



Community Impact Report

2019



EVERY ADOLESCENT EMPOWERED
TO BE HEALTHY, SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL

Letter from Executive Director | LIBBY SAFRIT



I have had the great honor of serving with Teen Health Connection for almost 22 years. As a master-trained clinical community psychologist, about half of my tenure was spent providing direct mental health services to individuals, and the other half, as executive director, has been focused on growing our services to meet the needs of the community at large.

In 2019, because of the strong leadership of our board, the generous support of our donors and our sustained collaboration with Atrium Health, we were able to expand and renovate our physical footprint. This has allowed us to better support our medical services, prevention and youth development initiatives and significantly increase access to our mental health care.

In 2020, we are better positioned than ever to serve our patients and participants and be at the forefront of community-wide initiatives focused on the health and well-being of our youth. It is the full integration of mental health care within a medical practice that truly sets Teen Health Connection apart and is how we will collectively rise-up to meet the fluid needs of our community's adolescents.

Through the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, our entire world is experiencing a collective global trauma that will affect us for years to come. The negative effect of social distancing upon teens is already manifesting, and certainly, there will be long-term consequences that are unique to teens who while physically healthy, will still suffer emotionally. Rest assured that with your continued support and advocacy Teen Health Connection will be there ready to support our teens and their families this year and for years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Libby Safrit".

Letter from Board President | JANE LLEWELLYN



As a community volunteer for the majority of my three decades in Charlotte, I have had the privilege of watching Teen Health Connection grow from an idea discussed in a small conference room to now being an established organization of 28 years.

As the current board president looking towards the future, I will always refer to 2019 as the year we took a hard look at ourselves and developed an extensive strategic plan for the organization. Through that process, we identified the areas where we were successfully addressing our mission, and then, began implementing new strategies to grow the impact of our medical and mental health services – more necessary than ever for our community's challenges that lie ahead.

It is sometimes said that Teen Health Connection is the best kept secret in Charlotte. I encourage all those familiar with our programs and services to spread the word of our mission, and as you meet those who are unfamiliar – ask if there are ways they can become involved or benefit from our services directly.

We frequently have the opportunity to speak directly with teens through local leadership events and community service, and now even virtually. With wisdom, laughter and sometimes tears, they often share that they are experiencing more societal challenges today than ever before.

Our teens need our support. Please join me in sharing with the community the wonderful services and programs that are available to all our adolescents at Teen Health Connection. Let's not be a secret anymore!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane B. Llewellyn".

Letter from Medical Director | DR. SHAMIEKA DIXON



As I enter my seventh year of caring for our Teen Health Connection patients, and third as medical director, I continue to lead our team of adolescent medicine physicians, nurse practitioners and pediatric residents while working collaboratively with our nursing and registration teams. We are thankful this year to welcome a new practice manager and nursing team lead to allow us to continue to enhance and expand medical services at Teen Health Connection.

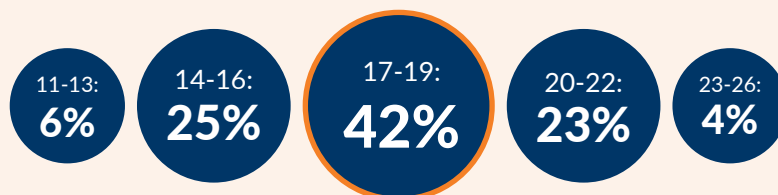
With all the stressors of our current day, I continue to see the correlation between the anxiety and trauma our patients experience and the negative effects it places on different aspects of their lives. As their bodies grow and minds develop, these stressors can become more difficult to deal with and surmount. When faced with prolonged periods of danger, stress and tension, teens produce excess stress hormones like cortisol which trigger the “fight or flight” response in the body. When our youth are not equipped with the proper tools to handle these stressors, it affects their success in school, relationships with their families and peers, and ultimately their emotional and physical health.

At Teen Health Connection, we continue to offer 45-minute physical and well visit appointments to allow us to properly address the psychosocial aspects of adolescent development, with extensive mental health, reproductive health and substance use screening. Due to our unique, multi-specialty, integrative approach, we continue to be the only adolescent and young adult practice of its kind in Charlotte.

