

Annual Report

July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011



Links reached over 17,000 youth through our Community Education, Clinic & Counseling, and Pride Youth programs last year. We are grateful for the generous support of our volunteers and donors whose

contributions allow us to continue to provide the programs and services so critical to the health of young people in our community.

Thank you!

Mission:

Links empowers young people to make informed, responsible decisions about their health, well-being, and sexuality.

Community Education

health education for students in grades 5-12 and their parents

Clinic & Counseling

reproductive health care for teens and young adults through age 25

Pride Youth Program

support services for high school students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender

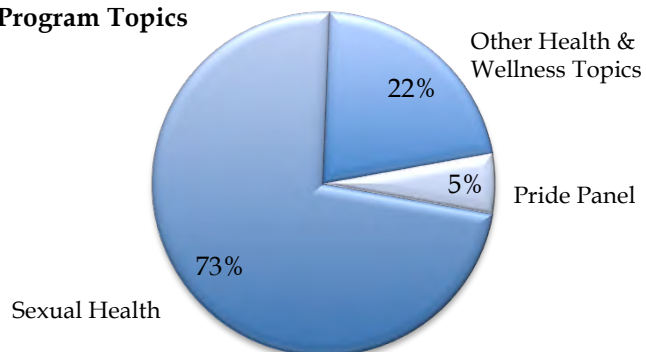
17,000 youth
523 donors
80 volunteers

Community Education

Community Education programs enhance school curriculum with presentations related to adolescent health and sexuality. Links reached 16,583 youth through 38 schools located throughout the north and northwest suburbs, educating students on topics ranging from puberty to stress management to the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, always with a focus on our motto, *Prevention through Education*.

(continued on page 2)

Program Topics



Community Education (continued)

Research has shown that comprehensive sex education programs for teens can help delay the onset of sexual activity, reduce the frequency of sexual activity, reduce the number of sexual partners, and increase the use of condoms and other contraceptives. While all schools include elements of sex education in their curriculum, many turn to Links as the experts in this area. Last year, 73% of our Community Education presentations were related to sexual health.

Our Community Education programs were supported by 8 dynamic volunteers who collaborated with staff on curriculum development and presented our programs out in the community.



Clinic & Counseling



Sexual health continues to be a critical issue for the young people we serve. Public health research shows that about half of high school students have had sex, and although adolescent pregnancy rates have declined in recent years, our country still has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy in the developed world. Sexually transmitted infections are also a concern: in our own state of Illinois, 75% of chlamydia cases and 69% of gonorrhea cases occur in the 15-24 age group.

When a young person makes a decision to become sexually active, access to accurate information, medical care, and affordable birth control is critical to the prevention of sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy. Many young people in our community are unable to access traditional care through their family insurance due to concerns

I was unsure when I first came to Links, but Links took me in and helped me feel more confident about birth control and health. I've had great experiences here and now I can make responsible choices.

~ a clinic client

about confidentiality. Others have lost their family insurance due to a parent's job loss. Some of our older clients work in part-time or entry-level jobs where health insurance is not included in their compensation package.

Our Clinic & Counseling program, available to teens and young adults up to age 25, provides young women with routine gynecological care, pregnancy testing and counseling, and affordable access to birth control. Testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections is available to both young men and young women, and counseling is always available during our clinic hours or by appointment.

We charge nominal fees for medical exams, birth control, medication, and lab tests to help cover our costs and to instill a sense of personal responsibility for one's own health. However, client fees cover just 21% of the cost of operating the clinic – and no one is ever turned away due to the inability to pay.

The Clinic & Counseling Program served 633 young people from 67 different communities last year.

