

Minors, Taking On Major Responsibilities.

In the game of life, we are dealt some rough hands at one time or another. One of the toughest jobs ever given is the caring for and nurturing of a child. This job should be saved for a time when there are two responsible adults who are established in their careers and prepared to take on this task both financially and emotionally. All too often, however, this job goes to two teenagers who haven't even made decisions about their own lives' paths.

I spoke with three sets of people about their facing the challenges this situation has put in their paths. They were asked about birth control, how they did or why they did not use it, if they considered abortion, what changes they made in their present lives to support this child, their greatest joys, their roughest times, their hopes for their child, and their advise to others who find themselves in the same situation. If you do find yourself in this situation, there is help.

You may contact the Family Planning Clinic at the Health Department in Walterboro or the Teenage Pregnancy Council at the Clemson Extension Service also in Walterboro.

Stacy & Lisa

Did we ever take any birth control precautions? It never occurred to us to use anything. Did we consider abortion? I did, but my girlfriend didn't. She felt that since the child didn't ask to be here, we shouldn't kill it. To support our

child, I work more hours at work, and I joined the national guard for insurance purposes. I also took steps to graduate early.

Our greatest joys? As a mother, it's a joy to have someone who's a special part of me. She'll always be special to me. As a father, I was overjoyed when, one Sunday afternoon, the baby said "Daddy" for the first time. I also love just spending time with her. The roughest times? As a mother, I would like my baby's father to spend more time with her. As a father it's hard working to support the child and still trying to please the mother and grandparents.

Hopes for the child? I hope she won't get pregnant while in school. I want her to have slightly different values and be more responsible than we were about sex. We have no regrets because we have a beautiful person who belongs to us.

Advise to others? Accidents do happen, so make sure you take the precautions to avoid them. But, whatever happens, don't get so down about it because it could always be worse. "And remember that all the extra work you have to do is worth the joy you get from being with your child."

