

You're receiving this email because of your relationship with Alternatives for Youth.

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



youth matters

a newsletter of alternatives for youth

in this issue

[Spotlight: Skyline's Community Advocate Students](#)

[Do a Good Deed: Eat Ice Cream!](#)

[Get out There!](#)

[BoulderCounty Help.org](#)

[AFY: FYI](#)

[No "Kid"ding ...](#)

quick links

[Calendar of Events](#)

[AFY's Supporters](#)

[More about AFY](#)

spotlight: skyline's community advocate students



Who: Students at Skyline High School who have been identified as having problems with attendance and grades. 50 such students participate in our Community Advocate Program, which is designed to provide services to targeted, truant students and their parents.

How: Three Community Advocates (pictured above are two Community Advocates, Heidi Weekley who works at Frederick High School, and Paula Fredman who works at Skyline High School) work in four schools with students who are identified as having problems with attendance and their parents. At Skyline, our Community Advocate, Paula Fredman, teaches three Academic Seminars. The classes help students improve attendance and grades through tutoring, helping students set and achieve goals, and life skills assistance from Paula. Incentives such as movie gift cards provide an extra reward to students showing improvement. Just having someone who gives attention to each student has made a profound difference!

Why: Truancy has shown to be a gateway offense to a number of problems, including

volume 2: issue 4

april 2009

Dear Alexa,

With spring officially begun and warmer weather on the horizon, Alternatives for Youth (AFY) is looking forward to more community and outdoor activities with our youth and for our organization. If you missed our annual Egg Hunt on April 11 (the kids had so much fun!), join us for these other upcoming events and appearances (see our [Calendar of Events](#) page for detailed information):

- Dia de Los Ninos (Children's Day Celebration) on April 24 at Salud Family Health Center
- AFY Ice Cream Social and Deb Roberts' Birthday Celebration at Longmont's new Baskin Robbins on April 27. [Click here](#) to get the invitation.
- [Longmont Celebrates Cinco de Mayo](#) on May 2 (see the Folklorico Dance Group perform and stop by AFY's booth to play in the Cake Walk)
- AFY Carnival and Drop and Shop Rummage Sale on July 24

While making our community a better place to live and letting people know about AFY's services, these events and outdoor activities can also help youth succeed. Read the next article to find out how and also check out the No "Kid"ding article on the advantages for kids of "unplugging" (April 20-26 is TV Turnoff Week).

All of us at AFY wish you a spring full of blooming and outdoor fun!

get out there!

The Importance of Community Events and Community Involvement

Research has shown that characteristics of individuals, their families, and their environment (i.e. community, neighborhoods, schools) affect the likelihood that individuals will engage in substance abuse, delinquency, and violence and drop out of school. Other characteristics serve to protect or provide a buffer to curb the influence of negative characteristics. Among the list of identified negative characteristics or risk factors are community laws and norms favorable to drug use, firearms and crime and low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization. And among the list of protective factors are opportunities for prosocial (giving, helping and sharing) involvement in the community.



For our youth, such research means that a positive, organized community and involvement in the community that includes sharing, helping and giving to others can help our youth succeed - indeed, help them to avoid substance abuse and violence, stay in school and become contributing members of society. Part of a positive community is having safe and family-friendly events open to all community members that celebrate our community and show our youth that they are important parts of our community, sending the message that "we value you" and "we want you to have fun in your community."

Alternatives for Youth (AFY) plays an active role in Longmont and Boulder County community events because we know the impact they can have on youth and their families. Our staff chair, help organize and volunteer at a number of events (Egg Hunt, Cinco de Mayo, Dieciseis de Septiembre, and Dia de Los Muertos community celebrations). Our fundraisers are not only intended to help provide financially for AFY's services but to bring youth and their families to positive events (rummage sale and carnival, jog-a-thon and Latin Adventures concert) in the community.

