 colleges now have mixed-race student organizations, and high schools are catching on with groups of their own. There are a slew of Web sites and chat rooms for multiethnics, and *Mavin* magazine, started two years ago by a college student to explore the mixed-race experience, now has a circulation of 32,000. The quarterly's spring issue went out to more than 9,500 high schools nationwide. "Young people today want to mix it up and continually blur the boundaries," says *Mavin* founder and publisher Matt Kelley, now 21.

The kids at Carson High, in the working-class South Bay section of Los Angeles, are blurring as fast as they can. The 25-member Mixed Heritage Multi-Racial Alliance meets weekly in a classroom lined with posters proclaiming ONE WORLD FOR US and NO COLOR LINES. The group sponsors multicultural events and diversity campaigns. Three years ago club members descended on shopping malls gathering signatures for a nationwide initiative to get a multiracial category on the 2000 Census. Their efforts paid off. Census respondents this year could check more than one box for race, allowing for 63 possible categories.

Even some so-called monoracial kids are down for the cause. Not long after the Carson group's signature drive, an entire history class at the school decided to show solidarity by checking every racial category on a standardized test. Coordinators sent the tests back to the school and made each student erase all but one box. But the multiracial students felt validated.

In places less diverse than California, mixed-race teens have to look outside their neighborhood or school for strength. When Xiomara Braceful switched to a new Catholic middle school in Detroit last fall,



Keeping the faith: Ashley Rosenberg cheerfully negotiates the challenges of mixing races and religions

where there were few mixed students, kids splashed the bathroom walls with OREO and other racist names. The 12-year-old, who is Cuban and African-American, with Jamaican, Spanish and Indian mixed in, ran home in tears. After getting solace from her stack of Mariah Carey CDs, Braceful told the girls they couldn't break her with their nasty names. They backed off. Now, Braceful is on the cheerleading squad and the baseball and basketball teams; her own mom marvels that she's "superpopular."

Even with backup from Mariah, that kind of confidence takes time to develop. "I used to think I wasn't pretty or smart enough," says Braceful, who was named for a Cuban actress. "But I woke up one day and realized I'm special." That's hard to do when kids are bombarding you with age-old race cues like "good hair" and "bad hair," "white music" and "black music," "Asian eyes" and "Anglo eyes." Junior high and high school, with their harsh social delineation, can be particularly tough. But multiracial teens who run the gamut often emerge with a stronger sense of self.

That's the key to being accepted, say many mixed-race kids—claiming your own identity, no matter what other kids want to make you. Still, identity can be as much a product of social sphere as it is of physical appearance. A kid who grows up in a predominantly Latino neighborhood may identify as more Latino, even if he looks more Japanese. A kid in a mostly black school may identify as more black, even if she looks more white. When people ask Stephanie Taylor what she is, she

tells them, "Cappuccino. Half coffee, and half light cream." Taylor says it's only natural that she identifies more with white culture: she was raised by a white mother and attends a predominantly white school. Some of her biracial friends feel the need to switch their behavior, depending on which racial group they're hanging out with. She thinks it's a waste of time. "I will talk about the Backstreet Boys to a black person," says the 17-year-old from Ann Arbor, Mich. "I'm myself and if they don't like me, that's too bad."

For many mixed-race teens, parents are the cheerleaders for their multiethnic pride. Sure, parents can be corny (like white mothers who celebrate Kwanzaa to get in touch with their kids' black side). But they offer advice when kids at school make dumb cracks. They can help build bridges to extended family, when one set of relatives is uncomfortable with the other side of a child's heritage. And they can teach a tough-minded acceptance of the fact that it's still, in many ways, a racist world. Stephanie Taylor's mother, Virginia Taylor-Godden, tells her kids not to feel pressured to identify solely as black or white. But she also reminds them that other people may choose to define them by race—including police who may target them because they look black. "I tell them you have to be on your guard constantly," says Taylor-Godden, who is white. "I make sure they are aware of the stereotypes."

With friends of all races, Cameron Caldwell didn't expect to have to deal with stereotypes. He got a reminder last fall. It was football season and the 6-foot-2 freshman was changing out of his gear into his favorite FUBU sweater. "Why are you wearing that? You're not black," joked one of the white kids, not realizing that his fair-skinned teammate was biracial. When Caldwell told him that he was half black, the guy stopped speaking to



'You're not black': Nicole Caldwell was furious when a boy rejected her brother Cameron for being biracial. 'He couldn't take it that there was this other part of our family that wasn't what he is,' she says.

him. "It really bothered me," says Caldwell, 15. It bothered big sister Nicole even more. "This jerk messing with Cameron expected him to wear Abercrombie and Fitch like the white kids," she fumed. "He couldn't take it that there was this other part of our family that wasn't what he is."

