

# **Aurora Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project**

## **Case Studies of Five Teen Clients**

*Case Study Research designed and conducted by Susan Eliot*

# Table of Contents

<b>Background.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Purpose.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Case Study Methods.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Alma.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Elizabeth.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Morgan.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Lorraine.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Nicole.....</b>	<b>11</b>

# Background

Teens who become pregnant are more likely to risk delays in meeting their educational and employment goals. They miss developmental opportunities for socialization and relationship building. Most start their young adult lives economically disadvantaged. Many, however, learn to cope with the handicap of having a child in their early teens. They demonstrate a resiliency and a sense of self-efficacy that manifests despite or, in some cases, because of the odds placed against them. It is important to remember that not all pregnant teens walk the same path. There is much to be learned by observing the diversity of outcomes that result from individual teen pregnancies.

# Purpose

In the words of Albert Einstein, “Not everything that counts can be counted; and not everything that can be counted counts.” From anecdotal stories and personal demonstrations of success, it was evident that the individualized case management efforts of the Aurora Teen Pregnancy Project (ATPPP) “counted.” The evaluation of case management processes within ATPPP called for a component that would capture these ongoing personalized efforts between case managers and their teen clients. Although the quantitative component of this evaluation effort profiles the average teen client, the variation among clients is so wide that no one client typifies the average. No two clients have quite the same story. In an attempt to humanize the numbers, five descriptive case studies were conducted and presented in this report.

# Case Selection

Cases can be selected by various criteria depending on the nature of the study. Cases can be most unique, most typical, or even polar opposites depending on the study proposition. “The first criterion, “ according to Robert Stake, is to maximize what we can learn” from the case. Balance and variety of cases can expand our learning. Additionally, he says “we need to pick cases that are easy to get to . . . and with actors willing to comment.”

As Stake suggests, a variety of cases with the potential to increase knowledge and understanding were selected among the over 200 teen clients that appear in the ATPPP database. Numerous client histories were reviewed and considered in the collaborative selection process with case managers. The specific proposition around which cases were selected is one that holds that, “Success has many faces.” Case managers realized in their review of cases that they considered several to be success stories not by one particular standard or set of outcome measures but by

measures that were unique and specific to each situation. Other criteria ultimately used for selection of cases included cases that:

- Were intensively case managed
- Were still available locally for interview
- Participated in a variety of services offered or referred by the program
- Possessed self determination and active engagement
- Challenged skills and abilities of case managers

The composite of cases selected paralleled the racial/ethnic mix of program clientele. Each of the cases selected were intended to help us understand more about success and how success is defined differently for each individual.

## **Case Study Methods**

Although several sources may be tapped for case study data, the interview is one of the richest and most commonly used methods to gather case study data. For this study, extensive interviews were conducted and tape-recorded with both clients and their primary case manager. In all but one situation, client interviews were conducted in the client's home. Clients were asked to sign consent forms giving permission to use their names and allowing their information to be used in the study. A component of the case manager interviews also involved a review of the client's chart for pertinent information. Data extracted from the agency's electronic database was not very useful because the cases selected were in existence one to three years before data collection was initiated.

Interviews were organized around conceptual issues rather than a specific set questions. Information was interpreted as it was collected and questions developed during the study. Empathic listening was employed to gain a genuine understanding of the client's story and convey that to the reader in its purest form. Client and case manager interviews were generally convergent and complimentary.

# Alma

## Cultural Contradiction: Success Beyond One's World

### Alma's Story . . .

#### Alma's Pregnancy . . .

Alma says that she became pregnant because she did not have enough information about how to prevent pregnancy. Once she found out she was pregnant, though, she was happy. Her intentions to prevent a second pregnancy were derailed by side effects to the birth control method she was using.

