



HAITI FUND-RAISER: Nearly 5,800 metro Detroit teens are to participate in a 30-hour famine this month to raise money for Haiti and needy people worldwide. The event is part of World Vision's 19th annual no-food fund-raiser, spokeswoman Wendy Will said Tuesday. Participants will subsist on liquids Feb. 26-27 and spend the time doing awareness-raising activities and community service. www.30hourfamine.org.

- ZLATI MEYER

Detroit Free Press

METRO

313-222-6600 localnews@freepress.com

2003 terror trial

Writer's source can stay a secret

Federal judge rules in Free Press case

By BEN SCHMITT
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A federal judge upheld Tuesday a ruling that Free Press reporter David Ashenfelter does not have to reveal the source or sources who provided information for a 2004 report that said a federal prosecutor was under internal investigation for his handling of a discredited terrorism trial.

In his ruling, U.S. District Judge Robert Cleland denied a request to reconsider a previous decision that allowed Ashenfelter to remain silent about the sourcing for his article.

Richard Convertino, a former assistant U.S. attorney who was the subject of Ashenfelter's article, had tried to force the reporter to reveal his sourcing as part of a lawsuit filed by Convertino against the Justice Department. Convertino contends that the information was leaked illegally.



David Ashenfelter



Richard Convertino

On April 21, Cleland allowed Ashenfelter to invoke his Fifth Amendment right to remain silent about who told him that Convertino was under scrutiny.

Free Press editors said Ashenfelter did nothing wrong or illegal in his reporting and had no choice but to invoke the Fifth Amendment because of Convertino's assertion that the leak was illegal.

Convertino's lawyer, Stephen Kohn, had asked Cleland to reconsider the ruling.

He wrote that Ashenfelter filed an affidavit in March 2008 acknowledging that he wrote the January 2004 report about Convertino, that it was accurate and that it was based on information from Justice Department sources.

Cleland ruled Tuesday that Kohn should have raised the issue about Ashenfelter's affidavit earlier.

"The court has no duty to correct what has — in hindsight — turned out to be plaintiff's poor strategic decision," Cleland said in his ruling.

The issue, which pits a reporter's interest in protecting sources against a litigant's interest in gathering evidence, has been watched closely by news media groups.

Convertino, in his suit against the Justice Department, claims the information was leaked to retaliate against him for criticizing the department after he came under scrutiny for alleged prosecutorial misconduct in his handling of a Detroit terrorism trial — the first to result from the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The convictions of three men tried in that case were overturned.

"We're pleased by the judge's ruling," Free Press Senior Managing Editor Jeff Taylor said. "Ashenfelter acted properly in his reporting. At times, reporters must be able to rely on confidential sources to bring important information to light, and to hold public officials accountable."

CONTACT BEN SCHMITT: 313-223-4296 OR BCSCHMITT@FREEPRESS.COM



Ashley Terry of Detroit is 21 and had her daughter, Alaiyna, when she was 20. She's living at the Alternatives for Girls shelter in Detroit.

Photos by KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL/Detroit Free Press

Teen births up in Detroit after declining for years

Program cuts may be one reason

By ROBIN ERB
FREE PRESS MEDICAL WRITER

After years of declining birthrates, a study released today concludes that more Detroit teens are having babies than a few years ago — reflecting a troubling trend throughout the state and nation.

In some neighborhoods on the east side, as many as one in four births in a three-year period ending in 2007 was to a mother who hadn't celebrated her 20th birthday.

The report is by Data Driven Detroit, a new data warehouse funded by the Skillman and Kresge foundations.

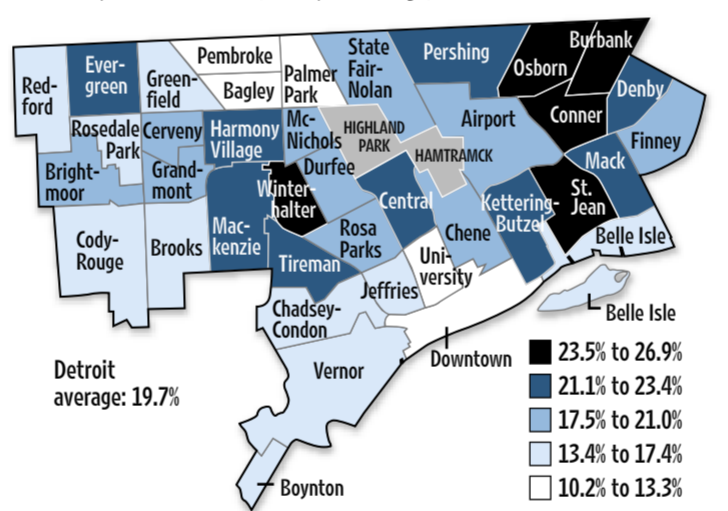
"It's not always grim and there are great teen moms," said Kara Anderson, who leads teen pregnancy prevention programs for the Michigan Department of Community Health. "But the odds are stacked against you if you're a teen mom."

