

This article appeared as an ad in several local NC newspapers including:
The Wilson Times, The Triangle Tribune, and The Carolina Peacemaker.

NC Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Project Ends

Adolescents receive information about their sexuality from numerous sources, such as the media and peer groups, that often include myths and misinformation. CJH Educational Grant Services, Inc. (CJH), a Raleigh-based company, was one of more than 30 recipients awarded a 3-year Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) grant to promote and address adolescent sexual health in 2018. Programs were funded across the nation by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (USDHHS). The CJH grant was extended an additional 4th year in 2021 and officially concluded on September 29, 2022, in the wake of the company's 24th anniversary year. As a result, more than 1,500 teens from across North Carolina participated in this virtual and in-person adolescent pregnancy prevention program taught by trained Wake and Halifax County teachers.

Adolescent were selected from eighteen North Carolina counties, most of which had a higher percentage of unplanned teen pregnancy rates than the state and rivaled that of the nation.

Public schools, faith and community-based organizations, and a university served in partnership to recruit adolescents (middle and high schoolers, dropouts, and graduates) for the voluntary program.

26 Partnering Community Agencies (2018-2022)

Above and Beyond Family Life, Inc. AKA Alpha Iota Sorority, Inc.
Blue Springs-Hoke County CDC Conetoe Family Life Center, Inc.
Divine Faith Baptist Church Eastern Carolina Human Services Agency
Edward Grove Bapt. Church Free Will Baptist Children's Home Greater Joy Baptist Church
Joy Community Development Corporation Jubilee Christian Center of Wagram
Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church Mt. Moriah Community Church
National Montford Point Marine Association, Inc., NC Triad-Triangle Chapter #38
NC Community Action Association OIC (Education Service Department)
One Harvest Life Center, Inc. Queline Consulting Services, Inc.
Shackle Free Community Outreach Agency Tau Gamma Delta Sorority
Tillery Spectrum Connections Together Transforming Lives, Inc.
Student Support Services, NC A&T State University W.E.S.T. Community Center
Weldon City Schools Wilson Housing Authority

Choosing the Best (Journey and Life series) was the age-appropriate, medically-sound, and research-based curriculum selected for enrolled youth (ages 13–19 years). With required parent permission, teens logged on to zoom and learned facts, such as the meaning of 'consent' and that sending sexually suggestive pictures by cell can put them in legal jeopardy. Federally mandated subjects were Self-Regulation (mindfulness) and Success Sequencing-- an ordered formula for avoiding poverty in adulthood:

1. Finish high school.
2. Get a full-time job once you finish school.

3. Get married before you have children.

SRAE also had a positive effect on college youth. Recent program participant, Jayla Richardson, a sophomore at NC A&T State University, applauded the interactive experience and curriculum content when she attended. She says, *"this program is on the right track to educating students about a life-changing lifestyle that many young people don't know is an option. The content promotes holistic health. Students learn how to protect their physical and mental health."* Jayla has already begun a program at the university to promote abstinence education among college students.

Psychologist, Dr. Travis Knight, served as evaluator to provide an independent analysis of voluntary and anonymous surveys from participants. His report reads in part, *"Overall, evaluation results suggest directional evidence that the program produced the anticipated outcomes and promoted positive change in attitudes/beliefs, and increased knowledge around abstinence, sex, marriage, and healthy relationships."*

CJH company President, Cynthia J. Harris, a native of Greensboro concludes, *"I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to administer this initiative with community partners interested in the emotional, physical, and sexual health of teens. We generated discussions to encourage adolescents to think positively about their future. They learned strategies to rely on as they move into their early adulthood years."*

The federal ***grants.gov website*** forecasts that the 3-year SRAE initiative will be offered again in **2023** with a funding base up to \$450,000 annually.

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<https://cjhgrants.com/srae-grant-2020/>

