



X-Rated *Birds & Bees* Featured at Health Conference

**By Barb Anderson
April 2009**

Caution: graphic sexual content

Executive Summary

This report was written to provide a health alert to medical professionals, parents, pastors, school administrators, teachers, legislators, and taxpayers regarding the *unhealthy* sexuality content of the Minnesota School Health Education Conference. The sex education subject matter (dominated by *The Birds & Bees Project*) ranges from questionable to extremely offensive and puts the health and well being of K-12 youth at risk.

Under the banner of comprehensive sex education, *The Bird & Bees Project* trainers encourage *unhealthy* behaviors—sexual experimentation for pleasure and fun, indiscriminate condom use, and anal sex and oral sex as normal behaviors—all without reference to what is moral, good, or healthy.

The Birds & Bees Project trainers employ and promote the “values clarification” technique for classroom sex education. This method—based on the proposition that there are no moral absolutes—is used to teach students to “clarify” their values, i.e. throw off their parents’ values and make their own moral choices and decisions.

Students are exposed to a range of values (supposedly in a values-neutral environment) and are told that they have the right to choose what values are right for them. The reality, however, is anything but neutral toward parental values. The exercises cause inner conflict in the mind of the child and are designed to get kids to agree that there are no absolutes and that everything is relative—there is no right or wrong. Open-ended questions regarding sexual behavior are designed to influence the moral concepts of the students—easily leading them to the conclusion that homosexuality is normal and natural. This is psychological tampering that violates the trust of parents and renders teens incapable of recognizing harmful behavior.

Conclusion

The directors and planning committee of this health conference should be the leaders in teaching and promoting abstinence-until-marriage education with an understanding of *healthy* sexuality—instead of allowing presenters to advocate sexual behaviors that are unhealthy, irresponsible and dangerous. Unfortunately this isn’t the case, and the young people of Minnesota are the ones who will pay the price.

The 29th Annual Minnesota School Health Education Conference Report

The 29th Annual Minnesota School Health Education Conference, directed by John Rohwer (University of St. Thomas) and Bob Wandberg (Columbia Heights Public Schools), was held on February 9-10, 2009 at the Minneapolis Airport Marriott in Bloomington. As at past conferences, the only “expert” on sexuality for the workshop sessions was *The Birds & Bees Project*—a comprehensive sex education program of *Pro-Choice Resources* (a nonprofit organization).

In the session entitled “Sexuality Education: Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health,” *The Birds & Bees Project* presenters Amy Marsicano (Director of *The Birds & Bees Project*) and Amy Kodet (Reproductive Health Residency Coordinator) announced that ***The Birds & Bees Project* exceeded their previous claim by reaching an all-time high of 9,000 student contacts in the Twin Cities metro area in 2008. They have been in the classroom for 35+ years.**

Amy Kodet talked about the need for a state law mandating comprehensive sex education, adding, “Unfortunately our governor is not friendly to this legislation.”

The presenter stated, “The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States [SIECUS] has great national guidelines you can access. We have copies here.” (Note: The **SIECUS Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Kindergarten-12th Grade** are the foundation for comprehensive sex education and are championed as the guidelines that health teachers should follow.) Amy Marsicano emphasized that comprehensive sex education, based on SIECUS, gives the “full spectrum of developmentally appropriate attitudes, values and behaviors.”

Unfortunately most parents have no idea what is deemed “developmentally appropriate” in the “full spectrum” of SIECUS comprehensive sex education guidelines. The guidelines (2nd Edition) include:

Teaching ages 5 through 8 (early elementary school):

- “Both boys and girls have body parts that feel good when touched.” (p. 11)
- “Touching and rubbing one’s own genitals to feel good is called masturbation.” (p. 34)
- “Both boys and girls may discover that their bodies feel good when touched.” (p. 36)

Teaching ages 9 through 12 (upper elementary school):

- “Homosexual love relationships can be as fulfilling as heterosexual relationships.” (p. 15)
- “Many boys and girls begin to masturbate for sexual pleasure during puberty.” (p. 34)
- “Masturbation does not cause physical or mental harm.” (p. 34)
- “A legal abortion is very safe.” (p. 41)

Teaching ages 12 through 15 (middle/junior high school):

- “Sexual orientation cannot be changed by therapy or medicine.” (p. 16)

- “Values should be freely chosen after the alternatives and their consequences are evaluated.” (p. 25)
- “Masturbation, either alone or with a partner, is one way people can enjoy and express their sexuality without risking pregnancy or an STD/HIV.” (p. 35)

Teaching ages 15 through 18 (high school):

- “Gender identity is determined by a person’s feelings of maleness or femaleness.” (p. 16)
- “The telephone number of the gay and lesbian center in this community is_____.” (p. 16)
- “Some sexual behaviors shared by partners include kissing, touching, talking, caressing, massage, sharing erotic literature or art, bathing/showering together, and oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse.” (p. 35)
- “Some people use erotic photographs, movies or literature to enhance their sexual fantasies when alone or with a partner.” (p. 37)

Along with copies of the SIECUS guidelines, *The Birds & Bees Project* presenters provided teachers with free copies of their graphic sex education curriculum—*Educator’s Guide to Reproductive Health*. This curriculum guide (according to the presenter) was “produced by means of a grant and received the highest rating from The Minnesota Sexuality Education Resource Review Panel convened by the Department of Education.”