In our programs, AFY teaches youth how to be positively engaged in the community and encourages them to do so. Our youth volunteer at [Joder Arabian Ranch](#) in Boulder; participate in park clean ups in the summer; spend their summers as teen leaders as mentors, chaperons and teachers to youth in our Summer Program; participate in [P.E.R.L.](#) (People Engaged in Raising Leaders), a training program designed to increase involvement among people of color on boards and commissions across Boulder County; volunteer for AFY events; perform in the Folklorico Dance Group at community events; are leaders at their schools; and volunteer as tutors for our Homework Clubs. Our youth are learning how to give back, the positive power of giving back and becoming positively engaged in their community.

As spring arrives, we look forward to doing more activities in our community and encourage you and the youth in your lives to do so also. Boulder County is home to so many great, low cost and free family-friendly events and activities as well as volunteer opportunities. Check out these websites for positive things to do in your community:

early warning signs of students headed for delinquent activity, social isolation, or educational failure. Low commitment to school has been shown to be a risk factor for substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and school dropout. Two studies have also found that truant students have low self-esteem and experience greater feelings of rejection or criticism from their parents than non-truants.

What the students at Skyline have to say:

"I appreciate how you are helping us focus on school by supporting us. I will keep working on my grades. Thank you."

"Thanks for the gift card. My goal is to get good grades and pass this semester so I can get credit towards graduating. Thank you very much."

"I'm working really hard on my attendance and my grades even when the obstacles of life put me down. But that won't stop me. Thanks."

"I don't think I deserve the gift card but it makes me feel like someone has faith in me."

join us for good sweet fun to support afy!

**Monday, April 27
5:00-9:00 p.m.
Ice Cream Social
and Deb Roberts'
Birthday
Celebration!**

**At the NEW
Baskin Robbins
17th and Pace at Fox
Creek Village**

Bring in the invitation ([click here to open](#)) to support AFY with your purchase.

Do a good deed - eat ice cream!

For more information, please call AFY at [303-776-8184](tel:303-776-8184).

afy board of directors

Greg Wagner
Board President
Chief Probation Officer, Longmont Municipal Probation

Dr. Jack Hay
Board Treasurer
Retired Assistant Superintendent, St. Vrain Valley School District

- [Alternatives for Youth's Calendar of Events](#)
- [Boulder County Children's Day and Family Week](#)
- [Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau Calendar of Events](#)
- [City of Longmont News and Events](#)
- [Longmont Mom Blog](#)
- [Volunteer Connection](#)

bouldercountyhelp.org

Boulder County's New Network of Care Online Service Directory

On March 28, Boulder County launched [bouldercountyhelp.org](#), an online directory of human services in Boulder County. The site is filled with government agencies and non-profits providing services and is updated regularly by providers.

Through [bouldercountyhelp.org](#), users can link to community resources, services, and programs and find information and assistance for a wide variety of needs. The website is part of Boulder County's [Human Services Strategic Plan](#) and is designed to be a one stop shop for finding help with human services in Boulder County.

On the website, users can:

- Create their own secure account to keep track of services and agencies they use
- View information in a variety of languages
- Search for services in key areas for families and children, seniors, people with disabilities, and behavioral health and wellness or through the Resource Book available on the web site
- Design a WRAP - wellness recovery action plan
- Track legislative action on topics of interest
- And more!

Additionally, information on [bouldercountyhelp.org](#) will be shared with United Way's 2-1-1 Colorado, the national telephone number for free access to health and human services information and referral. Both sources are all part of Boulder County's goal to help people help themselves. With these two resources, any door is the right door for finding help.

afy: fyi



Program Updates

AFY's four programs enjoyed a week off for spring break and are now reengaging all the youth we work with. Following are highlights from our four programs:

Celebrando la Familia's Homework Clubs continue to serve a full load of elementary and middle school students with 30-40 participants at each of our locations, Columbine, Rocky Mountain, and Spangler Elementary and Heritage and Longs Peak Middle Schools. At each site, students receive free, bilingual tutoring, building in organizational and life skills, and positive activities. Celebrando staff is beginning work on plans for the Summer Program to keep many of the Homework Club youth engaged in academic and positive recreational activities over the summer break.

