



*Nashville CARES  
HIV/AIDS Education. Support. And Compassion for All.*

Survivor Club is an HIV prevention education and leadership development program for teenagers offered by Nashville CARES.

Survivor Club trains adolescents to become peer educators about HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. It is a 20-hour course that builds leadership skills along with knowledge and understanding about HIV. It is comprehensive prevention education guided by the latest science. To date, Survivor Club has trained 250 teens at 11 high schools who in turn have educated almost 4,000 adolescent peers about HIV prevention.

The reasons for this program are clear. In the U.S., half of new HIV infections today are reported among people under age 25. That means a young person becomes infected with HIV every 20 minutes. In Middle Tennessee, the infection rate is lower than nationally. But we don't really know whether that means our young people are truly at lower risk, since other indicators show they are indeed taking sexual risks. Rates for other sexually transmitted infections are high locally, for example, and Tennessee ranks #12 in teenage pregnancies.

Survivor Club encourages young people to make healthy choices about sex that are consistent with their own personal, religious, family, and cultural values. For many, that means choosing not to be sexual. The peer educator training is detailed and explicit, as the science tells us it must be. Content is based on recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control, American Medical Association and other national health experts. Locally, the program has been certified via Alignment Nashville as a service learning project option in the Developing Community Leaders program of Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS). Program review documents strong success in giving teenagers the skills to protect their health and to talk with peers and adults about issues of sexual health.

Nonetheless, the program remains controversial in some quarters because we communicate openly and honestly about human sexual behavior and promote respect for the variety and diversity of sexual experience.

*Nashville CARES provides education on prevention of HIV and comprehensive support services to men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS in Davidson County and sixteen surrounding counties. The agency is a non-profit charitable corporation. Visit [www.nashvillecares.org](http://www.nashvillecares.org) for more information. (615) 259-4866.*

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