

MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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THE GLOUCESTER 18

[Transcript]

DR. BRIAN ORR: The first thing the world has to recognize is that teen pregnancy is a problem.

SARAH WILLIAMS: I gave birth when I was fifteen and I just recently gave birth again when I was eighteen.

ALYSSA SILVA: When she told us I was shocked, my husband was shocked, she said “Dad, I’m pregnant.” He said, “What?” He laughed, went outside, came back and here we are.

NEWS ANCHOR: A disturbing story out of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

KIM DALY: There’s been talk that girls were high-fiving, that there were people that were, you know, running around the hallways cheering about finding out that they were pregnant.

ALIVIA FIDLER: I was very surprised to become pregnant at the age of sixteen, and I just didn’t know what to do or who to talk to or anything like that.

NEWS ANCHOR: What’s with the Gloucester High School Principal?

HALLIE ALLISON: I wouldn’t say that I planned the pregnancy, I just didn’t do anything to prevent getting pregnant. I didn’t use birth control or anything.

COREY BROWN: Don’t sit there and expect your seventeen-year-old daughter to come home and say, “Hey, guess what? I’m pregnant.”

MICHAEL MITCHELL: I plan on being involved by making the money and supporting the baby and giving it somewhere to live, and transportation and all that good stuff.

NEWS ANCHOR: Why would these kids want to have kids?

NANCY ALLISON: My mother was fifteen years old when she gave birth to me and I have a daughter who now has a child and gave birth at sixteen.

KYLA BROWN: "...It's not going to happen to me," and I found out the hard way, "Yeah, it does, surprise."

TEXT ON SCREEN:

In the '07 – '08 school year, Gloucester officials counted 18 pregnancies among high school aged girls... four times the norm.

In the summer of 2008, reports of a pregnancy pact surfaced. The girls became known around the world as The Gloucester 18.

NEWS ANCHOR: We're going to get to the heart of the story this morning. Made headlines, you heard about it, it was all over the country, a so called "pregnancy pact" at a Massachusetts high school.

COREY BROWN: Somebody mentioned the word "pact" this year to a *Time* magazine reporter, he put it in his article, and it exploded.

NEWS ANCHOR: High school girls in Massachusetts making a pact to get pregnant.

NEWS ANCHOR: *Time* magazine broke that story in June and ignited a firestorm.

NEWS CLIP: We have not been able to confirm the existence of a pact.

NEWS ANCHOR: And now there's something even more surprising. It seems that nearly half of those teenagers got pregnant on purpose.

DR. BRIAN ORR: We had two pregnancies one year, five the next, and then it went up to the eighteen that we had last year.

NEWS ANCHOR: There are new developments tonight, new details in a shocking story about sex and status and possibly statutory rape.

NEWS ANCHOR: So why would a group of girls from Gloucester, Massachusetts, a fishing village outside Boston, choose to get pregnant?

ALYSSA SILVA: We didn't hear it until, I was actually doing dishes in my kitchen, and I yelled "Alexis come here quick, come here quick," and that's when we learned it, on TV.

NEWS ANCHOR: At Gloucester High School in Massachusetts, something strange is happening this year: enrollment is way up for the daycare center, in fact there is already a waiting list for September.

WENDY BROWN: We found out about it on the news, that's how we...

COREY BROWN: Found out about it when I came home and there was news crews in the driveway [laughs].

NEWS ANCHOR: In all, seventeen girls are having babies, some as young as fifteen. Not one of them is married.

KIM DALY: I think when you start talking about teenagers, and sex, and birth control and, you know, arguments with hospitals, and pacts, and principals, and the mayor and all of these other people, it sells stories, you know? People love scandal and I think that is part of what sort of escalated this into the forefront.

[Clip from *The Tonight Show*]

JAY LENO: This is a very shocking story from my home state of Massachusetts, this is unbelievable to me. Maybe you've heard of this by now. Seventeen teenage girls at Gloucester High School in Gloucester, Massachusetts are pregnant. Seventeen high school girls are pregnant, all sixteen and under. The girls had a pact to get pregnant so they could all raise their babies together. This is called "Juno the Home Game."

DR. BRIAN ORR: Was there a pregnancy pact in Gloucester? This is now the famous question that the news organizations are asking.

KIM DALY: When the media first ensued upon Gloucester around the teenage pregnancy situation the sort of scandalized part of this whole story was that there was somehow a pact among these kids to get pregnant, raise their babies together in some kind of a little commune of, I don't know.

GAIL MCCARTHY: I wrote the story on deadline, it was over Memorial Day and it went to press that Monday, and it got picked up by the wire and it went across the country and the *Time* reporter came to town, and that seemed to spark the fire when she used the word "pregnancy pact."

RAY LAMONT: The school principal made it very clear that his perception was that there were a group of girls in the school who were very actively trying to get pregnant.

NEWS ANCHOR: A pregnancy rate four times the norm at Gloucester High was shocking enough. But now a bigger shock: the so-called pregnancy pact among at least a half-dozen sophomores, none older than sixteen.

RAY LAMONT: All of a sudden, everyone from Boston to New York to L.A. to Tokyo and beyond is on their way in here. By that evening, CBS had us on the CBS Evening News.

[Sound of CBS News introduction] This is the CBS Evening News with Katie Couric.

NEWS ANCHOR: Now to a disturbing story out of Gloucester, Massachusetts. There has been a dramatic increase in teenage pregnancies there and authorities think they know why. Some say the high school girls planned it as part of a secret pact.

NEWS ANCHOR: According to the Superintendent, all the girls were sixteen or younger, most of the fathers weren't in high school and at least one of them was a twenty-four-year-old man.

RAY LAMONT: By the next day, literally, it was all over the world.

BRAZILIAN NEWS ANCHOR: (reports in Portuguese)

BRITISH NEWS ANCHOR: Officials in the U.S. state of Massachusetts...

NETHERLANDS NEWS ANCHOR: (reports in Dutch)

GAIL MCCARTHY: When the national media started to come to town, people definitely began to withdraw. They're, I think in part, worried about these young girls who are now pregnant and are now thrust into the national spotlight. When it's a local issue it's easier to talk about, but when you know that you're going national and even international, the tendency is to begin to protect them.