Alma, a diminutive and soft-spoken Latina, was 17 years old, five months pregnant, and not in school at the time she presented to Aurora Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project (ATPPP). She became aware of ATPPP through an announcement made by an ATPPP case manager after Sunday mass at St. Theresa's Catholic Church. Alma had been kicked out of the house when her parents discovered her unwed pregnancy. Having recently moved with her family from Mexico, her undocumented status disallowed any type of financial assistance. Alma went to live with her sister. She subsequently dropped out of school after two months due to her language barrier. The father of Alma's baby, also newly emigrated from Mexico, was enrolled in high school at the time and a member of her church. He graduated from school and attained legal status and employment. Shortly after moving in with her sister, Alma married the baby's father. As time passed, Alma's family gained acceptance of her new roles of parent and wife and welcomed her back into their home. For two years, Alma and her baby moved back and forth between her husband's family and her own. Both Alma and her husband were expected to provide financial support for their birth families as well as for themselves and their child. Alma's relationship with her young husband was challenged by his domineering and demanding temperament and the social isolation she experienced due to her language barrier. When Alma found out that she was pregnant again, she and her husband considered an abortion but decided that it was inconsistent with their religious beliefs besides being unaffordable. This dictated alternative housing arrangements due to crowding at both her and her husband's families' homes. After surmounting several financial, cultural, and relationship barriers, Alma and her husband and two children moved into a low rent apartment complex. Alma has no educational goals and is on Depo Provera to prevent any additional unwanted pregnancies. She and her husband are gainfully employed, and share parenting responsibilities for their children.

### Supporting Alma through Case Management . . .

Alma's case manager at Aurora Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project (ATPPP) supported her from the time she was kicked out of her family's home through her two pregnancies. Some of the case management services Alma received include:

- **Crises Management:** When kicked out of her home Alma received needed assistance to stabilize her housing situation until more long-term arrangements could be made.

- **Social/emotional Support:** Alma was enrolled in prenatal care at Clinica Campesina, one of the few clinics accepting undocumented residents. She and her husband were also referred to couples counseling where Alma gained confidence in asserting herself with her husband. To address her language barrier and the social isolation it fostered, Alma was enrolled in a Latina Support Group and encouraged to learn to speak English. Throughout Alma's pregnancies, she was provided a secure and supportive relationship encouraged toward actualizing her goals.
- **Advocacy:** The ATPPP case manager initiated a dialogue with Alma's parents who eventually accepted Alma back into their family. Likewise, the case manager visited the father of Alma's baby was at his high school to encourage him to become involved with the baby. When the need arose for subsidized housing, Alma and her husband received help the needed to fill out the required paperwork. Ultimately, Alma began to trust her own skills and independently secured housing for her family.
- **Education:** Alma's parenting competencies increased when she enrolled in an ATPPP-sponsored parenting class that was translated into Spanish by ATPPP's bilingual case manager.
- **Collaboration:** ATPPP's case manager, in collaboration with a nun from Alma's church, helped Alma and her family use their spiritual strength to heal and come together as a family gain.

### **Understanding Alma's Success . . .**

Alma was greatly influenced by her cultural values. Once ostracized from her family due to her unexpected pregnancy, Alma lost her culturally dominated support system. Through outreach and assistance from the ATPPP case manager, Alma was able to challenge her cultural programming and adjust her behaviors accordingly. In getting to know Alma's world, Alma's bilingual/bicultural case manager was able to understand Alma's cultural struggle and paradigm. Alma faithfully and respectfully responded to her case manager's guidance during the three years she participated in the ATPPP program. Although her progress was slow and protracted, the role of her case manager shifted over time from chauffeur and advocate to supporter and confidant. Eventually Alma independently secured employment and housing despite her language barrier. She also challenged her culturally entrenched husband to have a more equitable relationship with her. Alma's ultimate success is evidenced by the fact that she internalized strategies inherited through her relationship with her case manager despite the fact that some approaches occasionally contradicted her cultural beliefs.

#### **Alma's dreams . . .**

- learn to speak better English
- keep working
- get an education for her children
- have a good relationship with her husband.

# Elizabeth

## Dreams Are Not Enough: Sometimes Things Get in the Way

### Elizabeth's Story . . .

#### Elizabeth's pregnancy . . .

Elizabeth's parents never talked with her about sex or birth control. They both worked two jobs and were never around. Elizabeth found the love and attention that she was craving in her 8<sup>th</sup> grade sweetheart. Getting pregnant was never one of her goals.

"Liz," a perky young woman of Caribbean descent with a peaches and cream complexion, thought she was the last person who would ever end up pregnant at 16. She had big dreams of going to college, getting married, and owning her own business. Liz married her neighborhood sweetheart when she found out that she was pregnant. He was 17; she was 16. Liz was already receiving health care and was in her third trimester of pregnancy when she was linked with the Aurora Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project through her high school counselor. Elizabeth's parents were opposed to Liz's marriage but welcomed Liz's new family into their home when the baby was born. Because the baby was born during the summer, Liz did not miss any school. She finished high school early and graduated with honors. She then went on to T. Boone Pickens Technical School where she graduated at the top of her Medical Assistant class. In the meantime, her husband fell further and further behind as he dropped out of high school, was unable to hold a job and began drinking. "As we grew up, we grew more apart," said Liz. Elizabeth worked at the day care center her son attended while she was in high school. After acquiring her Medical Assistant certificate she worked full time for a nursing home, then a full-service medical clinic. As Liz became more educated and self-sufficient, the chasm between she and her husband grew. Elizabeth found herself on the abusive end of her husband's drinking problem and low self worth. By this time Liz and her new family were living in an apartment of their own with Liz serving as primary breadwinner. When her husband's abusive behavior became intolerable, Liz took her two-year-old and went back to live with her parents. Liz filed for divorce and decided that it was time to enroll in college. She was so influenced and inspired by all the professionals who supported her through her process that she aspired to become a social worker so she could: "Have an impact on someone else like they had on me." Elizabeth is currently a junior at Metro State College earning a degree in Criminal Justice. She continues to work 25 hours per week while going to school full time and caring for her young son. She finds tremendous support in her church family and occasionally still touches base with her case manager and staff at ATPPP.

### Supporting Elizabeth through Case Management . . .

Even though Elizabeth is high functioning, she was operating within a very disorganized support system. She thrived on the services she received from ATPPP case managers. Elizabeth's case

manager described her as “driven but needing to be paced to temper her enthusiasm.” Some of the services she received from ATPPP include:

- **Crisis Management:** ATPPP case managers supported Liz in domestic violence incidents with her ex-husband.
- **Social /emotional support:** Liz felt that there were times when ATPPP case managers “had time for her that her parents did not.” Before Liz was able to purchase a car, case managers provided her with transportation to and from various appointments. They also reviewed her homework at her request. Liz’s greatest need was for help in channeling her energy, pacing herself, and keeping everything in perspective.
- **Advocacy:** Liz enlisted the help of ATPPP case managers when she decided to apply for the AFDC Child Care Grant and Jobs Program. She also asked them to help her husband enroll in the Jobs Program and finish his GED. Liz received assistance from ATPPP case managers in applying for and securing employment. Ultimately her primary case manager supported her through her divorce.
- **Education:** Liz’s case manager invited her to participate in a parenting group through Aurora Mental Health where she learned about conflict mediation and stress management. Elizabeth also enrolled in several parenting classes taught by ATPPP case managers where she developed a high level of parenting proficiency.
- **Collaboration:** ATPPP case managers collaborated with Hinckley High School staff to establish a school sponsored teen parent support group. Liz was one of the first program participants.

### **Understanding Liz’s Success . . .**

Liz set out to be different than the rest. She did not want to be “another teen marriage failure statistic,” in her words. As she developed her own inner strength, the disparity between her own actualization and that of her husband grew wider. Liz was a “fighter; determined to stay in school and make things happen,” according to her case manager. Although there were times when Liz needed to be rescued, she possessed the character traits necessary to facilitate adaptation to her ever-changing situation. Elizabeth’s case manager differentiates Liz from many other parenting teens in that: “She was able to put a fire under her dreams and goals.”

#### **Elizabeth’s dreams:**

Elizabeth had goals from the time she was very young. She always wanted “to be someone helping someone else.” Liz said that “being a teen parent didn’t get in the way of fulfilling my dreams because I had people all around me; a lot of times a girl just needs someone to care for them.”

# Morgan

## Resiliency: It's Ability to Foster Unexpected Success

### Morgan's Story . . .

#### Morgan's pregnancy . . .

Morgan said that she wasn't using any type of birth control at the time she got pregnant because she didn't realize the seriousness of being pregnant. She "was not thinking about pregnancy, only about love." Morgan wanted "the love that she failed to get from her parents." She "wanted to be noticed; wanted to be important."

Morgan is an only child. Her mom lives up the street but hasn't talked to Morgan since she kicked her out of the house two years ago for becoming pregnant at the age of 16. Morgan's parents divorced right after she was born. She was raised by a mother who dated numerous boyfriends throughout Morgan's childhood. Both parents are alcoholics. Morgan met her baby's father when she was a freshman and he

was a junior at Smoky Hill High School. They both

dropped out of school when Morgan became pregnant. Morgan went to live with her uncle; her boyfriend stayed at home with his family. When her uncle asked her to leave, she and the baby moved to Nebraska to live with her father and grandmother. She eventually moved back to Colorado to live with her boyfriend's aunt while he remained at his parent's home.

When the baby was 10 months old, Morgan became pregnant again while taking birth control pills. It was at this time that her aunt referred Morgan to the Aurora Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project (ATPPP). Morgan decided to put the second baby up for adoption. The process was familiar to her since she gave her first pregnancy the same consideration. Had she not been so uncomfortable with the philosophy of the adoption agency she encountered with her first pregnancy, Morgan would have relinquished her first child. Neither family was supportive of the relinquishment. Morgan said that she "lost a lot of family because of it (the relinquishment)." Morgan and the baby's father applied for and were accepted into subsidized housing, living together for the first time in their relationship. The baby developed a close attachment to her father. Morgan pushed the baby stroller to the Salvation Army Daycare Center before she got on the bus each day to go to work. The baby's father was also employed but supporting still providing financial support to his parents. Financial strains, lack of transportation, maintaining a household, and living together challenged the relationship, but Morgan saw the benefit of working on the relationship. Both are learning in many areas: communication skills, budgeting, parenting, basic survival. Both look forward to moving out of their current positions into jobs that offer them a career.

### Supporting Morgan through Case Management . . .

Morgan depended heavily on her ATPPP case manager to provide the support and encouragement she needed to follow her heart. Some of the intervention she received through over 100 program contacts include:

- **Crises Management:** When Morgan had run out of options for housing with her relatives or relatives of the baby’s father, her ATPPP case manager worked with them to secure subsidized housing.
- **Support:** Morgan was transported to job interviews, social agencies, health clinics and day care centers. To do it on her own often required no less than 3 buses and an average two-hour ride. When housing became an issue, her case manager supported her process in securing subsidized housing.
- **Advocacy:** Being under age, Morgan encountered problems with identification. Her case manager made many trips with her to the Motor Vehicle Office to secure a Colorado ID card. When Medicaid threatened to withhold payment for the delivery of Morgan’s second baby, her case manager intervened. When she was denied Depo Provera by the state funded CAMP program, she called her case manager. When Morgan could not find a child care site that was willing to accept delayed payment until she received her first employed check, her case manager intervened once again.
- **Education:** Morgan told her case manager that she wanted to get her GED, and was assisted in securing her degree including transportation to and from the testing site.
- **Collaboration:** Morgan was supported in the many aspects of her baby’s relinquishment. Her case manager collaborated with the social worker from the adoption agency and accompanied Morgan to court.

### **Understanding Morgan’s Success . . .**

Despite the fact that Morgan grew up in a household deficient of love and attention and replete with substance abuse, she manages to demonstrate incredible resiliency. Morgan says that her parents didn’t listen to her a lot and that she is “trying to improve on what I didn’t get from my own parents.” Morgan’s case manager describes her as being very mature in her parenting. She once took her baby to the hospital via the bus when she was unsure about the severity of the baby’s illness. Morgan has an incredible ability to remain poised, calm and centered in the midst of the many unstable, unpredictable situations she encounters. She remains determined to keep working on her relationship with her baby’s father. Morgan has a great deal of inner strength at her young age. Morgan’s case manager is working to help “get her more stable so that Morgan can be free to dream.” She says, “Although Morgan is soft spoken she has strong convictions and there is a fire that burns inside of her.”

#### **Morgan’s dreams . . .**

Morgan is so consumed with her life as it is that she has little spare time for dreaming. She says that sometimes it “feels like I’m 40 years old; there’s been a lot going on in my life already.” She would like to move on to full time employment and skill building. She wants to marry the father of her baby after they have lived together for a year.

# Lorraine

## Readiness for Success: Removing Barriers to Options

### Lorraine's Story . . .

#### Lorraine's Pregnancy . . .

According to Lorraine, she was "naïve and not thinking" when she got pregnant with her first child. She said that she "knew what she was doing when she got pregnant the second time with a man with whom she was surely in love." Lorraine did not want to use Depo Provera because she believed it would make her hair fall out.

Lorraine was 16 years old when she left the father of her 5-week-old baby behind in a Utah jail and moved to Colorado Utah with her parents. Her mother had received a job transfer necessitating the move. Lorraine was not happy leaving the father of her baby behind but made the decision to follow her mother who was her only source of solace and support at the time. She left a teen-parenting program in Utah where she received home schooling and parenting classes among other services. By the time she came to Colorado she had successfully completed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Lorraine's father was very critical of her situation and uninvolved. He drank heavily and smoked around the baby even though Lorraine requested that he not in regard for the baby's health. Her baby had already been diagnosed with respiratory problems. The problems Lorraine was having with her father initiated her first visit with Aurora Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project (ATPPP). Her mother worked all the time and had no influence on her father. Lorraine wanted to be the first in her family to actually finish high school. Her ATPPP case manager advocated for her enrollment in Overland High School where she received childcare, parenting classes and counseling. The one piecing missing for Lorraine at Overland was assistance with her learning. Lorraine has a reading disability and trouble processing. She needed one-on-one intervention to address her special education needs.

Despite difficulty, however, Lorraine had good attendance and made passing grades. It was not long, though, before things became unbearable at home with Lorraine's father and she asked her case manager to help her find an apartment of her own. Lorraine moved into subsidized housing with her child and things started to fall apart. She was not able to meet the work expectations of the housing program and keep up with school. Her baby was sick, her mother needed help with transportation, and Lorraine was asked to leave school due to poor attendance. She started smoking and befriended peers who were a poor influence. One of her new girlfriends introduced her to a man who soon afterward became the father of her second baby. By this time Lorraine was terminated from the subsidized housing program and went to live with the father of her second child. Although Lorraine wanted to have a stable relationship with this man, he proved to be abusive and she found a girlfriend to with which to share an apartment. Despite all of her setbacks, Lorraine secured full time employment at a childcare center, is pursuing a GED, and is

consistently involved in case management services. She continues to elicit assistance and support in removing barriers that stand in the way of actualizing her dreams.

### **Supporting Lorraine through Case Management . . .**

Lorraine required intensive case management and support from ATPPP case managers. Her need for services only escalated when her mother moved out of state to accept another position with her company. A sample of those services include:

- **Crisis Management:** Two of the primary crises for which Lorraine elicited ATPPP support were in securing housing when she needed to move out of her parent’s home, and in addressing abuse issues with her second boyfriend.
- **Support:** Lorraine said: “[I don’t] know what I would have done without the help of ATPPP case managers.” Support took many forms from taking her sick baby to the hospital to providing phone numbers for housing, childcare, TANIF, and food stamps. Lorraine claims that one of the most helpful things was when her case manager helped her to understand that her father’s alcoholism, “was not her fault and there was nothing that she could do about it.”
- **Advocacy:** ATPPP was a major resource for Lorraine in advocating for programs that she was entitled to but could not access due to her learning disability, her life stressors, and the complex uncoordinated systems she was attempting to access. Advocacy efforts encompassed schools, Social Services, health care, mental health, and housing.
- **Education:** Lorraine’s determination to complete her education actively engaged ATPPP case managers in advocacy with the schools
- **Collaboration:** ATPPP case managers collaborated with case managers in Utah in transferring Lorraine’s case to their offices in Colorado

### **Understanding Lorraine’s Success . . .**

“Due to the enormous impact of her learning disability,” explained Lorraine’s case manager, “she doesn’t know what it feels like to be successful.” She credits Lorraine with many interim successes, however, including the completion of three parenting classes, long-term employment, and continuous partnership in her case management. Of significance is the fact that Lorraine is still engaged in pursuing needed services. Lorraine enumerates her successes to include: 1.) The close relationship that she developed with her case manager; 2.) A reduction in her stress level as a result of classes in which she was enrolled; 3.) A transference of her case manager’s guidance to her own internal authority; and 4.) Greater self-esteem. A philosophy embraced by Lorraine’s case manager is that sometimes one must challenge beliefs to move clients along toward readiness to remove barriers and embrace new paradigms and new skills toward success.

#### **Lorraine’s dreams . . .**

Lorraine has decided that she definitely wants to do it different than her parents.

She wants to:

- own her own home
- own her own insurance company
- have her children attend college
- ultimately teach her children how to parent responsibly

# Nicole

## Debunking Myths: Not all Teen Moms Fit One Stereotype

### Nicole's Story . . .

#### Nicole's Pregnancy . . .

If she had it to do all over again, Nicole says that she “would never have started messing with boys so early.” Before Planned Parenthood could prescribe Nicole a more effective birth control pill, she was pregnant at the age of 14. Nicole counsels her younger sister against taking the same path.

Nicole was 16 and pregnant with her second child when her mother suggested that she contact the Aurora Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project (ATPPP) for assistance. Nicole's mother knew that Nicole and her two-year-old son would need more support with a second baby on the way than she herself could provide as a single parent. Nicole's mother gave birth to Nicole when she herself was only 18. The father of Nicole's baby remained uninvolved. When the baby was one, Nicole befriended the man who would ultimately become the father of her second baby. He was three years older than Nicole, had a high school diploma, and was Nicole's ticket out of her mother's home.

When the Norplant that Nicole was using started causing unpleasant side effects, Nicole had it removed and almost immediately became pregnant with her second child. By this time she was enrolled in parenting classes and working toward a GED. She received her degree one month after her second child was born. The father of her second baby was in prison intermittently but would support Nicole and the children with odd jobs when he was not incarcerated. Nicole worked cleaning apartments and doing childcare. Soon she enrolled herself in a self-paced Radiology/Orthopedic Assistant program at Community College of Denver. She made straight A's and earned her certificate in one and a half years. As soon as her training was complete, Nicole no longer qualified for childcare support. Without childcare, she was unable to secure employment. In an effort to reinstate her childcare benefit, Nicole enrolled in a local public assistance program with Adam's County. Having completed the County program, Nicole plans to use her Radiology training to secure employment. In the meantime, Nicole and her two children live in comfortable Section VIII housing with assistance from TANIF. Nicole's oldest child has been diagnosed with and is being treated for Attention Deficit Disorder and a speech and learning disability. She receives intermittent child support from the fathers of both of her children but very little direct parental involvement from either.

### Supporting Nicole through Case Management . . .

Although Nicole is self-directed and system savvy, she realized the benefits of the support and understanding she received from ATPPP case managers in addressing the multiple stressors in

her life. She was particularly challenged by her poor relationship skills, health problems, and a learning disabled child. Some of the assistance she received from ATPPP includes:

- **Support:** Nicole’s case manager was only a phone call away when one stressor or another emerged. While working full time and going to school, the amount of support her mother could provide was limited. Nicole said that her case manager “was always there when her mom wasn’t.” In addition, she helped Nicole obtain child support from one father.
- **Advocacy:** Her ATPPP case manager connected Nicole with Child Find, a service specifically designed to assist parents of special needs children in securing needed educational, emotional, and behavioral support services. At the same time, Nicole and her son were linked to Aurora Mental Health for extensive family counseling. When Nicole decided that she wanted to go to college, her case manager helped her complete applications and secure funding.
- **Education:** Nicole benefited tremendously from the parenting classes in which she enrolled. Her skills were particularly useful in addressing the special needs of her speech and learning disabled son. Nicole’s case manager would also role model appropriate behaviors for her when she would interact with Nicole’s children during home visits.
- **Collaboration:** Nicole’s case manager collaborated with Housing Authority staff in designing a two-year program to meet Nicole’s educational, parental, and living needs.

### **Understanding Nicole’s Success . . .**

According to her ATPPP case manager: “Nicole learned early how to take care of herself.” Nicole’s mother is her role model because she is goal-oriented and assertive and just completed her college degree. Nicole herself acknowledges that she is very internally driven: “When I set a goal for myself, I do it; I don’t need a push.” Her case manager worked to help Nicole have goals and dreams that were more long term. The problem, according to Nicole’s case manager, was that, “Nicole felt she needed a man to help fulfill her dreams.” Despite her relationship detours, however, Nicole was very resourceful. “She was open to reading about and learning new things.” She shared her accomplishments as well as her disappointments with her case manager. Nicole partnered fully and “would always follow through.” Nicole expected to be treated as a highly intelligent individual, able to direct all decisions regarding herself and her children. She was confronted and allowed to make her own decisions but only when she decided she was ready. Nicole’s determination and self-assurance preclude stereotyping her as any predictable type of adolescent parent.

#### **Nicole’s Dreams . . .**

Nicole dreams of having a nice house, a college degree, and a good job just like her mother. She wants a career rather than a self-limiting job. According to a career test, she is destined to work in a crime lab. Nicole holds dear her dream of finding that special relationship but now with a much wiser heart.