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Pregnancy prevention program focuses on boys

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A local fraternity charter offers a pregnancy prevention program for middle school boys in Dougherty County. - Ethan Fowler, education writer

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ALBANY, Ga. — A teen pregnancy prevention program will work with Albany middle school boys to help them understand their role in responsible sexual behavior.

As part of more than 500 sites across the nation, Project Alpha — which is sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., the March of Dimes and conducted locally by the Albany Gamma Omicron Lambda Chapter — will have its 26th retreat today and Saturday at Kolomoki Mounds near Blakely.

“During these retreats, we have informed over 1,000 boys about the dire consequences of impregnating young girls in their teenage years,” Albany Gamma Omicron Lambda Chapter President T. Marshall Jones said in a news release. “We expect this to be our most informative retreat. We have many excellent speakers who have volunteered their time and expertise to educate these young men and help them make informed, responsible decisions regarding their sexual behavior.”

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, more than 1 million teenagers become pregnant annually, with about 500,000 giving birth.

The Project Alpha retreat at Kolomoki Mounds has 65 middle school boys registered, Albany project director William R. Berry III said. The Dougherty County Board of Education will provide the transportation and the accommodations, which include all food and lodging.

“Many anti-teenage pregnancy programs are about girls,” said Herman Mason, general president of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. “Project Alpha strives to reach the boys involved and teach them about the social, economic and personal consequences that come with fathering a child. We emphasize abstinence first and foremost but also address contraception and safe sex.

“Ultimately, we want to provide a safe environment for young men to make positive choices about sexuality, which will result in their making more informed decisions.”

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