WENDY BROWN: We came home one night and we had three channels outside. They had to hide. I was working and they had to hide to get away from one of the newspeople...

COREY BROWN: ...Get away from the media.

WENDY BROWN: Yes.

COREY BROWN: That Saturday, they just, the Saturday after the *Time* magazine article came out they just, one right after the other, coming to the door. Everybody wanted an interview, everybody wanted her to fly down, go down to New York and do this show, that show, the other show. My answering machine got flooded with *Dr. Phil* and *Tyra Banks*, everybody under the sun. So we just got in the car, packed up, took off.

ALISSA SILVA: But he wasn't even two hours old and we had three phone calls. They wanted to know how old he was, can they come to the hospital, two hundred different things and I just said we weren't interested.

NEWS ANCHOR: We are now joined by some moms-to-be from Gloucester and I guess our first question, and I'm going to direct it to you Kyla and to you Alexis: was there a pregnancy pact at your high school?

KIM DALY: When some of these girls got pregnant, it drew some attention to them, you know. For some of these girls, they hadn't necessarily stood out before, and now all of a sudden they got to be part of something that was bigger.

ISRAEL HOROVITZ: The celebrity involved in what's going on in Gloucester now is so out of control. For some kids who had absolutely no profile in the community whatsoever, no visible existence, this kind of scandal was, existence, was notoriety, was celebrity.

KIM DALY: The pregnancy situation at Gloucester High School, for better or worse, is probably the biggest thing that has happened in this town in a long time.

RAY LAMONT: We had international TV crews literally stopping any young woman with a stroller on Main Street and asking her what she thought of the teen pregnancies.

ALIVIA FIDLER: Xavier was five months old when all of this happened with the media, and I didn't want them to, like, ruin my life, and I was like just "Come on, let's go, and..."

DR. BRIAN ORR: When I gave an answer to the press that was a complex answer about teen pregnancy, they did not accept it, they did not print it, they did not go with it. What they wanted was one answer and when they got the pact, that was the one answer they got, and they descended on that.

NEWS ANCHOR: The scandal at Gloucester High School, Massachusetts leads the way. This morning on ABC, one of the seventeen pregnant girls and her boyfriend were confronted over reports saying they made a pact to get pregnant.

KIM DALY: It doesn't make any difference whether there was a pact or not, it doesn't change anything at the end of the day. Whether they wanted to get pregnant, whether they didn't want to get pregnant, whether they wanted to get pregnant and it was a group decision, what difference does it make? It sells papers, sure, it gets people to watch your shows, but it doesn't really change anything at the end of the day.

BRIANNE MACKEY: With the whole pact thing, I just, I don't know, I think it's stupid, and that there's really not that many girls, and so what if there is? That's their business. People don't need to be getting in everybody's business and wanting to know, and every single girl has a different story and a different thing.

ALIVIA FILDER: Well, two of my friends became pregnant at the same time of this whole pregnancy pact thing, so. I know a lot of other girls but I don't really talk to them.

ALEXIS SILVA: It wasn't as many people as they even say.

ALYSSA SILVA: Between her and her girlfriends I don't know more than seven people.

KAILA SIMPSON: In Gloucester there are a lot of teen mothers. It's nothing new to anybody here. Every year there's a teen pregnant or a few teens pregnant, there's a lot of teen mothers. It's been that way since my 30-year-old sister was in high school.

ALYSSA SILVA: Twenty years ago, when I was in the Gloucester High School, there were fourteen girls pregnant then and it was no big deal. I mean, it wasn't anything we were all proud of it's just something that happened and we had to deal with from there on in.

REESE HOPKINS: We're out talking about the teen pregnancy issue, not Gloucester, Gloucester doesn't have an issue, the entire country has an issue with teen pregnancy. I figured I'd go to the genesis of the story that everyone is sensationalizing and I have to say, I got 125 emails in an hour. One hour. About Bristol Palin, Sarah Palin, the Vice Presidential nominee's daughter, when I said that I could not support the Vice Presidential candidate, because she, although she preaches abstinence, her own seventeen-year-old daughter got pregnant. I got 125 emails that said Reese you're crazy, what do you mean, you're not going to support her? This is a separate issue. This has nothing to do with it. This was one person who wrote an email to me when the Gloucester story came out and said that these girls were easy. They were sluts. They said that the parents were irresponsible. But Sarah Palin's daughter, no, no, no, this was a separate issue!

GAIL MCCARTHY: Gloucester is a city of great contrast. It's got more physical beauty than probably any place on earth. It has got vibrant, energetic people of all cultures. The Portuguese, the Italians, the Irish, the Catholics, the Protestants. But with that you also have all the social ills of big cities. Now you've got, sort of, this little storm in the backdrop of what was a perfect storm: how do you address this teenage pregnancy issue that we don't know where it's going?

NEWS ANCHOR: You're seventeen years old, ok? You're pregnant. How do you see your life moving forward?

KYLA BROWN: I'm going to be taking care of a kid and, I don't know.

KYLA BROWN: I was sixteen. She first told me I was pregnant, I looked at her and said, "It's lying! Do another one."

TEXT ON SCREEN:

In January 2008, Kyla received a positive pregnancy test result at the Gloucester High Clinic.

KYLA BROWN: She goes, "It's going to come out the same." "Just do another one, I don't believe it." "Ok." She comes in, "Same thing." Oh God. Now they're going to call my mom. Called her up and said, "Mom, how do you feel about being a grandma." I got nothing back.

WENDY BROWN: Had our little crying drag at the school when I went into the Nurse's Office. And then we talked about it and came home.

ALEXIS SILVA: When I first found out I was pregnant it was kind of shocking and I didn't, I don't know...

ALYSSA SILVA: Didn't know what to do? She came home and she told me, and I told her it was her decision to do what she thought was right. And, she decided...

ALEXIS SILVA: I decided that I was going to keep him, that I couldn't go through with having an abortion.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

In the first week of her senior year at Gloucester High, Alexis gave birth to a baby boy.

