

# Time



# TEENS

Peer to Peer

Livingston Youth & Community Services

Summer 2009

## OPRAH WINFREY ON RIHANNA AND CHRIS BROWN

Oprah Winfrey spoke out about the Rihanna and Chris Brown incident and warned women everywhere that "if a man hits you once, he'll hit you again."

During her show, which aired live from Chicago with guest Tyra Banks, she highlighted last month's domestic incident between singers Rihanna and Chris Brown. Although Brown has been charged with two felonies for allegedly attacking Rihanna, rumors continue to swirl that the duo are back together. Reports also indicate the two are recording a song together about love and that they may co-author a book about domestic violence.



"It's so sad that even when you grow up in an environment and you disdain that environment, you really cannot help yourself until someone helps you," Winfrey said.

Banks who's interviewed both Brown and Rihanna separately on her show said that both singers have told her about their previous bouts with domestic abuse.

"Rihanna told me that her parents used to argue so intensely and she used to get these headaches, almost migraines... and it was almost a living hell for her," Banks said. "The moment her parents separated, the headaches went away."

Banks also said, "Brown witnessed domestic violence at home that scared him so much, that he used to pee in his bed."

"When you grow up in an environment where there is abuse, it's more acceptable to you," Winfrey said, "If you go back with a man who hits you it's because you don't think you're worthy of being with a man who won't."

9th Annual

### Run for Rachel

Raising Awareness about  
Domestic Violence

Sunday, May 31, 2009

Memorial Oval, Livingston

5k Run, 3k Walk, Kid's Run

Registration Required

For Race Information

[www.metrowest.org](http://www.metrowest.org)

### *Love shouldn't hurt*

If you are in an abusive  
relationship and want help  
call **Rachel Coalition**

**973-740-1233** day or night

All calls are strictly confidential

### Inside This Issue

Letter from the Editor 1

Gossip 2

Positive Role Models 3  
Tricia Idrobo

Dating Tips 4

Teens and Sex 5

Teens on Track 6

Dear Syd 7

Top Ten 9

Parent's Corner 10

Livingston Youth & Community Services



Celebrating A Drug Free Life  
Through Leadership



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello Readers,

I hope you enjoyed our premier issue of the LYCS Time for Teens newsletter. This is now our second newsletter. In this issue we will have dating tips for teens. We have a new role model this month, a girl scout troop leader who really helps out in the community and we talk about how gossip can be bad in many cases.

For parents, we have an article about how to raise three teen daughters and how to see that you are bonding with your teen child.

I hope you enjoy our second issue of this newsletter. There will be many more and I hope you continue reading it. Feel free to send in articles you would like in the newsletter. If you have any questions or comments, please email: [lycs@livingston.org](mailto:lycs@livingston.org), or write to: Time 4 Teens - LYCS, PO Box 822, Livingston, NJ 07039.

Please feel free to comment. Enjoy the newsletter!

Sincerely,

*The Editor*

### Editorial Board

Many thanks to:

Jeanne Albano, Sarfraz Akmal, Sydelle Barreto, Veda Nambi, Joshua Wang, Jordan Stone, Christie Albano, and Thomas Albano.

## GOSSIP

*Gossip (n) : rumor or talk of a personal, sensational or intimate nature*

Gossiping continues to be an epidemic among teenagers. Gossiping has the power to humiliate, ruin one's reputation, and destroy relationships. When gossiping, there are three people involved: the gossiper, the listener, and the victim. At Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls there are daily announcements to remind students not gossip.

*"We can't expect everyone to just stop gossiping forever, even though we all know that words hurt," Ms. Renov, a 17 year old attending the school said, "(the goal is) to change how we treat each other, and it really motivates us to speak with respect."*

The negative effects of gossiping are severe and impact many people. Malicious gossip destroys friendships, causes mistrust, and lowers self-esteem. Gossiping not only affects the victim, but the gossiper as well. The victim is humiliated when private or untrue information is exposed. The gossiper loses friends and develops a reputation.

