



*MyPower is now the largest  
youth development program in Lea County.*

August 2023

## ***MyPower, Inc. Background and Progress***

Since 2010, ***MyPower, Inc.*** has worked with 11,585 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls in its ***MyPower*** Elementary Mentoring Circles, the ***MyPower*** Middle School Edition, and ***MyPower*** Leadership Camps to empower girls to make wise choices, set goals, succeed academically, and avoid teen pregnancy.

### **Teen Birth Rates are **DOWN** in Lea County**

**84%** ↓ for the 15-17-year-olds and  
**65.5%** ↓ for the 15-19-year-olds since 2009!

Addressing the tough issues and alarming statistics for STD's and teen pregnancy in Lea County, ***MyPower*** has worked closely with the Hobbs Municipal Schools (HMS) to implement major changes in the sex education program for 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> graders. This change to Abstinence PLUS information, evidenced-based programs was exciting news for the Hobbs community. Science and health teachers teach factual information, and parents can choose to “opt-out” their children from the program. ***MyPower*** advocated for this change and commends the HMS Board for implementing the new policy.

### ***MyPower Offers Three Quality Programs to All Girls at NO-COST:***

- ***MyPower's Mentoring Circles*** work with girls in their last year of elementary school (5<sup>th</sup> grade) in the following nine elementary schools: Southern Heights, Jefferson, Will Rogers, Booker T. Washington, Edison, Mills, Taylor, Mettie Jordan (Eunice), and Jal Elementary. These Circles are held after school from January-April, once a week, for 12 weeks. 50 women volunteer their time to make this program possible each year. 83% of students participate.
- ***MyPower's Middle School Edition*** has more than 1,000 girls participate in our six-session program at Heizer, Houston, Highland, and Caton Middle School (Eunice). These sessions are held during the advisory/home room period and offer an energetic and inspiring study of the Quantum Learning Keys of Excellence and real-life scenarios. These sessions are facilitated by ***MyPower*** staff and trained volunteers for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- ***MyPower Leadership Camps*** have had 2,808 middle school girls participate in exciting life skills and academic strategy camps at the University of the Southwest campus, Training Center, Hobbs High School, and Freshman Commons since 2010. Many of the hired facilitators are teachers, who are provided with hands-on teaching strategies to later implement in their classroom.

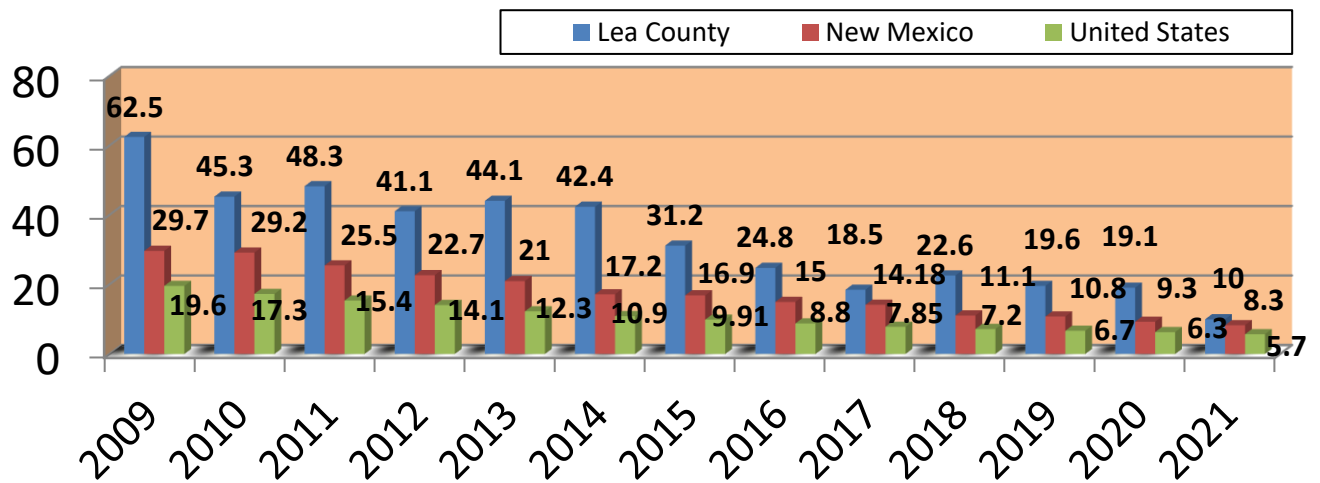
## The Alarming Statistics for Lea County