MEDICAL CARE | 2019

4,845
Medical Visits

Age of Teen Health Connection Patients



95% of
Teen Health Connection
patients completed at
least one standardized
mental health screener
during their visit

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Letter from Team Manager | BETSY THOMPSON



In these unprecedented times our world is facing, it is more important than ever to acknowledge and care for our mental health. I have had the privilege of serving the adolescents in our community with Teen Health Connection for over five years. We have seen incredible growth in our mental health services, and I now lead a group of seven licensed clinicians, each one bringing a unique skill set to meet the needs of our patients.

Due to the events happening in our world, we are witnessing significantly higher levels of anxiety and overall stress amongst our young people and their families. Their lives are changing and doing so rapidly. These changes feel scary and unsettling, thus raising anxiety levels. Adolescents have already been impacted by events being canceled that are milestones in their young lives, and their parents are facing unparalleled stressors, both financial and emotional.

Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we are prepared to adequately address the growing mental health needs of our community. We are working with our adolescents on managing their anxiety and empowering them to focus on the things they can control while letting go of what they cannot. Most importantly, we are reminding patients, families and ourselves; while many things in our daily lives have been postponed or cancelled, our resilience is not one of them. We, as Teen Health Connection and as a greater community, will rise from this stronger and better equipped to handle life's many stressors together.

Betsy Thompson

MENTAL HEALTH CARE | 2019

Among teens participating in therapy through Teen Health Connection, the most common diagnoses include:

4,166

Outpatient
Therapy Visits

*Due to comorbidity of mental health diagnoses, total is greater than 100%.

40%

Adjustment
disorder

34%

Depression

27%

Anxiety

Nearly 1 in 3 adolescents aged 13-18 will experience an anxiety disorder. (National Institutes of Health)

966

Mental Health
Triage Visits

*Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can include forms of abuse, parental divorce, serious illness, bullying and other stressful events.

Top 3 reasons for triage intervention during a medical visit:

32%

ACEs*

24%

Depression

14%

Anxiety

The triage program is a primary method of integrating patient care at Teen Health Connection. Through the triage program, dedicated therapists work collaboratively with the medical team to identify and address the evolving needs of patients seen for routine primary care or specialized treatment.



Mental health team from left to right: Clark, Laura, Betsy, Jessica, Mimi, Cokley

Betsy Thompson, M.Ed, LCMHC
Laura Zevan, MSW, LCSW

Jessica Conley, M.Ed, LCMHC
Milagros "Mimi" Smith, PhD, LCMHC

Clark Bridge, MSW, LCSW
Cokley Martin, MS, LCMHC



JORDAN | Teen Testimonial

Among the many teens who have similar success stories, Jordan wanted to tell his story in his own words: I have recently found the perfect passage from adolescence to adulthood. As a self-proclaimed overthinker, I've learned that I need time to pause and reflect on my feelings, and at Teen Health Connection, I've found active listeners. The entire staff has mastered the art of empathy. Both the medical and mental health services are composed of clinicians who know how to talk to teens. They show genuine interest in our lives and offer support with no judgment. They are the most qualified adults to tell you what it's like to be a teen today.

I remember a time when I would fabricate stories when I had therapy appointments because I was embarrassed that I needed guidance. Now, as a current senior in high school, I am proud to be a regular patient and owe most of my self-awareness to the practice. I have found solace in talking to someone who is removed from my everyday life; an unbiased mentor who can advise or simply ask how my day was.

I have seen results from my time at Teen Health Connection. I learned how to trace back my behaviors to the initial thoughts and reflect on how they made me feel, and work on setting healthy boundaries in relationships in order to be treated the way I want to be. I leave every appointment with motivation, to the point where I asked my counselor for homework because I find fulfillment from putting in the work.

Being a patient at Teen Health Connection means you are cared for and have a safe space to gain self-knowledge and awareness from trained professionals who want you to live a meaningful life.



PARENTING THE LOVE AND LOGIC WAY®

A six-module, face-to-face parenting curriculum offered by Teen Health Connection at no charge to local parents and professionals. The course gives participants practical skills and tools to enhance their relationships with teens while emphasizing personal accountability and prevention of underage drinking and prescription drug misuse.

82% of parents who completed the course had established clear family and house rules around underage drinking and drug use.