Gossiping starts when there is social pressure among friends. People gossip because they are insecure therefore they point out faults in another person. People gossip when they are envious, feel threatened, and deny the impact. In order to stop gossiping, one must look for the good in everyone. Also, have the courage to refuse to be a listener to gossip.

Everyone is prone to gossip, but evidently no one comes out a winner. Next time you are about to gossip, ask yourself what is your motive in repeating the information to another person. Even if the news is true, from your point of view, it doesn't justify a need to portray another person in a negative light, or worse, to tear down their character. What you say cannot be taken back.

Remember these words, *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ... Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"*

***"Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation for 'tis better to be alone than in bad company."***

George Washington (1732-1799)

## POSITIVE ROLE MODELS: TRICIA IDROBO

### Interview by Sydelle Barreto

There are people to be admired all around us. The everyday heroes are in our community. One of these people is Tricia Idrobo, mother of two children. She is a piano teacher, a Girl Scout troop leader, and plays an active part in the "Living Green Committee" of Livingston, a group dedicated to making Livingston an eco-friendly town.

Question: **What made you want to become a Girl Scout leader?**

Tricia: I used to be a Girl Scout, so it seemed the natural way to go. I also like what the Girl Scouts teach young girls: be strong, be responsible, be a leader.

Question: **What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?**

Tricia: I don't have just one, I have received many that can be applied to different aspects of life. The first one would be *"Listen to the way you talk to yourself, and check to make sure that you're being positive, not putting yourself down"* People tend to talk to themselves very negatively, and don't realize it affects their moods and their friendships. Also, though it may seem silly, *"Get enough sleep"* because our world today is very stressed and if you are sleep deprived you will just be more stressed. And lastly, *"Take care of your priorities first"* then you can do smaller things, that way if you run out of time, the bigger things are done. I think this is important because it helps you accomplish things in your day to day life.

Question: **Who is your role model?**

Tricia: I guess it would be my colleagues at the Department of Peace Campaign. I admire them because they treat each other with a lot of respect and at the same time are honest with each other.

Question: **Why do you think it is important for our town to be environmentally friendly?**

Tricia: I think our country is using up our resources too quickly, and we have to be careful in order to have enough for our children. We need to be conscious to not waste, and to use resources wisely.

*Tricia is on the recycling sector of the Living Green committee, and has held two composting workshops at the library and community center.*

Question: **What do you think is something girls should learn from Girl Scouts?**

Tricia: I believe that they should learn to be self advocates and stand up for themselves, and yet at the same time be kind to others and not put them down. Also Girl Scouts should teach a love of nature to girls.

*Tricia is currently working on the draft of her first novel, whose tentative title is **The Secrets of Baykidi Mountain.***

Question: **What is the moral of your book?**

Tricia: I think it's that courage doesn't have to mean the courage to go and fight a war or something; it means to stand up for what you believe in, and also to solve problems without violence.

## DATING

Not sure you're ready to date? Don't know *who* to date? If you want a few pointers on your first date, this article is for you!

### What is dating?

Dating is any social activity in which your romantic interest is focused on you. If you regularly go out with that person you are dating. When you are attracted to each other and talk on the phone, or text each other regularly (i.e. flirting, banter), you're dating. If every time you get together with your friends and you break off into pairs, and you go with the same person, you are dating. So how do you know if you are ready to take on the responsibility of this step?

- 1) First you need to know why you want to date. Are you being pressured or is it of your own choice? Am I dating just because it's a normal part of being a teenager, and you want to have the classic American teen life?
- 2) Being of proper age to date is extremely relevant. Are you graduating from the "cooties stage", or is dating a normal part your schoolmate's lives? At your age, do you think your parents would allow it?
- 3) If you do start to date, what type of people are good for you to have a relationship with?

Of course, the first thing to do is talk about dating with your parents. They can be very helpful, even though you might disagree about who to date, and when you can date.

