Gaston Youth Connected (GYC) is a 5-year, multi-pronged, community-wide initiative to lower teen pregnancy rates in Gaston County, North Carolina.

Gaston Youth Connected Goals:
1. A 10% drop in teen pregnancy and birth rates
2. Develop a sustainable community infrastructure that supports effective teen pregnancy prevention

How Gaston Youth Connected Works:
A Surround-Sound Approach

Understanding the Initial Disparity
According to 2010 data on Gaston County from the NC State Center for Health Statistics...


1 in 5 contraceptive-seeking teen clients receives one of the most effective contraceptive methods when they visit GYC's flagship clinical partner, the Gaston County Health Department. Statewide, only 10% of teens get one of the most effective methods.

* In 2012, the African-American teen pregnancy rate was 1.7% lower than the White teen pregnancy rate.

Report Card: African-American Program Participants
Here's how our program participants would do if we graded them on a traditional 10-point grading scale.

Knowledge of Abstinence
Knowledge of Pregnancy Prevention
Knowledge of Where to Obtain Free/Low-Cost Birth Control
Knowledge of Where to Obtain Free Condoms

African-American Teens, Ages 15-19
84.0
52.5
African-American Teens, Ages 15-19
84.0
52.5
White Teens, Ages 15-19
52.5
41.1

CRITICAL STEP
During project planning, GYC and project leadership teams mapped teen birth data to place services and outreach efforts in teen birth hot spots, and to coordinate efforts between residents, churches, and youth-serving organizations.

African-American Participation
GYC reached a greater proportion of the African-American population of Gaston County than it did the White or Hispanic populations. This overrepresentation can account for some of the dramatic change in teen pregnancy rates.

16 of 20 program facilitators were African-American.
4 of the 8 program partner organizations primarily serve African-American youth, and programs were offered in 6 African-American churches.
30% of Gaston County’s African-American females ages 15-19 receive effective contraception from the Gaston County Health Department, a leader in adolescent-friendly sexual health care.
20% of Gaston County Health Department’s contraceptive-seeking teen patients receive a long-acting reversible contraceptive.

Two of the three project leadership teams overrepresented African-Americans.
Of the project’s 9 youth-and-parent Let’s Talk Month events, 44% of participants were African-American.

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Sources
1. NC State Center for Health Statistics
2. Project pre- and post-test survey results from program participants
3. Gaston County Health and Human Services
4. Gaston Youth Connected project records

* Estimated based on population and client data sources