**MyPower** was founded in 2009 specifically to address Lea County's alarming teen pregnancy and STD rates. New Mexico has consistently moved between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place nationally. As of 2023, New Mexico ranks #10 in the United States for teen births. The U.S. leads the industrial world in teen births. While rates are down in Lea County since 2009, there is still a long way to go.

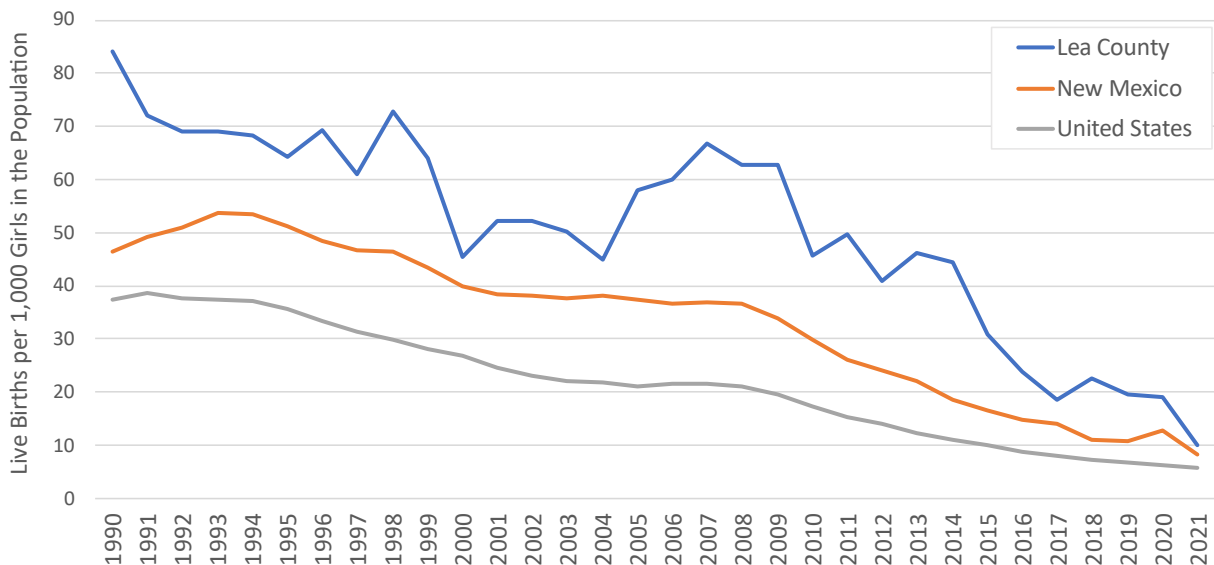
### Teen Birth Rates are **DOWN** by **84%** in Lea County for the 15-17-Year-Olds Since 2009!

New Mexico Birth Certificate Database, Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics, New Mexico Department of Health, 2023  
New Mexico Indicator-Based Information Systems (NM-IBIS), 2023/Cases per 1,000 Population

#### Birth Rates: 15-17 Year Olds



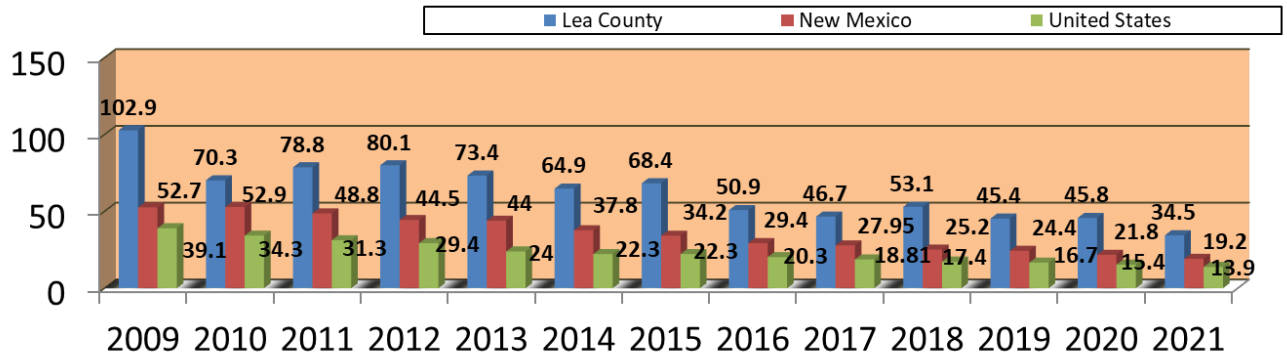
Teen Birth Rates. Births per 1,000 Girls Age 15 -17, Lea County,  
New Mexico and United States, 1990-2021



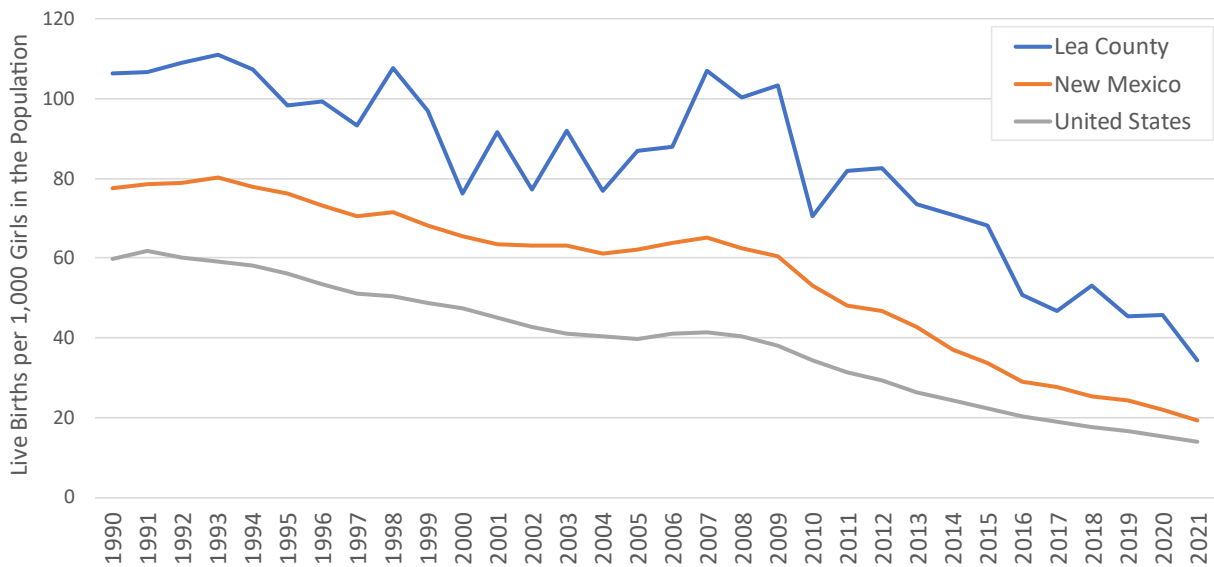
# Teen Birth Rates are **DOWN** by **65.5%** in Lea County for the 15-19-Year-Olds Since 2009!

New Mexico Birth Certificate Database, Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics, New Mexico Department of Health, 2023  
New Mexico Indicator-Based Information Systems (NM-IBIS), 2023/Cases per 1,000 Population

Birth Rates: 15-19 Year Olds



Teen Birth Rates. Births per 1,000 Girls Age 15 -19, Lea County,  
New Mexico and United States, 1990-2021



## Community Impact

High teen pregnancy rates hurt communities, as less than 1/3 of teens who begin families before 18 ever complete high school; only 2% of teen mothers complete college before age 30; and the children of these parents are often not ready for school themselves and are more at risk for child abuse. In New Mexico, the gross impact of teenage parenting is more than \$100 million annually (Source: Power to Decide). Single women who have a baby during the teen years are also at a high risk of poverty.