HALLIE ALLISON: Becoming pregnant at fifteen was hard, but I knew that my mom was always going to help me take care of what I needed to take care of. Like, I knew I was the one taking care of the baby but if I needed her, she'd be there. My father, I was terrified to tell, so...

ALIVIA FIDLER: I found out I was pregnant from one of my other friends who suggested I should get a pregnancy test. And from there I got it, and it said I was positive, and then just to make sure I went to my pediatric and I got tested, and they said I was positive. And then I just, yeah, I don't know. I was just...

HALLIE ALLISON: I didn't think that I was going to go and have a baby, I just didn't think about it. I was kind of young and stupid.

TABITHA ELDRIDGE: My mom was my age when she got pregnant. It was really funny because my daughter was due July 19 and I was due July 19, and my mom was the same age I was, so, sixteen years apart.

SARAH WILLIAMS: Pedro and I met when I was fifteen years old. We met at high school, and I had an instant crush on him. And I think he felt the same about me. We were together for maybe nine months before I found out I was pregnant.

BRIANNE MACKEY: When I found out I was pregnant, it was kind of, I don't know, a lot of different emotions. I wasn't sure and a lot of different things.

KIM MACKEY: It was tough, it was mixed feelings. It was an emotional rollercoaster. I was of course, initially I was upset, she's sixteen years old of course I didn't want her to have the baby.

BRIANNE MACKEY: In the long run, obviously, I decided to keep her.

ALYSSA SILVA: What is he like?

ALEXIS SILVA: I don't know, good...he's shivering.

ALYSSA SILVA: One second. He's twelve days old, he eats every three hours, he's very good. He gets kind of fussy every once in awhile, but besides that he's great. Now go...ok. [laughs]

ALEXIS SILVA: Brayden's twelve days old, he eats every three hours, he's a good baby, but sometimes he gets fussy. But he's good.

NEWS ANCHOR: Did you guys talk about adoption or abortion? Did you think about that? Because you knew that your life was going to completely change?

ALEXIS SILVA: I thought about it but then I decided that I would never be able to have a kid again if I decided that I killed one.

KYLA BROWN: The thought of abortion never crossed my mind, at all. And I knew that if I was going to be pregnant for nine months and then have the baby and be sitting there going, “Alright, well, let’s pick a family, I’m never going to see my baby again” I couldn’t do that so me and her basically decided there’s no other option. We’re going to keep the baby, it’s going to be at the house. I’m going to raise him. End of story.

SARAH WILLIAMS: My pregnancy was the most stressful thing ever, but I knew I didn’t want to have an abortion because I was afraid, I was afraid to have an abortion.

TABITHA ELDRIDGE: We were thinking about abortion, but when we looked into the prices of abortion, it was kind of expensive, we really didn’t have the money at the time and we just figured that we would kind of wing it and have a baby again.

DR. BRIAN ORR: There’s been an ongoing assumption in Gloucester that the eighteen pregnancies ended up in eighteen deliveries and that’s not necessarily the case. And I have to say that there was probably about a third of teens who had their pregnancies terminated.

WENDY BROWN: I figured she’d be the age I was, twenty-four, twenty-five and be on her own. Not living at home. I mean, not that I mind her living at home. She threw us a curveball.

ALYSSA SILVA: She was always a quiet one, she was babysitting, three, or four, or five days a week, she was a nanny for three years. She never went out much and never brought any boys around so we thought she was a shy, quiet one. Little did we know, she wasn’t [laughs].

KIM MACKEY: I put her on the pill and she had been on it for a year and a half, and she didn’t think she messed it up so she wasn’t quite sure even, she was just as surprised, her and Michael were just as surprised and it was definitely, they didn’t plan on it but...

MICHAEL MITCHELL: I was there when my daughter was born and I actually missed my graduation because I was in the hospital with her.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

After he graduated from Gloucester High, Michael went on to work at the family bait shop seven days a week.

ALEXIS SILVA: I never planned to become pregnant. It was kind of just a thing that happened that turned out good... ok.

KIM DALY: There’s a lot of misinformation out there amongst the teenage population around sex, around birth control, around how you can get pregnant, when you can’t get pregnant, and a lot of it is very inaccurate.

ANDREW: Lindsey was on birth control, she was very careful with it because obviously we, seventeen and twenty, were not ready for a kid. But...

PEDRO GONZALEZ: When we were dating, never really thought about condoms. When you're young you don't really think about that, you really just think about getting what you want and, you know, that's it.

ALIVIA FIDLER: I wasn't on any form of birth control.

ALYSSA SILVA: She used a condom, and it obviously didn't work.

KYLA BROWN: I was one of the naïve teenagers, well, "It's never going to happen to me."

DR. BRIAN ORR: We have to recognize as a country that the rate of success of teen families is very, very low just for those kids, how they do in school, they are more likely to, if they are girls, more likely to be teen mothers themselves. For boys they're more likely to end up in prison.

TABITHA ELDRIDGE: This is Anthony, he's four months old. This is Christina, she's a little older than two.

SARAH WILLIAMS: Isaiah is two and a half. And Isabella is eight months. Becoming a parent is life changing, especially at fifteen, sixteen years old because in high school you still have all these things such as Semi and Prom and you have graduation parties and then you have all these friends that, when you become a parent, your priorities have to change and your child has to come first before you, so a lot of the time you can't find a babysitter to go out.

TABITHA ELDRIDGE: It kind of sucks because everyone gets to go out and they get to do everything with their friends and you stay home with your kids. And most of your friends don't understand that, they're like "Oh, I'm not going to come to your house I'd rather just go out with all these other people, you can stay at home with your kids," you know?

SARAH WILLIAMS: And you end up staying home and you can't spend money on yourself because you have to buy diapers or you have to buy formula, it's really hard.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

Sarah and Tabitha live together with their boyfriends and their four children.

TABITHA ELDRIDGE: The father of our children are biological brothers and we felt that it'd be easier to live in one home to help each other out with each other's children and it's very hard but we seem to be working it out, and it's for the best.