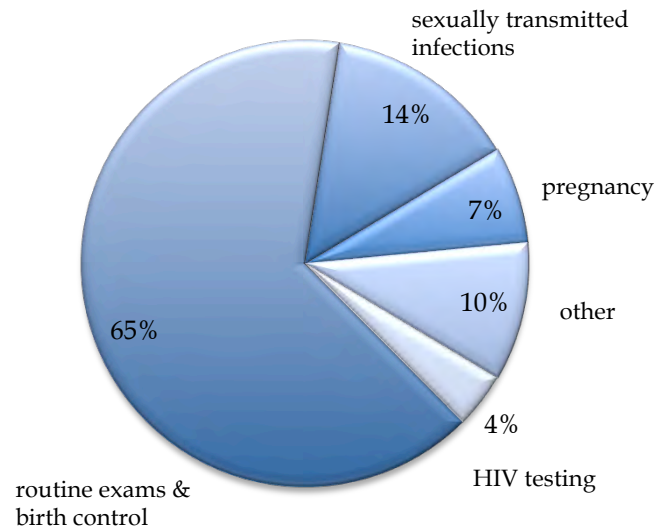
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Clinic & Counseling (continued)

74% of our clients come from communities within a 10-mile radius of our Northfield office. 85% are female and 15% are male. As shown at right, the majority of clinic visits were related to prevention services: routine exams and birth control.

We couldn't operate our clinic without the support of our outstanding, dedicated volunteers. Over 60 volunteers worked in our clinic last year. Twelve physicians, 2 certified nurse-midwives, and 8 registered nurses contributed the equivalent of \$28,290 in their time and expertise. Other clinic volunteers contributed a total of 680 hours, serving as the primary point of contact and support for clients throughout their clinic visit, educating clients about sexual health, and managing office and reception duties.

Reasons for Clinic Visits



Pride Youth Program

Our Pride Youth Program fulfills critical needs for sexual minority youth. In a nation-wide survey, over 84% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students reported being verbally harassed at school, and over 40% of all LGBT students reported being physically harassed at school because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition to the direct physical and emotional results of such harassment, LGBT students are at risk for truancy, poor grades, and dropping out of school. The homophobia and discrimination experienced by LGBT students also leads to an increased risk of substance abuse: they are 190 times more likely to use drugs and alcohol than their heterosexual counterparts.

Our Pride Youth Program is open to LGBT youth in grades 9-12 and provides a safe and confidential space for participants to build community and support each other. Our professional staff and trained volunteers provide ongoing support and education regarding issues such as the coming out process, dealing with homophobia, building communication skills, and the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Periodic guest speakers address specialized topics like legal rights, issues of faith, and finding an LGBT-friendly college.

Our core program continues two nights a week at our Northfield and Palatine locations. We also expanded our reach last year with two new collaborations: we co-facilitate a weekly in-school *(continued on page 4)*



Through coming to Pride, I've changed in ways that are hard to describe simply with words on a piece of paper. All I know is that I feel full of pride every day.
~ a Pride participant

Pride Youth Program (continued)

support group with one of the social workers at New Trier High School, and we started a new weekly group in Evanston in collaboration with the McGaw YMCA.

The Pride Youth Program reached 215 youth last year. 40% identify as male; 57% identify as female; and 3% identify as transgender. The only program of its kind in the north and northwest suburbs, Pride drew participants from 45 different communities.

