

Teenage pregnancy rates lower locally

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Writer

Despite national concern that teenage pregnancies and related school dropouts are increasing, a survey of the Back Mountain schools revealed that the reverse is true in the local area.

While there are only four known pregnancies in the Dallas and Lake-Lehman school districts this year, Jane Grogan of the Luzerne Intermediate Unit said that in the 12 districts represented in the LIU 18, there are 82 teenagers involved in their program. Forty one of these are pre-natal and 41 are receiving post-natal care and supportive services, but all of these are continuing their education.

Neither Dallas nor Lake-Lehman District rep-

resentatives conceded they have any way of knowing how many pregnancies are aborted, nor how many are never made known to the districts.

Nationally, the dropout figure for teenage pregnancies is 50 percent but locally, in 1985, the dropout figure was six percent.

In a conversation with Joan Makowski, Dallas School District Home and School Visitor, she stated that during the past two years there have been only one or two pregnancies reported in the district and no dropouts due to pregnancy during that time.

Mrs. Makowski gives much of the credit to the Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 Multidisciplinary Outreach to Teenage Mothers program (M.O.M.) as well as the school district's own curricular support program which was provided prior to the M.O.M. program and which is still

administered under the direction of the guidance counselor and school nurse.

Mrs. Florence Finn, guidance counselor at Lake-Lehman Senior High School explained that recent research points to the fact that education has played a key role in the decrease in the number of pregnancies.

She emphasized that the M.O.M. program's key role is not to reduce the number of pregnancies but to increase the number of teenage mothers continuing their education.

The LIU program is funded by the Commonwealth and the member districts receive the services from the LIU. The program places emphasis on the teenager remaining in school, and also refers her to the proper medical, nutritional and child care agencies as support during and after the pregnancy.

Following the birth of the child, the mother is given six weeks to remain at home with the baby in order to become familiar with responsibilities involved.

The school's curriculum program begins in seventh grade where students are taught human relationships and to respect themselves and others. In ninth grade, students receive additional information concerning their bodies, such as caring and understanding themselves. Tenth grade students are taught the risks and responsibilities of teenage marriages and teenage pregnancies and in the junior and senior year, there are classes in parenting, child development and child care and management.

The programs have been developed to support both male and female students and from the administration down, the district has an excellent supportive program.

Faculty members, counselors and administrators do everything they can to keep the children in school. With the M.O.M. program made possible through the LIU and the district's own program, Mrs. Makowski believes these have been a major factor in the decided decrease in teenage pregnancies and in student dropouts.

"The students realize that they can continue their education and be better equipped to provide financial assistance for their child and themselves," said Mrs. Makowski. She also explained that if a teenager finds the need to

give the child for adoption, the M.O.M. program also provides support services in that area.

"The program is a coed program and both girls and boys are participating in the M.O.M. program," explained Mrs. Finn. "It is important for the general public to understand that sex education is not for the purpose of teaching students to have free sex, but rather to teach them to try to deal with a situation they are in, and help them find support."

She pointed out that in the New York State school system, they not only teach sex education but also distributed birth control information and since they have the number of pregnancies have reduced drastically.

The Lake-Lehman District has no sex education courses in its curriculum, but the district does have access to the LIU M.O.M. program services.

Neither Dallas nor Lake-Lehman District representatives conceded they have any way of knowing how many pregnancies are aborted, nor how many are never made known to the districts.

Ms. Grogan explained that the LIU received two grants this school year totaling \$127,000. The M.O.M. program received \$80,000 and Consumer and Homemaking received \$47,000.

Ms. Grogan said that their program deals with three major concerns in teenage pregnancies — 1. Working with the girls in providing community services; 2. Career Counseling, assisting in long range plans for their future; and 3. Parenting Education. The funding also helps in providing support services even such practical things as car seats.

In a recent M.O.M. Teenage Advisory Council Meeting, it was determined a problem exists with nutrition and the knowledge of good nutrition; there is a need for preventative education; and there is a concern that teens are more likely to become pregnant at 14 or 15 instead of 17 or 18 as in the past.

In a follow-up survey of 34 teenagers, who graduated in 1986, it was learned eight are full-time homemakers; two are full-time college students; one a part-time college student; one has full-time employment; two have part-time employment and 20 did not respond.

It was a festive week at Lehman

Lake-Lehman Knights lost to Crestwood Saturday afternoon, at the Edward Edwards Stadium but there was plenty of enthusiasm on the field, at least prior to the game.

It was Homecoming at Lake-Lehman and, after a week of special activities, the six members of the Court were anxiously awaiting the naming of the Homecoming Queen.

Inside the stadium fans were taking their seats; the Award-winning Lake-Lehman Band was nervously assembled in a group waiting Band Director John Miliauskas' signal to file onto the field and outside the stadium gates six attractively, well-dressed young ladies were shivering in the cold while waiting for the start of the festivities.

The week of events was mulled over by the girls — Dawn Smith, Jennifer Follmer, Kyra Koflanovich, Dee Dee Barber, Melissa Hontz and Carol Kropp — while they waited.

They recalled Monday and the suspense during assembly while waiting to hear who was nominated for the Court, then Tuesday, "Don't Talk to Football Players", the day every student was given a small football. If a student was caught talking to a football player, he or she had to give up the football. At the end of the day, the student with the most footballs was declared the winner. Winner was Rob Michaels, who was awarded a pizza and also earned points for his class.

The girls talked about Tuesday and their "College Day." Each student voted for his or her favorite college. The class, who had the most votes for a favorite college, earned points for the class in the competition.

Wednesday was S.A.D.D. (Students Against Drunk Driving)

(See FESTIVE, page 4)



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Queen crowned

Kyra Koflanovich (center) was crowned Homecoming Queen at the pre-game festivities Saturday afternoon at the Crestwood/Lake-Lehman game. From left, Carol Kropp, Miss Koflanovich and Melissa Hontz are shown following the crowning. In the background are Miss Koflanovich's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Koflanovich.



Sue of Mowery Photo

DR. WILSON REOPENS PRACTICE

Dr. Catherine Wilson announces the reopening of her practice of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery in Shavertown. Dr. Wilson was formerly associated with Podiatry Associates of Kingston.

She is a native of the Back Mountain and is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tex Wilson of Dallas. A graduate of Dallas High School, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Muhlenberg College and obtained her Doctor of Podiatric Medicine from the Pennsylvania College of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia. She completed her residency in foot surgery at Oxford Hospital in Philadelphia. She is presently a member of the Academy of Ambulatory Foot Surgeons, American Podiatry Association, Pennsylvania Podiatry Association and is secretary of the Luzerne County Podiatry Association. She has been practicing in the Back Mountain area for four years. Dr. Wilson resides with her husband, Fred W. Dymond, and daughter, Samantha, in Dallas.

Dr. Wilson provides medical and surgical treatment of foot disorders including office and hospital surgery. Home service to geriatric and handicapped individuals is available. Most medical insurance plans are accepted. Weekday, evening, and Saturday morning appointments are available. For appointment call 675-0091.

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