

**Santee-Lynches Region Facing Facts 2008
Community Forum
July 30, 2009**

Discussion Topic: Teen Pregnancy and other Unwed Mothers

Question 1

Within the community, what specific conditions or values contribute to out of wedlock pregnancy among: (A) pre-teens and teens and (B) adult females 18 or more years of age?

Response(s):

A. Pre-teens and Teens

- Lack of education (sex-ed or academic attainment?)
- Low self-esteem
- Age of the mother's life cycle
- Generational poverty
- Latch-key children/lack of adult supervision
- Pop culture – "Everybody's doing it"

B. Adult females 18 or older

- Personal choice
- All of the above (A) with exception of latch-key issue

Question 2

Why, in your opinion, do these specific conditions or negative value systems exist: (A) pre-teens and (B) adult females and males?

Response(s):

A. Pre-teens:

- General acceptance by peer group and community
- Low priority in all social institutions
- Glamorization
- Home/social environments/family structure

B. Adult females and males:

- Social and economic issues
- General acceptance within the community

Question 3

What opportunities does the community have to reverse and significantly reduce these negative trends?

Response(s)

- Increased faith-based institution involvement – programs, forums, etc.
- Character education
- Government program reform.

- Commitment by leaders
- Focus on contraception and prevention

Question 4

How do these negative trends impact the following?

Response(s):

1. Community Quality of Life - reduced for the individual, the family unit, the neighborhood, and community
2. Economic Prosperity - a lack of personal job skills and a reduced workforce capacity, economic opportunity limited for both the individual and community
3. Families - various social ills: divorce, physical abuse, substance abuse, crime
4. Local Taxes? – taxes go up to support community-based response to social ills, the unbroken cycle of dependency insures long-term public investment

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Discussion Topic: Single Parent Families and Poverty

Question 1

What community based factors or conditions contribute to the number of single parent families and their financial poverty?

Response(s):

- Lack of alternative activities i.e., school programs, summer jobs, too much idle time
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Lack of transportation
- Generational poverty
- Lack of civic involvement/forum settings with opportunities for receiving information and exchanging personal views
- Access to continuing education
- Lack of educational incentives

Question 2

Are there connections or common threads linking the factors identified in **Question 1** above?

Response(s):

- Yes

Identify those factors that you believe are linked:

- Support structure does not adequately encourage and enable a transition
- Current system(s) favor enabling people to stay in poverty

Question 3

How do the current conditions or circumstances typical of single parent households impact those families and the at-large community?

Response(s):

- Conditions (social and economic) hinder advancement of additional incentives
- Inadequate parental behavioral training of specific children affects all children in the classroom
- Creates community resentment
- Encourages defensive responses and a breakdown in communication

Question 4

What can be done to:

(A) More effectively minimize increases in these numbers

Response(s):

- More afterschool programs and new alternatives for single-parent families to progress out of their social and economic circumstances
- Community and grassroots dialogue in the developing and implementing funding of specific programs; monitor outcomes
- Refocus personal energy

(B) Who in the community is best able to accomplish this task?

Response(s):

- Get the population involved in solving the problem(s): find the 'go-to people'

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Discussion Topic: Crime, Drugs, and Alcohol

Question 1

What community based factors and conditions have the greatest impact contributing to the number of males, both African American and Caucasian arrested for drug law violations?

Response(s):

- Jobs, lack of job opportunities
- Lack of education
- Drop-out rate
- Community – social and cultural conditions
- High illiteracy rates in the homes
- State laws start at elementary level – 4th grade
- Personal identity problems/low self esteem
- The presence of gangs in the community – vulnerable individuals looking for acceptance and love, environment of violence, expressions of anger and frustrations
- Law enforcement/judicial system
- Single-family homes

Question 2

Looking at the above factors and conditions, is there a common thread or group of threads that dominate contributing to the particular drug use pattern in the community?

Response(s):

None

Question 3

Why have prior community efforts to curb illegal drug use produced limited success as demonstrated by available statistics?

Response(s):

- More church/community involvement
- Community has blinders on
- Neighborhood of influence
- No coordination of community efforts – lots of small efforts, but there is a need for a larger community impact
- Community fear
- Kids do not value life/each other, a lack of empathy
- Educate parents/increase parental involvement and community support for parents
- Lack of respect for each other (youth)

- School suspension alternative vs. incentive to stay in school
- Disconnect between the church, the school, the home, and the community

Question 4

What new opportunities does the community have to reverse current trends?

