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MEDIA NOTE: A low-resolution photo is attached. A high resolution is available upon request. Pictured from left to right during the Sarasota County Commissioners' presentation of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month proclamation are Linda Pearce, Sarasota County Health Department, Eleanor Ball, Truvine Missionary Baptist Church, County Commissioner Carolyn Mason, and Jan Chester, Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida.

The Community Foundation of Sarasota County grant continues commitment to teen health

The Community Foundation of Sarasota County recently awarded the Sarasota County Health Department a \$75,000 grant for their third year funding commitment to the Truvine Teen Project. As an investment in the future of children in Sarasota County, this project empowers young people ages 12 to 18 to make responsible decisions about sexual activity, abstinence, and their overall health. The goal is to help reduce unintended and repeat pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among youth.

The Teen Health Project was recently highlighted as a "blueprint" for our community during the presentation of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month proclamation by Sarasota County Commissioner Carolyn Mason. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, there are significant costs savings associated with preventing unintended pregnancies. For every dollar spent in preventing teen pregnancy, there is an estimated \$4 saved in future social and health services costs to taxpayers.

The Truvine Teen Project is a partnership between Truvine Missionary Baptist Church and the Sarasota County Health Department in collaboration with Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida, Inc. Through this partnership, teens receive training in responsible decision-making. In addition, their parents learn effective ways to communicate and role-model healthy behaviors. Families are equipped with information needed to connect with local community services.

The Truvine partnership began in 2004 with a three-year federal Title X grant through the Florida Department of Health. The original program included education and clinic services at the Truvine Missionary Baptist Church. Since 2007, pre-teens and teens in need of medical services such as family planning services, nutrition counseling, diabetes screening, sexually transmitted disease (STD) testing, physical exams, or weight management support can see healthcare provider through the health department clinics in Sarasota, Venice and North Port. The health department's Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit also is available to provide health screenings, pregnancy testing, and HIV testing at 15 locations across the county.

Local public health officials are pleased with the continued funding commitment of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County to teens and their families throughout Sarasota County. For more information about the Truvine Teen Project, call 941-861-2970 or visit the Sarasota County Health Department's website, www.sarasotahealth.org.

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