"This course changed the way we approach parenting. It is really hard to change people but this course changed me as a human!"

- Parent Participant

THE BIG PICTURE

A dynamic health education and community outreach initiative written and performed by and for teens in local high schools and community venues. Based on data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Youth Risk Behavior Survey and other local sources, the performance raises awareness of critical adolescent health issues and aims to improve health and help-seeking behaviors.

3,239 individuals attended a showing of The Big Picture in 2019.

"I didn't realize how much these issues are on the minds of teens. I will make more time to talk to my teenagers about what I learned."

- Parent Attendee



EMPOWER: TEEN LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

A unique, four-day experience designed to teach prevention skills to local teens and the adults who work with them and develop alcohol, drug and tobacco-free social networks of local youth leaders. The Summit is led by trained teen staff members and supportive adults with a focus on substance use prevention and leadership development.

91% of teens reported deciding to be alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) free for at least the next year.

"My favorite parts of the Summit were the friends I made and the support system it created. I liked getting to meet new people that shared some of the same goals and ideas that I have."

- Youth Participant

TEEN ADVISORY BOARD (TAB)

A group of teen volunteers who serve as the youth sector representatives on Teen Health Connection's Youth Drug Free Coalition. The goal of TAB is to develop and empower adolescent leaders committed to the prevention of substance use. Throughout the year, TAB members develop public awareness campaigns, engage in volunteer activities and implement unique strategies to prevent substance use among local teens.

100% of teen members report that TAB gives them opportunities to be a leader in their community.

"TAB is such a positive asset to our community! Thank you for caring about our youth and showing them they can be happy and successful without drugs and alcohol."

- TAB Parent





SIMONA | Teen Testimonial

Simona has been an active participant with Teen Health Connection for over four years. She first joined in eighth grade, after learning about our substance use prevention program, the Teen Advisory Board (TAB). She shared, "I saw that substance abuse was happening in school and knew that there was a need for prevention and education." Through TAB, teen leaders begin developing the knowledge and skills needed to become influencers among their peers to promote healthy living.

After some time passed, TAB created a new program where Simona and other team members offered training at elementary schools regarding over-the-counter medications, their basic uses, side effects and safety concerns. After participating at several schools around Charlotte, Simona shared, "Over the years I became less afraid to speak in front of others and more confident talking with adults and those of different backgrounds."

Simona also taught workshops at Teen Health Connection's annual Empower: Teen Leadership Summit, including sharing about a project she initiated during a trip to Nepal several years prior. Through her volunteer work in a rural community, she saw the difficulty of gender inequality and had the idea to teach young girls to make beaded bracelets to sell for income, which they did successfully. After Simona gave a presentation on this project at the 2019 Summit, attendees also purchased over 100 bracelets to support the girls in Nepal!

Seeing young leaders like Simona grow as individuals, take on new initiatives and make lasting change in their communities is the heartbeat of Teen Health Connection, empowering youth to be healthy, safe and successful.

Teens participating in Teen Health Connection's programs **fare better on key risk indicators of substance use than comparable Charlotte-Mecklenburg high school students.** Research indicates that perception of peer disapproval and perception of risk play major roles in adolescent substance use.

Perception of Peer Disapproval:

Percentage reporting their friends think it would be "wrong" or "very wrong" to use or misuse

| | CMS HS Students | The Big Picture Attendees | Summit Attendees | TAB Members |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | 57% | 81% | 83% | 92% |
| | 74% | 84% | 88% | 88% |
| | 37% | - | 61% | 56% |
| | 68% | - | 82% | 96% |

If their friends think it is wrong, local teens are 25% less likely to use alcohol, 55% less likely to use marijuana, 60% less likely to misuse prescription drugs, and 70% less likely to use e-cigarettes. (Youth Drug Survey, 2018)

Perception of Risk:

Percentage reporting "moderate" or "great risk" to use or misuse

| | CMS HS Students | The Big Picture Attendees | Summit Attendees | TAB Members |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | 80% | 88% | 92% | 92% |
| | 88% | 89% | 99% | 100% |
| | 47% | - | 79% | 79% |
| | 87% | - | 96% | 100% |