### *MyPower, Inc.* Founded in 2009 to Empower Pre-Teen and Teen Girls

*MyPower's* program is **Abstinence PLUS Information** and is designed to help empower girls in grades 5-9 to successfully navigate the teen years by empowering them to make wise choices, set goals, succeed academically, and avoid risky sexual behavior and teen pregnancy. These youth development programs provide girls with straight talk about issues they will face as they enter the teen years. *MyPower* uses tools such as refusal skills, training and practice with real life situations to prepare these girls.

Specifically, our **Abstinence PLUS Information** curriculum works to empower girls to think about their goals, and it presents very straight talk concerning sexual issues, including basic facts of life, the importance of waiting, teen STD and teen birth statistics, how to prevent STDs, birth control options and the facts about common myths. *MyPower's* straight talk and Abstinence PLUS Information mentoring programs give girls the answers to their questions about the consequences of risky sexual behavior. *MyPower* utilizes area nurses and doctors who volunteer their time to present the anatomy and facts of life sessions, as well as the teen pregnancy and STD issue in the community.

### *MyPower* Leadership Camps





## Parent Meetings are an Essential Part of *MyPower*

Each year, *MyPower* meets with more than 1,200 parents and community members about the alarming STD and teen birth rates in Lea County. For parents, *MyPower* distributes straight forward materials from the Power to Decide, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, that provide advice on talking to children about sexual issues.

## *MyPower* Mentoring Circles



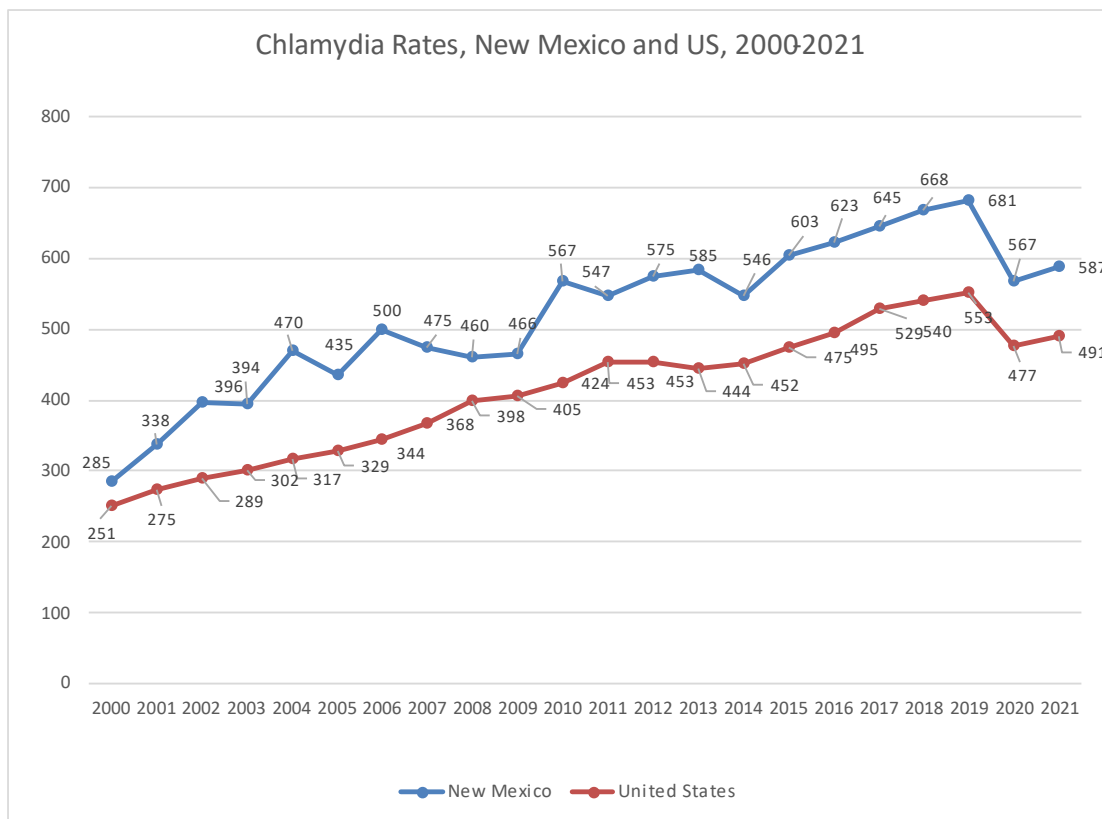
*MyPower's* message is that it takes an entire community to address this crisis – parents, schools, churches, our political leaders, and committed volunteers. The City of Hobbs, the Lea County Commission, the J. F Maddox Foundation, Chevron North America, URENCO USA, the MyPower Board of Director members, the Stevan and Cynthia Pearce Foundation, Watson Truck & Supply, and many local businesses and individuals have stepped up to help fund our programs. (Businesses named have contributed more than \$15,000. Please see “Passing on the Power.”).

