



*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 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 2009, we continued our four programs on our continuum of service from prevention to intervention to rehabilitation, expanded programs, and strengthened our organization's capacity. We assisted over 1,700 youth and their parents, an increase of 700 individuals from 2008. In all of our programs, we are dedicated to collaborating 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. Over 900 youth and their parents participated 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 2009, 30% demonstrated a decrease in the number of discipline referrals and increased attendance; 80% increased academic performance or maintained good grades; and 25% of participating youth's parents attended a parents meeting. Over 80 youth participated in our 2009 Summer Program, improving their academic skills and participating in positive extracurricular activities. Twenty teen assistants assisted in the success of the Summer Program and gained job preparation experience and leadership training.

In 2009, Celebrando la Familia expanded the Homework Club at Spangler Elementary School from two to four days; served more than 120 regularly attending youth in Homework Clubs at five schools; participated with the Niwot Timberline Symphony Orchestra for a Folklorico Dance Group performance; continued 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; continued to support the St. Vrain Valley Latino Parent Involvement Collaboration, which provides twice monthly meetings to educate parents about how to be better involved in their children's lives and schools. Celebrando la Familia staff continued to be main supporters and volunteers for community events, including Cinco de Mayo, Dieciseis de Septiembre, and Dia 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.).

**Attendance Advocates**, a partnership program between AFY and the St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD) begun in 2008, provided 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, and providing ongoing support to students and parents so students can be successful in school. In 2009, Community Advocates worked with 452 students and 147 parents in two middle schools and four high schools (an expansion from four schools in 2008). 85% of students improved their attendance, and 67% of parents showed improvement in involvement with their students.

**NorthStar**, a partnership between AFY and the SVVSD, provides classes for students at risk of being suspended or expelled 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 Erie High School and a series of six free, bilingual, family-oriented evening classes in 2009. NorthStar served 72 youth and 82 parents with 95% of students and parents completing the program and 89% of students avoiding suspension or expulsion.

In 2009, evaluation of NorthStar was improved with the addition of pre- and post-testing on two assessments for students, Life Effectiveness and Colorado School Bonding. The first assessments showed that NorthStar is a successful program and that NorthStar is having above average success with students compared to other programs. Specifically, students improved most in the categories of healthy risk taking, perceived relevance of schoolwork, and enjoyment of school.

**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 2009, Clearview continued to expand services to students with the addition of physical education classes, service and experiential learning with Boulder Open Spaces, and continued experiential learning and equine therapy at Joder Arabian Ranch. The Transition Advocate position, added in 2008, has proven to be a tremendous resource to students with transition services provided for a minimum of six months following a student's return to school. 100% of students who returned to school in spring or fall 2009 finished the school year at a middle or high school.

In the 2008-2009 school year, 96% of students increased by at least one grade in language arts and ranged from .68-8.80 grade level gain, 84% of students increased by at least one grade in math and ranged from .22-8.50 grade level gain, and 83% of students increased by at least one grade in reading and ranged from .44-7.91 grade level gain. In 2009, 74% of students returned to school or adult education program, entered treatment, or remained at Clearview. Clearview students also took pre- and post-tests on Life Effectiveness and Colorado School Bonding. The results for students in spring 2009 show that Clearview is having success with the students and above average success with students compared to other programs. Specifically, students improved most in the categories of effort in school and confidence and perseverance.

Despite the current economic climate, Alternatives for Youth ended 2009 in a good financial position and with our organization stronger than ever. In 2009, we improved our organizational capacity through increasing the diversity of our Board of Directors with the addition of a Latino community leader and past AFY participant and the addition of a small business owner; participating in Boulder County's five-part series on program design and evaluation; improving coordination of all program evaluation activities; participating in a cultural competency training focused on LGBTQ youth; completing a strategic planning process; redesigning our brochure and purchasing giveaways; and expanding fundraising activities.

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