



*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 2010, 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 2,000 youth and their parents, an increase of 300 individuals from 2009. 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 700 youth and their parents participated in a variety of recreational, educational and cultural activities, including Summer Program, Folklorico Dance Group, Homework Clubs, Parents Involved in Education Meetings, and community celebrations. Over 80 youth participated in our 2010 Summer Program, improving their academic skills and participating in positive extracurricular activities. Seventeen teen assistants assisted in the success of the Summer Program and gained job preparation experience and leadership training. Of the youth served in 2010, 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. Pre- and post-tests on the Division of Behavioral Health's Y-PLAN during the 2009-2010 school year showed that between 79% and 100% of tested youth participating in Celebrando had used alcohol, tobacco or drugs (ATOD) during their lifetime; between 91% and 100% never used or stopped using ATOD; and the number of youth talking to at least one parent about the dangers of ATOD rose to 70% from 57%.

In 2010, due to changes in funding streams and changes in availability of programming through the school district and the City of Longmont that mirrored Celebrando's services, we made the decision to close the Homework Clubs. AFY will continue to support the Parents Involved in Education Meetings and community celebrations and to hold the valuable Summer Program.

**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 2010, Attendance Advocates worked with 627 students and 767 parents in two middle schools and three high schools. In the 2009-2010 school year, 59% of participating students earned or maintained passing grades in 75% of all classes. 81% of middle school students and 41% of high school students earned or maintained passing grades in 75% of all classes. 71% of students had a 10% or greater reduction in the rate of unexcused absences. 55% of parents had at least a 40% improvement in parental involvement.

**NorthStar** 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. In 2010, the program provided a life skills class to students at Heritage Middle School and Erie High School and a series of six free, bilingual, family-oriented evening classes. Of the 58 youth served in the 2009-2010 school year in the NorthStar program, 95% were not suspended or expelled, and 100% of participants completed the NorthStar classes. Youth and parents took pre- and post-tests on Colorado School Bonding

and Life Effectiveness measures during the 2009-2010 school year, and tests were submitted to CSU for analysis. Results show that participants improved overall in school bonding and life effectiveness (approaching small effect size) with the largest improvement in educational aspirations (moderate effect size) and conflict resolution (moderate effect size).

**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, restorative justice practices, and transition to school support. In the 2009-2010 school year, Clearview served 52 students and 84 parents. In a minimum of 12 weeks after entry, 77% of students increased by one grade level in math, 86% of students increased by one grade level in language arts, and 63% of students increased by one grade level in reading. 80% of students demonstrated improvement in behavior and choices. 73% of students returned to an educational program or to CEC in fall 2010. 100% of parents/guardians attended a teacher/parent or guardian conference. 10 of Clearview's students returned to school in fall 2010, and 100% of the students who are still in school had no more than one suspension and 86% had no suspensions.

In addition to the success of our programs, we are continuing and expanding collaborative partnerships. We are a member of the Longmont ASSET Coalition, a volunteer group of community members working towards bringing a substance abuse treatment program for adolescents to Longmont. The program, iThrive Longmont, began in spring 2011 at AFY. We are a part of the Inter-Agency Truancy Taskforce, an interdisciplinary collaboration created to increase student success by addressing truancy and its underlying issues through prevention, intervention and education. Finally, we continue to be a partner of parents Involved in Education, a collaboration of area organizations that provides bi-monthly meetings for parents on topics related to parenting and education to increase parent involvement in their child's education.

The greatest challenge faced in 2010 was feeling the effects of the economic downturn. To address this, we began making plans in 2009 in response to the possibility of decreased funding. In the beginning of 2009 our staff and board worked to decrease expenses (staff salaries were frozen in February 2009 and continue to be frozen and staff began paying more toward health insurance premiums) and to be vigilant over the annual budget and changes. In 2010, staff and members of the Board of Directors began meeting monthly to review programs and develop strategies to address the possibility of less funding. The meetings were deliberate and proactive. In November and December 2010 and April 2011, the Board held mini-retreats to discuss programmatic changes, focusing on what services we need to and can provide with the current level of funding.

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