The *Educator’s Guide to Reproductive Health* includes lesson plans for grades 6-12 (ages 12 and up). Some of the directives and activities include:

- “Respecting youth and their decision to be, or not to be, sexually active is very important.” (p. 22)
- “Tell your students that 99.9% of the population will stop practicing abstinence at some point in their lives, so everyone should have a back-up plan for when they decide to stop practicing abstinence.” (p. 25)
- “...avoid engaging in sexual behavior before they are *ready*.” (Emphasis added) (p. 27)
- “It is important to use inclusive language when discussing abstinence. Many abstinence programs use the ‘abstinence until marriage’ messaging or define sex as penile-vaginal. These definitions exclude GLBTQ youth and reinforce stereotypes about gender and sexual orientation.” (p. 28)
- “We highly recommend...defining sex as oral, anal, and vaginal rather than just vaginal...to create a respectful and inclusive classroom environment.” (p. 28)
- In the section on abstinence, students are asked to decide whether or not certain activities constitute being abstinent. Some of the behaviors include: cuddling with someone without clothes on, giving oral sex, receiving oral sex, having anal intercourse, rubbing bodies together with clothes on, rubbing bodies together without clothes on, masturbating when alone, masturbating with a partner, touching a girl’s breast’s, touching a partner’s buttocks, touching a partner’s genitals. (p. 31)
- “List the advantages of a relationship that includes forms of sexual expression but does not include vaginal, oral or anal intercourse.” (p. 36)
- “People who are questioning their sexual orientation may experiment in an effort to determine their sexual identity.” (p. 39)
- “Dental Dam (for oral sex on the vulva or the anus). The person performing oral sex lays the dental dam (a thin sheet of latex) flat over the vulva or anus and holds the edges to

keep it in place. The dam functions as a barrier between one partner's mouth and the other partner's vulva or anus and should be used during oral/vaginal sex (cunnilingus) or oral/anal sex (analingus or rimming) to reduce the spread of STIs and HIV. A new dam should be used if switching partners or switching from oral/anal to oral/vaginal sex." (p. 44)

- "...condoms, dental dams...They are effective methods of staying healthy." (p. 69)
- "We encourage teachers to demonstrate the proper steps to putting on a condom with a condom and penis model (your index and middle fingers, a banana, cucumber or test tube may be used if a penis model is not available)...“Since practice makes perfect, consider asking your local family planning clinic, school nurse or The Birds & Bees Project for a donation of condoms to your classroom so that you can have each student practice the activity along with you.” (p. 72)
- “Condom Line-Up” activity (for ages 12 and up). Students arrange cards in the correct sequence for proper condom use. The 17 steps include: discuss safer sex with partner, sexual arousal, erection, roll condom all the way to the base of the penis, intercourse, ejaculation, withdraw penis from partner, remove condom from penis, relaxation, talk, cuddle. (p. 74)
- “People should use one lubricated latex condom for vaginal or anal intercourse.” (p. 79)
- “Condoms now come in a range of different colors, flavors, styles and sizes (for example, glow-in-the-dark or strawberry flavored condoms). These differences allow partners to experiment with different types for purposes of pleasure and fun.” (p. 81)
- “Putting a condom on your partner can be a sensual way to incorporate condom use into foreplay and show your partner respect.” (p. 81)
- “Carrying a condom says nothing about a person’s promiscuity...they are prepared to have safe sex when the time is right for them. They are taking responsibility for their own health and well-being.” (p. 81)
- “When used as directed, emergency contraceptive pills are a safe and effective option for teenage women. In fact, research shows that emergency contraceptive pills are safer than aspirin.” (p. 94)
- “Teens in Minnesota have the right to obtain emergency contraception without parental consent or notification.” (p. 94)
- “According to SIECUS guidelines, students ages 9 and up should begin learning about abortion, including its safety, barriers to access and legality.” (p. 130)
- “According to the American Psychological Association, the most common feelings women report after having an abortion are relief and happiness.” (p. 144)
- “Today abortion is one of the safest medical procedures available.” (p. 145)
- “It is 20 times safer to have a legal abortion at 8 weeks than to carry a pregnancy to term.” (p. 150)
- “A Day at the Clinic” activity (for ages 15 and up). Students arrange cards in the correct sequence to visit an abortion clinic. The 18 steps include: “Make an appointment to have an abortion.” and “Walk through protesters outside of the clinic.”(p. 153)

The Educator’s Guide to Reproductive Health includes a DVD with two excerpts from “The Talk”—a film created by Youth Performance Company (YPC) for ages 14+. It deals with topics such as oral sex, condom use and homosexuality.

