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youth matters

a newsletter of alternatives for youth

in this issue

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AFY's Programs Impact Lives

AFY: FYI

No "Kid"ding...

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Dear Alexa,

The 2010-2011 school year is upon us, and we at Alternatives for Youth are welcoming back students and finishing plans to begin our programs. Our program directors and staff are opening up their offices, cleaning classrooms, purchasing supplies, getting classrooms and curriculum ready, training new staff, and scheduling student and parent meetings.

We are so excited to begin the school year and to start working with youth again to help them succeed in school and life!

helping youth succeed

AFY's Programs Impact Lives

As we begin a new school year and look forward to working with our youth, Alternatives for Youth has been reviewing the impact of our programs last school year, celebrating our impact, and making adjustments in our programs.



Following are highlights of the impact of our programs in the 2009-2010 school year:

Celebrando la Familia

- Celebrando la Familia served 892 students and 397 parents in Homework Club, Folklorico Dance Group, Summer Program, Parent Meetings, and SASSIE (Sharing Achievement through Student Success in Education).
- 25% of participating youth's parents attended a parents meeting.
- 80% of youth increased academic performance or maintain good grades.
- 91% of students stopped or never used alcohol.
- 94% of students stopped or never used cigarettes.
- 97% of students stopped or never used inhalants.
- 98% of students stopped or never used marijuana.
- 100% of students topped or never used other tobacco products, methamphetamine, or other drugs.

Attendance Advocates

- Attendance Advocates served 395 students (134 middle school and 261 high school) and 484 parents (143 middle school and 341 high school) at six schools.
- 59% of students (81% of middle school students and 41% of high school students) working with Attendance Advocates earned or maintained passing grades in 75% of all classes.

quick links

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spotlight: rick beisel, jr. 1954-2009



This month in our Spotlight, we celebrate the life of Rick Beisel, Jr. (pictured with his wife, Cheryl), a Board Member of Alternatives for Youth.

On August 9, Rick passed away unexpectedly at his home.

Rick was a Board

Member at AFY for over six years. Besides providing assistance as a lawyer, Rick was deeply passionate about our work with youth. Our Board President, Dr. Jack Hay, describes Rick as having "a unique combination of technical experience and a huge heart and tremendous passion for underserved children and families.

In his practical thinking, he always brought our conversations back to our main focus, "It's all about the kids." His co-workers at Denver Housing Authority, where Rick worked for the last two years as the Special Programs Attorney, remember the many times Rick told them about AFY and how Rick's eyes just lit up when he talked about AFY.

Rick was dedicated throughout his life to helping the underserved and to volunteering. While living in Cortez, CO, Rick helped to form the Four Corners Child Advocacy Center and served with numerous nonprofits, including 12 years on the boards of the Advocacy Center and Montezuma County Hospital and Montezuma County Economic Council.

Rick was Volunteer Connection's Volunteer of the Month in August 2008 and stated in [an article in the Times-Call](#), "Volunteering provides we with a sense of satisfaction and

- 67% of students had a 10% or greater reduction in the rate of unexcused absences. 90% of students had a 5% or greater reduction in the rate of unexcused absences.
- 61% of parents had at least a 40% improvement in parental involvement.

NorthStar

- NorthStar served 58 youth and 12 parents.
- 100% of students and parents completed their NorthStar class.
- 95% of students remained in school without being suspended or expelled (two students were suspended and one student expelled).
- 95% of participating students and parents report improved relationships between each other and with schools.

Clearview Educational Center

- Clearview Educational Center served 55 students and 90 parents.
- In math, 77% of students increased by one grade level in a minimum of 12 weeks after entry.
- In language arts, 86% of students increased by one grade level in a minimum of 12 weeks after entry. In reading, 63% of students increased by one grade level in a minimum of 12 weeks after entry.
- 73% of 2009-2010 students returned to an educational program or will return to CEC in fall 2010.
- 93% of students who returned to SVVSD in 2009-2010, had no more than one suspension within the first semester.
- 80% of students demonstrated improvement in behavior and choices.
- 100% of parents attended a teacher/parent or guardian conference and school meetings.

In the 2010-2011 school year, we will continue our programs with improved services to continue impacting youth and their parents and to achieve our goal of helping youth succeed in school and in life.

afy: fy



Program Updates

This month, our programs get to do what we love the most - working with youth and finding ways to support them in being successful. Our programs aim to provide a combination of mental health, life skills and academic support to target those areas where our youth struggle the most. Following are updates about our core programs:

Celebrando la Familia's staff was able to take a break in the beginning of August after finishing up the eight-week Summer Program with 60 elementary students and 20 teen assistants. This school year, Celebrando will see some program changes as Homework Clubs change to providing afterschool tutoring in collaboration with the City of Longmont's collaborative AfterSchool Program (with recreational services provided by Parks and Recreation and youth development services provided by Children and Youth Resources) at three middle schools. Celebrando will continue the Folklorico Dance Group, Parent Meetings in collaboration with the St. Vrain Valley Latino Parent Involvement in Education taskforce, and S.A.S.S.I.E (Sharing Achievement through Student

general well-being. Even if you have a bad day at work, volunteering will make you feel good about yourself."

