

Pinup who has AIDS hopes to educate youth

By DAN SEUFERT
Associated Press

GROTON, Mass. — Rebekka Armstrong's dream of a perfect Playmate life ended because of a night of unprotected sex on a California beach.

The 29-year-old, Playboy's Miss September 1986, continues to startle boys with her looks — and her story of living with AIDS. She speaks at schools around Massachusetts, discussing the perils of promiscuous, unprotected sex.

"I give AIDS a face, and I give it reality," she said. "Sex is a very normal, natural thing, and when you're a teen-ager your hormones are raging and you think you're indestructible. But sex is how I got AIDS."

Armstrong left a big impression on students when she spoke in California, said Stephanie Dew, a teacher at Santa Monica High School. "A lot of the students, particularly the boys, came because they were interested in the novelty of seeing a Playboy Playmate, and once they got past that they

heard the message," Dew said.

Armstrong just moved to this small town outside Boston with her husband, Joey, a film editor. They have a normal sex life but always use protection. He does not have the virus.

Armstrong contacted Playboy when she turned 18, and after the centerfold edition lived in Hugh Hefner's Playboy Mansion.

She believes that was two years after she got the human immunodeficiency virus, from the only man with whom she ever had unprotected sex. She couldn't find him later.

An AIDS test came back positive in 1989. She began abusing drugs and twice tried suicide.

"I was thinking, 'Normal people spend every single day of their life building toward a future, and I don't have a future,'" she said.

Four years ago, after several of her friends died of AIDS-related diseases, she ended her silence. Although diagnosed with AIDS three years ago, Armstrong is not ill at the moment.

"Right now, my career move is liv-



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**Former Playboy Playmate
Rebekka Armstrong speaks to
teens about AIDS.**

ing, it's a full-time job," she said. "I'm still a Playmate, and I'm really glad, because Playboy gave me a voice. And I'm using my voice now to fight AIDS."