

PREGNANT MINORS

ARE SOME OF THE MOST

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

IN OUR SOCIETY.



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JANE'S DUE PROCESS, INC.



2009 IMPACT REPORT



JANE'S DUE PROCESS

Ensuring legal representation for pregnant minors in Texas

Jane's Due Process enters its tenth year as a stronger, more vibrant organization than ever before. We continue to be the only organization ensuring legal representation for pregnant minors in Texas. Our goal is for every pregnant teen to know that she has the right to seek legal representation, to be treated with respect and sensitivity by those who work in the legal system, and to participate in legal proceedings where everyone is interested in following the law. Over the years we have helped thousands make safe and informed choices about how and when to become a parent, guiding them through the obstacle course of the “judicial bypass.” Texas is a safer place for pregnant teenagers because Jane's Due Process exists.

The core of the Jane's Due Process program is our toll-free legal hotline and network attorney program. Although most clients come to us for help with a judicial bypass, we also provide legal information, representation, and referrals for teens who wish to carry to term and for any other legal issue related to a client's pregnancy, such as emancipation, protective orders, and violations of the Title IX right to an equal education.

When pregnant minors call our hotline they go through a short screening process and are then referred to a clinic for a sonogram and pregnancy options counseling. Jane's Due Process requires all clients to meet with a counselor to discuss their situation and explore all of their pregnancy options. Often, there is no other adult with whom our clients can have this important conversation. If clients still want a judicial bypass, they call back to the hotline and are put in touch with one of our network attorneys. The training and resources we provide to our network attorneys result in a 98-99% success rate in judicial bypass cases.

CONTINUING OUTREACH EFFORTS

As we try to do every year, Jane's Due Process sent representatives in 2009 to several organizations that serve pregnant and sexually active teens. Our outreach included presentations to groups of school counselors, domestic violence shelter workers, and teens themselves.

Because South Texas and the border have some of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the entire country, we always makes a particular effort to conduct outreach and education in these areas. In 2009, we traveled to Galveston, and to Cameron, Hidalgo, Kennedy, and Nueces counties and met personally with the courthouse workers responsible for handling judicial bypass cases there.

We mailed materials to courthouses in the other Texas counties. These mailings included informational posters, copies of our attorney manual on CD, and other information in both English and Spanish. It is important for Jane's Due Process to regularly reach out to courthouse workers because they are often the first point of contact with the judicial system for teens seeking help and also because of the high rate of turnover among workers in court clerks' offices.



About Jane Doe:

Of callers to the Jane's Due Process legal hotline in 2009:

- 25% had been pregnant before. 16% were already mothers supporting at least one child.
- 19% reported having experienced physical or emotional abuse from a parent or guardian.
- 21% feared being kicked out of the home or disowned for being pregnant.
- 24% were orphans, had parents outside the country, or were unable to contact either parent.
- 67% were 17 years old. 2% of 17 year olds were within 2 months of their 18th birthday.
- 22% were 16 years old.
- 16% were 15 years old.
- 2% were younger than 15.
- 35% were Latina.
- 29% were of African or Caribbean descent.
- 26% were Anglo.
- 10% were of Mixed, Other, or Unknown descent.
- 6% were of Asian descent.

Among callers who were not on birth control, the top two reasons were that they believed parental consent was required to obtain birth control and that they could not afford it.



JDP PROGRAM OUTCOMES	2007	2008	2009
Minor referred to JDP network attorney program	121	183	201
Minor referred to clinic recruited or court appointed attorney	38	38	47
Minor received assistance with pro se representation from executive director	3	0	0
Minor referred to explore pregnancy options – outcome unknown	123	213	161
Minor indicated intent to seek consent from a parent	16	19	14
Minor indicated intent to seek abortion outside of state	0	2	2
Minor indicated intent to seek abortion after 18th birthday	9	5	2
Minor indicated intent to continue pregnancy after discussing abortion option through hotline screening	4	4	2
Minor referred to clinic for emergency contraception	0	0	1
Minor had miscarriage before participating in judicial bypass process	2	5	1
TOTAL MINORS SCREENED FOR SERVICES	316	469	440



NEW PUBLICATIONS

A grant from The Texas Bar Foundation allowed us to publish our revised attorney manual on CD. These CD manuals are useful not only to members of our attorney network, but also to court clerks, who have special responsibilities under Texas judicial bypass law, and to other legal workers who may not be familiar with the special legal issues surrounding pregnant minors.

We also re-printed our popular series of English and Spanish tri-fold pocket cards. A grant from the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers (DAYL) Foundation funded the printing. These cards cover the general rights of pregnant teenagers and teens' rights with regard to dating violence. We also created a new card explaining how teenagers in Texas can safely, legally, and confidentially access contraception and emergency contraception.

The DAYL Foundation also allowed us to create a new color brochure. Although we believe teens will find it useful, we wrote it primarily for nurses, counselors, and other professionals who work with pregnant and sexually active minors outside the legal field. This brochure answers the questions about teen legal rights that these professionals most often ask us.

We began the process of updating our previously published handbook *The Rights of Pregnant Teenagers in Texas*, again funded by the DAYL Foundation. This handbook is longer than our other publications and discusses legal issues relevant to pregnant teens in more depth. This update is especially exciting because the handbook will be translated for the first time into both Spanish and Vietnamese, which means that teens with limited English proficiency will have access to our most comprehensive legal guide. Texas has some of the highest percentages of Spanish and Vietnamese speakers in the country.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

The Texas Bar Foundation grant also allowed us to complete a project that we began in late 2008 to address the relationship between dating violence and teen pregnancy. We instituted a new policy under which Jane's Due Process network attorneys will screen their judicial bypass clients for dating violence. We also revised our attorney manual to include information about dating violence, how to screen for it, and the various protections that Texas provides for victims.

A lawyer from the Texas Advocacy Project joined us for a series of Continuing Legal Education seminars that we presented in Dallas, Austin, and Houston. These seminars discussed the connection between teen dating violence and teen pregnancy, and how lawyers can best respond to it. Because these areas of law are so specialized, many of the attendees who regularly try cases related to teen pregnancy were unfamiliar with teen dating violence law and vice versa.



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JANE'S DUE PROCESS, INC.
is the only organization
ensuring legal representation
for pregnant minors in Texas.

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