How Teen Pregnancy Affects Our Community: The Picturing Health Venice Arts Project, Part 1

Recently, I had the opportunity to look at photographs for *Picturing Health: Photographs by Youth Across Southern & Central California*, a documentary project of Venice Arts, funded by the California Endowment. *This is part 1 of a 3 part series.*

The pictures featuring teen parents and their children are personal and give us a glimpse of what teenage parenthood is really like. The photographs that are featured here were taken by teens living in Southern Kern. These are two of the photos, and the captions describe the image and explain why the photographers took them. *Click on the photos to view the rest of the Southern Kern Gallery*.

***Sonia and her Two Kids*, courtesy of Karina Forero, age 16, and Venice Arts**
(From Picturing Health: Southern Kern)
"Sonia's kids the little boy is 2 years old and the baby girl is two months. I took this picture because it was interesting how she was trying to calm the little boy and puts the little baby girl off to the side."

***Such a Loving Parent*, courtesy of Maria Diaz, age 13, and Venice Arts**
(From Picturing Health: Southern Kern)

"This is Jose Olaya, and Jose Olaya Jr. Jose Olaya is teen parent. His son is four and a half months. This picture was taken on the 15th of June in his home in Bakersfield, California."

I enjoyed looking at these photos because they reminded me of my experience in high school. I grew up in the Coachella Valley, and I had friends drop out of school or get their GEDs because they didn't have time to study or attend classes once they had the responsibility of taking care of a baby.

How has teen pregnancy affected your life? Do these images remind you of anyone you know? Share your comments below.

Check back on December 8, 2011 for part 2 of the Picturing Health *Series*

Picturing Health is a documentary photography project that consisted of photographs taken by eighty teenagers. The *Picturing Health* project was created by Venice Arts (www.venicearts.org) for the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Initiative, which seeks to create meaningful change in 14 low-income communities across California.

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TeenSource is a project of the California Family Health Council. All Rights Reserved.
TeenSource.org is funded in part by the Federal Office of Population Affairs, Title X grant and the California Wellness Foundation.
Additional money has been provided by the California Endowment and the American Civil Liberties Union.