JORGE ROSADO: I don't know, it's like a daycare [laughs], got kids running back and forth, up and down the stairs, got to keep an eye on them.

PEDRO GONZALEZ: It's hectic.

JORGE ROSADO: Yeah, it's very hectic.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

1 in 4 teen mothers give birth a second time within 2 years of their first pregnancy.

SARAH WILLIAMS: My second child was not planned, but when I found out I was pregnant I was actually very excited because I had a feeling it was a girl and that I was going to have a little boy and a little girl.

TABITHA ELDRIDGE: When I found out I was pregnant I wasn't too worried because I had already had my daughter so I knew what it was going to be like, I knew what was going to happen.

ALIVIA FIDLER: I got adopted by my grandmother when I was three months old and I never grew up with my mom really, and I never met my father. When I found out I was pregnant I was a little nervous but I was excited at the same time. I was excited because I would have somebody close to me.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

In January 2008, during a break from midterms, Alivia went into labor. She was 3 months early.

NEWS ANCHOR: When kids don't feel like they have a future, they don't have goals, it's not likely they're going to get into college, they often feel a sense of purpose from becoming a parent. Number two, when kids aren't feeling, particularly girls, love and care, they're going to seek for it elsewhere, whether it's from boys or from babies.

HALLIE ALLISON: The new baby's father, he's a really good guy. He tends to help me with the issues that I have and if I just need a shoulder to cry on he's right there.

NANCY ALLISON: I see her looking to men as a solution to every problem instead of just carrying it on with her life and that rips me apart.

KYLA BROWN: I'm having a boy, and his name's going to be Cameron Matthew Brown. And hopefully he's going to be small. We can hope that.

COREY BROWN: Ten pounds or more.

KYLA BROWN: In your dreams.

[Clip from *The O'Reilly Factor*]

BILL O'REILLY: They're just dopey kids, ok, and they're going to have a baby, alright, and there are sixteen other dopey kids, all having a baby. She says this is a coincidence. I don't

believe that. I believe that there's something in that school that's very, very wrong. Now the issue of statutory rape has to come into play but from Massachusetts authorities, again, we don't hear much.

JORGE ROSADO: I was twenty years old when Tabitha became pregnant. I knew that it was wrong, but you know, I was in love and I had a child and, I wasn't going to leave her.

TABITHA ELDRIDGE: DSS got involved and they were trying to press charges.

ALIVIA FIDLER: My baby's father was, well, is twenty-two now, twenty-one when I got pregnant. The baby's father was really excited when he found out that I was pregnant and he didn't really stick around through my pregnancy a lot, like he was there for me once in a great while.

KAILA SIMPSON: This generation, like our generation, there's a lot of us who are more mature for our age and we like to go with older guys. And older guys have their minds set like 'oh I'm older now, I want to start a family, I want to do this, they're like in their twenties and they want to start something.

NEWS ANCHOR: The superintendent says the men who fathered the children are not students. They're older, in their twenties. If the girls agree to name them, he says, they could face statutory rape charges.

[Clip from *The O'Reilly Factor*]

MEGYN KELLY: You can't force the school to run around keeping tabs on the sex lives of the students either. When they found out they were pregnant they did notify the parents.

BILL O'REILLY: I think that the school is the last line of defense and obviously it collapsed.

DR. BRIAN ORR: We began to become aware of the teen pregnancies in Gloucester early in the fall last year in 07. By November we had noticed that there were about ten pregnancies.

KIM DALY: When you're working with teenage girls, and in the capacity that I was at the high school, girls would come in often times by themselves, sometimes with friends to come in to see me because maybe something came up, maybe a condom broke or you know they thought that they might be pregnant.

RANDI KAYE: School officials first began to take notice last October when so many girls started showing up at the nurse's office to find out if they were pregnant. The nurse reportedly gave as many as 150 pregnancy tests. The superintendent says the girls went back over and over until they got the results they wanted.

DR. BRIAN ORR: By November, Kim was concerned about our clinic being a pregnancy testing clinic.

KIM DALY: Some girls weren't exactly unhappy about becoming pregnant or finding out that they were pregnant. You know, there wasn't necessarily a level of high-fiving in the hallways but there wasn't exactly tears in some circumstances.

ALIVIA FIDLER: Some of the girls, to, me made it seem like they wanted to become pregnant. They were very excited and they'd be like "I'm five months in, I'm six months..." I know everybody counts it, but the way they did it was way too excited.

KAILA SIMPSON: I wouldn't keep shoving it in people's face and reminding people that I'm pregnant and how far along I am all the time. And whipping out my ultrasound pictures like "oh look, look at this, look at that..." I'd keep it to my family and to myself, personal.

[News clip]

NEWS ANCHOR: Andrew, Lindsey, are you excited?

ANDREW AND LINDSEY: Yeah.

NEWS ANCHOR: Do you have a name picked out yet?

ANDREW: Yeah, definitely. We have Chloe Jade.

NEWS ANCHOR: Chloe Jade, very nice, very nice. Beautiful. Two names. Five months now, when's the due date.

LINDSEY: November 12.

NEWS ANCHOR: That's great. It's going to change your life.

DR. BRIAN ORR: A lot of people started talking about, well if there was a pact then we don't have to do anything different. We don't have to institute a program of more sex education or contraception in the school.

KATHLEEN KINGSBURY: I spoke with the school principal who said "you know a lot of people are talking about whether or not to hand out contraceptives." But in this particular situation, contraceptives would have done nothing.

NEWS ANCHOR: Because that is the debate going on right now at the high school.

KETHLEEN KINGSBURY: Right, exactly.

KIM DALY: I was not allowed to prescribe birth control. But I have to think that it would have been a very good setting to have done so. We would have had the opportunity to access these kids in a very timely manner. So it really would have likely improved that factor of kids, you know, having to take on remembering to get their pills. Or you know forgetting, or "what do I do if I forget, who can I talk to?" Well I was there everyday. So they could have come in at any time. And they did.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

As pregnancies increased at Gloucester High, the health center staff proposed a confidential contraceptive plan for students.