*Yikes, I got asked out, and I'm gonna go on my first date!*

### Instructions

1. RELAX! There can be some major jitters before your first date. The worst thing you can do is panic. Do something that can relax you. This could be taking a nap, hanging out with friends, taking a walk, exercising, you might even try taking deep breaths.
2. Hygiene. A clean body is important for a first date. Address all body parts from the top of your head to your toes. Oral hygiene is important for that first date smooch. Ensure that you brush your teeth and gargle with mouth wash before leaving for the date. Take a bath or shower before you leave. Use a deodorizer and perfume to ensure that you will still smell fresh, like you just stepped out of the shower. Wear clean clothes on the date. Put on something really nice to make that good first impression.
3. Be punctual, this can show you are reliable and trustworthy, and leaves a lasting impression.
4. Bring money, whether you are a girl or a guy, it is rude if your date pays for everything!
5. Prepare questions to ask. As an ice-breaker, you might want to ask about their family, or where they are from, or maybe even start with a joke. A good laugh can relieve some of the tension both you and your date may be feeling. Then once both of you are relaxed, you can shift the focus to strengthening the relationship.

If you follow all this advice, your dating life is sure to be a success.



### ADAPTED FROM THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEENS

Relationships during the teenage years are very important. Whether it be between friends, siblings, parents, girlfriends, boyfriends, or even teachers there are a few very helpful hints to make these relationships last. A relationship is like a bank account. It can be built rich or be completely empty. By keeping promises you add on to your bank account in that relationship. If you exhibit small acts of kindness, it can really help your friendship grow.

Being loyal is important. Do not turn your back on your friends when they need you. Listening is important because some people need to vent. By listening to them, you are helping them work through their problem. If something happens between you and a friend, and it is your fault, apologize. Even if they do not forgive you right away, it is the start to healing a broken relationship.

In summary, using these skills will enhance your relationships, so that they last a lifetime (Covey 132).

## FIVE DATING RULE TO LIVE BY

There are five important rules for teens who want a healthy dating relationship.

On the first date, girls should not reveal too much about their past or their intentions for a relationship in the future. The subject of ex-boyfriends is a definite no. In addition, revealing too much personal information will scare away a boy.

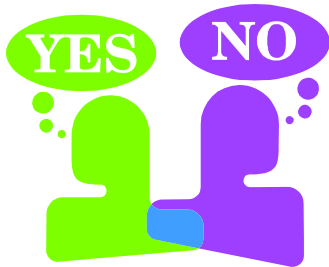
Also, remember, don't make yourself too available and give away large chunks of time. This gives the impression that you will change your personal goals based on someone else's priorities.

Furthermore, don't settle on a serious relationship, and act like you are married, too early in your life. Dating is for teens, marriage is for adults.

The fourth rule is to follow your gut. Don't let anyone else make a decision for you.

The fifth rule is to listen for words of wisdom from your close friends, and even your parents. Ask them for their impression of the new relationship. Write down their opinions and review the information periodically, especially when making decisions.

Living by these five rules of dating will lead to success.



## HOW TO SAY "NO" TO A DATING INVITATION

Rejecting a dating invitation, nicely, is really important because the person's affections are on the line. They are feeling vulnerable in expressing their feelings, so consider these tips: Refrain from leading the person on; this gets their hopes up and then they are shattered. Don't be mean about it; just tell them that you are not interested. Try not to over explain or make excuses; tell them that you don't feel the same way they do. If they try and win you over; create a distraction and move away. Overall, be gentle, but firm in your decision.

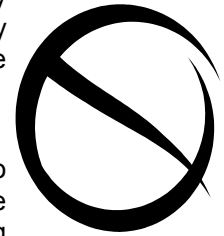
## HOW TO SAY "NO" TO SEX

1. Stop what you are doing, say "NO" very clearly, and quickly move your body to leave the situation.

2. Calmly leave the location to go home. Immediately call someone to help you stay firm while leaving as soon as possible.

3. Do not stop to explain your reasons, your feelings, or your motives. Just leave the situation.

4. The next day, be honest with the person and explain your commitment to abstinence in a brief conversation. If the other person doesn't get it, then end the conversation. Call your friend that knows how to help you stay firm.



## TEEN SEX AND THE LAW

Do you know the laws and what they mean regarding teenage sex?

