



AMTC

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News

“SRAE matters. Kids are bombarded with messages of sex through the media. It’s vital to provide a positive youth development focus for those who are not ready for sexual commitment.”

— ANGELA TURNER

AMTC News

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Honored to Serve

The Illinois State Board of Education has entrusted us with a statewide Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) initiative. It’s an incredible honor and a testament to our hard-working, dedicated staff. In fact, this programming area was AMTC’s first line of work, so it seems natural for me to throw my heart and soul behind such an important program.

SRAE matters. Kids are bombarded with messages of sex through the media. Yet not everyone is ready for sexual activity. It’s therefore vital to provide a positive youth development focus for those who are not ready for sexual commitment, thereby providing a support system. Through SRAE, individuals are also informed about the consequences of sexual activity, providing a framework for them to think about their future.

We plan to serve almost 15,000 individuals during this four-month grant period. That makes me incredibly proud to have an amazing team of curriculum developers, regional coordinators, educators and additional partners. The evidence-based curriculum uses a relationship framework so students learn to form and sustain healthy relationships. It

is a program that goes well beyond sexual protection or a singular message about delaying sexual activity.

AMTC & Associates will provide program management, training and performance measurement services. We also provide participating organizations with an impressive online participant tracking system. In this newsletter, I invite you to read about having a “Focus on the End Game”: thinking about goals and priorities, and looking forward to one’s future. We also highlight two organizations, emphasizing how diverse communities can utilize this programming. Meet their amazing regional coordinators, and learn how AMTC is setting the stage for future successes with an SRAE video.

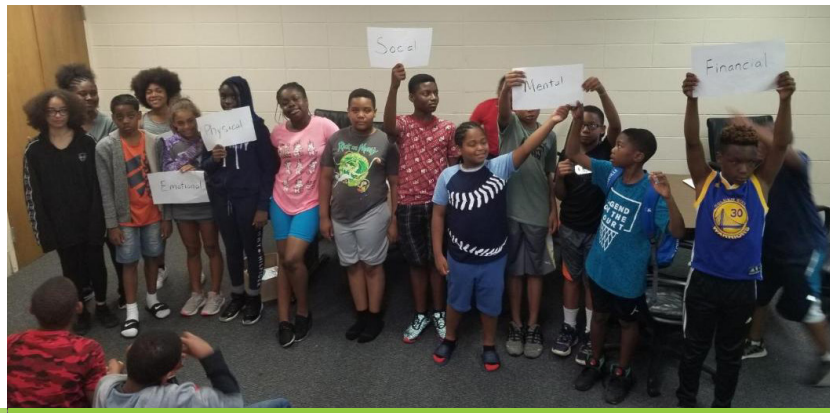
If we can be of any assistance to your organization, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Angela M. Turner

Angela Turner
Principal



FOCUS ON THE END GAME



These students, aged 10 to 13, enthusiastically participated in a recent SRAE event with WorkStudy Enterprises in Chicago's south suburbs, using an AMR curriculum.

How youth envision their future matters, but so do the action steps toward obtaining a bright future; with this in mind, we established a program called, "Focus on the End Game." This brand conveys the purpose of Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE): establishing practical goals and a sense of confidence that life can be full of positive outcomes. SRAE is so much more than a single message about not having sex!

"Focus on the End Game" is an SRAE program that is sponsored by the Illinois State Board of Education and is available across the entire state. It follows a highly successful Illinois State Abstinence Program that reached more than 17,000 youth during the 2017-2018 school year. This new programming cycle covers the summer months and the start of the school year, and provides additional curricula options and community partners.

Expanded Tools and Varied Methods

Key to this new SRAE programming is a focus on positive youth development, with an expansion of tools to promote healthy behaviors for youth, ages 10 to 19. For example, as part of addressing sexual risks,

other topics and resources are provided to combat harmful behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, among others. This expansion is built upon an already strong foundation of SRAE curricula that was created by Abstinence and Marriage Resources (AMR) and utilized during the 2017-2018 programming cycle; the curricula were perfectly suited to "Focus on the End Game" and were aligned with the new SRAE legislation. Each set of curricula is developmentally appropriate for a certain range of ages and includes varied teaching methods, such as storytelling, acting, art and more.

In addition to AMR's curricula, this new initiative added two new curricula from The Dibble Institute, a publisher that is recognized as a leader in promoting healthy relationships for youth. "Love Notes—Sexual Risk Avoidance (SRA) Adaptation" is curricula targeting higher-risk youth, ages 15-24, while "Relationship Smarts Plus—SRA Adaptation" is for ages 12-16.

Offering Youth Options

Jaclyn Schiessl is the AMTC Grants Coordinator and she spoke about the excitement for this new program: "It offers youth options. You don't have to take the road right in

front of you. You could take a different path and it can overall become a great life with productive, healthy outcomes."

Angela Turner, AMTC's Principal, is equally excited: "By using words like 'abstinence,' 'sexual risk' and 'avoidance,' we can unintentionally turn youth away who think they are going to be told 'do not have sex.' No one likes to be told what to do, or what not to do, and programming takes this into consideration. Even the name of the program focuses toward a smart, healthy, bright future: 'Focus on the End Game.'" ■



Facilitator Shawn Mitchell leads students through a "Whole Person" activity at WorkStudy Enterprises.

