



Combating High Q.C. Teen Birth Rate

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While the teen pregnancy rate is falling nationwide, it remains stubbornly high in the Quad Cities.

May is teen pregnancy prevention month so **Bethany for Children and Families** teamed-up with Edgerton Women's Health Center, and the Scott County Health Department to hold a teen forum. Students, parents and school administrators attended Wednesday's event.

"We had a wonderful opportunity today to bring teens and parents together to talk about the issues," said health educator Libbey Brooke. "What is important and what is happening and how maybe we can change that?"

Both Rock Island and Scott counties have higher teen birth rates than their respective state averages. In Illinois, the teen birth rate is just over 10 percent. But in Rock Island County, it's 13.3 percent. Iowa's average teen birth rate is 8.7 percent. In Scott County, it's 11.5 percent.

Bethany is trying to figure out how to reduce those numbers. The agency released convincing statistics. Only 38 percent of moms who have a child before 18, graduate from high school. 80 percent of teen fathers do not marry the mothers of their first child and contribute less than \$800 annually for child support. Sons of teen moms are 2 times more likely to end up in prison.

The agency is also asking teens and the community for input on how to help turn things around.



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