## *MyPower* Middle School Edition



## Sexually Transmitted Diseases Among Teens at Epidemic Levels

**FACT:** Long-term health issues from STDs can result from a lack of treatment. Girls are often non-symptomatic for many STDs, and these diseases can result in health issues like long-term pain, sterility, and even cancer.



Cases per 100,000 Population

[nmhealth.org](http://nmhealth.org), 2023

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023

Sexually active young people are at a higher risk of getting chlamydia. This is due to behaviors and biological factors common among young people. Most people who have chlamydia have no symptoms. If someone does have symptoms, they may not appear until several weeks after they have sex with an infected partner. Even when chlamydia causes no symptoms, it can damage one's reproductive system. Although chlamydia can be cured with the right treatment, it is important one take all of the medication their doctor prescribes to cure the infection. When taken properly it will stop the infection and could decrease chances of having complications later on.

SOURCE: [www.nmhealth.org](http://www.nmhealth.org), 2023



**Cases per 100,000 population**  
**Nmhealth.org, 2023**  
**Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023**

Sexually active young people are at a higher risk of getting gonorrhea. Most women with gonorrhea do not have any symptoms. Even when a woman has symptoms, they are often mild and can be mistaken for a bladder or vaginal infection. Women with gonorrhea are at risk of developing serious complications from the infection, even if they don't have any symptoms. Gonorrhea can be cured with the right treatment. It is important that one take all of the medication their doctor prescribes to cure the infection. Medication for gonorrhea should not be shared with anyone. Although medication will stop the infection, it will not undo any permanent damage caused by the disease.

It is becoming harder to treat some gonorrhea, as drug-resistant strains of gonorrhea are increasing. If symptoms continue for more than a few days after receiving treatment, one should return to a health care provider to be checked again.

SOURCE: [www.nmhealth.org](http://www.nmhealth.org), 2023

# Parent Comments

## *MyPower Mentoring Circles*

“I would recommend this program to ALL girls. This program has opened the doors to conversations that my daughter should have had a long time ago. It made it easy to talk to about issues that she is facing and will face”.

“I wish I would have had this opportunity in school. They learn so much about themselves and who they can become. They see what can be achieved when they set goals. Thank you for spending time with my daughter!”

“I love the character building MyPower creates”.

“I would recommend this program for other young girls. I loved it and my daughter did too. I am so glad there is a program for our young ladies. I wish there would have been something like this when I was growing up”.

“MyPower has helped my daughter to be more confident in herself and her plans for the future. Her focus is college, a career and then a family!”

“This is the place that helps parents instill positive attitudes in our young women. It builds confidence in our girls. Wonderful program!”

“I highly recommend this program to other parents. It’s very important for girls to learn self-respect, self-confidence, and empowerment.”

“It helps them hear information from others, not just from their mom or dad. Positive reinforcement helps”.