Response(s):

- Bring all the agencies together who work in these areas, facilitate recognition of their joint efforts and the total resources being invested against the current outcomes of those investments.
- Forum tonight is a start
- View youth as students not kids
- Focus on the users (drug) and reduce the demand by creating more effective ways to address the underlying causes of illegal drug use
- As long as the demand exists, there will be drug dealers
- Evaluate the judicial process, to determine if outcomes could be improved with appropriate system changes

Why would these particular opportunities have greater success where previous opportunities have either failed or had only limited positive outcomes?

Response(s):

None

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Discussion Topic: Troubling Youth Population Demographics and Trends

Question 1

Drill down below early childhood and youth poverty statistics and question the root causes of the local poverty threshold. Identify and prioritize your perceptions root causes.

Response(s):

Root Causes:

- #1
 - Lack of education
 - Lack of jobs
 - Single parent families
 - Negative community-based influences
- #2
 - The poverty cycle
 - Weak mental and social services
 - High incidents of drug use and addiction
 - Low personal expectations
 - Lack of quality recreation facilities and the lack of accessibility to these facilities due to their physical location within the community
- #3
 - No home life (lack of structure)
 - Gang Violence

Question 2

If current "at-risk" youth trends continue, what would likely be the anticipated increased negative consequences felt by the community?

Response(s):

- More violence
- More crime
- Higher unemployment
- Increased number of dropouts
- Additional costs for incarceration
- Greater drug use and other substance abuse
- Abandoning of communities
- Lack of economic development
- Increase demand for social services and cost to tax payers
- Greater burden on education system

Question 3

With limited public and private resources, which community responses to youth concerns are having the greatest measurable positive impact?

Response(s):

- After school and extracurricular activities
- Increased family involvement
- Community-based activities i.e., Boys and Girls Clubs, recreation, etc.
- Gang prevention and intervention
- Mentoring programs one on one
- Early education success and follow-up with individuals not experiencing success

Question 4

What's the underlying reason for these community programs' success and what limits the expansion of specific efforts that over time have proven successful?

Response(s):

Success

- Having a passion for community improvement
- Willingness to devote the time to mentoring
- Developing a community consensus on what the problems are and how the community can come together to solve the identified problems
- An undeterred willingness to work together

Limitations

- Financial resources
- Limited number of people willing to volunteer

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Discussion Topic: Senior Population Demographics and Trends

Question 1

Senior population demographics create either opportunities or challenges depending on whether a county is classified as rural or urban (population greater than 100,000):

Response(s):

What opportunities (Identify)?

Rural:

- Economic stimulus
- Increased retirement relocation to State
- Increased number of volunteers

Urban:

- Accessibility of health care and other supportive services

What Challenges (Identify)?

Rural:

- Transportation
- Affordable housing
- Access to health care
- Access to quality recreation

Urban:

- Affordable housing
- Safety issues relating to crime

Question 2

The Santee-Lynches Region has three distinct retirement community focal points: Camden/Lake Wateree, Sumter/Shaw AFB, and Manning-Summerton/Lake Marion. How are these communities responding to their specific opportunities for economic growth in this sector?

Response(s):

Retirement Community Focal Points:

- Camden/Lake Wateree:
 - Horse Park
 - Bedroom community for Columbia
 - Retirement homes
 - Historical Parks
 - Cultural amenities
- Sumter/Shaw AFB
- Manning-Summerton/Lake Marion

Question 3

What new community opportunities or challenges will result as a result of in-migration of retirees into these communities (Identify by community)?

Response(s):

Retirement Community Focal Points:

- Camden/Lake Wateree:
 - Health care, accessibility and cost of living favorable
 - Public Transportation (limited)
 - Affordable housing
- Sumter/Shaw AFB:
 - Health care, accessibility and cost of living favorable
 - Public Transportation (available in the urban area, limited in the rural area)
 - Affordable housing
- Manning-Summerton/Lake Marion:
 - Health care, accessibility and cost of living favorable
 - Property taxes
 - Public Transportation (limited)
 - Affordable housing

Question 4

How will the out-migration of youth and young adults from rural counties impact the senior population currently residing there and the tax base available to service the particular needs of this population in the community?

Response(s):

- Lack of industry jobs due to workforce limitations
- Contraction in public service availability
- Decline in population growth
- Decline in tax base