Sex Positive Sex Education and the Transformative Impact on Incarcerated Youth

Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center, Hennepin County Home School, Lino Lakes Juvenile Center, Lino Lakes adult center, Ramsey County Juvenile Detention Center, and Ramsey County facility for adults are some of the detention facilities where we offer sex education...and we talk about so much more than birth control and sexually transmitted infections.

It’s well documented that incarcerated youth and adults face increased sexual risks due to drug use, depressive symptoms, gang involvement, exposure to community violence, and sexual abuse.

As a Family Tree Clinic supporter, you know we’ve been providing sex positive sex education in detention centers for years. But did you know that we also offer a wider array of classes, including several days on the topic of healthy relationships?

In fact, detained youth and adults are desperate to talk about healthy relationships...things like love. What consent means. What consent looks like. The difference between sexual harassment and flirting. How to respectfully break up. These are the topics that are brought up time and time again.

For example, one of the sex education exercises we offer involves asking the class to list off all the things people expect from sex. Typical responses include orgasms, feeling committed to one’s partner(s), cuddles, fun...and as we talk about those things in more detail,
Transformation Through Sex Education

students soon realize that sex isn’t required for any of them. The conversation suddenly blossoms into a dynamic, memorable exchange about healthy relationships, communication, and boundaries. Ah-ha moments happen right before our educator’s eyes.

Yet, detention centers aren’t the only places we’re offering classes in the community. We also partner with Neighborhood House by offering a parenting group with their Gang Related Intervention Program. The group provides space for parents to explore their values around sexuality and discuss ways to foster healthy communication within their families.

“I recently saw a patient who hadn’t seen a health care provider in many years. I asked him why he choose to come to Family Tree. He said he just finished a class at his detention center and remembered the instructor was from the clinic. He was willing to go through several extra bureaucratic steps to get here,” said Jen Demma, Lead Provider, “What struck me was that because of the connection made by the educator — that Family Tree is a place that would see him and help him without judgment — he was willing to go through all the extra steps and advocate for himself to be seen for a visit and to be seen at Family Tree. That’s remarkable.”

This is a perfect example of our services coming full circle. And this is only possible due to people like you. Thank you for your support.

To learn more about our work in detention centers or to inquire about becoming a community partner, contact Jacki Trelawny at jtrelawny@familytreeclinic.org.

The majority of youth in detention centers don’t know what a healthy relationship can look like. So we dream with them. That’s the heart of transformative sex ed.

-Katie Robinson, Community Health Educator

Trump Cuts Research Funding, We’re Doing It Anyway

For the last 18 months we have been working on a national research project to test the Family Life and Sexual Health (FLASH) curriculum. This curriculum could change the face of sex education in the U.S. But the Trump Administration recently cut the research funding.

The FLASH curriculum is different from most federally approved sex education curricula available because it’s designed to support young people in making healthy choices like abstinence, protection, seeking health care, effective communication, respecting decisions not to have sex, and reducing sexual violence.

Research funding has been cut, and we are currently seeking alternate ways to finance the evaluation portion of the project.

This LGBTQ inclusive curricula has the potential to reduce unplanned pregnancy and sexual violence rates across the country. Most federally approved sex education curricula available rely on outdated education strategies (and sometimes data), promote biases and stereotypes about gender, family structure and sexual orientation, are not LGBTQ accessible, and are not easily translatable across different communities.

The FLASH curriculum can change all of that.
Donor Spotlight: Violet and Her Lemonade Stand

Four-year-old Violet – avid rock climber, joyous dancer, fixer of things, niece of one of our board members, dedicated big sister, and budding philanthropist – hosted a lemonade and watermelon stand to raise money for Family Tree Clinic. She asked for 5 cents a cup/slice, and raised $34!

Philanthropy is a family affair in the Gunelson household. When Violet was excited to have a lemonade stand that she could operate all on her own, her mom Missi saw it as an opportunity for her to learn about giving rather than personal gain.

Violet’s mom encouraged her to donate what she made to a nonprofit. The family decided on Family Tree and explained to Violet that the money would help people “go to the doctor.”

Violet was very excited. She walked around the yard asking neighbors if they would like to buy a cup of lemonade to support of Family Tree. After about two hours, Violet had raised $34 in support of our services!

“I hope we helped six people go to the doctor,” said Violet, “I think they will be happy.”

Our patients are thrilled to have your support, Violet! We have a feeling this won’t be the only time you work hard to support your community.

You can follow Violet’s lead, and support our critical work by visiting FamilyTreeClinic.org.

When asked why she wanted to support Family Tree, Violet (pictured above with her sister Zaleah and their mom Missi), said, “It is important for people to go to the doctor to get shots.” We couldn’t agree more!

Trump Cuts Research Funding...continued

We believe so strongly in this curricula, that when the Georgia research location had staffing issues we sent our own FLASH Health Educator, Hadija Steen-Mills (pictured left next Christen Jackson, Georgia FLASH educator). Hadija will be commuting to Georgia through the end of the year.

You make this possible. When you support the work of Family Tree, you’re supporting systematic change with real results.

Follow us on Twitter @FTClinic
Buzz, Baby, Buzz!
In early October, Family Tree Clinic and spelling aficionados converged at the Amsterdam Bar & Hall for the 4th annual Spelling Bee for Cheaters. Over $44,000 was raised to support our critical programming!

Teams scammed, swindled, and even spelled their way to victory during a raucous and fun-filled evening. A HUGE thank you to all who donated to, volunteered at, and attended the event. If you missed out on the best team-based spelling fundraiser in the upper Midwest, don’t fret!

You can mark your calendar for next year’s Bee happening Thursday, October 4th, 2018!

Making Sex Education Available to Deaf Youth

Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (DDBHH) youth deserve sex education that meets their needs. Often, that isn’t what they get. But thanks to you, we’re working to change that across Minnesota!

Early this fall, Family Tree Clinic staff and volunteers are presenting at the third annual Collaborative Experience Conference for professionals who serve DDBHH students. Hundreds of professionals from across the state who support DDBHH students in education, will receive teaching tips and tools during our session titled Sex Positive Sex Education with DDBHH Youth.

These types of trainings are critical because we show attendees how to tailor lessons to meet the needs of all students, whether it be visual, tactile, role-playing, or vocabulary.

Your support gives DDBHH youth access to information they need and deserve. Thank you!

Not only will we introduce ourselves to potential new partners, but we’ll also provide current and accurate ASL and English vocabulary related to sexual and reproductive health education.

-Judy Klopp, Health Educator Serving Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing People