

# Teen STAR News

Autumn 2009



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## Sixth International Teen STAR Congress, Ars, August 20-24, 2009

Our French colleagues could not have extended themselves more to organize our Sixth International Teen STAR Congress in Ars, France. The venue chosen, La Providence was a center for welcoming pilgrims to the place where St. Jean Marie Vianney, the Cure of Ars lived out his mission as parish priest and discovered his special gift for leading souls in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. La Providence was founded by him as an orphanage, it is now administered by the Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, whose hospitality was most gracious. Local volunteers, ably organized by Angela de Malherbe, met all arrivals

and conveyed departing participants to airports and trains. Christian Thery, President of C.E.P.P. (Teen STAR France) found our venue and chaired the program, ably assisted by Helene Vivares, C.E.P.P. Secretary and Claudine Tannery, Secretary emerita. So many others helped with translations, copying, preparing booklets... it was a tremendous undertaking. Altogether, we were 98 Teen STAR teachers from Austria, Burma, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Germany, Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Uganda and USA.



Teen STAR Congress 2009, Ars, France

## Reports

*The formal program began with reports from each country. Nearly all reported steady growth of their Teen STAR Programs, training of additional teachers and opening of additional teaching sites. Their results are summarized in Hanna Klaus' address to the group which can be seen on the Internal section of our web page.*

**Austria and Germany** have begun distant learning for teachers, new introductory sessions for boys suitable to summer camp gatherings where follow-up is not easily available. They have enlarged their prayer support groups and invite us to send our intentions to them. The Germans are working on a program which introduces the topic of reproduction to much younger children. Elisabeth Pesahl showed some of their graphics and hopes to present the completed program at the next international meeting. One "fruit" of our participation at World Youth Day in Cologne in 2005 is that Teen STAR has begun in Cologne at the request of Cardinal Meisner, the archbishop of Cologne.

**Quebec, Canada** – All signs of religion had to be removed from the "separate schools" (a parallel school system for Catholics who have their own administration but are supported with public funds) – to be able to continue to receive public funding.

Teen STAR **Chile** awards a national award to the best (Teen STAR) School each year. Their Team Teen STAR recruits participants via on site skits, TV shows, and a musical. Their newly begun university degree program graduated 25 persons this year.

The effectiveness of **Croatia's** programs drew the attention of a small but very articulate group of homosexual rights activists who engaged the Interights group at the University of London and the Center for Reproductive Rights in New York to launch a complaint against the government of Croatia in the Council of Europe for permitting the Teen STAR program to be offered on a voluntary basis in public schools. After more than two years, the complaints against Teen STAR were dismissed. See the full report on the Internal page.

**Italy** – Programs have continued in Naples and begun in Torino.

**Ecuador** – A new director for education for the Bishops' conference in finding his way, meanwhile Veronica Ponce continues in the two high schools and in one university program.

**France** has offered 10 five day teacher training courses a year, have trained over 1500 persons including many priests and religious educators and are already booked through 2011. In order to support the newly trained teachers they have set up an interactive website for them to share their experiences, and are organizing the regular provision of a tutor for the new teachers. they need more male teachers, are planning more formal educational programs for parents. Most of their students are between 13-18 years of age.

**Ethiopia** – Teen STAR in Ethiopia is funded by USAID under the PEPFAR program. This year 205 trained teachers in 225 schools have reached over 5000 students. The strengths of the program are acceptance by the Bishops Conference, but so far there has been little advocacy. The parents love the program and are learning from their children. In Ethiopia discussion of menstruation is taboo! Many program graduates continue in Teen STAR Clubs which not only provides continuing support but also serves as an outreach and recruitment tool. Teen STAR has to compete with many foreign agencies who provide contraceptives, but the students' and parents' enthusiasm are an indicator of the program's welcome. Holistic sexuality programs have begun in two universities at their request.