If they believe it is risky, local teens are 30% less likely to use alcohol, 60% less likely to use marijuana, 40% less likely to misuse prescription drugs, and 50% less likely to use e-cigarettes. (Youth Drug Survey, 2018)



Letter from Chief Psychologist | DR. JENNIFER THOMAS

I serve as the chief psychologist for the Independent Psychological Assessment (IPA) team at Teen Health Connection. As one of five psychologists, I conduct objective, comprehensive psychological assessments for youth ages five and older who have experienced one or more forms of child maltreatment. The goal of the IPA is to identify the youth's strengths and needs across various life domains (i.e., mental and physical health, academic, social, environmental) and make recommendations unique to each youth. This work is possible through community

partnerships with the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (Clinical and Contractual Services and Youth and Family Services), the Juvenile District Courts and other system stakeholders including the Guardian ad Litem office.

For me, my interests in mental health and working with teens date back to my own adolescent years. I grew up in a small, rural community where specialized services and support for teens were unheard of and access to mental health resources were altogether limited. I pursued my interests through education and training in clinical psychology and was first introduced to trauma work through my predoctoral clinical internship at the Center for Child and Family Health. While there, my purpose to serve the most vulnerable youth in our community, those who have been abused and neglected, became more defined and led me to my friends and colleagues at Teen Health Connection, with a shared vision of empowering every adolescent to be healthy, safe and successful. This vision is inclusive of all teens we serve, transcending adversity and all other life circumstances.

My journey began at Teen Health Connection in 2012 as the first full-time IPA psychologist. A little more than two years later and with a heavy heart, I transitioned from the organization when my family relocated from Charlotte for a few years. Soon after returning to Charlotte I was led back to Teen Health Connection, undoubtedly purpose driven, to find that the IPA team had not only grown, but flourished. I am proud to be a part of this team's commitment to serving, supporting and advocating for the youth of our community. Each day we can share their stories of trauma and triumph, adversity and perseverance. Within our integrated care practice, I have witnessed teens who have never had a medical home establish relationships with their provider, who is board-certified in adolescent medicine and specializes in identifying and treating their unique health care needs. In this now familiar and comforting space, many of them also can process their life experiences through evidenced-based, trauma-focused therapy with a member of our mental health team who is trained and certified to provide this treatment.

When asked to consider the impact of this work on our community, I must first acknowledge the impact that our teens and their families have had on me. I am forever changed by their strength, courage and resilience, and for that, I am grateful.

Jennifer W. Thomas, PhD

The IPA is a critical connector to resources and services for youth with and without mental health diagnoses.

*"The IPAs help to identify appropriate treatment and support services at the front end of the case instead of grasping and grasping and grasping for the right treatment plan. This greatly assists case planning across the board. **The entire case is impacted for the better if we have a good assessment and plan early in the case.**"*

– Juvenile District Court Judge

"I find the information in the reports, probably, the most helpful information I have in determining how well the care team is doing. Are we changing behavior and helping the youth in a positive and lasting manner? Do we need to make any adjustments as we go forward? The IPA is my road map. It is a strong instrument in my toolbox for a case."

– Guardian ad Litem

"There is a definite time-savings for social workers who do not have to 'guess' what type of therapy or intervention would most benefit the child. They often obtain family history that was unknown prior to the IPA. That family history can influence treatment not only for the child but also for the parents/caretakers."

– DSS/YFS Supervisor



Advancing Specialized Care | The Levine Children's Center for Gender Health at Teen Health Connection

- Launched in April 2019, the Center applies Teen Health Connection's integrated care approach towards the delivery of gender-affirming care and treatment options for gender-diverse children, adolescent, and young adults. The Center is the first gender health clinic of its kind in Charlotte and one of only a handful in the region.



Media | Reaching New Populations and Raising Awareness

- Radio PSAs targeting prevention of underage drinking featured on Beasley Media Group radio stations and websites.
- Billboards aimed at reducing underage drinking and prescription drug misuse.
- Teen Health Connection Medical Director Dr. Shamielka Dixon served as the adolescent health expert at Atrium Health's press conference on vaping.



Community Outreach | Providing Education and Resources

- Teen Health Connection gives back to the community in many ways, such as providing mental health screening and triage during the Atrium Health Heart of a Champion health assessment and educational event.
- In 2019, teammates and therapists served over 1,000 community members at local health fairs and symposiums.