In May 2008, after a prolonged conflict with the hospital that oversees the high school clinic, Dr. Brian Orr and Nurse Practitioner Kim Daly resigned.

NEWS ANCHOR: The school doctor and nurse who administered dozens of pregnancy tests throughout the year resigned in protest after being told to stop giving out birth control. A policy that's now being heavily debated in the Gloucester school district.

KIM DALY: There's a lot of belief in response to what happened at Gloucester high school that the reason that I and Dr. Orr resigned was because we weren't allowed to prescribe birth control. It had nothing to do with not being allowed to prescribe birth control, it was the process by which the factors involved in that decision were being basically taken away from us. The hospital had some concerns around liability, around prescribing birth control to teenagers. They had concerns around the safety of birth control. And both of these arguments are really kind of ludicrous. In fact, being on a birth control pill is actually safer than being pregnant. Some research has shown its anywhere three to ten times safer to be on a birth control pill than it is to become pregnant.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

The risk of death following pregnancy in girls age 15-19 is twice as high as for women 20-24.

KIM DALY: In some circumstances I was basically told that from a liability purpose, you know we can be held liable for prescribing birth control that provides a side effect versus not being held liable for a pregnancy. I was very unwilling to work in a clinic where the services that I was going to be able to provide were going to be dictated by lawyers.

ALIVIA FIDLER: My baby Xavier's now ten months old. He was in the hospital for four months. He was three months premature. He had like a lot of...

KAILA SIMPSON: health problems...

ALIVIA SIMPSON: Yeah like a lot of health problems, like everything. So he finally got out after four months and I have him home with me now. Well he has an eye doctor appointment soon because I don't know how great he can see. If you talk to him he like turns his head and doesn't pay attention. But his hearing's really good like he startles when you talk to him and everything.

KIM MACKKEY: Bri and Michael don't get foodstamps, and they don't get any welfare. And I wanted to make that very clear because these kids aren't living off the state. Michael works 4 o'clock in the morning everyday until 11 or 12, whenever he gets done or whatever. And

Brianne goes to school and does the PCA work part time and they both have bank accounts with some money in them. They've always worked and even with their income it's too much. So these kids are working themselves and they're learning what it's like.

SARAH WILLIAMS: Everything that we have today is because of us. Because we made it this far. We have all these extra things for our children, like a beautiful carriage, crib, cribset, we have everything baby you can imagine. And we can take our kids places because we work for it, we work hard for it. And I take a lot of pride in what we've done together to make our family work.

ALIVIA FIDLER: He has two shunts, he had a pedia ligation done to his heart. What else have you had done? Come on, name it. [Baby coughs] Oh yeah, coughing? He's fine... What's the matter? Are you talking?

KAILA SIMPSON: Doing it good by myself. But its hard at points and times, living with my aunt and not getting along with her so much.

JORGE ROSADO: It's really hard when you don't have work, and you need a...

TABITHA ELDRIDGE: Financially...

JORGE ROSADO: ...financially you need to have, you know, diapers and all types of different things. Clothing. You have to pay your rent. You know, really, I don't have an education, if you don't have a high school diploma it's a lot harder, you know, to find work.

WENDY BROWN: Financially, I think we'll be ok...

COREY BROWN: I said, one step at a time.

WENDY BROWN: One step at a time. That's right. One day at a time.

COREY BROWN: That's right. We'll just feed her less and give the baby some.

KYLA BROWN: Thanks.

COREY BROWN: Yeah no problem.

WENDY BROWN: You're not priority no more.

COREY BROWN: You're splitting your portion of the taking with the baby.

ALEXIS SILVA: I'm trying to make it so I can do it on my own so that way it doesn't look like I just got pregnant and have everyone help me do everything, and do everything for me. I just wanted to show that I could do it.

KYLA BROWN: It's obviously really scary knowing that you're going to be having a baby soon, no matter what age you are. It's just nice to know that I'm going to be having my parents actually supporting me, I'm not just going to be at the house doing it all by myself, I'm going to actually have support and if I'm at my breaking point... "mummy please!"... she'll come and help me no matter what happens, and my dad will do the same. So.

JORGE ROSADO: Yeah, I do get afraid, I do, I think about that every day. It's really hard. It's not going to be easy.

ALYSSA SILVA: Her and Braden's dad, they were good friends for a while. They were more friends than anything. And they ended up going to a party and that's when she was conceived...he was conceived.

ALEXIS SILVA: Yeah. I don't like that question.

KAILA SIMPSON: The way he treats Alivia is wrong. And the way he never comes to see the baby is wrong. You can have a problem with Olivia but don't take that out on your child.

HALLIE ALLISON: I have a restraining order on him because he was very abusive towards me in front of my daughter. He choked me, numerous times. Broke my nose.

SARAH WILLIAMS: I was really nervous when I found out I was pregnant because I thought I was going to be another one of "those girls" that the father's going to up and leave. That he was just going to ditch me and my child and I was going to be raising my child all by myself. But what has happened is the complete opposite. He's the most wonderful thing and I believe we have an awesome relationship. He's really my best friend.

KYLA BROWN: He still wants to be involved and I'm perfectly fine with that. It'll be nice. Because the baby needs a daddy.

DR. BRIAN ORR: We have a lot of families where the grandparents step in to take care of the babies. I've had a fair number of mothers who, to some degree, drop out of the picture in regards to the care of their infants.

ALYSSA SILVA: Well she doesn't like sharing him very much, so what we usually do, is she'll give him a ten o'clock feeding, and then I'll go and sneak him out of there and take him so I can do the twelve o'clock feeding, and so I can have time to play with him. Then the next morning she woke up and she was nervous because he never woke up in the middle of the night. And I had to confess that I took him.

KYLA BROWN: I'm going to have to fight her to play with my own kid. You're not going to want to give him up.

COREY BROWN: But you want all the midnight feedings.

KYLA BROWN: Oh I know that one.

COREY BROWN: No doubt about that. You get change all the dirty diapers too.

WENDY BROWN: That's your job.

