Coping with teenage pregnancy

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD

Workers at Common Ground, Bir-mingham human resources agency, are thinking about how they could spend \$1.3 million.

They don't have the money to spend and question if they ever will, but Common Ground has applied for a \$1.3 mil-

mon Ground has applied for a \$1.3 million federal grant.

The money would be used to help prevent unplanned teenage pregnancies and provide alternatives, according to Joanne Lindensmith, supervisor of crisis services at the agency.

"The \$1.3 million over five years is the maximum possible but the grant could be a lot less," Ms. Lindensmith said. "And it will be it 8 months before we know whether we will get anything, "The whole world has applied for this grant, everybody wants this money," she added.

money," she added.

THE FOCUS of the grant is to provide comprehensive care all in one place — to treat those already pregnant and provide prevaital care detection and related information for girls 17 and younger.

Ms. Lindensmith and others at Common Ground are excited about the grant because most other people "who are doing something about teenage pregnancies are all profit-making, such as abortion clinics," Ms. Lindensmith said.

Statistics on teenage pregnancies are "overwhelming," she added.

At Common Ground alone, the numbers of young girls who have been seen for pregnancy tests and birth control information jumped from 10 girls under age 1s in all of 1976 to 25 girls in the same age group in the first four months of 1979, according to Jean Lee, director of the agency's medical clinic. About one half of the girls were from Birmingham, she said.

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"And those are just the ones we see. I woulder how many of them fudge on their age and say they are 13 or 14 when they really are 12 years old."

"Most people we see in the clinic are from south Oakland their age and say they are 13 or 14 when they really are 12 years old."

A LARGE number of 12-year-olds are promiscuous," Ms. Lindensmith said. "I am not implying that it is ram-pant. I am not talking about what every kid is doing, just some of them. But aren't some as valuable as the whole? "Kids do need to know about this and there is no place to learn," she added. "It is really important that all adolescents have a base of information to help them decide what to do." "Mat young rifts are being taught."

"It is really important that all adolescents have a base of information to
help them decide what to do."
"Most young girls are being taught
what birth control information they
ave by their boy friends and they have
a vested interest in it," Ms. Lindensmith said. "And not all adults have
correct information. They are passing
along misinformation, too."
The grant would pay 75 percent of
the cost of the program, dubbed PACE
for Pregnancy: Alternatives, Care
Education, the first year and decreasing amounts each following year.
It would provide money for a psychiartic nurse for follow-up counseling for
pregnant adolescents, emotional care,
nutrition information, financial planning and goal setting.
"THESE GIRLS have to know what
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"THESE GIRLS have to know what they are going to do in the future," Ms. Lindensmith asid. "Does life end with birth? They say there are alternatives to pregnancy but abortion is the only one readily available." Contributing to the statistics on pregnancy before marriage is the fact that American girls are reaching puberly at increasingly earlier ages, marrying latera and being unwilling to abstain from sexual activity until they are married. "About one-third of the girls who came to the Common Ground clinic for pregnancy tests and birth control information during July were pregnant,"

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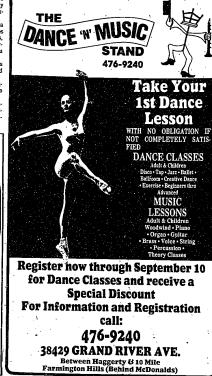
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Ms. Lee said. "Most people we see in the clinic are from south Oakland Counly and a fair number are from Birningham and Bloomfield Hills." She believes many Birningham and Bloomfield Hills girls "go directly to abortion clinics because they have the money to do that."

Ms. Lindensmith said she hoped the Birmingham Schools would continue a unit on birth control offered for the first time last year to eighth grade stault on the control offered for the first time last year to eighth grade stault on the control offered for the suff for a variety of reasons.

Ms. LinDensMittH said she thought the school program was "carefully considered" and that it "seemed to give said the seemed to give said the school program was "carefully the school program was "carefully the school program was "carefully considered" and that it "seemed to give said the seemed to give said the seemed to give said the school of the school district elected and the mechanism of the school of the school district elected and the mechanism of the school of the s



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