Recognizing Teen Leaders | The Johnston Ziegler Youth Leadership Award

- Khamiah Alderman, Vance High School senior, was recognized as the 2019 recipient. This award is a merit-based scholarship that recognizes a local high school senior who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, advocacy or service for adolescents.
 - "Leadership is more than a role; it's more than a title. It's all about how you can use your own knowledge and give back." – Khamiah



Conferences | Adolescent Research and Clinical Practice

- Teen Health Connection contributes to the field of adolescent medicine on a local and national level through annual publications and presentations.
 - Atrium Health Quality & Patient Experience Sharing Day - Silver Touchstone Awardees
 - Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Leadership Forum
 - Justice Initiatives' North Carolina Justice Summit
 - Mecklenburg County Transitions for Youth Collaborative
 - Sexual Health Initiatives for Teens North Carolina (SHIFT NC)
 - Society for Adolescent Health & Medicine (SAHM) Annual Meeting



Social Media | Platforms to Connect with Teens, Parents, and the Community

- Through social media, Teen Health Connection is raising awareness and providing helpful information to empower adolescents to be healthy, safe and successful.
 - Mental Health Education
 - Mindfulness Exercises
 - National Alcohol & Drug Facts
 - Nutrition & Exercise Programs

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS | Corporate and Foundation Sponsors



MATT STANFORD | Director at Atrium Health Levine Children's

"On behalf of leadership from Atrium Health, it is a privilege to continue our many years of collaboration with Teen Health Connection. We consider the opportunity to help invest in the expansion and renovation as a key step in increasing the integrated medical and mental health services needed for the teens in our community."



GEORGIA CAMERON | Studio Principal at Little Architectural Consulting

"Little sees the importance of not only providing mental health services, but providing that service in an operational approach that creates safety, affords anonymity and inspires hope for patients and their families. We are honored to be able to support this organization and intend to continue our support into the future. The underserved mental health population is significant in our region, and there are far too few services available. Teen Health Connection is truly helping create a better future."



TOM LAWRENCE | President of The Leon Levine Foundation

"The Leon Levine Foundation is honored to be a part of enhancing the resources Teen Health Connection can provide for the region's young adults facing physical and mental health needs. The expansion means additional youth will receive services while also creating a more welcoming, safe and nurturing setting for teens and their families. Our foundation remains committed to improving access to quality health care. This investment will enrich the lives of youth seeking support at Teen Health Connection."

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS | Increasing Our Impact

Teen Health Connection has provided over 200,000 comprehensive health care visits since seeing its first patient in February 1992. To help meet the rising demand for mental health services and community programs, a final phase of expansion began in 2019 to acquire the entire second floor at the Randolph Road location. Through this investment, Teen Health Connection now operates a 15,000-square-foot practice. This includes adding nearly 2,200 square feet dedicated to youth development and health education and growing the mental health services footprint by 130% from 920–2,120 square feet.

Since Teen Health Connection serves adolescents, the new space was designed to be "teen friendly," not reflective of a typical pediatric practice. Some highlights of the expansion include:

| Expansion | Benefit |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The medical practice renovation added patient exam rooms and workspaces | More patients can be treated, and a specific area is now dedicated to the new gender health clinic |
| The mental health therapist offices were expanded from 85 to 115 sq ft, with brighter colors and extra seating | Patients now have a more comfortable space for therapy which also allows families to join the sessions |
| Three additional therapist offices were constructed, bringing the total to nine | These extra offices will accommodate the growing demand for services and plans to expand the team |
| The IPA psychologists have larger offices, a dedicated testing area for evaluations, and additional rooms for family and social workers | This new space better protects the privacy of families involved in the evaluations and debrief sessions |
| The community-focused multipurpose room is now 580 sq ft | This accommodates growth for parenting programs, community events and other organization functions |
| A previous training room was renovated into a uniquely designed, interactive workspace for TAB called the "Teen Hub" | TAB members can more easily organize in their leadership committees and plan community outreach programs |