Celebrando staff are continuing plans for upcoming events, including the Folklorico Dance Group practicing for [Longmont Celebrates Cinco de Mayo](#) on May 2, and Celebrando's program director, Mary Vigil, assisting in the Cinco de Mayo preparations as co-chair of the celebration committee.

Latino Parent Involvement in Education meetings will be held in April and May at Skyline High School with a presentation by [LEVI](#) (Longmont Ending Violence Initiative) and [SPAN](#) (Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence) on "Domestic and Dating Violence Prevention" on April 22 and Healthy Youth Alliance on "Staying Connected with Kids" on May 13. The monthly meetings are intended to provide education to parents about how to be better involved in their children's lives and schools. A complete calendar of meetings, held Wednesday evenings, is available on the [Alternatives for Youth](#) website. A new calendar for 2009-2010 school year is currently being created.

Girls Group, taught by Josie Vigil, continues with 20 new girls at Heritage Middle School and 13 girls at Longs Peak Middle School. The groups are a supportive and positive peer group that teaches a select group of girls life skills through the [Girls Circle](#) curriculum. The girls learn valuable relationship and communication skills that improve their friendships and success at school.

Our **Community Advocate** program, which works with targeted, truant students and their parents to help students improve attendance and success in school, is continuing at Heritage and Longs Peak Middle School and Skyline and Frederick High School with great success. The Community Advocates currently serve over 100 students and are seeing an increase in attendance, an increase in understanding of truancy laws and parent involvement, and appreciation from parents in the extra support from Community Advocates, each of whom has dedicated time at each school and the ability to check on students as needed. In April, Community Advocates began giving out incentives to participating students for improved attendance and began working with students on improving grades.

Rick Beisel
Board Secretary
Attorney

Bob Arnold
Board Member
Owner, Aspen Laser
and Technologies

Carmen Ramirez
Board Member
Program Coordinator
and Mediator, City of
Longmont Community
Relations Program

Connie Syferd
Board Member
Executive Director,
Learning Services
Center, St. Vrain Valley
School District

NorthStar continues classes focusing on life skills, communication, and anger management at Heritage Middle School and evening classes at AFY for students at-risk of suspension or expulsion or who are involved in the judicial system. The Program Director, Emanuel, began a new series of six-session evening classes on on April 13. Evening classes are open to any families who will benefit from the instruction. For a calendar and more information about the evening classes, [click here](#).

Clearview Educational Center continues to work with expelled students in the full day program, offering individualized academic assistance through classes and academic software, individual and group counseling, life skills classes and experiential and service learning opportunities. With the spring 2009 semester progressing, Clearview continues to accept new students and is now serving 24 middle and high school students. 10 former Clearview students who have returned to school continue to receive transition support through Clearview's Transition Advocate.

This month, Clearview students will participate in a class on technology, learning to use basic programs, and high school students will begin a career exploration class. Students will get out of the classroom with field trips to the Botanical Gardens and Celestial Seasonings. Student lead parent/teacher conferences begin later this month.

no "kid"ding...

Did You Know?

April 20-26 is Turnoff Week, a week to turn off the television and encourage youth and families to try other activities. Turnoff Week is a great time to think about youth, the impact of television on their lives and how to help youth be tv-smart. Did you know:



- Two-thirds of infants and toddlers and children under 6 watch a TV an average of 2 hours a day.
- Kids and teens 8 to 18 years spend nearly 4 hours a day in front of a TV screen and almost 2 additional hours on the computer (outside of schoolwork) and playing video games.
- The average American child will witness 200,000 violent acts on television by age 18. Kids who view violent acts are more likely to show aggressive behavior but also fear that the world is scary and that something bad will happen to them.
- Children who consistently spend more than 4 hours per day watching TV are more likely to be overweight.
- Youth in the United States see 40,000 commercials each year.
- TV characters often depict risky behaviors, such as smoking and drinking, and also reinforce gender-role and racial stereotypes.
- Studies have shown that teens who watch lots of sexual content on TV are more likely to initiate intercourse or participate in other sexual activities earlier than peers who don't watch sexually explicit shows.
- Alcohol ads on TV have increased over the last few years and more underage kids are being exposed to them than ever before such that youth exposure to alcohol ads on TV increased by 30% from 2001 to 2006.
- Kids who watch 5 or more hours of TV per day are far more likely to begin smoking cigarettes than those who watch less than the recommended 2 hours a day. Although cigarette ads on television have been banned, kids and teens can still see plenty of people smoking on programs and movies airing on TV.
- As kids get older, too much screen time can interfere with activities such as being physically active, reading, doing homework, playing with friends, and spending time with family.
- Hundreds of studies of the effects of TV violence on children and teenagers have found that children may become "immune" or numb to the horror of violence; gradually accept violence as a way to solve problems; and imitate the violence they observe on television.
- On the positive side, studies have indicated that
 - Television increases the general vocabulary of children, especially when it involves terms referring to outer space.
 - Television provides opportunities for children to learn about all kinds of things, although whether they do so depends largely on the specific programs the child actually watches.
 - Television can increase a child's range of interests since it exposes him or her to a variety of activities and topics he or she might not otherwise encounter.
- Parents and guardians can be TV smart and teach their kids to be TV smart by:
 - Making a checklist of the values that they want shows to reinforce (honesty, responsibility, kindness) and checking television shows kids watch against the list.

- Watching the shows with their kids and knowing what their kids are watching.
- Not allowing kids to watch TV shows or movies that are known to be violent or racially or sexually stereotyping.
- Setting viewing limits.
- Talking with their kids about the show as they watch.
- Limiting kids' exposure to TV commercials by having kids watch public television stations, recording programs and fast forwarding through commercials, and buying, renting or borrowing from the library children's videos or DVDs.
- Teaching kids to be savvy consumers by talking about the products advertised on TV.
- Offering fun alternatives to TV watching, including stocking the room in which you have your TV with plenty of other non-screen entertainment (books, kids' magazines, toys, puzzles, board games, etc.) to encourage kids to do something other than watch the tube.
- Keeping TVs out of bedrooms.
- Turning the TV off during meals and homework times.
- Treating TV as a privilege to be earned - not a right.
- Setting a good example by limiting their own TV viewing.

You can find more information about youth and television and what to do when the television is off at the following websites:

[Center for Screen-Time Awareness](#)
[Children and TV Violence](#)
[Green Hour](#)
[How TV Affects Your Child](#)
[Kids' Movies and TV](#)
[Television and Children: Guidelines for Parents](#)
[TV-Free or TV-Smart?](#)
[TV-Turnoff Week and other television resources](#)

Note: The above is provided as information and does not indicate an endorsement by Alternatives for Youth of the listed websites.

Alternatives for Youth, Inc.'s mission is to promote 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. Since 1978, Alternatives for Youth has been providing services to youth and their families in the Longmont community. Last year, over 800 youth and their families received services through Alternatives for Youth, including after-school homework clubs, parenting education, an alternative school for expelled youth, positive recreational activities, youth leadership opportunities, academic enrichment activities, and service learning activities.

Thank you for your support!

Alexa Van Dalsem
 Resource Development Director
 Alternatives for Youth

get involved!

Yes! I/We want to help young people succeed! I/We wish to support Alternatives for Youth's work in helping youth succeed by:

Volunteering

Making a gift donation of: \$

Name:

City, State, Zip:

Address:

E-mail:

Phone:

You can make a secure credit card donation to Alternatives for Youth using GivingFirst or Google Checkout at www.alternativesforyouth.org/contribute.html. To make a donation by check or cash or to volunteer please return this form to Alternatives for Youth, 24 Ninth Avenue, Longmont, CO 80501 or call 303.776.8184.

Alternatives for Youth is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Donations to Alternatives for Youth are tax deductible. We do not sell or trade our mailing or e-mailing list to anyone.

[Forward email](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to alexa@alternativesforyouth.org by

alexa@alternativesforyouth.org.

[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Alternatives for Youth | 24 Ninth Avenue | Longmont | CO | 80501