The terrain gets even trickier when it comes to dating. At Lakeshore Ice Cream and Donuts in Oakland, a group of friends from Generation Pride, a local group for mixed-race teens, sits eating donut holes and rapping about the rules of the race game. All are children of black and white parents. "Whatever the race of the person you're dating, people take it to mean you're going that way," says soft-spoken Helena Turner, 16, the only girl in the group.

"Yeah, people take it like a statement, even though it's not," adds Gino Jackson, the group's president.

"I think I'd catch some stuff if I dated a white guy," Helena jumps back in. "It's like, if you're mixed you can be too white, and that's a bad thing. But you can't be too black or whatever else."

"Word," says Ian Simmons, nodding.

Helena doesn't have a steady boyfriend. Gino and Ian get around the issue another way. "Mixed girls!" declares Gino, as his younger brother Sergio howls with laughter across the table. "That's the way to go! All the mixed girls I know are *fine*."

The broader the affirmation, the better it feels. On the green lawn of Wellesley College, high-school junior Liz Short is beaming. She's one of roughly 200 multiracial students at a mixed-race symposium sponsored by student groups and Harvard and Wellesley. The daughter of a white American serviceman and a Korean mother, Short has treaded the landscape of race both in Korea and her new home in New York. "I've always been proud of who I am, but this makes it more fantastic," she says. "Just look around. It's great! Nobody is plain white, or plain black, or plain anything. Eventually I'm hoping every place will be like this." It's a vision that many mixed-race kids can share.

With ANA FIGEROA, JULIE WEINGARDEN and JULIE EDELSON HALPERT

Speaking Up

“Certain things are better than ever. We are trying to deal with things like racism and homophobia and sexism, where past generations didn't.”

Tara Duke, 18

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Parenting a Teen...

... is a tough job. The First Lady tells what she learned, and how a White House Conference can help others. BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

A FEW MONTHS AGO, BILL AND I GRADUATED FROM being the parents of a teenager to being the parents of a young adult. Chelsea turned 20 in February. We look at this life passage with mixed emotions—pride at our daughter's accomplishments; wistfulness about how quickly it has all happened; and most of all, gratitude for Chelsea's safe transition to adulthood. We know we are very fortunate.

This week, the President and I will be holding a White House Conference on Teenagers. We'll be joining other parents, teenagers and experts to talk about how we can all work together to help families navigate this critical period in their lives.

Why a Conference, and why now? Well, ask any teen: growing up today feels tougher than ever. While the cases may be extreme, the tragedies at Columbine High School last spring, and just recently at the National Zoo, are chilling reminders of the stress, alienation and violence that can overwhelm a troubled teen. And if it's tough to be a teen these days, it's even tougher to be a parent. More and more parents are working outside the home, and struggling every day to meet their responsibilities. Parents tell me they worry that all their best efforts to create a world of love and support at home might be useless, when our popular culture continues to depict a world of gratuitous sex and violence. They're worried about their teens' choices, how the bright future they envisioned for them can disappear with a single bad decision to drink, to try drugs, to trust the wrong person.

One theme we will be discussing at the Conference is the critical role parents can—and should—play in their teenagers' lives. What parent of a teenager hasn't felt that pang when a child who once couldn't be pried out of his mother's lap is now embarrassed to be in the same room with her? But studies are showing that for all their protest and swagger, teenagers need—and want—the everyday love, involvement and discipline of their parents.

Sometimes, even modest efforts to reach out to your teenager can make a tremendous difference. When Chelsea had to stay up all night adding footnotes to a research paper in high school, she appreciated our willingness to stay up with her, even though we were useless when her computer became temperamental. When she became a vegetarian, the three of us bought vegetarian cookbooks. When she was getting ready for college, we went shopping for extra-long sheets, shower caddies and

all those other necessities of dorm life.

I believe that one of the biggest casualties of modern life—of fast food, TV and more stressful days at work for parents—has been family time, the time during meals, for instance, when parents and children can check in with each other. Before Chelsea left for college, she, Bill and I made it a priority to share at least one meal together every day. That half-hour in the small kitchen of our private quarters of the White House was always my favorite part of the day.