Timeline of Growth

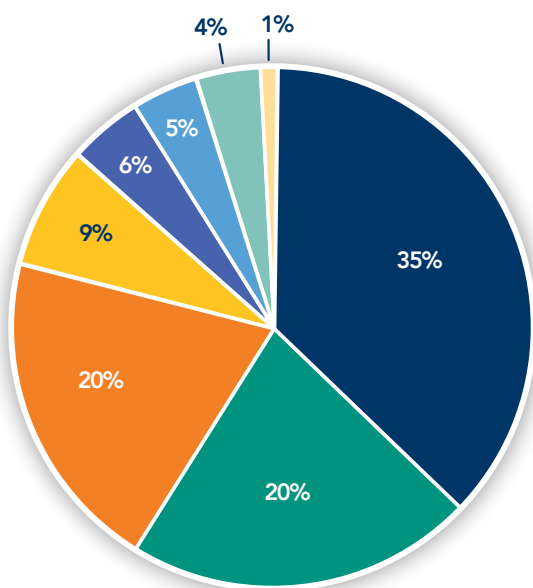
1992
Teen Health Connection opened on Elizabeth Avenue

1997
Relocated to CMC Northpark on Eastway Drive

2008
Secured the current location at Randolph Road

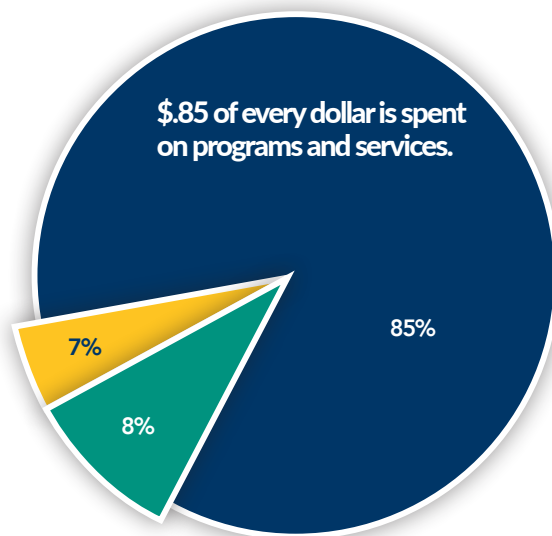
2009-2018
Incrementally expanded footprint on second floor

2019
Final expansion and renovation to cover entire second floor



INCOME/REVENUE

- Government Grants & Contracts (35%)
- Program Services (20%)
- In-Kind Goods & Services (20%)
- United Way of Central Carolinas (9%)
- Corporate Grants, Sponsorships, Matching Gifts (6%)
- Charitable Foundation Grants (5%)
- Other Income (4%)
- Individual Donations (1%)



EXPENSES

- Program Services (85%)
- Fundraising (8%)
- Management & General (7%)

DONOR SPOTLIGHT | Bob and Wendy Bradford



For over 25 years Bob and Wendy Bradford have financially supported Teen Health Connection because they strongly believe that it fills a vital community need. Bob and Wendy add, "We also get something in return – a feeling that we are contributing to something bigger than ourselves and to realize our good fortune in being able to invest in our passion."

The Bradfords have a soft spot in their hearts for adolescents, believing that they are unique individuals whose lives are often wrought with struggles, drama and complications. They know teens need the help of professional adults they can trust to discuss personal, physical and emotional issues, and they believe that Teen Health Connection very capably meets those needs through its specialized practitioners trained in adolescent medicine and mental health.

Wendy, as a Children's Law Center (now part of Council for Children's Rights) attorney, worked with teens in the Department of Social Services custody. She often recommended Teen Health Connection because she believed they would provide the best professional and independent evaluations and health care. Bob and Wendy have also used their volunteer work as Charlotte-Mecklenburg School tutors as an ongoing act of service in our community.

Through their especially generous investment this year to support the renovation, they hope that more teens and young adults in our community will learn about and receive the quality of care they need, equipping them with skills to manage the challenges of life that are ahead.

MISSION

To improve the health of adolescents by providing physical and mental health care, education, advocacy, leadership development and research through connections among adolescents, parents and the community

VISION

Every adolescent empowered to be healthy, safe and successful

VALUES

We believe that every individual deserves respect

We believe in a safe, inclusive and family-centered environment

We believe in education and advocacy at every opportunity

We believe in caring and compassion

We believe that adolescents, parents and the community all have ownership in assuring safe passage from adolescence to adulthood

