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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Princeton Center for Leadership Training and HiTOPS Announce \$4.8 Million Award for Innovative Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative in North Carolina

Five-year federal grant will replicate and evaluate a comprehensive teen pregnancy prevention and sexual health education program for high schools

Princeton, NJ – The Princeton Center for Leadership Training (PCLT), in collaboration with long-time partner HiTOPS, was awarded a five-year, \$4.8 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to replicate and evaluate a teen sexual health peer education program, known as the Teen Prevention Education Program (Teen PEP), in 16 high schools in rural North Carolina communities with high teen birth rates. Since the program’s launch in 1995, PCLT and HiTOPS have worked collaboratively with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services to develop and implement Teen PEP in more than 50 high schools in New Jersey.

The new federal grant will enable this successful and proven New Jersey program to expand its impact significantly in the state of North Carolina. The project will:

- build the capacity of schools to provide effective and sustainable sexuality education through a model of peer education;
- support the development of students as effective sexual health educators effecting positive behavioral change among their peers; and
- provide students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to reduce unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

“We are both honored and thrilled to receive this prestigious award that will enable us to reach thousands more young people with medically-accurate sexual health education and leadership development programming,” said Daniel F. Oscar, President & CEO of PCLT. “The success of Teen PEP as a statewide model in New Jersey offers a solid foundation for wide-scale replication of the program in rural communities across North Carolina.”

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“A young person’s future depends on the decisions he or she makes today,” said Dr. Elizabeth Casparian, Executive Director of HiTOPS. “Adolescents are already a medically underserved population, and are often just a choice away from life-altering actions. Through this project, we can provide the resources they need to make decisions that protect their health, which will enable them to live healthy, responsible lives.”

Teen PEP is a school-based program that utilizes peer education to increase responsible decision-making by students around issues of sexual health. High school juniors and seniors serve as peer educators who conduct—for groups of younger peers, faculty, and family members—a series of structured workshops designed to reduce risk factors for unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV as well as to enhance protective factors against these issues. Peer educators are trained through a daily, credit-bearing leadership course taught by school faculty during regular school hours. PCLT and HiTOPS build the capacity of schools to implement Teen PEP by providing training, curriculum, and on-site technical assistance to stakeholders and school faculty. The direct implementation of Teen PEP is carried out by faculty employed by and peer educators enrolled in participating schools.

The proposed project will reach more than 12,000 program participants, including 10,000 ninth grade students, who are the recipients of peer-led workshops. PCLT and HiTOPS will partner with Abt Associates, Inc. to conduct a scientifically rigorous evaluation of the program’s impact on student outcomes in order to further enhance the knowledge base and field of teen pregnancy prevention and peer leadership.

About PCLT

Founded in 1988, PCLT has a 22-year history of changing life trajectories for students and effecting cultural transformations within schools. We develop, disseminate, and promote peer leadership, advisory, and other evidence-based K-12 solutions that enable and inspire educators to more fully engage students in learning, better connect students to their schools, motivate and equip students to make decisions responsibly, and accelerate academic achievement. Please visit www.princetonleadership.org.

About HiTOPS

Founded in 1987, HiTOPS’ mission is to promote adolescent health and well-being by providing health education programs in schools, communities of faith, juvenile justice facilities, and community forums. HiTOPS also operates a wellness and prevention healthcare clinic for youth and young adults ages 13-26. Please visit www.hitops.org.