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youth matters

a newsletter of alternatives for youth

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spotlight: all in, a non-profit, llc

"Don't gamble on our children's future . . . invest in it."

What: All In a Non-Profit, LLC is dedicated to helping non-profits working with youth and in education with fundraising. All In was co-founded by Angie Pike and Lisa Matthews, two members of the Longmont community who are also mothers, dedicated to supporting strong family values, education, and health,

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Dear Alexa,

As we get closer to the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year, the holiday lights and seasonal celebrations offer a wonderful distraction from the short, cold days, and a reminder that spring will come again.

Like the holiday lights, the youth and families we work with are bright lights throughout our year at Alternatives for Youth. In our four programs and work with over 1,000 individuals, we see lives changing, hope returning, and brighter futures ahead.

This month, as we celebrate the holidays, our staff will also gather to celebrate our youth and families. From all of us at Alternatives for Youth, we wish you wonderful celebrations. Happy Holidays!

gifts of art and activity support afy

Creative Gift Ideas

With the holiday season upon us, you may be looking for a few great, last minute gifts. Through two community partners, Alternatives for Youth offers creative gifts that are fun to receive and that support our work in helping youth succeed. These include:



- **Purchasing art work** through [Jazzgoods](#), a local company that supports non-profits through the sale of original artwork. 50% of all proceeds from your purchase will benefit AFY with the remaining 50% benefiting the artist. Jazzgoods' original prints and cards make great holiday gifts!
- **Purchasing a \$10 "Resolutions to Go" box** through [Alpha Martial Arts](#). Each "Resolutions to Go" box includes a one-month unlimited membership to Alpha Martial Arts and [Anytime Fitness](#) in Longmont and all proceeds benefit AFY. Alpha Martial Arts offers high quality training using a mixed martial arts curriculum to ages 4-60. Anytime Fitness is a 24 hour, 7 day a week, 365 days a year health club. A great gift to a martial arts enthusiast, inspiring young ninja, or exerciser!
- **Make a tax-deductible financial donation in a gift recipient's name.** Donations can be mailed to Alternatives for Youth at 24 Ninth Avenue, Longmont, CO 80501 or made online through our [Contribute](#) web page.

Through our programs, community collaborations and even this newsletter, we provide innovative and supportive programs to over 1,000 youth and their parents to help youth academically and socially. You can learn more about our programs through our [website](#), monthly

and best friends. As Angie said about her work with All In, "Life is filled with ups and downs, and having the support of friends makes the joys and struggles that we are faced with more exciting and less trying. That is what we see in organizations like AFY, and it is our motivation and desire to help make sure these programs have continued success."

Who: All In was co-founded by Angie and Lisa, who met each other about five years ago and soon became best friends. With the same faith, enjoying spending time with each others' families, and esteeming to help make our youth strive for higher education and uphold strong moral standards, All In grew out of their desire to support their passions in the community through their gifts in fundraising. Angie said, "A partnership comes in many forms, but sustaining it can be hard work and fun at the same time. One of the best partnerships I have developed is the one I have with my best friend, Lisa. Co-founding All In has made us grow to appreciate each other even more and work is much more rewarding."

Angie and Lisa have diverse education and career backgrounds. Lisa is an alumnus of the University of California Los Angeles, has practiced family law with her sister

[newsletters](#) and newly released video, [AFY 2009 Year in Pictures!](#)

Contributions from people like you directly impact youth in our community. Thank you for considering a gift that supports AFY.

from the executive director



Alternatives for Youth Turning 25!

For the last 25 years, Alternatives for Youth (AFY) has helped youth in the greater Longmont area succeed through a variety of programs. But do you know how AFY started?

AFY began in 1978 as Alternatives for Youth Out of School in Boulder and worked with students who had dropped out of school. In 1980, a police shooting of two Hispanic youth created a rise in racial tension in Longmont. At that time, AFY was invited to Longmont to assist in healing the community. AFY was so successful that a group of local citizens formed a board of directors and incorporated AFY as a non-profit based in Longmont.

AFY has always remained dedicated to helping youth and to doing so by responding to the needs of the community, changing and creating new programs. And now in 2010, we are going to celebrate our Silver Anniversary! Throughout 2010, we'll bring blasts from the past and information about AFY's achievements over 25 years.

We also hope you will join us for an exciting celebration event! We will celebrate with

Alternatives for Youth 25th Silver Anniversary

Saturday, February 13, 2010

7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Ion Place in Prospect

Dinner, Live Music and Auction

Call 303-776-8184 for ticket information.