Now, with three thousand miles between us, the three of us try to talk on the phone as often as possible. Of course, it isn't quite the same. You can't always count on a busy college junior to be in her room when you call. And chatting across a continent is nothing like chatting across a dinner table. You can't watch your daughter's eyes light up as she describes an interesting lecture or a fun activity. But one thing remains the same. Chelsea knows that whenever she needs to talk, to ask for advice or just to say hello, we will always be available and eager to listen.

We hope that the White House Conference will help more parents remain involved in their teenagers' lives. Three years ago, we held the first-ever White House Conference on Early Learning to raise awareness about the new research showing the critical brain development that takes place during the first three years of life. Now scientists are beginning to learn that the brain goes through another—equally crucial—growth spurt during the early teenage years. We

hope to help more parents use this still-evolving research to make the most of their relationships with their teens.

Most of all, we hope the Conference will inspire all Americans to take concrete steps to give working parents the tools they need to stay active and involved in their teenagers' lives. I urge lawmakers to extend the Family and Medical Leave Act so that parents can take the time they need to take their children to the doctor, or to attend teacher conferences and other activities. Businesses can do their part by giving parents flexible work schedules. The entertainment industry can develop a voluntary uniform ratings system, and technology companies can devise programs to help parents supervise what their teens see on TV, at the movies and on the Internet.

The time between childhood and adulthood is pivotal. The choices teens make, the values they adopt now can determine whether they become happy and productive citizens. Together we can help them to make choices that are good for them, and for all of us.



ERIC MATHIAS/AP

Together: With Chelsea in Jordan last fall



Déjà vu: Young with Stills, Crosby and Nash in 1969

Still Young At Heart

Neil Young's sweetly sentimental new album sounds like his early, some say best, work. BY LORRAINE ALI

THIS ISN'T EXACTLY MY scene," says Neil Young, pulling his baseball hat low and slouching to avoid recognition as he shuffles through the ostentatious halls of the swanky Four Seasons Hotel in Austin, Texas. In a T shirt so old that the faded logo looks like a stain, Young slips into the elevator, causing fellow passengers to gawk in silent awe. When Young exits on the wrong floor, a college-age rider gasps: "Whoa, that was The Man!"

Remarkably, Young has remained The Man for three decades now. In all his ragged glory—craggy face, hair the same wispy mess it's been since his '69 solo debut—the eccentric composer is one of the few rock legends that haven't slipped down the inevitable slope of numbing mediocrity. The intensely private 54-year-old instead chose to team up with Pearl Jam on his last

album rather than succumb to a "mature," easy-listening record. Even the recent reunion of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (whose 1999 album is approaching gold, and whose tour sold out) proved a critical success beyond the fast-cash nostalgia.

His 26th solo album, "Silver & Gold," adds yet another unexpected twist to Young's career. A radical switch from 1995's grunge masterpiece "Mirror Ball," this new, largely acoustic record is his most compelling return to simplicity since 1972's "Harvest." The sonic equivalent of looking through an old, treasured photo album, Young's new disc is a bittersweet journey through the idealism of youth, one that hits a graceful chord without ever lapsing into movie-of-the-week sappiness.

"A lot of songs have little scenes in them that are from my childhood, or from the child's point of view," says Young, looking uncomfortable in the sterile surroundings of

After the gold rush:
Three decades later, the artist is wary of fame and guards his privacy

*'To injure no man,
but to bless all mankind'*

BOSTON • WEDNESDAY
MAY 3, 2000

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

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Global Report

Cheap bytes and beverages at Net cafes

A Christian Science Monitor
Roundup

WHEN 16 newspapers in Tehran were shut down last week, Iranian mullahs and housewives lined up at cybercafes for the news.

In South Korea, young people flock to their corner "PC bangs" to light up the screens with "Starcraft."

In the remotest and poorest parts of China, lovelorn villagers are discovering romance online.

From Tehran to Tasmania, cybercafes are becoming inex-

A year of topsy-turvy ideologies

■ Party labels aren't what they used to be, and they're even less clear as Bush and Gore jostle for the center.

By Abraham McLaughlin
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON — The two leading presidential candidates are undergoing ideological makeovers so dramatic that lately it's getting hard to tell who's the Democrat and who's the Republican.

In 2000, more than any election cycle in

recent memory, predictability is out, replaced by a topsy-turvy free-for-all as the contenders scramble to seize the political center and, perhaps, redefine their parties in a post-cold-war, post-red-ink era.