Teen STAR **Korea** has reached 9 of 14 dioceses. Not all the teachers who have been trained have been able to start teaching. Male teachers are still in the minority. People would like to have shorter programs, but the need to experience several cycles puts a natural limit on that request. No one opposes the program, and that is a real plus. Their behavioral outcomes parallel those reported by the US. and France.

**Peru** – Four teachers are beginning programs but need time to win acceptance within the Church.

**Romania** – Dr. Zlate Podani has produced a short video on Testosterone which uses humor to convey the educational message.

**Slovakia** – At one time, there were 150 trained teachers, but some decided to produce their own program, minus charting. But Teen STAR is well known. Currently 9 teachers are active.

**Spain** – In the nine years since the first Teacher training more than 1000 persons have attended the workshops. Half the programs are in schools, the other half in parishes. Two apostolic movements and seminarians have joined. A Teen STAR Association was formed in September 2008, they maintain a list serve for teachers.

**Switzerland's** teachers are currently reviewing their educational model. Teacher training workshops are offered regularly, not everyone who attends becomes a teacher. A felt need is **Parent STAR!** The group are beginning to work on this.

**Uganda** like Ethiopia, is supported by a PEPFAR grant, their history and procedures are similar to Ethiopia's. They have added a sixth point to the Teen STAR – culture. They also offer programs during the summer holidays, May-August. Outcome evaluation is pending. The many NGO's who distribute condoms and the relatively low male enrollment in the high schools present ongoing challenges to the teachers. However, the strong advocacy for premarital abstinence and marital fidelity by President and Mrs. Museveni carry enormous weight. The demand for the program is greater than the personnel to meet it, but staff are working as quickly as is possible without sacrificing program quality.

**UK** – One group of students from the junior school at Ampleforth Abbey school received the program following last summer's teacher training, and one class of girls received the program in London at a private school. Another London site is slated to begin this fall.

**USA** – Teen STAR has operated continuously in one High School in the Washington metropolitan since 1989, where the entire freshmen class of over 300 students has the option of participating. Opting out is rare, ranging from 0 to 1 or 2 per year. It is offered as an elective by Mary Lou Bryant in her school, and in two grade schools and one in University in Dallas, TX. Liz Heyne and her staff also offer instructions in their Low Birthweight Development Center to the mothers of the children who attend the center, and to another parish group. Other sites are in start-up following the recent training workshops.



## Teen STAR International

The need to **formalize the structure** of the already existing **International Teen STAR Federation** led use to circulate questionnaires to those present, and to tally available tallied. In order to hear from all teachers, the questionnaire has already been circulated to all on the Teen STAR News List, with replies requested by October 30, 2009. Final tallies will then be presented to the membership.

## Presentations

Informational presentations by Bishop de Kerimel, the Bishop of Grenoble on the Theology of the Body, and by Dr. Pilar Vigil on *Steroidal Hormones and the Brain*, and *Recognizing hormonal changes during the menstrual cycle* completed the program.

*See the Internal page on the website for Congress papers. The user name is teen, the pass word is star.*

## Other workshops

A Holistic Sexuality training seminar was offered in Bethesda Maryland July 13-15, 2009, which will lead to a pilot program At a local community college. Stay tuned!



Bethesda Holistic Sexuality seminar

A Teen STAR teacher training was offered in New York City July 23-26, 2009.



TSTT, NYC. Our youngest participant was 4 months old

*See links to the other program sites for reports of their workshops and photographs.*

## People of Life award

On August 9, 2009, Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago and President of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops presented the People of Life award to **Victoria Thorn, Virginia McCardle and Hanna Klaus, M.D.** at the Respect Life coordinators' meeting. The inscription reads: *The Secretariat of Pro-life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops recognizes the outstanding leadership of Hanna Klaus, M.D., Natural Family Planning Center of Washington, D.C. and Founder, Teen STAR Program.*



Cardinal Francis George and Hanna Klaus