- The age of consent is the age when the law says you can agree to have sex.
- The age of consent in NJ is 16; in NY it is 17; in CT it is 16; in PA it is 16.
- You are breaking the law if you have sex before you reach this age, even if you both consent to it.
- Statutory rape, a felony statute, is a crime charged to the person, over the age of consent, who chooses to have sex with someone under the age of consent, even when they both agree to it.
- A Georgia man is serving a 10-year prison sentence for having consensual oral sex at age 17 with a 15 year old girl.
- This same man will be registered as a sex offender for the rest of his life. His name and personal information will be on the Internet. As part of probation, he could not live at home with his 12 year old sister.

## TOP 5 SIGNS THAT YOU AND YOUR TEEN ARE ON TRACK



### 5. Your teen fluctuates between saying that he/she loves you and hates you.

Here's why: Your teen is experiencing a daily inner conflict between wanting to depend on you and wanting to be independent from you. If they say they hate you, you have provided the environment for expressing this conflict. They need to know they can have, and "play out" both feelings, and that you will be there to accept both the love and hate feelings.

### 4. Your teen says "no" more often and/or tries to rebel.

Here's why: Rebellion and saying no are a normal part of adolescence. The developmental task of an adolescent is to separate from their parents, join their peers, and find their unique identity. Saying no and rebelling helps your teen to separate.

### 3. Your teen is very moody, irrational, and sometimes has outbursts.

Here's why: It is very scary for them to separate from you and venture into unknown territories. They ask themselves these questions; Who am I? Where am I going? The outbursts of anger are their way of warding off feelings of fear and vulnerability. They also have angry outbursts at you because they want you to "hold" their emotions safely. In this way, you are their "container," holding emotions they are unable to negotiate.

### 2. You (the parent) feel up and down. You feel like you are going crazy. You feel confused and insecure. You are positive that you are a bad parent.

Here's why: You are unconsciously in sync with your child's unconscious and you are experiencing all the feelings he/she is experiencing. Anna Freud described adolescence as a "normal psychosis". As a matter of fact, this is an indication that you are in tune with your child, and you are doing an excellent job. Congratulations!

### 1. The final sign that you and your teen are on the right track is that you (the parent) feel a sadness and a loss.

Here's why: Your teen is moving away from you emotionally because you provided them with the strength and confidence to do so. You have successfully facilitated your teen in resolving the issue within adolescence: separation. The feeling of loss is necessary but they will return! Allow yourself to grieve.

### Summary

Adolescence presents challenges for both the teen and their parents. It is a time of instability, a time for building confidence, a time for moving forward in maturity, and, in some ways, a time for moving regression. It is a time of raw emotions, and a time of contradictions. It is, at the very least, a difficult time for the entire family, but it can be a rich time providing a new level of closeness. Look for the opportunities to connect.

The parent must visualize their teen on a boat in choppy waters near a rocky shoreline. The parent must function as a symbolic lighthouse. The light source is always present, always bright, and always illuminating a path. It is a beacon of hope and love. Never give up, and never let your love dim.

Rhoda H. Alekel, L.C.S.W., B.C.D. is a psychotherapist with a private practice in Livingston. She specializes in providing psychotherapy for teens, adults, couples, families, and offers parent counseling. She has published many articles on teens and their parents. She has conducted many parenting workshops. She is on the Parent Ed Committee on LMAC, and the creator of "Reflect on This". She is also a member of HCHY.

For questions you may call her at 973-740-0047.

Dear Syd,

*I used to have a really good group of friends. Now, they are all getting into smoking, drugs and sex. I want to find a new group of friends, but I'm shy. How can I figure out who are the type of people I should hang out with, and who will accept me?*

- Out in the Cold

Dear Out in the Cold,

You've made a very important step already in recognizing that it's time to find new friends. Making and keeping good friends is a challenge for all of us, whether we are shy or not. Probably the best way to make and keep friends is to find others who share your interests. Lasting friendships often develop between people who enjoy the same activities, like participating in sports, music, or after school clubs. You also want to be with friends who share your values and goals for life.

The old saying is also true—that the best way to have a friend is to be a friend. Reach out to others who share your interests, sit with them at lunch, invite them to join you in activities you all like. Being a real friend takes time and effort. Although your set of friends will probably change over the years, you may also find "best friends" during your school years that you'll always stay in contact with.