Consider these stances:

● George W. Bush's positions on Social Security, Medicare, and education are surpris-

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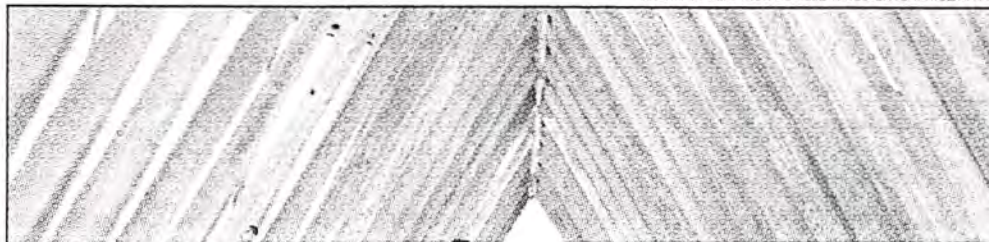
ingly similar to those of the Democratic Leadership Council, the think tank that provided much of the intellectual firepower for President Clinton's programs.

● Al Gore — head of the party once known as tax-and-spend liberals — portrays himself as the defender of fiscal conservatism, vowing to wipe out the national debt.

● Republicans, long the party of law and order, are bashing the US attorney general

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BOBBY HAVEN/THOMASVILLE TIMES-ENTERPRISE/AP/FILE



Power play over new media age

Cheap bytes and beverages at Net cafes

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From Tehran to Tasmania, cybercafes are becoming inexpensive and indispensable gathering places of whole so-

**The global boom
in cyberoutposts
offers even the
poorest places
on earth access
to the dotcom age.**

cieties. Five years ago, there were an estimated 80 cafes, mostly in the US and Europe. Today, in South Korea alone, there are about 15,000.

In the US, many Americans go online from home or work, but when they're abroad they join Dutch backpackers and British businessmen queuing up to check their e-mail at Kalia Cafe in Tonga.

The following vignettes from five cafes, including a 550-seater in London and a nook in Chengdu, China, offer a window on the burgeoning cafe phenomenon.

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BOBBY HAVEN/THOMASVILLE TIMES ENTERPRISE/AP/FILE

Wiring up the South

A worker scales a TV tower in Thomasville, Ga. Like other rural Southern towns, it is prospering by wiring itself to the high-tech world. **PAGE 3.**

Teenagers want more ... family time?

■ A majority of American teens today say they are not spending enough time with their parents.

By Francine Kiefer
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON — Here's a surprise for today's parents: Their teenagers want to spend more time with them.

Evidence is growing that increasing numbers of young people feel they are not getting enough parental attention. Many teens now see it as their top concern.

The findings speak volumes about today's fast-paced society and the decline of the nuclear family. Teens, perhaps more isolated from adults than ever before, are saying they need their parents, yet parents — strapped for time by work or single-parent hood — are unable to respond to the degree their kids want.

"This is the surprise: Youth are [saying], 'I want to talk to an adult, but people are zipping by us.' What's interesting is that this research is coming out just as adults are not around," says Lynn McDonald, a psychologist at the University of Wisconsin's School of Education.

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USA

Teens want more time with parents

TEENS from page 1

The benefits of something as simple as regular family mealtimes are significant. Teens who eat dinner with a parent five days a week or more, are less likely to smoke, use alcohol or marijuana, or have sex, according to a study by the president's Council of Economic Advisors, released yesterday at a White House conference on teens.

And kids who say they feel close to at least one parent are far less likely to consider suicide or engage in antisocial behavior such as fighting at school, the

study shows.

A YMCA poll of parents and their children, also released at yesterday's conference, highlights the pivotal role parents play in their kids' lives. Twenty-one percent of teens aged 12 to 15 listed spending more time with family as their biggest concern—the top response, along with education.

Similarly, in a recent poll by Newsweek, 73 percent of teens aged 13 to 19 said parents don't spend enough time with their children.

Turning to mom for advice

Perhaps as another surprise to parents, kids put parents highest on their list of people they turn to for advice, according to the YMCA poll, though friends are still a major influence (78 percent said they turn to parents; and 58 percent to friends). In both cases, younger teens are more interested in mom and dad than older teens are.

While the popular perception is that parents don't spend much time with their kids, that isn't necessarily true. Although 10 percent of parents say they eat just one meal a week or less with their teens, kids and parents are still finding time for each other—on average about 80 minutes a day.

But it isn't the quantity, it's the quality of the time that may be lacking. Polls continue to show a major disconnect in the way parents communicate with their kids.

For instance, although many parents say they talk frequently to their kids about important issues like sex, dating, drugs, alcohol, and future plans, their kids don't agree. The same goes for parents' monitoring of their kids' TV and Internet use. Parents think they do this frequently, but kids say they don't.

