

NEWS RELEASE
February 27, 2007

Contact: Heather Malloy
202-347-6464 ext 306

“Value your life” is one of the messages that will be echoed as organizations join together for Abstinence Awareness week”.

Washington, DC- In a society that routinely promotes sexual themes to young children, a group of organizations has decided to focus on a different option. Ultra Teen Choice, a grant recipient of the Together is Better campaign and, the DC Metropolitan Healthy Marriage & Relationships Coalition (DCHMRC) a TIB partner have joined forces with several organizations to promote “Abstinence Awareness Week” Washington, DC. from March 10-March 17, 2007. This group consists of DCHMRC member organizations and other power organizations in the community including: *Concerned Black Men-National Organization, East of the River Clergy Police Community Partnership, Pilgrim Baptist Church and East Capitol Center for Change.* These organizations are taking an active lead in their efforts to provide teens and young adults with positive alternative options to prevent HIV by communicating the importance of abstinence from sex before marriage.

The purpose of Abstinence Awareness Week is to increase awareness that abstinence from sex outside of marriage is a desirable choice for individuals to make, and to provide a forum for those who have made that decision to be heard.

Abstinence Awareness Week is designed to support and encourage youth who have made abstinence from pre-marital sexual activity their standard. These youth are excellent role models that will serve as youth ambassadors for Abstinence Awareness.

Fifty two percent of Washington D.C. high school students have never had sex, according to the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, which is a sixteen percent drop from two years prior. Abstinence Week activities will promote and continue the expansion of this positive trend. Through advocating for programs that support and provide character based, directive instruction and support to enable youth to remain abstinent from sex before marriage and from drugs, alcohol and tobacco our youth can embrace healthy behaviors and lifestyles.

Ultra Teen Choice offers teens and young adults an alternative to having sexual relations before marriage. By explaining the pros of abstaining from sexual activity, and by explaining the risks of engaging in sexual relationships, and by providing college mentors plus peer counselors, Ultra Teen Choice is hopeful that their intended message will resound in each of the youngster’s lives.

Together is Better (TIB) is a citywide campaign that promotes healthy relationships and marriages. TIB partner, the DC Metropolitan Healthy Marriage & Relationships Coalition (DCHMRC) is made up of service providers that offer an array of relationship and marriage education training and supportive services to youth and families in the District of Columbia.