

(4-part series)—SENTINEL-VOICE REPORTS

**SENTINEL-VOICE REPORTS ON COMMUNITY TEENAGE PREGNANCY PROBLEMS**

By Bob Palm

**Part II**

The mother had noticed that her 17-year-old daughter had put on a lot of weight in the past few weeks, but had no idea she was pregnant until she found her trying to abort the baby by guzzling down a bottle of turpentine.

Confronted, the girl confessed she had gotten pregnant by her boyfriend.

Asked why she had not used some kind of contraception, the girl shrugged her shoulders.

When the baby was born, the girl seemed to have lost some of the liveliness she had become known for. She kept the sniffles, constantly blowing her nose.

However, she was very protective of the boy born to her. She would even bristle at her mother, if she felt the

boy was threatened. She and her younger sister fought many a fight because she felt the sister had spoken too harshly to her son or hit him.

Shortly before the child's second year, the mother's attitude towards him changed. She started leaving him more and more with her mother and the mother of the young father.

Where once she took the boy everywhere with her, and never let him out of her sight for more than a few hours; now the grandparents had to hunt her down to return the child.

Young poor girls, many of whom are black, have babies for a variety of reasons, according to Clark County experts. Some have them to get the attention that they felt had been denied them by their mothers; or to find purpose and direction in life,

or a combination of both reasons.

But whether the young pregnant girls are poor or from well to do families, most of them face the same mental and medical problems.

The problems are compounded among the black girls because a

education, which will lower their economical opportunities, according to experts.

The experts say young black girls find it hard to eventually find a husband, especially one who can financially support them.



disproportionate number of them are from poor families. Most of the boys who get them pregnant do not stick around long after they learn that their former object of passion is pregnant, forcing the children to be born out of wedlock and the mother and child to face a dismal future with almost no possibility of the mothers continuing their

chances are further limited of finding a husband because so many black men are chronically unemployed, imprisoned or murdered — the leading cause of death of black men between the ages of 15 and 40.

The young girls are considered high-risk pregnancies because they are nutritionally junk food

eaters; haven't completed their own growth; are over or under weight; and suffer from anemia, kidney problems, hygiene problems, causing a lot of them to have premature babies.

The experts say many of the pregnant girls begin with high hopes of the baby making positive changes in their lives, but they end up having afterthoughts; missing the freedom and carefree lives they once had.

They further end up with shattered dreams and most unmarried, resigned to live barren lives.

The pregnancies causes hardships for the grandparents and the child.

The pregnant girls are more likely to end up living below the poverty level and about half of the young mothers end up not finishing high school.

The infants have high rates of sickness and death, often experience educational and emotional problems, but Mary K. Pedersen, a Clark County social worker, said the problems the infants face in the future depend on the quality of parenting, which, she said, she had found quite adequate in the county.

Many of the infants end up suffering child abuse at the hands of their mothers, who blame the babies for the complications caused by

parenthood, the experts say.

More than 80 percent of the babies born to teenage parents are likely to end up teenage parents themselves.

Experts say almost half the young black women in the county are pregnant by the time they are 20 years old, which is the same trend all across the country, and a large percentage of them end up pregnant again before their first child is two years old.

(Part III of this series will deal with interviews of several young girls who have had babies or are expecting.)

**TRAINING**

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companies in working with Southern Nevada Employment and Training Program was the recruitment and assessment, counseling, assistance with paper work, and financial incentives provided to the employer. The cost of training for the employers was reduced, and at the same time productivity was increased. The result has been better trained and qualified employees.

Both employers, Chance Dupree, President, Nevada Powder Coat, and Dave Murdock, President of AFC, stated that they were "satisfied with the program."

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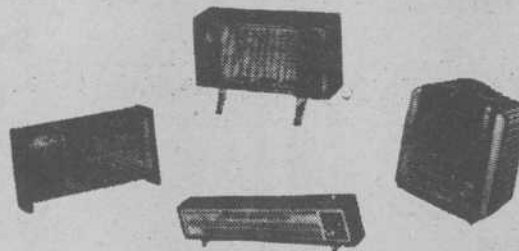
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