- Syd

Dear Syd,

*A group of girls in my class have suddenly ganged-up against me because they have become friends with a girl that doesn't like me. Now they criticize everything I do, and its so irritating. What can I do?*

- Harassed in School

Dear Harassed in School,

Find an adult that you trust with whom you can discuss this problem and help you develop a plan to resolve this concern. Also reach out to one or two of your old friends and try to re-connect with them, or ask them to help resolve the situation.

- Syd

Dear  
Syd



## Quotes



*"Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree the real thing."*

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

*"Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value."*

Albert Einstein ((1879-1955)

*"I've decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."*

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)

*"I keep my ideals, because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."*

Anne Frank (1929-1945)

## TEEN IDOLS

1. **Zac Efron**

"Summerland," "High School Musical," and "Hairspray"



2. **Hayden Panettiere**

"Remember the Titans," "Ice Princess," "Joe Somebody," TV show "Heroes"



3. **Miley Cyrus**

Disney series "Hannah Montana"



4. **Corbin Bleu**

"High School Musical," TV series "Flight 29 Down"



5. **Drake Bell**

Nickelodeon series "Drake & Josh," "College"



6. **Vanessa Hudgens**

"High School Musical"



7. **Emma Roberts**

Nickelodeon series "Unfabulous"



8. **Jamie Lynn Spears**

"Zoey 101"



9. **Aly & AJ**

Disney series "Phil of the Future," "Cow Belles" telepic, "Potential Breakup Song"

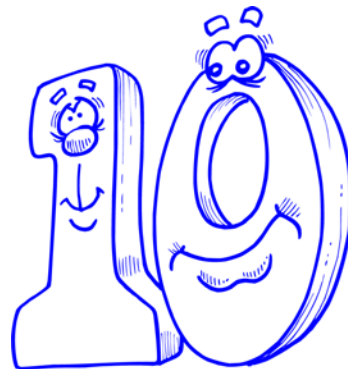


10. **The Jonas Brothers**

"Zoey 101," "Disney Mania 4," "Hannah Montana," Disney series "J.O.N.A.S!"



# TOP



# FAVES

## ICE CREAM

1. Chocolate
2. Vanilla
3. Cookie Dough
4. Cookies n Cream
5. Rocky Road
6. Strawberry
7. Mint
8. Lemon
9. Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough
10. Pistachio



## PARENT'S CORNER

Teens, Teens, Teens, have times really changed that much?

It has been quite some time since I lived with teens, my daughters are well beyond their teen years, but I still recall the days and oh those nights, when they were teens, I will never forget them.

I dare say that today while times have changed with the use of modern technology and the speed that everything happens. It might appear that times have changes drastically and maybe they have but rest assure some of the problems that my daughters faced are still the same that teens face today. For example, what are we doing on Friday night? So now instead of spending hours on the phone, in a round robin of calls, today with one press of a button a mass email can be sent or you can watch their fingers text as quick as lightning strikes and plans can be made for the night. At least when my daughters were on the phone I could occasionally hear what was going on; even if I pretended not to listen I could pick up bits and pieces. I will admit today that is the big difference, today things happen faster and quieter than in times gone by and that could be problematic for parents, you only get as much information as the kids want you to know.



**HELEN FLORES**

*Executive Director,*

*West Essex YMCA*

Should we go to Andrea's house, go to the movies; hang out at mall or at Starbucks? Whatever it is the pressure to hang where the other kids are going to be is big. After all who wants to be at a movie when everyone else is at a party or behind seven eleven? Some kids follow the crowd even when they know they shouldn't, even when trouble might follow. For example some teens might know through the underground that a party is going to be at Jay's house and there will be drinking. It takes a lot of courage to say no I am not going to that party when everyone else is going to be there. The big question for parents is how I prepare my teens to make the right choice when I am not looking. How can they negotiate the maze of options that are out there and still be safe, popular and happy?

