

Effort Name: Moms R Us teen pregnancy program

Please complete this form for your **Economic Empowerment Hallmark effort**.

Effort Description: (Describe the effort)

Moms R Us serves pregnant and parenting teens who are 19 years or younger through prepared childbirth, parenting classes and continuing support groups. Outreach, education, program resources and referrals are available until the families no longer need the assistance. We also serve the extended families of these teens including the father of the child and his family as well as any other support persons or peers involved with the teen mother. Moms R Us is free of charge, the YWCA provides transportation to and from classes and food is served at all classes. All participants may use the YW Computer Lab for completing homework or searching for employment.

Moms R Us is an economic development program that encourages teen parents to continue school, maintain or obtain a job. The YWCA Children's Center with sliding scale fee gives participating teen parents top priority on the waiting list for enrollment. Job Readiness is an ongoing program and provided whenever the teens need the service outside of the regularly scheduled classes. All participants fill out a Job Readiness assessment form to determine their educational, workforce development, and technology needs and are offered that program in the YW Computer Technology Lab. Job Readiness classes include: *Developing your Career Interests, Preparing for Employment Classes: How to fill out an application, How to write a resume and cover letter, and How to present yourself for an interview.* Moms R Us operates at the YWCA and as an Outreach program serving teens.

1. **Impact:** (Explain how this effort results in **measurable, meaningful, mission-focused change** in the conditions of women's economic advancement in the local community. What condition is the effort designed to address? What is the goal of the effort?)

This free program does intend to have a direct impact in the economic development and advancement of the young women it serves. **All participants who continue their education or maintain a job receive top priority for the YW Children's Center which is the only sliding scale fee childcare in Bristol.** The importance of attending school classes, obtaining a GED or maintaining a job is stressed throughout all phases of the program. Items for baby are earned for attendance to all classes and nutritious snacks are provided at each class. Transportation is provided to and from all classes.

Moms R Us is the only teen pregnancy program in the Bristol area. There are programs in Kingsport and Johnson City but none available in the surrounding counties. **The average age for teen mothers in our area is age 15. Teen parents are at risk of dropping out of school, not advancing to post-secondary education and therefore, have less exposure career development opportunities.**

This program is meaningful and mission focused to train young mothers how to parent and continue working on their own future by utilizing the resources the community has to offer them. Moms R Us collaborates with Abuse Alternatives, Bristol Faith in Action, Bristol Family Resource Center, Bristol TN/ VA school counselors, Children's Advocacy Center, Crisis Center, La Leche League, local Health Departments and doctors offices, and United Way. Program goals include: reduce infant mortality, increase family bonds, reduce child abuse, increase awareness of child development, to provide information and referral services, and to decrease the teen drop out or unemployment rate by teaching career development skills.

Concentration is on child abuse prevention, health care of the baby, **pregnancy prevention in an effort to avoid a second pregnancy**, budgeting basics, independent living and the importance of remaining in school/continuing education, obtaining or maintaining a job for **growth in economic development skills while raising a child, which is an issue unique to teen parents.**

2. Evaluation: (Explain how the **results** of this effort are or will be **measured**)

Moms R Us evaluates on an ongoing basis with pre and post tests in class, class evaluations at the completion of Labor and Delivery and parenting classes, and questionnaires to determine workforce development needs. Programs are assessed based on the number of participants each year, the evaluations completed by the participants and continuing participation in the program. Moms R Us has been a successful program and resource for 15 years serving between 30-40 young women a year and their families.

3. Results: (Describe the status of implementation and results thus far. What are the **measurable objectives** for the coming year?)

The Moms R Us program's primary goal has always been to encourage the participants to continue their education or maintain a job. It was developed for that purpose and now has expanded over the 15 years of service to include a job readiness program as a part of the follow up and continuing support. The Job Readiness Program is the newest phase to Moms-R-U's and has all the necessary resources to educate young women in much needed career development skills and the knowledge of how to obtain and maintain a job. All attendance and evaluations are recorded to measure the results of the program. Many teen moms take advantage of the childcare while they are in school or if they get a job. Several teen moms do continue in the support groups, take job readiness and even volunteer their time at the YWCA. We have worked with several teen mothers with learning disabilities and we work to teach them how to live independently and manage their resources. We do encourage ongoing relationships for them to have access to resources available to them to help along the way. We have worked with some young women as long as 10 years and they are success stories for the YWCA Moms R Us program.

We expect at least 80% of the participants to report on evaluations that they did learn something that they did not know before they took the class. Participants who have not graduated will stay in school or get their GED. Participants will consider their career development and continue to post secondary education options. Participants who are able will gain employment to support their child. Participants with certain disabilities (learning or physical/health related) will learn independent living skills and the resources available to assist them. All program participation is documented.