



commonground

The Westside Community Center *Working Together to fight HIV*

## TEEN PEER EDUCATION PROGRAM (TEEN PEP)

Teens are the fastest growing group at risk for HIV. Two teens are infected with HIV every hour in the US. One in four new HIV cases in the US occurs in people under the age of 21. African American and Latino youth make up 84% of new AIDS cases among youth.

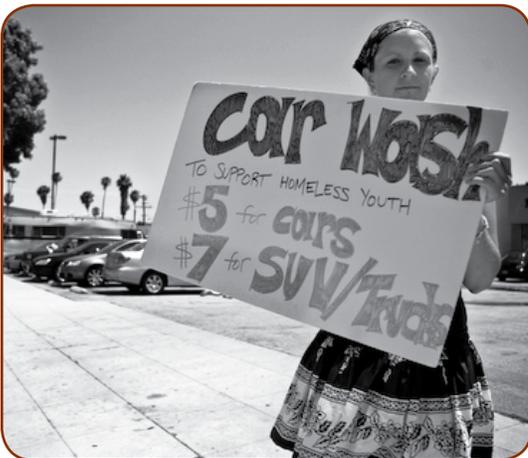
In 1992, it was clear that the Westside of Los Angeles lacked essential HIV prevention education services. Common Ground, together with the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, created Teen PEP, a peer-led HIV education program training youth to talk to other youth about HIV risks and other youth-related issues.

The goal of Teen PEP is to provide peer-led education and prevention tactics to in-school youth on the Westside of Los Angeles, to help stop the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and to address issues around sexuality that are crucial to youth. Since Teen PEP began, the program has reached over 17,000 in-school youth with HIV prevention messages.

*“The program not only teaches about the disease, but about respecting yourself and having compassion for all people.*

*Not enough people my age learn these ideas.”*

*~SAMOHI student, 16*



According to CDC's Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS), many young people begin having sexual intercourse at early ages: 47% of high school students have had sexual intercourse, and 7.4% of them reported first sexual intercourse before age 13. And, only 50% of those who are sexually active report consistent condom use. HIV/AIDS education needs to take place at correspondingly young ages, before young people engage in sexual behaviors that put them at risk for HIV infection.

For more information about our Teen Peer Education Program, visit [www.commongroundwestside.org](http://www.commongroundwestside.org).