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News

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*****South Oak Cliff peer counselors
graduate

DALLAS--Graduation ceremonies honoring 15 Family Planning peer counselors from South Oak Cliff High School were held in the A.W. Harris Faculty/Alumni Center at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas in December. The students, who range in age from 15 to 18 years, are from a health class taught by Lisa Scott, who accompanied them. Representing Family Planning were staff members Barbara Cambridge, Kaye Spencer, Cassie Patterson and Dr. Stephen Heartwell, director of the Division of Maternal Health and Family Planning.

Peer counseling is a major part of a new community education program being sponsored by Family Planning. The peer counseling program, which includes making literature, speakers and other public information available on all areas of health that involve the reproductive system, is funded by a grant from the Department of Health and Education. A major part of the program aims at dispelling sexual myths that commonly get passed on from teen to teen--and sometimes adult to adult, say Family Planning staff members who have been working with the teenagers in the program.

The students took examinations on the material covered, received literature to keep in their personal files and participated in discussions during training sessions. In addition, each participated in a short internship at a Family Planning clinic.

The health agency, which has six clinics throughout Dallas and sees more than 40,000 clients a year, will train other peer counselors this year. In addition, Family Planning staff members will act as consultants as well as training peer counselors for other agencies.

Besides learning physiology and other facts related to sex, said Patterson, the course emphasizes where teens can go for information.

Students graduating from the South Oak Cliff program included Cedric Hordge, Sandra Medlin, Benjamin Frazier, Maury Turner, Timothy Rockwell, James Smith, Vicki Martin, Debbie Johnson, Lonnie Hawkins, Yolanda Johnson, William Tisdale, Bennie Jones, Carolyn Barney, Cathryn Barrow and Abram Pate. Hordge, Medlin and Tisdale are members of the Family Planning Advisory Board.

All students had permission from their parents to take the course and become counselors.

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