In my mind they need some skills and those skills just don't happen over night. They need to start with the early year's right up to the teen years, small responsibilities first, small decisions first as well, then when it comes time for the larger life choices they won't be so unprepared. Some kids today are so programmed that they can't make a move or a choice on their own, that could be problematic, when mom or dad is not around who will lead them? Will they be tempted by the charisma and popularity of someone they know they should not follow? Let them have small responsibilities as they grow, it is ok to have chores and to have some accountability, it will help in the long run.

It is not that I am an expert in the field but I have had both private and work experience with teens. As a YMCA professional I come in contact with teens on a daily basis and YMCAs are the largest employers of teens throughout the country. Often our lifeguards, after school and camp counselors are teens, as well as many of our members on swim teams, in weight rooms and in some classes are teens. I hear them in the hallways, in the gym and often chatting at work. I remind them that they are to be working, not making plans for the weekend, but sometimes the temptations are great and teens get caught up in the moment. Should I listen to this hot guy who I really have been trying to meet or watch these beastly kids who are climbing all over me in 90 degree heat? It is a tough choice to stay focused and do the right thing. But that is what I expect of them, sometimes I am disappointed but I must say the majority of times, the teens we have will do what we expect of them.

We want to develop leaders and all kids can be leaders if they tap into their strengths and we develop their leadership qualities, but again that doesn't happen over night. We must teach our teens to be role models so other children can look up to them. That means they need to know how to do the right thing, they need to believe that they are leaders and not followers. Self confidence and self respect needs to be encouraged and nurtured. We also need to hold our teens accountable for their actions. If they make the wrong choice what will happen? As parents we have to explain the consequences and even more importantly we have to hold them to those consequences. *(continued on back page)*

## Livingston Youth & Community Services



**Celebrating A Drug Free Life  
Through Leadership**

PO Box 822, Livingston NJ 07039

Phone: 973-535-2646

Fax: 973-992-9318

E-mail: [lycs@livingston.org](mailto:lycs@livingston.org)

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**

**[WWW.LIVINGSTONLYCS.ORG](http://WWW.LIVINGSTONLYCS.ORG)**

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The Livingston Youth and Community Services program (LYCS) is a collaborative community organization sponsored by the Township of Livingston, the Livingston Municipal Alliance Committee (LMAC) and the Mental Health Association of Essex County (MHAEC).

LYCS is a drug prevention program that teaches healthy life choices to Grades 3 to 12 after-school in the Livingston school district. The primary goal of LYCS is to be a community based mental health resource that identifies and implements Wellness programs.

Our program is designed to:

- To reduce the incidence of substance abuse among the adolescent population and to have Livingston's youth make healthier life choices
- Train Leaders and provide opportunities to practice leadership by participating in community service activities
- Empower parents with tools they need to communicate effectively with their children
- Provide opportunities for Livingston youth to engage in healthy social interactions

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### **PARENT'S CORNER** (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

It is even worse if the teens think they won't be punished for negative behavior, because they know there is no follow through. I remember staying home on a weekend because I told my oldest daughter that she was not going out because she came home past her curfew, way past her curfew. That meant that I had to stay home too, in essence I was being punished as well, be that as it may, I stayed home so she knew I meant business. Not easy, but necessary. In my case it was three against one, all my girls were two years apart, at one point it was three teens and me. The odds were definitely stacked in their favor, but being a little stubborn and a little old fashioned got me through it. My children were the better off for it.

So do be encouraging and loving, be tough when you have to and have expectations for your teens, give them something to live up to. Be there when they fall or titter of course, tell them when they have done great, but also tell them when you are disappointed. Most of all tell them and show them that you care about them. The good news is that after six or seven years, the kids you knew before will be back and they come back with love and respect for all the time and effort you put into them. I know I survived and have a better relationship with my daughters because of the boundaries set and the love given.

### **Love**

*by Sydelle Barreto*

An intangible thing  
Yet so brightly burns it  
Lighting a fire in the hearts of men  
A soundless song  
Which pours from us  
Like honey from a jar  
Sweetening our thoughts  
Let love forever bloom  
Inside our souls  
An exquisite flower  
Sown into the soil of our being  
So magnificent  
That men will search in vain  
For such beauty as it