One excerpt from “**The Talk**” DVD entitled “**Jump Partners**” was shown at the workshop. This two-minute skit, with teen actors, shows a boy and a girl in an airplane talking about jumping together—a reference to having sexual intercourse. The girl has second thoughts based on the fact that they do not have a parachute (a condom) to protect themselves. The boy encourages her to jump anyway since a parachute only “decreases the thrill factor.” She refuses, and states that someday when she jumps, “It will be with someone special and we’ll have parachutes.” In one outtake (shown at the end of the video) the boy says, “Great, maybe the next time we go up in the airplane, we won’t have to jump; I just like the foreplay.”

This video is followed up with a lesson from the *Educator’s Guide To Reproductive Health* that includes condom-friendly responses (pages 85-86) that students ages 15 and up can use “if their partner was pressuring them to have sex without a condom.” such as:

- “Let’s go get some condoms together.”
- “If we use the condom we don’t have to worry about pregnancy or STIs.”
- “If we use the condom I’ll be more relaxed and I’ll enjoy myself more.”
- “I hear that condoms can make sex last longer.”

A second skit (for classroom use) on the same *Birds & Bees* DVD was not shown at the workshop. It is entitled “**Captain Condom.**” In this video skit, two 15-year olds (who appear to be naked) are in the family home under a blanket making erotic sounds when Captain Condom suddenly appears to warn them about condom use—so they won’t get “preggy.” He tells them that condoms are 98% effective and that the new condoms are ribbed and durable.

Captain Condom hands the kids a written questionnaire that asks, “Is there anything in your family, religious or cultural background that would prevent you from having sex, and do you want to save sex for marriage?” The 15-year olds laugh and loudly reply, “Hell no!”

Captain Condom continues, “Now for the oral part.” The teens instantly react with delight and return under the covers. The captain stops them and resumes his questions. In the end, the young teens decide to postpone having sex *for now* and thank Captain Condom. (Note: These videos treat teen sex as a form of recreation with no warning about the emotional bonding consequences, and the risks of STDs even with condom use. They do not “help students to abstain from sexual activity until marriage”—a violation of Minnesota Statute 121A.23 Programs to prevent and reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections and diseases.)

In the DVD credits, special thanks are given to the *Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP)*. Molly Snugerud, RN, Community Relations Director, and the West Suburban Teen Clinic are cited as having developed the Discussion Guide for the video.

The *Birds & Bees Project* workshop presenters emphasized the need to teach **values clarification** in sex education. They described it as “a very important process for youth to go through...since youth don’t have a lot of safe spaces to reflect on their own values.” (In reality, most youth *are* able to safely reflect on their values—at home with their parents and in their churches. Teachers should not be judging whether or not their students’ homes and churches are safe places to discuss and teach values.)

Their brochure states that students “may choose to clarify their own values or choose to explore new values.” According to the presenter, it is imperative that teachers, however, check their values at the door. Amy stated, “As educators, we check our values at the door—not bringing in our personal values or agenda.” (Note: The presenters are not being value neutral. Apparently they mean checking only those values that contradict the values *they* are promoting.)

A few teachers from the audience were selected to participate in a classroom values-clarification exercise. In the actual classroom, students are asked to read a statement and stand under one of four signs placed around the room: Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree. The two examples given were: 1. “Teens should be allowed to buy emergency contraception over the counter just like adults do (Plan B).” 2. “Gay and lesbian students should not be allowed to bring each other to the senior prom and show same-sex romantic affection.”

The presenter said that sometimes students are asked to defend a value that they disagree with—“to take on someone else’s view and argue it.”

After the values clarification exercise, the presenters emphasized the need to have condom demonstrations in the classroom so that students will “see and understand how a condom is appropriately used, and so they will be more likely to use a condom the first time they have sex.”

Amy led another classroom exercise on “tough questions from students.” In this exercise sample student-written questions are read aloud in a mixed class and the teacher gives the answer. Amy directed teachers to the website www.advocatesforyouth.org for a complete list of the questions and other information. *Advocates For Youth* is a major proponent of comprehensive sex education and advocates for homosexuality and other forms of sexual confusion. *Advocates For Youth* encourages teachers to express their own personal values sparingly—that is unless no one in the class supports what they deem a “core value” such as: “Everyone should have the same rights, irrespective of race/ethnicity, biological sex, *sexual orientation*, or *gender identity*.” (Emphasis added) According to *Advocates For Youth*, if students do not show support of this “core value,” then teachers are encouraged to promote and advocate for it in the classroom.

