CHARACTERISTICS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

General Characteristics:

- Interests shift from solitary to group pursuits
- Having the "right" or "in" clothing becomes particularly important
- Vocational interests become more prominent and realistic
- Concerns about social issues develop
- Beginning of a truer sense of self develops
- Strong attitudes toward religious, ethnic, and racial groups begin to emerge

Physical Development

- Rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence; enormous appetite
- Sexual maturity with accompanying physical and emotional changes
- Females usually about two years ahead of males
- Bone growth essentially completed, adult height essentially reached, improved coordination

Characteristic Reactions:

- Going to extremes, emotional instability and "know it all" attitude displayed
- Return to habits of childhood - nail biting, tricks, impudence, day-dreaming
- High interest in philosophical, ethical, and religious problems - search for ideals
- Preoccupation with acceptance by the social group; fear of ridicule and/or being unpopular; overly sensitive; self-pity
- Strong identification with an admired adult
- Assertion of independence from family as a step toward adulthood
- High interest in physical attractiveness

Special needs:

- Conformity with and acceptance by the peer group
- Adequate knowledge and understanding of sexual relationships and attitudes
- Adult guidance which is kindly, unobtrusive, and does not threaten the feeling of freedom
- Sense of direction without being pushed
- The assurance of security - seeks both dependence and independence
- Opportunities to make decisions and to earn some money