ALYSSA SILVA: When I very first told my husband that my daughter was pregnant he said it was my fault. And I said how is it my fault? And he said, well, "you always wanted another baby, here you go!" I said well it's the wrong uterus but, I guess I get another one. Then I told him I wanted to have one with her and he told me I was nuts.

COREY BROWN: You can't be with your kid 24 hours a day 7 days a week. All you can do is tell them what you want them to do, what they should do, and then they're going to get out on their own and they're going to do whatever they're going to do regardless of how well you prepared them. 'Cause kids are kids and they're going to do what kids do.

KIM DALY: We have a situation where we have teenage pregnancies. And it's not unique to Gloucester. Again, the numbers at Gloucester High School, in fact, are lower than several cities across Massachusetts and lots of other cities across America. I mean we're talking about half. There are cities in Massachusetts that average seventy pregnancies a year.

ANGIE SPEARS: When I heard about the Gloucester teenagers who had made the pact to get pregnant together at the same time, it was very concerning to me. And it confirmed my belief that its not an urban issue, it's not a black or white or Cambodian issue, that this is a societal issue. Lowell, Massachusetts is a very ethnic, cultural environment. The kids here are surrounded by a lot of gang life and a lot of things that our kids shouldn't be subjected to. But it's kind of a tough area. Lately, through the program we've seen a rise in teen pregnancy. It seems that the age is getting younger.

LESLIE CARNEIRNO: Growing up it was hard, I didn't meet my father until I was 11. When I actually did meet him I felt like he didn't stay put. He just kept coming in and out of my life. So I felt like if he didn't want to stay put, why should I? So I started running away at the age of twelve. So I stayed on the run for pretty long and I was staying anywhere and everywhere. Hallways, cars, vans, trailers, anything. Just anywhere and anywhere I would sleep. So I stayed running away, really until I found out I was pregnant. I didn't ever expect to have a baby at any age because of the fact that when I was 9 I have a torsion on my right ovary, which left me with one ovary. So I've always thought I never could have kids or, you know, it wouldn't happen to me. It's not for me. And then, I'm fifteen years old and I find out I'm pregnant and, it was horrible. It was like my world came crashing down. I didn't know what to do. It took so long for me to tell my mother. My mother was also a teen parent, my mom also got pregnant at fifteen and had my brother at sixteen.

ANGIE SPEARS: I think it's a lot easier for the media and the society to portray teen parents as just kids that are running around to be promiscuous.

LESLIE CARNEIRO: I did not get pregnant on purpose. It was not intentional, at all. I wanted to have the baby, but only because of the fact that I only had one ovary, and I thought if I

give this chance up, what makes me think that God would give me another opportunity to be a parent. I have one talent. I can braid hair. And that's, everyone in Lowell has long hair. Every time I would braid hair I would charge. Still to this day that's my main income, is braiding hair. That's my diaper supply. They say "what do you want?" And I say "a pack of diapers." It's a good deal, you know.

I never got one day experiencing high school, not one day. I put a backpack on and it feels so weird. Cause you know I really didn't have that experience. And it's hard. I'm sorry.

When I did find out I was pregnant and I was with my son's father. He basically told me everything I wanted to hear. You know, oh, I'll be there for the baby no matter what. Our relationships going to stay strong. It didn't. It went down hill, and it went downhill so quick. And now we're not together. Now he doesn't want to be a part of my son's life. Now he denies my son.

I'm a full time mom no matter what. No matter what I want to do. Anywhere I want to go I have my little tail. You know, it's not what every teen girl wants. It's not fun, changing diapers, waking up, none of it's fun, you know.

ANGIE SPEARS: I guess I try, like every one else to figure out, why young kids are having babies. What I hear often is that, I needed someone to love me unconditionally, and I wanted someone that I could love unconditionally. You know, they wear their stretch marks proud is what I hear often. And I think that maybe there is just no shame.

LESLIE CARNEIRO: Have you seen it out there in Lowell? It's the new thing. Every one is pregnant or having kids and, you know, its hard, but it's like, what we see is what we're doing. Cause it's the new trend, or, stuff like that. I show them my stretch marks all the time, "do you want this belly? It's so gross." You guys don't want it, you guys can become models, do something, you know. Just everyone's having kids. Maybe they don't feel loved, so they need to know that someone would love them no matter what.

ELIZABETH WOOD: I was brought up here in the area. I also was a teen mom. I found out I was pregnant my senior year in high school. I had talked to my guidance counselor and I said you know "I just found out I'm pregnant." And the look of horror on her face was one thing I'll never forget. She was just totally shocked and said well, "That's it, it's over." Now I see the need to support students in the situation that I was in. I had a supportive family. The dynamic of this building and the dynamic of this city are much different than the dynamic I grew up in.

We have 1600 students in this building, about 890 of them are female. So by the end of the year, it's pretty across the board, we can expect that we will have almost 85 to 90 moms that are either pregnant or parenting at the time. Gladys is one of my students here at Putnam. She came to me last year as an incoming ninth grader. She's in her tenth grade year this year. She has a four and a half year old son at home that she's taking care of.

GLADYS CARABALLO: Me and my boyfriend was twelve years old when we first met each other. We were in the sixth grade and we was just going out like little boyfriends and girlfriends

in school. I found out that I was pregnant cause I was not getting my you know personal issues and I was kind of scared and I went to the Family Dollar and I got the pregnancy test that is the regular one and I bought like four of them and they all came out like they were true. I was kind of scared to tell my mother that I was pregnant cause I was just twelve years old and I didn't know how to tell her so I went to my son's father's family and I told them. And they called my mother and they told her. We were not planning to have it, have the baby or nothing, it just happened. So...

I didn't know if I was going to be a good mom or if I was going to have all the things that I needed or of a home, food, and all this stuff. I'm trying to put my son in the right path. Like, not in drugs. No gangs or nothing. I want my son good, educated and everything like that.

LESLIE CARNEIRO: In Springfield we practice an abstinence-only model, um so we don't, we're not allowed to talk about birth control. We're not allowed to pass out birth control, um, so students get it from their friends and their friends are misinformed and so our students are misinformed about birth control and not using it. There's such a feeling of, "It's not going to happen to me, I don't have to worry about it," that they often throw the birth control and the condoms out the window.