Outside of his work with nonprofits, Rick grew up in a military family and graduated from Arvada High School. He did his undergraduate work at Western State College of Colorado and his law degree at Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA. Before working at Denver Housing Authority, Rick was a contract attorney at Qwest. Rick was a master handyman and a great at trivia. His is survived by his wife of 27 years, Cheryl, son, Andrew, daughters Christine and Carrie, granddaughter, sister, niece and nephew.

Our Executive Director, Deb Roberts recalled how Rick carried around her business card in his front pocket to share with other people. Deb said, "Rick really cared about AFY. We will greatly miss his wise counsel and passion for the kids."

We say goodbye this month to Rick, who we will remember as an "all around great guy," and a man who helped underserved and underprivileged children with wisdom and passion.

save the date!

Please plan to join

Success in Education), lead by young adults to provide support to eighth through twelfth graders in graduating high school and attending college and/or entering a career after high school.

Attendance Advocates returned to school with the students, opening their offices at Heritage and Longs Peak Middle School and Frederick, Longmont, and Skyline High School. Advocates will continue working with students from last year and new students this year who struggle with truancy. Advocates work in relationship with students and parents to uncover why students are not attending and to design practical steps to help students improve attendance.

NorthStar, provides classes for students at-risk of dropping out, suspension and expulsion as well as evening classes for students and parents around anger management. The classes follow [The Council for Boys and Men](#) curriculum, a strengths-based group approach to promote boys' and young men's safe, strong and healthy passage through pre-teen and adolescent years. This year, NorthStar has a new Program Director, Max Nealon, who will work with boys at Heritage Middle School and AFY.

Clearview Educational Center, an alternative transition program for expelled middle and high school students of the St. Vrain Valley School District, provides academic instruction through classes and computer software, life skills classes, group and individual counseling, parental support, service and experiential learning, physical education, and transition to school support. Clearview staff are back from summer break and making preparations to welcome students back the last week of August.

iThrive Longmont continues to move forward with plans to begin a pilot program to provide services to adolescents struggling with substance abuse and their parents. We plan to begin the low cost program on September 8, 2010. The Longmont Asset Coalition, which oversees the program, continues to seek expanded funding for the program and to design marketing materials. For more information, visit the [iThrive Longmont website](#) or call AFY at 303-776-8184.

no "kid"ding...

Did You Know?

With the school year just beginning, now is a good time for parents to understand the importance of their participation in their child's education and for parents to take steps to be a part of their child's education. Did you know:



- According to decades of research, when parents are involved in their child's education, students have:

- Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
- Better school attendance
- Increased motivation, better self-esteem
- Lower rates of suspension
- Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
- Fewer instances of violent behavior
- Better relationship with their parents

- Parents who are involved in their child's education develop positive attitudes towards school and have a better understanding of the

us for

**AFY's Golf
Tournament
Sun., Sept. 26
8:30 a.m.**

**at
Colorado
National Golf
Club in Erie at
Vista Ridge**

Details to follow.

afy board of directors

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Officer,
Longmont Police
Department

Connie Syferd
Board Member
Assistant
Superintendent for

schooling process.

- Parent participation in education is more important in determining a students' academic success than family income level.

- The biggest problem facing public school is lack of parental involvement.

- The more parents participate in schooling, consistently, whether it's as a volunteer, a home teacher, in advocacy, in helping schools make decisions or as fundraisers, the better for student achievement.

- Parent's expectations of their child's academic attainment and satisfaction with their child's education are the most consistent predictors of a child's academic achievement.

- Most students, even teenagers, want their parents to be involved in their school.

- Parents can be involved in their child's education in numerous ways that fit many different types of family situations and schedules. Parents can be involved by:

- Going to events at school (back to school night, conferences, recitals, sports events, dances).
- Keeping lines of communication with their child's school open by reading notes, flyers, newsletters and e-mails from school, taking phone calls, and calling and e-mailing teachers when needed.
- Carrying class room lessons over into real life in every day activities such as cooking, reading signs while driving, writing and reading notes and recipes, and grocery shopping.
- Reading to children at home or having a family reading time. A child's reading achievement is significantly improved when he or she practices reading at home or is read to.
- Contributing to their child's education by reading to their children, taking trips, visiting local attractions and museums, guiding TV watching, having books available, going to the library, and providing other stimulating experiences.
- Volunteering at school as time allows in the classrooms, office, playground, lunch room, or with fundraising.
- Going to school regularly. When parents do so, it helps children see that school and home are connected and that school is part of the whole family's life.
- Having a family routine that provides space and time for getting ready for school in the morning, doing homework at night, and getting rest for the next day.
- Advocating for their child if he or she needs something at school that has not been provided.
- Being there for their child for transitions, including when the school year starts and ends and when he or she transitions from elementary to middle, middle to high and high school to college.

You can find more information about parental involvement and ideas for being involved in their child's school at the following websites:

[Involving Parents in the Education of Their Children](#)

[National Education Association's Parent Resources](#)

[Parent's Involvement in Children's Education](#)

[U.S. Department of Education's Parent Power: Build the Bridge to Success](#)

[What Research Says about Parent Involvement in Children's Education](#)

Student Achievement,
St. Vrain Valley School
District

Note: Websites are provided for information and do not indicate an endorsement by Alternatives for Youth. You can find past No "Kid"ding . . . Did You Know? articles on our website by [clicking here](#).

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 1,000 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:

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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.

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