It's unclear why the numbers are inching up after a 15-year stretch of improved teen pregnancy rates. It might be because of cutbacks in outreach programs, said Jane Zehnder-Merrell, director of

Teen birthrates in Detroit

In five Detroit neighborhoods, about one in four babies was born to a teenage mother.

Teen births as percentage of total births, by Detroit community in 2005 to 2007 (three-year average)



research at the Michigan League for Human Services.

At Alternatives for Girls, a Detroit agency that offers shelter, parenting and life skills classes, and three meals a day to young women, several residents Tuesday gave a number of reasons they got pregnant: Lonely, they found comfort in older men. Naïve, they believed boys who told them they couldn't conceive or thought they could get pregnant only at certain times of the month.

But this was the same for each: They were surprised to

learn they'd gotten pregnant.

Isabel Torres, 19, was so "shocked and devastated" she wept before the doctor who delivered the news.

Torres has seen other young girls struggle to buy necessities for babies, their own youth consumed by the demands of an infant. Ready to deliver in a few months, she looks at the months ahead determined — but wondering how she'll be able to finish school while she's tending a new baby.

And that's not even considering the job she knows she'll



Gwendolyn Eades, 19, of Detroit is nine months pregnant and staying at Alternatives for Girls.

Read the report from Data Driven Detroit

have to get.

"I didn't want to be a teen statistic, because ... I wanted to get it right," she said.

The report parses out information by neighborhood, also studying the number of new moms who are married, have high school diplomas or get adequate prenatal care.

Kurt Metzger, director of Data Driven Detroit, said he hopes the statistics can inform a public awareness campaign and community groups that do teen outreach.

CONTACT ROBIN ERB: 313 222-2708, OR RERB@FREEPRESS.COM

Retired finance director to help Macomb County get a deal on bond

Expert could save it tens of thousands

By STEVE NEAVLING
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Former Macomb County Finance Director Dave Diegel will collect a consulting fee of nearly \$66 an hour on top of receiving his regular pension.

And that's a good deal for taxpayers, county commissioners said Tuesday.

Commissioners say Diegel,

who spent 24 years as finance director before retiring Jan. 4, is the best person to land a low interest rate on a \$6.7-million bond to finance sewer repairs.

Diegel's consulting job is to convince credit rating agencies that the county is in good financial shape, despite next year's projected \$16.8-million deficit. If successful, the county may save \$85,000 or more in interest rates over the life of the 20-year bond, commissioners said.

Commissioners said Diegel, whose annual pension is \$79,250, likely won't work more than 22 hours, a cost of roughly \$1,450.

"Our goal is to communicate to the credit rating agencies that we are a well-run county, even in the face of the incredible economic transformation we are in," Board of Commissioners Chairman Paul Gielegheem said. "Who can better articulate that than Dave Diegel?"

Diegel, 64, was revered for communicating his intimate knowledge of the county's \$202-million budget to commissioners, the public and rating agencies. A replacement has not been hired.

Diegel could not be reached for comment.

The bond is to help finance renovations to the 21-mile Macomb-Oakland sewer interceptor, which serves more than 300,000 residents in both counties.

Wayne

DETROIT

Jurors in Riddle trial to be back at it today

Jurors are to continue deliberating this morning in the Sam Riddle political corruption trial in U.S. District Court. Deliberations began Monday.

Riddle, 63, has been on trial for more than two weeks on seven felony charges, including bribery and extortion. Prosecutors contend he worked with his former boss, ex-Detroit City Councilwoman Monica Conyers, to shake down various people for money in return for her influence on the council and a city pension board.

ROMULUS

New charge in airport security breach filed

A man who officials said breached security at Detroit Metro Airport appeared in federal court Tuesday. He also was charged with resisting arrest, a two-year misdemeanor, by Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy.

Kaylan Policherla, 27, of Bryan, Ohio, was ordered to be held until a detention hearing Thursday by U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Randon. Policherla ignored Transportation Security Administration officials as he walked through a screening checkpoint Monday morning, authorities said. He did not have a ticket or baggage.

He was hit with a stun gun and later charged with entering an airport in violation of security requirements, a one-year misdemeanor.

Police were notified and emergency procedures implemented: Security gates closed around the area involved and authorities ordered other passengers there to leave the terminal immediately. Panicked people fled the terminal.

DEARBORN

Chihuahua hoarder given probation

The former Dearborn man who kept hundreds of live and dead Chihuahuas in filthy conditions in his home until last year was sentenced Tuesday to five years of probation in a mental health program and payment of \$60,000 in restitution.

The sentence had been expected as part of Kenneth Lang Jr.'s guilty plea to a count of cruelty to animals in Wayne County Circuit Court last month, though the restitution amount was not determined at the time. He also was ordered not to own animals.

The restitution will go to the City of Dearborn, the Dearborn Animal Shelter and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

In July, 105 Chihuahuas were rescued from the house on Orchard where Lang and the dogs lived.

COMPILED FROM REPORTS BY BEN SCHMITT AND ERIC D. LAWRENCE