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Let's Talk about Sex with Dan Savage

Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health to Honor Savage Love Columnist with Sexuality Activist Award

CHICAGO – The [Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health](#) (ICAH) honors author Dan Savage and youth leaders at its 5th annual event *Let's Talk about Sex* on Tuesday, June 15, 2010, from 6 to 9 PM at the Chicago Cultural Center.

In partnership with youth, ICAH advocates sound policies and practices that promote a positive approach to adolescent sexual health and parenting. Through grassroots organizing, youth and adult training, and legislative advocacy, ICAH advocates for access to sexual health care services, access to sexuality education, and support for pregnant and parenting youth in completing their educational goals.

Honoree Dan Savage is an author, media pundit, journalist and newspaper editor. He is the writer of the internationally syndicated relationship and sex advice column [Savage Love](#) and the editorial director of [The Stranger](#), a weekly alternative publication in Seattle. Savage is the author of several books, including *Things I've Learned from Women Who've Dumped Me*; *The Commitment: Love, Sex, Marriage, and My Family*; and *Skipping Towards Gomorrah: The Seven Deadly Sins and the Pursuit of Happiness in America*. Savage will be available for interviews the day of the event.

"Mr. Savage acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of sexuality while providing advice on how to be sexually healthy," said Soo Ji Min, executive director of ICAH. "An outspoken critic of social policies that harm young people, Mr. Savage doesn't only write about sexuality; he encourages his readers to be politically active on issues involving family planning, birth control, and youth rights."

Min explains, "Too often sex and sexual expression—especially as they relate to youth—are viewed as problematic and dangerous. Many sex education programs and policies are based on fear and shame of sexuality. We are presenting Mr. Savage with an award for his work on promoting sexuality as a lifelong, healthy part of our identity and behavior."

Let's Talk about Sex also recognizes five outstanding youth advocates for their leadership in sexuality activism. ICAH recruits, trains and supports adolescents ages 14 to 20 throughout the state to create social change around adolescent sexual health and parenting through youth-led projects and actions. ICAH focuses on building youth leadership skills and serving marginalized adolescent groups, including low-income, immigrant, homeless, parenting, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth.

"The voices of youth are essential when advocating for access to sexuality education in schools and communities, since they are ones most affected by the policy decisions of public officials," said Min. "We are acknowledging the hard work of our youth activists who have testified before their school boards, organized events in their communities, and lobbied their legislators in Springfield and Washington, D.C."

The annual event features Debby Herbenick, author of the sex advice column [In and Out](#) in [Time Out Chicago](#), as the master of ceremonies. The evening includes cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and a live performance of [Fast Forward](#), an [About Face Theatre](#) production. *Fast Forward* tells the true stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and allied youth ensemble members, exploring the connection between the current lack of comprehensive sex education in schools and the impact of HIV/AIDS on youth.

“We have grown tremendously and touched the lives of thousands of young people over the last several years,” said Min. “The annual event is a celebration of our successes in improving adolescent sexual health around the state.”

In recent years, ICAH helped change local school board policies on sexuality education in Chicago, Urbana, and Freeport. This year, ICAH released a state sexuality education report and recommendations based on a strategic planning process that engaged more than 600 stakeholders throughout Illinois. The organization also trained over 800 health educators and providers across the state on adolescent sexual health.

“But our work is far from over,” Min added, citing staggering statistics on sexual health outcomes. “Nationally, young people ages 15 to 24 represent half of the new cases of sexually transmitted infections. One in three girls nationwide becomes pregnant before age 20. Classrooms continue to promote harmful abstinence-only-until-marriage messages that have proven inaccurate and ineffective. We must keep organizing and training youth and adult allies to advocate for increased access to adolescent sexual health services and education.”

Let’s Talk about Sex tickets can be purchased at www.icaah.org. Tickets are \$150 for the full program and a VIP reception with Mr. Savage from 5 to 6 PM and \$100 for the full program. The Chicago Cultural Center is wheelchair accessible. American Sign Language interpretation is available.

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The Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, in partnership with youth, advocates sound policies and practices that promote a positive approach to adolescent sexual health and parenting. Visit www.icaah.org to learn more.