Amy said that if some of the “tough questions” are uncomfortable for a teacher to read to the class, the teacher can choose to turn her back to the class when reading the question and giving the answer aloud. (What about the embarrassment and discomfort of the students who have no choice but to listen to the question *and* the answer? Many of these questions are not necessarily what kids in a particular class are even asking. This exercise introduces teens to behaviors they perhaps have not heard of or even want to know about.)

Amy read a couple of examples: 1. “Is it OK to like the same sex?” “Does anal sex feel good?” 2. “Why does she need a condom when her mouth [is] on him?” The presenter said that they take the questions very seriously and it is important to understand the question *under* the question: “Perhaps the student is asking ‘Am I normal? Validate me and my life—gay and lesbian families.’”

When I asked Amy how she would answer the question—“Does anal sex feel good?”—she responded, “There’s a range of human sexual behavior that can change throughout our life. Whether it feels good is up to the person.” (This is right out of the sexual playbook of

discredited Dr. Alfred Kinsey—with his fraudulent sex statistics and bogus sexual continuum. Neither presenter offered any mention of the physical health risks with anal sex or its direct connection to HIV transmission. This should be a prime warning at a health conference.)

Amy also recommended that teachers order a *Bird & Bees Project* poster for classroom use that lists all of the slang terms for genitals and sexual acts.

The Birds & Bees Project brochures, with sexually graphic and unhealthy content, were made available to health teachers in their exhibit booth. The following “health” advice is from a sampling of their brochures:

Safer Sex Between Women

- “Use condoms on shared sex toys.”
- “Wear latex gloves when using fingers or hands for penetration.”
- “Use dental dams or non-microwavable plastic wrap for oral sex.”
- “Place a latex barrier or plastic wrap between you and your partner during vulva to vulva sex.”
- Use protection for “Grinding or humping vulva to vulva.”
- “For cunnilingus (vaginal oral sex), or rimming (anal oral contact) use a dental dam.”

What should I know about oral sex?

- “For fellatio (mouth on a penis), condoms should be used. Other types of sex acts, such as cunnilingus (mouth on a vagina) or rimming (mouth on an anus) need a dental dam.”
- “Use a new dental dam for each oral, anal or vaginal sex act.”

Am I ready to have sex?

- “Different people have different definitions of sex.”
- “There is a wide range of behaviors when you feel attracted to someone that feel comfortable even if you are not ready for sex.”
- “Choosing to have sex is a big decision. When you are still in your teens, it is best to wait as long as you possibly can to have sex.”
- “Make a Sexual Health Plan. Decide when and under what circumstances you will be ready for riskier sexual activity.”
- Reducing the risk means, “Limiting the number of sexual partners.”

I’m Pregnant, What can I do?

- “Abortion is an option if you cannot or do not want to be pregnant or be a parent.”
- “Yes, abortion procedures are safe. Only 2.5% have minor complications that can be handled at a doctor’s office; and less than 0.5% require some additional surgical procedure.”
- “You’re ten times more like to die during childbirth than from a legal abortion.”
(Note: There is no mention of the emotional trauma of abortion.)

The *How do I talk to my kids about sex?* brochure makes a valid point: “Young people who feel connected and supported at home develop healthy attitudes and behaviors, and are more likely than other teens to delay sexual intercourse.” The citation for this is The National Longitudinal

Study on Adolescent Health (JAMA 1997). By omitting one very important fact, however, *The Birds & Bees Project* tells only half the story.

This study also found that one of the “Family Characteristics that Protect Teens From Early Sexual Intercourse and Pregnancy” was “Perceived parent disapproval of adolescent sex” and “Perceived parent disapproval of adolescent contraception.” This clearly demonstrates that schools should be teaching abstinence until marriage, be consistent in their support of parents and *should not* be undermining parental protection for teens by approving of and handing out contraception.

Conclusion

The directors and planning committee of this health conference should be the leaders in teaching and promoting abstinence-until-marriage education with an understanding of *healthy* sexuality—instead of allowing presenters to advocate sexual behaviors that are unhealthy, irresponsible and dangerous. Unfortunately this isn’t the case, and the young people of Minnesota are the ones who will pay the price.

The directors of the 29th Annual Minnesota School Health Education Conference are:

John Rohwer—University of St. Thomas
Bob Wandberg—Columbia Heights Public Schools

The Planning Committee members are:

Giovanni Antunez – St. Cloud State University
Rod Dobey – St. Cloud State University
Nancy Johnson – Columbia Heights High School
Kathy Moskal – Winona State University
Stacey Nelson – St. Francis Jr. High School
Randy Nitchie – Osseo Public Schools
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