



NYRAG

Voices

FROM THE FRONT LINE

PROFILES OF OUR NONPROFIT PARTNERS

Scenarios USA



“In Scenario’s films, young filmmakers challenge their generation to consider the limits of racial, gender, and sexuality stereotypes and come to terms with their desires, their values, and with each other. Scenarios’ films model for young people the right ways to take risks — the kind that involve defining yourself, seeking mutuality, and building a future.”

— Dorinda L. Welle, Ph.D., Program Officer,
The Ford Foundation

Scenarios USA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that aims to inspire teens to make healthier and safer decisions by offering them a creative approach to thinking through and discussing their lives, their choices, and their futures.

Young people ages 12 to 22 address issues such as peer pressure, pregnancy scares, HIV/AIDS, self-esteem, and commitment by writing stories for the annual “What’s the REAL DEAL?” writing contest. Contest winners are then partnered with professional filmmakers who help them turn their stories into high-quality short films shot in their hometowns; past artistic collaborators include directors Michael Apted, Tamara Jenkins, and Griffin Dunne.

The films are used nationwide in schools and community groups, screened at film festivals and conferences worldwide, streamed on the Internet, and aired on cable stations and national media outlets such as the TODAY Show, Showtime, MTV, NBC, Oxygen, PBS, and ABC’s “World News Tonight.”

“At Scenarios, we get our greatest satisfaction from seeing the tangible ways that the organization has improved the lives of the young people involved in our program,” said Co-Founder/Co-Executive Director Kristen

Each year, U.S. teens experience as many as **850,000 pregnancies**, and youth under age 25 experience about **9.1 million STIs**. By age 18, **70 percent of U.S. females** and **62 percent of U.S. males** have initiated vaginal sex. Comprehensive sex education is effective at assisting young people to make healthy decisions about sex and to adopt healthy sexual behaviors. No abstinence-only-until-marriage program has been shown to help teens delay the initiation of sex or to protect themselves when they do initiate sex. Yet, the U.S. government has spent **over \$1 billion** supporting abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

— Advocates For Youth,
[Effective Sex Education](#) fact sheet



Scenarios USA *continued*

Joiner. “Students who spend their lives feeling ignored are asked to share their views and their stories, and are often inspired to become advocates on the issues their stories address. And the families, communities, and audience members who see the youth-written and Hollywood-directed films are always enriched and inspired by the final product.”

“Scenarios mixes fresh, youthful perspectives on sexuality from a new generation of film

writers with the seasoned experience of Hollywood film professionals. As a teaching strategy, it’s unbeatable,” added Alison Bernstein, Vice President of the Education, Media, Arts, and Culture Program at The Ford Foundation.

This year’s four winning projects debuted at the Scenarios USA 2007 REAL DEAL Film Premiere at Clearview’s Chelsea West Cinemas on West 23rd Street. The young writers (including Brooklyn’s own Tiara Bennett) and their Hollywood directors introduced their films and engaged in a question and answer session following the screening.

The next REAL DEAL writing contest begins in September 2007, and the deadline for submission of entries is November 28, 2007. The topic for this edition of the REAL DEAL writing contest is “What’s the REAL DEAL about Masculinity?” All New York City youth ages 12 to 22 are eligible to participate. Interested parties can contact Scenarios USA at 866-414-1044 or info@scenariosusa.org to receive a Contest Kit or attend a development workshop.

All 12 of the Scenarios USA films, which address topics such as pregnancy prevention, HIV/AIDS, body image, and sexual identity, can be purchased [on their website](#). (Pre-orders for this year’s films can also be made there.) ▲

To learn more about Scenarios USA, please visit www.scenariosusa.org.



NYRAG Members That Fund Scenarios USA Include:

Edward S. Moore Family Foundation
The Ford Foundation

Recommended Restaurants in the Area

Pequeña

Mexican (cash only)
86 S. Portland Avenue
(Lafayette Avenue and Fulton Street)
718-643-0000

Restaurant New Orleans

Southern Creole
747 Fulton Street
(S. Elliot Place and S. Portland Avenue)
718-596-6333

Scopello

Italian
63 Lafayette Avenue
(Fulton Street and S. Elliot Place)
718-852-1100

About half of all new sexually transmitted diseases and infections (STDs/STIs) in 2000 occurred among youth ages 15 to 24. The total estimated costs of these nine million new cases of STDs/STIs was \$6.5 billion, with HIV and human papillomavirus (HPV) accounting for 90 percent of the total burden.

— Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health (2004)



As part of NYRAG’s commitment to philanthropy, we have added a new feature to our website. Each week, **Voices from the Front Line: Profiles of Our Nonprofit Partners** will spotlight an exemplary grantee of one or more NYRAG members.

For more information on a particular grantee, please contact them directly. We rely on you to conduct your own due diligence; NYRAG has not done so. All members are encouraged to submit grantee suggestions—please contact us at talkback@nyrag.org.