OMAR COLON: I didn't think using birth control was going to be good. I never thought I would get her pregnant. When Yazmarie's parents find out we was going to have a baby, they didn't expect it. We talked to Ms. Woods about it and she set-up a parent meeting with my mom, her mom.

YAZMARIE VEGA-OROCHO: My mom said a lot of hurtful things. I do understand that taking care of a baby is not easy. I have to go through it. And I somebody next to me that's helping me out. Omar's working right now and he's helping me out. And his mom is helping me out too. I'm thankful that I'm going to have this baby because it's a gift from God and I wasn't expecting it.

OMAR COLON: Hopefully I have a good family for her and my kid, and just move on to whatever comes.

SARAH WILLIAMS: When I was thirteen years old I went into foster care because me and my mom were having problems. Since I was in a foster home I wanted I guess to start my own family and have something nobody could take away from me. I don't understand why my mom and me decided for me to go in foster care but I cannot ever imagine having my children go into foster care. It is one of my greatest fears to have my children taken away from me.

KIM DALY: We know that teen moms sometimes are just really caving someone to love. Um, and it's really sad, you know that they go to those means to just try and develop something that they can love and who's going to love them back but I think that happened in Gloucester.

DR. BRIAN ORR: We knew that some girls did want to get pregnant. And every teen pregnancy blip or rise in teen pregnancy in every town you're going to get a group of teens who are interested or think they're interested in getting pregnant.

HALLIE ALLISON: Catherine was my friend's mom. She, um, she was kind of like my mom. I slept over at her house all the time. I spent a lot of time with her. I went to the mall with her. She took us shopping all the time. We'd go for rides. She was kind of like a kid. Only, not, obviously. But she spent all her time with us, me and my best friend. And um, I slept over my friend's house one day.

NANCY ALLISON: Hallie was very close to this family. The um, father shot the mother at night with the kids there, my daughter and his kids, um...

HALLIE ALLISON: My friend's father shot her twice in the face and then shot himself. I walked in and my friend's father was laying on the bed and her mom was in front of the door. That was pretty much it.

NANCY ALLISON: That blew her world apart. And she wanted a new world. It did impact her decision to make her own family and to get pregnant. Cause she was hell bent on getting pregnant. And I mean, it was clear.

HALLIE ALLISON: I got pregnant with my daughter at fifteen. I had her at sixteen. And I'm expecting my second daughter in April.

NANCY ALLISON: I knew that Hallie was intentionally trying to get pregnant because I found pills that helped to encourage a pregnancy along. She needed something to take away that hole and that pain that she lost from two of the people she trusted the most in the world. If that's what she wanted, you know, I was willing to back her up. And she did get pregnant.

I was involved with a man who was also a diver and a marine biologist and somebody that I enjoyed and respected. And then in front of her he beat me up and broke two of my ribs. So I went to his house and I was very cold to him and I told him we couldn't move in together. We were going to get a house together with Hallie and was in the next room and he put a 357 magnum in his mouth and blew his brains out and when I heard it I walked in the room but it was like nothing I'd ever seen and my daughter saw that later, you know. I don't know how to deal with that, you know? I've never been in war. And then my daughter has to see the same thing. It just doesn't seem like it makes any sense or it's right. But it did happen. And I couldn't help her because I never got over how it felt for me and she wouldn't talk to me about it.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

Six hours after this interview, Nancy Allison attempted suicide.

NEWS ANCHOR: Many are wondering, of course, that are watching this story from afar: Where are the parents in all of this?

COREY BROWN: I don't feel like we have to defend our parenting skills.

WENDY BROWN: I do.

COREY BROWN: Everybody we know knows us and knows the way we are and the parents we are.

KIM MACKEY: You know, people say, "Why don't you teach them abstinence? Why don't you do this?" But you can't pretend and teach kids abstinence if you know, they're not going to do it and she's already had a boyfriend.

ALISSA SILVA: I don't feel guilty I just feel it's a coincidence and people do judge it and say, "You're a teen mom, so now she's a teen mom. She's following the trend." I just think it's another challenge in life that we all got.

BRIANNE MACKEY: Every day Michael goes to work. I go to school. I take the baby to school with me. And then after school I go home and he's home by the time I get home and pretty much just spend time together. That's pretty much it. (Laughs) Every day. [Laughs] Same thing.

KYLA BROWN: My friends basically look at me and say, "Happy it's not me." Yeah, thanks. [Laughs].

DR. BRIAN ORR: If you think back about teenagers and what teenagers really want, they want involvement with their community, their teen community. And becoming a teen parent all of a sudden isolates you from your teen community.

ALIVIA FIDLER: I don't have the same life I had when I, before I got pregnant. I don't go out with my friends as much. I don't sleep out at my friend's houses that much. I sit home and take care of my son.

HALLIE ALLISON: The reality of it is that if you want a baby, you're going to be home a hundred percent of the time taking care of that baby. That's what it is. And you know you think that "Oh, well I have a baby. It's a doll that I get to play with." Well, no. It's a real person's life. And you can't screw with that.

NEWS ANCHOR: While it's clear there was a perfect storm of teen pregnancies this year at Gloucester High School, seventeen in total, officials admitted Monday the so-called "pregnancy pact" initially reported by the principal may not be what it seems. The information from the principal has been verified by any other source. We are talking to the folks who work with children one-on-one.

GAIL MCCARTHY: The Mayor called a press conference wanting to squash the idea that there was a pact.

MAYOR: There's been no independent confirmation of the alleged pact.

GAIL MCCARTHY: The attention then became the media itself and the issues of why there's suddenly four to seventeen girls pregnant got overlooked.

DR. BRIAN ORR: I mean the news you get a little bit of variety between, was there seventeen pregnancies or were there eighteen? But there were eighteen.

NEWS ANCHOR: So was there a pregnancy pact or not?

KIM DALY: I read about this pact in time magazine and I almost fell off my chair. It's absurd. It's absurd to me to think that anybody could possibly believe that there was ever any kind of idea amongst these kids to get pregnant and raise their children together.

