

Part of the problem

Nobody's Fool only encourages teenage sex

Have you ever been in a room of 12-year-old boys while the teacher explained oral sex? I have. I watched the teacher point to a picture showing female anatomy with legs spread apart and describe the act. Imagine the response. Half of the boys were uncontrollably laughing. The other half were truly stunned. It was obvious that they had never thought of this before.

Such was my introduction to Nobody's Fool several years ago. Nobody's Fool is a program offered every summer in Waco by Planned Parenthood.



**GLENDA
JONES**

Guest
column

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At the
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hours

My degree is in biology and health education, but what I experienced at Nobody's Fool was like nothing I had ever seen.

The volunteer instructor for the boys was actually a licensed minister, who went on to explain how girls can give oral sex to boys, too. He concluded with the obligatory "safer sex" spiel that it was safer with a condom. What a picture for an authority figure to send home with a child.

Aside from the obvious problems fueled by "how to" instructions in oral sex, it is dangerously misleading to let teenagers think that condoms will keep them safe from disease, either orally or genitally.

Condoms simply do not cover all the places on the human body where sexually transmitted diseases lurk. For HPV alone (the virus that can cause genital warts and cervical cancer), the 2001 National Institutes of Health workshop concluded that there was "no epidemiologic evidence that condom use reduced the risk of HPV infection" because "infections can . . . be transmitted by areas not covered or protected by the condom."

Is it any wonder that for several years McLennan County was ranked near the top in the state for teenage pregnancy and STDs?

Even during this time, Planned Parenthood was bragging that Nobody's Fool was "nationally award-winning." So what? Who bestowed that award anyway?

The real question is, has Nobody's Fool made a healthy difference in the sexual behavior of young people who attend? I'd say quite the opposite.

Until recently, Planned Parenthood had been the dominant sex education organization in McLennan County. Yet we had among the worst sexual health statistics in the state. It's only been since McCAP (McLennan County Collaborative Abstinence Project) was formed in the late '90s that we've begun to see a positive difference.

Well-meaning people sponsor Nobody's Fool every year, but their efforts only promote more teenage experimentation. For medically researched and effective programs, try either McCAP or "Worth the Wait," written by a nationally known ob/gyn specialist at Scott & White in Temple. Both organizations have proven records in promoting abstinence as the healthiest choice for teenagers.

**Glenda Jones is a Waco
business owner.**