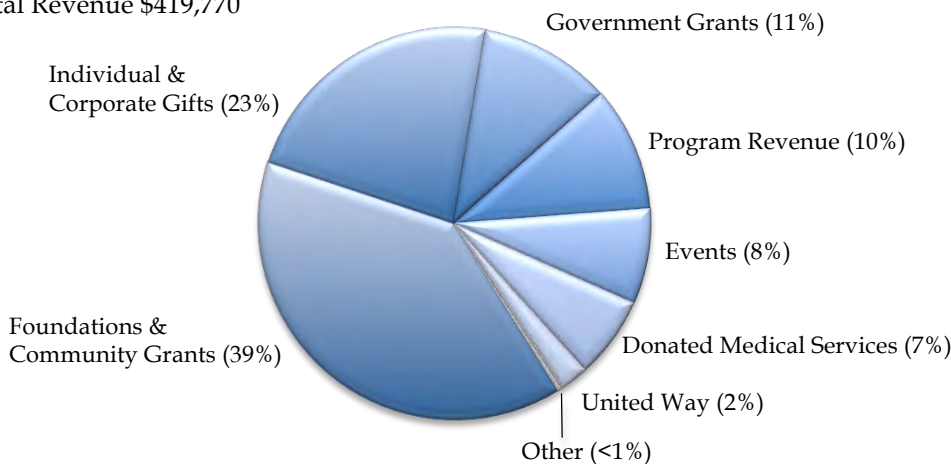
The Pride program is immeasurably enhanced by the involvement of 5 dedicated volunteers who co-facilitate weekly group sessions with our staff, serve in a mentoring role for participants, and collaborate with staff on program content.

Finances

Financial information has been excerpted from our audited financial statements. The full audited statement is available at our Northfield office.

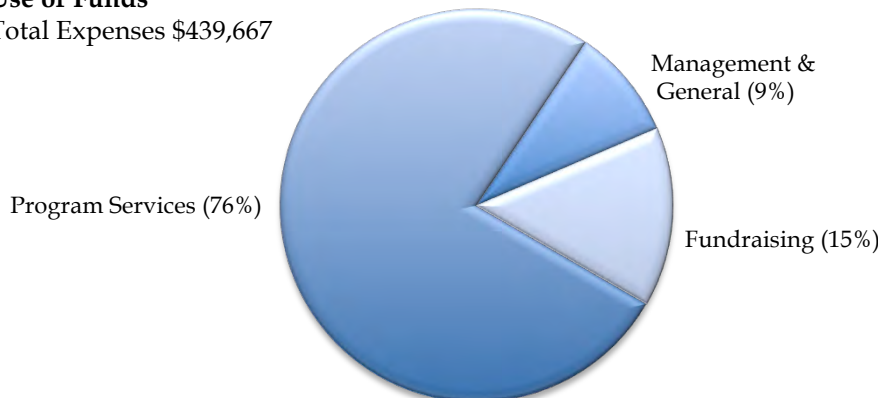
Income Sources

Total Revenue \$419,770



Use of Funds

Total Expenses \$439,667



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\$1 - \$99

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 Mary Beth Schroeder
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 Linda Weatherby
 Lynne Weiss
 Bob & Ellen Wigoda
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 The Millspaugh Family

In Memory of Irving Dorfman
 The Burgess Family

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 Judge Edward R. & Jo Burr

**In Honor of Donna Elrod
& Peggy Orloff**
 Ned & Cindy Zallik

In Honor of Loren & Deb Hutter
 Rich & Susan Eggener

In Honor of Patti Kay
 Pat O'Connell

In Honor of Karen & Nick Lygizos
 Dick & Judy Ridgeway

In Honor of Betsy Mandel
 Peter & Ellen Klein

In Honor of Carol Moritz
 John & Christine Bakalar
 Laurie & Bruce Kaden

In Honor of Gail Neiman
 Sudy Altholz
 Randee Johnson
 Mark & Patti Nahin
 Lynne Reich
 Alan & Elaine Weisz
 Margie Morrison Zivin

In Honor of Piper Rothschild
 Jeffrey & Sidney Golman

In Honor of June Schneider
 Ludmilla Coven

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 Matt Johnson & Elaine Moy

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 Matching Gifts Program

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 Northshore Ballroom Dance Studio
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 Peggy Orloff
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 SPACE
 Tapas Gitanas
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 Sid Teppes
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 Wines for Humanity
 Winnetka Park District
 Chely Wright
 Writers' Theatre
 Bev Zadikoff

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Links - North Shore Youth Health Service makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list. However, there is always the possibility of error. If there is an error in your listing, please contact Amy Skalinder, Executive Director, at 847.441.6191 ext. 1 or amyskalinder@linksyouth.org.