“MyPower promotes a positive self-image and focuses on issues that are sometimes difficult for parents to start conversations about.”

“It changed her attitude and outlook on school. It gave her the courage to stand up for what she believes in.”

“We want the youth in our community to live their best life. Not just to live it, but to have a paradigm shift...that they DESERVE to live their very BEST LIFE.”

-Dr. Elaine Sena Cortez /Executive Director





# Parent Comments

## *MyPower Leadership Camps*

“I would highly recommend this program because it is a forum that builds high self- esteem and gives them “tools” to rise above peer-pressure and negative influences to obtain goals in which they have set.”

“My daughter likes that she matters.”

“She has learned to be herself and no longer is afraid of what others think about her. She knows she has a voice and can express herself more without being afraid.”

“This truly is a miracle program.”

“My daughter’s attitude has improved 1,000%. She is more positive and more pleasant to be around.”

“My daughter sees a wonderful future for herself! She doesn’t see boyfriends, children and failure anymore. She sees college, career success and self-confidence.”

“I would recommend MyPower, because it paves the way for child-parent communication. It also taught my daughter self-confidence and to accept herself for who she is.”

“Knowledge is power”.

“MyPower teaches self-love, kindness, setting boundaries, communication, honesty, and accountability.”

“This program empowers our girls, gives them great information about themselves, and reminds them of the inner power they have.”

“It has helped her learn to stick to something she starts and not give up. She learned just how valuable she is and that she is capable of so much”.

“Girls this age have a hard time adjusting to their life and this experience gives them hope and opens their eyes to the future. It’s okay to be yourself! Thank you, MyPower!”

“My daughter is more positive and her behavior has improved. She is more loving and more willing to try new things because of MyPower.”

“MyPower helped my daughter blossom and realize she matters and that she can make a difference in our community. Thank you for empowering our youth and future leaders!”



# ***MyPower's* Mission**

To empower Lea County's youth to reach their full individual potential by providing FUN, social and learning activities geared toward developing personal confidence, academic excellence and enhanced life skills.

## ***MyPower's* Goals**

***Training and Mentorship:*** Target Lea County's youth at critical developmental stages for engaging academic and social skills activities, with a goal to provide open communications about the long-term benefits of staying in school, choosing friends wisely and making healthy choices.

***Vision for the Future:*** Expose participants to new ideas, skills, mentorship, and the limitless possibilities and opportunities available to all youth regardless of race or socioeconomic background.

***Constructive Life Choices:*** Increase knowledge of how to make positive personal decisions and constructive life choices, especially with the temptations of drug abuse and teenage sex, regardless of peer pressure or other outside negative factors.

***La alegría de vivir:*** Enhance their spirit to enjoy life and plan for the future using fun learning activities and exercises designed to boost personal confidence and self-concept.

### ***MyPower, Inc. Board Members:***

Shannon Arguello, Court Administrator, Hobbs Municipal Court  
Valerie Chacon, Deputy City Attorney, City of Hobbs  
Megan Chavarria, Nurse Practitioner, Presbyterian Medical Services  
Ty Elliott, Computer Specialist, New Mexico Jr. College  
Tiffany Garcia, Family Nurse Practitioner, Eagles Student Health Center  
Valerie Onsurez Gauna, Executive Assistant, NMJC Foundation & College Relations  
Lisa Griffith, LCSW, Ohio University  
Lisa Hardison, Ed.D., URENCO USA  
Evelyn Rising, Health Extension Rural Officer, University of New Mexico  
Steven Williams, CPA, Dean Dorton  
Sarah Yue, Nurse Practitioner, Lea Regional Hospital

### ***Board Officers & Executive Committee:***

Valerie Onsurez Gauna - President  
Sarah Yue – 1st Vice President  
Shannon Arguello – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Ty Elliott - Secretary  
Steven Williams - Treasurer

### ***MyPower, Inc. Staff:***

Dr. Elaine Sena Cortez - Executive Director  
Danielle Hernandez - Program Director  
Katt Nieto - Executive Assistant  
Jordyn Titus - Program Staff