

# Students tackle subject matter many adults never deal with

By Kathryn Reed

When students at Mt. Tallac High School graduate a week from day, they will have left behind a collection of work that is compelling and heart-wrenching. The subject matter in many cases deals with issues these teens this early in their lives should not even know exist.

Some of the material delves into issues they are interested in, other subjects hit close to home. The topic can be anything, but most are about a serious subject.



Estefany  
Flores with  
her daughter.  
Photo/Provided

“I decided to make my project on teen pregnancy because I went through a lot of the same experiences I discussed in my project,” explained Estefany Flores. “For example, being confused, feeling alone, feeling sad, and even thinking about having an abortion. I also did this so girls going through this realize that they aren’t alone.”

This is her PowerPoint on teen pregnancy.

Teacher Eileen McEwen has her students make a proposal, research the options and then create a PowerPoint about the subject.

“The PowerPoint project allows them to meet state requirements and have real world skills,” McEwen said.

Besides learning a skill set that will last them a lifetime, part of the project’s goal is to identify a problem and find a solution for it.

“If we don’t find answers, we just have more problems,” McEwen explained.

Jennifer Marroquin had shaken baby syndrome as her topic.

She is one of the Tallac students who has presented her PowerPoint to the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board to demonstrate the skills they are learning at the continuation high school.

Denisse Robles this school year had fetal alcohol syndrome as her topic. It talks about how this is the leading cause of mental retardation for babies born in the United States.

“It shows the wonderful things the (South Lake Tahoe) Women’s Center does,” McEwen said of that PowerPoint. That’s part of the research component – talking to local agencies about what they do to help people with particular problems.

In the process of creating the PowerPoint the students figure out visually what works in terms of using colors, fonts, point sizes, lighting, background, text over photos and other graphic elements.

Music is also integrated into many of the presentations.

They also learn about being able to tell a story, so to speak, through the slides. They must incorporate 500 words of their own writing – not just statistics – into the PowerPoint.

Besides being graded by McEwen, the PowerPoints are subject to peer review by fellow students. And to ensure plagiarism has not occurred, McEwen will run some information through a website that checks for cheating.

Mt. Tallac students graduate June 10 at 11am on the football field at South Tahoe High School.