KIM MACKEY: It's not true. I don't know why anybody thought it was true just because of a statement that they think that one gentleman made. Um, it's ridiculous. I don't know why people would think kids would even want to do that.

ALIVIA FIDLER: I don't think there was a pact. I haven't heard anything of it or anything so I know I'm not in it so I don't think there is one at all.

WENDY BROWN: There is no pact. It's just a word that somebody threw out there and got the attention of everybody.

ISRAEL HOROVITZ: What made Gloucester very special to me as a dramatist is clearly this P-word, the word "pact."

KIM MACKEY: It's that big four-letter word as we say that brought the attention to Gloucester. It's now Gloucester's naughty four-letter word. Not the regular four-letter word.

KYLA BROWN: We didn't all get pregnant at the same time. Like, they were counting a couple of girls that already had their babies even before the school year started and everything. It's stupid. (Laughs)

NEWS ANCHOR: What is the bottom line, Lindsay? Was there a pact among these high school kids to get pregnant together?

LINDSAY: No. There was definitely no pact.

TABITHA ELDRIDGE: I think the whole pact was blown out of proportion. I think could have been a few girls that maybe agreed to get pregnant at the same time. But I don't think, no way, that seventeen girls would agree to get pregnant at the same time.

KAILA SIMPSON: All the girls that were pregnant, they're all from different groups. They all hang out with different people. They don't contact with each other, anything. So that's when, when I heard about it I was like, "Yeah, ok, that's not true. Because the girls that are pregnant, only two of them are friends." And that's it.

ALYSSA SILVA: The only pact that I heard about was the girls that were already pregnant, they were going to stick together and help each other. And make sure they got through school, watched each other's kids, do homework together. That whole thing was discussed at least two months before the media even got here.

KIM DALY: When these girls became pregnant they found each other and they did develop a support system. They weren't necessarily friends beforehand but they became friends. And I think that makes sense. Kids with common interest are going to find one another.

KAILA SIMPSON: Watching all this I don't wish I became pregnant. It's good to have my friends who have babies. It's like, those are my babies. My niece is my baby, those are my babies for me right now. I don't want to have a baby until I've graduated and I know I have a good job and until I'm older and I know I can handle it. But I don't wish I'd become pregnant now.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

Six weeks after this interview, Kaila found out she was pregnant.

KYLA BROWN: I just can't wait for him now. It's been 39 weeks and I'm finally about to see him. For something this big, it takes up an awful lot of room in the house. (Laughs) You never really thought about it before.

MICHAEL MITCHELL: I thought that it would be a lot harder than it really is. It's really not that bad, except for like, like I said, managing your money. It's expensive, having a baby.

ALEXIS SILVA: I work at Dunkin Donuts and it's, it's hard. But I've worked and saved all my money and...

ALYSSA SILVA: Now it's just...

ALEXIS SILVA: I have everything I need and everything. It's just getting through it. I'm nervous just being a young mum because I want to make sure that he gets the best he can get and... What? I don't know how to say it. I'm nervous, but I don't know...

MOM: Why are you nervous?

ALEXIS SILVA: I want to make sure that I don't mess up and that he has everything.

ALYSSA SILVA: That's all you have to say, then. What do you see down the road?

ALEXIS SILVA: I don't know.

ALYSSA SILVA: How do you see you guys together?

ALEXIS SILVA: I don't know.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

Three weeks after this interview, baby Brayden died suddenly in his sleep.

LESLEY CARNEIRO: If I have my life to live over, one thing I would have changed was I would have waited. I definitely would have waited to have a baby or just to even have sex. I would have really believed in celibacy because I tell all my friends now, "You guys are virgins. Stay virgins. If you guys wait, you guys could have perfect futures, you know. Get married in a little white church, you know. Wear a cute white dress and, you know, have a family. And it's not like I don't have a family now because I do, but it's just, it's incomplete.

KIM MACKEY: I'd hoped Brianne at this age would still be being a teenager. I didn't want her to be a mother this early.

ALIVIA FIDLER: I wish I had waited until I was older. But it happened really and I'm just going to accept the fact.

OMAR COLON: We're still young. But can't do anything about it now.

HALLIE ALLISON: I think you shouldn't bring a child into the world if you don't know how you're going to take care of it. Because you, you can't depend on the other person.

LESLEY CORNEIRO: I'll always be here for Jordon. Because I know how it felt. So I am, I'm going to be Jordan's best friend.

ISRAEL HOROVITZ: So what become of these kids? I don't know. The real, the real story to be told is to be told in five years.

SARAH WILLIAMS: I feel I've excelled in being a teen parent, a young mother. I feel I have gone above my adversities and my issues and gone farther and done something great with myself.

KYLA BROWN: I'm going to have to take care of another little person. I'm going to be responsible. It's different.

COREY BROWN: One day at a time. One step at a time.

BRIANNE MACKEY: If I didn't have the baby it wouldn't be much different than it is now.

MICHAEL MITCHELL: If she didn't have the baby, life would be boring. Nothing to come home to, right?

KIM DALY: Someday this is all going to end and the attention is going to be off of Gloucester and these girls are now going to be teen moms, and who is going to remember them then?

TEXT ON SCREEN:

Kaila dropped out of Gloucester High. Her daughter was born September 3, 2009.

Alivia dropped out of Gloucester High. She and Xavier were placed in foster care.

Hallie recently gave birth to her second daughter.

Nancy Allison recently married her third husband on a beach in Gloucester.

After the birth of her son, Kyla graduated from Gloucester High. She is pursuing a career in cosmetology.

SARAH WILLIAMS: So far it's working out.

JORGE ROSADO: So far it's working out. So far it's working out.

SARAH WILLIAMS: So far it's working out.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

The two couples (Sarah and Pedro, Tabitha and Jorge) no longer live together.

Brianne and Michael now live with his parents. Michael still works at the bait shop.

Alexis dreamed of taking Brayden to Disney World. She scattered his ashes there.

750,000 teens in the United States become pregnant each year. The U.S. has the highest teen pregnancy rate of any developed country in the world.

[END]