"The good news is that families are still spending time together," says Kenneth Gladish, national director of the YMCA. "The bad news is that children may not be hearing what we parents think we're saying."

Surprisingly, another sign of the disconnect between teens and adults is that many parents don't even consider spending more time with their kids a top concern. In fact, the



HANGING OUT: Kids stand in the hall at the Parker School, in Ayer, Mass. While teens say most of their free time is spent with friends, they'd like to spend more with parents.

YMCA poll showed that most adults are far more concerned about outside threats such as drugs and alcohol.

But those threats could greatly diminish if parents put in more time parenting. "The two things kids say that help steer them clear [of trouble] are a good relationship with parents and a good relationship with their school," says Ms. McDonald.

Of course, the question is, how can today's already overloaded

parents do this?

Changing the rules

Some experts argue that it's partly society's responsibility to change the rules so that parents can spend more time at home.

That's certainly Hillary Rodham Clinton's view. In a recent Newsweek column about raising Chelsea, the first lady urged lawmakers and business leaders to establish more flexible hours in the workplace.

The societal response is spreading at the community level, as well.

The Dallas YMCAs, for instance, are about to institute a program where parents can pick up their kids from the Y—along with their groceries, dry cleaning, and prescription drugs.

Parents have to agree that the time saved on these after-work errands will be used for family mealtime at home. Inside their grocery bags are talking points to help generate dinner-table discussion—and those points are discussed at the Y the next day.

McDonald, at the University of Wisconsin, is working with schools to hold regularly scheduled dinners with parents and their kids so they have time to talk. It's a program that's spreading quickly.

Parental practices

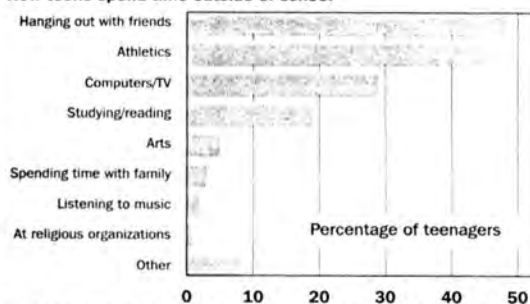
But other experts say it's not just institutions that need to change, but also parental practices and attitudes. Volunteer to be the teen driver as often as you can, turn off the radio in your car when you're driving with your kid, ask your teens open-ended questions, schedule retreats with your children—these are the ways to get to know your children, says Eric Chester, president and founder of Generation Why, a speaking and consulting firm on teens.

Kids have a lot of "stuff," says Mr. Chester, what they need more of is parental attention. "A lot of kids really want more family time. They've heard of the family unit. Here's a generation that wants family, and for all intents and purposes, they've been deprived of it," he says.

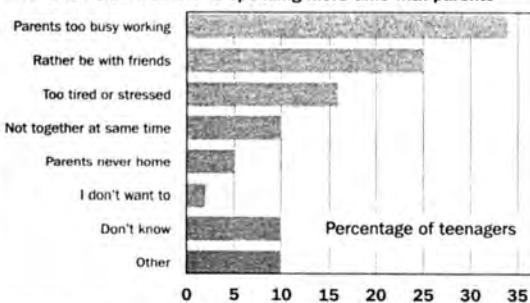
Teens and parent time

A majority of American teenagers ages 12 through 15 say their top concern is not having enough time with their parents. Here are some other findings:

How teens spend time outside of school



How teens rank barriers to spending more time with parents



Source: YMCA Teen Topline Data Report

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— Mary Baker Eddy

ISSN 0897-7729 (USN 0896-551X World Edition)
Published daily except Sundays, holidays, and
holidays by The Christian Science Publishing Society,
One Newbury Street, Boston, MA, USA 02115. An
activity of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in
Boston, Massachusetts. Member: Religious

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office,
Postmaster: postage paid at Boston, MA, and at
additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Please
send address changes to The Christian Science
Monitor, 3125 USA, Avenue Canada G5T
Registration Number: 126918436

Reader comment line
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Subscriptions (US, Canada)
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Outside: The Christian Science Monitor,
PO Box 37544, Boston, MA 02037-0544

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In the UK call 0800 76 0866 (freephone) or write to
The Christian Science Monitor, Broomfield House,
New Zealand Avenue, Wotton-on-Tyames, Surrey,
KT12 1QD, England

Rates: Daily edition (US) — 1 year: \$189,
single copy 75¢. Daily edition outside US —
1 year: \$268. World Edition weekly, not available
in the US — 1 year: US\$79, single copy US\$1.50

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