



*Alternatives for Youth, Inc. (AFY) promotes academic persistence and success of youth by instilling values that lead to positive choices and positive community impact and by encouraging social, cultural, and self development. During over 25 years of experience, AFY has seen many changes in community need and has responded quickly with programs to address the challenges facing youth of the St. Vrain Valley School District. In 2008, we continued our three programs on our continuum of service from prevention to intervention to rehabilitation, expanded programs, added a new program and strengthened our organization's capacity. In all of our programs, we continue current and grow new collaborations with other groups and agencies serving the youth and families of the St. Vrain Valley. We look forward to continuing to provide and expand positive alternatives to the youth of our community.*

**Celebrando la Familia** utilizes education and positive engagement to help youth avoid drugs and stay in school while increasing youth leadership skills and pride in one's heritage. Close to 700 youth and their parents annually participate in a variety of recreational, educational and cultural activities, including Girls Group, Summer Program, Folklorico Dance Group, Homework Club, and community celebrations. Of the youth served in 2008, 98% of assessed participating youth never used or stopped the use in the last 30 days of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, 80% improved or maintained their academic performance and/or school attendance and youth maintained positive attitudes about substance abuse, and 40% of participating youth's parents attended a parents meeting. Over 80 youth participated in our 2008 Summer Program, improving their academic skills and participating in positive extracurricular activities. Eighteen youth interns assisted in the success of the Summer Program and gained job preparation experience and leadership training.

In 2008, Celebrando la Familia added an additional Homework Club, bringing our after school student total to more than 120 regularly attending youth at five schools; participated with the Longmont Symphony Orchestra and Niwot Timberline Symphony Orchestra for Folklorico Dance Group performances; added S.A.S.S.I.E. (Sharing Achievement through Student Success in Education), a program supporting 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders in graduating high school and attending college and/or entering a career; improved meetings for parents by forming, in cooperation with area agencies and organizations, Latino Parent Involvement in Education meetings and holding monthly meetings to educate parents about how to be better involved in their children's lives and schools. Celebrando la Familia staff continue to be main supporters and volunteers for community events, including Cinco de Mayo, Dieciseis de Septiembre, and Día de Los Muertos, to participate on community and civic boards, and to partner with the St. Vrain Valley Gang Task Force, Longmont's Children and Youth Resources, and Longmont's Gang Response and Intervention Program (G.R.I.P.) to prevent and intervene in Longmont's gang activity.

**Community Advocates**, a new partnership program between AFY and the St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD), provide services to targeted, truant students, including as needed, doing detective work to figure out why a student is truant, informing parents about attendance laws and consequences of truancy, supporting parents through truancy court mediation and hearings, and providing support to students and parents so students can be successful in school. Community Advocates work with students in two middle schools and two high schools.

**NorthStar**, a partnership between AFY and the SVVSD, provides classes for students at risk of being suspended or expelled as well as students in diversion and probation programs with the goal of keeping students in school and fostering anger management, conflict resolution and communication skills. The program provided a life skills class to students at Heritage and Longs Peak Middle Schools and a series of

six free, bilingual, family-oriented evening classes. NorthStar served 44 youth and 57 parents in 2007-2008 school year with 98% of students completing the program. Principals, teachers, school counselors and parents report that students improve behavior and maintain positive choices, reduce discipline referrals, improve relationships with school staff and peers, are more cooperative at home, and are able to work out struggles effectively. Parents received support from the program director and community resources to build parents' capacity, relationships and communication skills.

**Clearview Educational Center (CEC)** an alternative transition program for expelled middle and high school students of the SVVSD, provides academic instruction through classes and computer software, a social development component that focuses on decision making and goal-setting, group and individual counseling, parental support, service and experiential learning, and transition to school support. In the fall 2008 semester, 80% of students increased by at least one grade in language arts and ranged from .67-8.6 grade gain, 86% of students increased by at least one grade in math and ranged from .17-5.42 grade gain, and 83% of students increased by at least one grade in reading and ranged from .13-9.20 grade gain. 87.2% returned to school in fall 2008 or spring 2009 (with one student leaving Clearview for residential treatment and then returning to school) and 12.8% remain at Clearview Educational Center. In fall 2008, Alternatives for Youth received two new grants, Colorado Department of Education Expelled and At-Risk Student Services in collaboration with the St. Vrain Valley School District, and Tony Grampsas Youth Services, which provided for expansion of CEC in January 2009. CEC expanded to a full school day for all students, added additional coursework in math, science, history, English and electives, and provides transition to school support through a Transition Advocate for up to one year upon returning to school. Since its inception in 1995, the program has proven successful with 80% of students returning to a full-time and degree granting academic program.

In 2008, we improved our organizational capacity through expanding our highly qualified staff, which now includes three program directors, twelve program staff members and three administrative staff members; engaging more volunteers and youth workers to assist with our after school and summer programs and strategic planning; increasing the diversity of our Board of Directors with the addition of a Latina community leader; improving our program evaluation of NorthStar and Clearview Educational Center through the Tony Grampsas Youth Services grant, which provides evaluation support through OMNI Institute and research based pre- and post-testing of students on school bonding and life efficacy; commencing a strategic planning process through which we have identified three goal areas and steps to achieving the goals for each program and three goals for the organization as a whole; beginning a partnership with Niwot Timberline Symphony Orchestra for an annual fundraiser; and securing a grant for improving our organizational marketing in 2009.

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