SRAE:

Far-Reaching, Powerful Youth Development

The State of Illinois is diverse, spanning from one of the country's highest populated urban centers to rural areas, and many places in between. Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) is available to all of them (i.e., throughout the entire state) and is sponsored by the Board of Education. Although each community is distinct and has its own set of strengths and challenges, SRAE curricula is relevant in every setting; after all, young people are largely exposed to consistent messages and images about sex through the same media, no matter where they live.

This article highlights two organizations that cover different geographic

regions: **Academia de la familia** (Academy for Families), in the city of Chicago, and **The Pregnancy Care Clinic**, based in Marion County, a mostly rural area in the southern portion of the state.

The *Academia de la familia* serves both youth and parents in varied ways, among them educational initiatives that teach how to avoid risky sexual behaviors and how to replace those behaviors with positive youth development. Educational opportunities are presented in different settings and formats, including workshops, classrooms and retreats. Lessons are delivered in both Spanish and English. The *Academia de la familia* has partnered

with AMTC & Associates since September 2017 and has introduced Abstinence and Marriage Resources (AMR) curricula to 34 schools, reaching 4,560 youth.

The Pregnancy Care Clinic serves the whole family with an array of services, including pregnancy services, parenting classes, resource and material assistance and sexual health education. Like *Academia de la familia*, the clinic teaches about the consequences of risky sexual behaviors and works to instill positive youth development. Since September 2017, the Pregnancy Care Clinic has worked with AMTC and has launched AMR programming in 19 schools, reaching more than 740 youth. ■

New Video Highlights Impact of SRAE

BY ANNIE SANDER,
CREATIVE DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

Sexual risk avoidance education (SRAE) isn't a subject I've previously directed a video about; however, it has been exceptionally rewarding. As a mother of teens, I'm keenly aware of the vast and instant array of sexual content available online, not to mention what they face in school environments. Our children are barraged with explicit messages and are often conflicted with navigating their way around them.

I'm thrilled to partner with AMTC in crafting a critical message intended

for those in positions of influence to deliver SRAE to better arm our kids to combat sexual temptations and risky behaviors.

Video is powerful because it fully engages multiple senses at once. It's easily shared and can compel viewers to immediate action. This video highlights harsh realities that sexually-active youth must confront. We feature real people (not actors) who have been profoundly impacted by such realities and by the SRA education they've received. One teen observes how her sister's college education was hindered, another explains his choice to delay sex. AMTC staff, educators and practitioners from across the country also address the growing sexual risks our youth face and why SRA offers an effective, holistic approach, especially coupled with

positive youth development programs.

If SRAE were "mainstream," I believe we would see a reduction in premarital births, the spread of STIs and even the cycle of poverty in our nation. For this reason, we targeted this video to school administrators, health instructors, program directors and community leaders. We hope more people embrace this education. I'm honored to work with AMTC on this project. Together, we are positively affecting the trajectory of young people's lives. ■



Annie Sander

Meet two Regional Coordinators

Regional Coordinators are integral to the success of the Illinois State Board of Education's SRAE initiative. Although only two are highlighted in this newsletter, AMTC is proud to partner with each of them.



**ROSALINDA
VILLASEÑOR**

**SRAE REGIONAL
COORDINATOR
DIRECTOR FOR ACADEMY
FOR FAMILIES**

**Region 10, covering Cook
County, Illinois**

What is your role at the Academy for Families (Academia de la familia)?

To sum it up, overseeing the success of the region, following all the guidelines of the SRAE projects, including outreach, speaking and assisting other members in the region, reporting and data collection. I also know the curriculum and have taught it for many years.

What excites you about the current SRAE programming cycle?

The opportunity to reach young people with what I call a lifesaving message. It's summertime, so on the one hand it is hard to reach young people because it's their break but at the same time it's an important time of the year because they could be more open to getting involved in activities that might put them at risk. This project frees them from pressures and encourages them in a positive way.

What do you hope to accomplish with this cycle?

The results are that youth have received either new knowledge or encouragement in a new direction with healthy decision making, for them to be encouraged to focus on their future, their education, the desires of their heart, all the positive things they have, to be able to stay focused and avoid engaging in risky decisions.

What has your experience been like working with AMTC?

It has been a wonderful learning experience. I admire Angie [AMTC principal], her input; her leadership has been phenomenal. Jeanette Stevens [the Program Manager] has taken on such a leadership role. I really appreciate her guidance.



MICHELLE REIM

**SRAE REGIONAL
COORDINATOR
Region 6, covering 22 counties
in Southeastern Illinois**

What is your role at the Pregnancy Care Clinic?

I conduct outreach and recruitment to schools and community-based organizations, as well as help ensure fidelity of the program. I secure enrollment, service and attendance requirements. We also work closely with educators and program sites that implement the program with youth in our region, as well as participate in professional development training and workshops.

What excites you about the current SRAE programming cycle?

Having the continued opportunity to help promote the grant to reach and empower youth. Working with a professional and talented team has been an amazing and fulfilling experience. It's encouraging to hear of the numbers of students who have been reached. Youth learn to cultivate lifelong skills, they are encouraged to avoid risks, and to set and achieve goals that lead to a healthier and brighter future.

What do you hope to accomplish with this cycle?

To engage new sites and students, to reach and influence youth to set goals and achieve them by learning new tools, with an increased skill set to help make healthy and safe choices.

What has your experience been like working with AMTC?

It has been a pleasure. They are kind, courteous and professional. The knowledge from their years of experience is beneficial to the whole program. The partnership aspect brings this expertise of many working together for a greater good. It has been gratifying and exciting.