Best wishes in the holiday season,
Deborah Roberts

afy: fyi

Program Updates

In this holiday season of celebration, we at Alternatives for Youth celebrate all the youth and parents who take part in our programs and take the steps to succeed. Following are updates about what the youth and parents are involved in:

Celebrando la Familia's Homework Clubs provided bilingual tutoring and assistance with organization after school to approximately 100 students at Heritage Middle School and Columbine, Spangler and Rocky Mountain Elementary Schools. Students had a safe place to go after school with caring adults to help them with their homework.



Latino Parent Involvement in Education meetings, held in collaboration with other area organizations, in November and December covered "Encouraging Positive Behavior - 40 Assets" and "Finding Balance -

Renee, taught middle school students, and still substitute teaches. She and her husband, Rick own and build Matthews Custom Homes.

Angie holds a Bachelors of Arts in English Literature with a minor in Psychology from the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, a second Bachelor in Science in Psychology with an emphasis on behavioral analysis from Kaplan University, and is currently pursuing a Masters Degree in Psychology and Healthcare Management. She is also a published fiction writer and distributor of Bazi, a nutritional supplement.

Partnership with AFY: All In has begun working with Alternatives for Youth on our 25th Silver Anniversary celebration to be held on Saturday, February 13. Everyone is invited to join in what promises to be an incredible celebration and night to remember. Save the date!

For more information, see our [Calendar of Events](#) or call AFY at 303-776-8184.

\$10 resolutions to go box supports AFY

Give the gift of fitness and success to someone you know or to yourself!

Stress Management." In January, the meetings will be on January 13, "Positive Parenting - Strengthening Families and Positive Discipline" and on January 27, "CELA/CSAP - Tips for Success and Test Preparation" at Longs Peak Middle School. All meetings are free, open to all interested parents, and include childcare, light dinner and Spanish translation. Meeting dates and topics are available from our [Calendar of Events](#).

NorthStar classes continued at Heritage Middle School with eighth graders and at Erie High School after school. As the semester comes to a close, and NorthStar's Director, Emanuel Barr, wraps up classes, Emanuel has seen great progress in his students' behavior and in class leaders and seen them really start to open up to him and each other. The boys at Erie even requested that Emanuel continue meeting with them next semester! 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. NorthStar evening classes, which focus on anger management, conflict resolution and communication within a family, are offered to all interested families. The evening classes are offered monthly and dates can be found on our [NorthStar web page](#).

The **Attendance Advocate** program, a partnership with the St. Vrain Valley School District, continued in six schools, Heritage and Longs Peak Middle Schools and Frederick, Longmont, Silver Creak and Skyline High Schools, working with approximately 150 students. Through relationships with the students, Attendance Advocates are able to help students and parents uncover the underlying reasons students are not attending school and to connect students to needed resources to address any needs. Attendance Advocates are then able to help students improve attendance, avoid diversion, and improve academically.

There is a buzzing, transitional energy in the air at **Clearview Educational Center** as eight of our students get ready to graduate from Clearview. There are many preparations to attend to including a graduation ceremony, re-entry meetings, finalizing grades, and obtaining closure in the therapeutic relationships students have developed with their Clearview counselors. And while some of our current students are graduating, new students are being interviewed and readied to enter Clearview.

The last few weeks of the fall 2009 semester went by quickly! Students have been working hard in their academic classes and are closely following the events unfolding at the [Climate Change Summit](#) in Copenhagen, Denmark. Students will end this week by writing letters to the delegates, offering their own creative ideas and suggestions on how to solve the problem.

Students enjoyed a day of experiential outdoor education at Boulder County Open Space and Mountain Parks. Ranger Kelly set up several scavenger hunts for students to navigate and chart using only a blank map of the open space area and a compass. The students impressed Clearview staff with their diligence, resourcefulness, teamwork, and motivation. At the finish line, the group met to collect their rewards, and the unexpected arrival of an endangered Golden Eagle circling low in the sky stunned them. Ranger Kelly explained to the students that this sighting was very rare and special.

Clearview also hosted a potluck style Thanksgiving feast for students and their families before the Thanksgiving break. Everyone enjoyed a day of relaxation and bonding as they shared homemade recipes in a

Alpha Martial Arts,
a new martial arts
studio in
Longmont, and
Anytime Fitness
present \$10
"Resolutions to Go"
boxes.

Each box contains:

*

1-month
UNLIMITED
membership to
Alpha Martial Arts

*

1-month
UNLIMITED
membership to
Anytime Fitness

*

Support for AFY!

To purchase a box or
 for more information,
 contact Alternatives
 for Youth at
 303-776-8184 or Alpha
 Martial Arts at
 720-939-7070. Offered
 for a limited time,
 November
 2009-January 2010.

*Alpha Martial Arts is
 committed to providing high
 quality training using a mixed
 martial arts curriculum for
 kids as young as 4 to adults 60
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 believes that you must be
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pleasant atmosphere of appreciation. Before the meal, one student's father expressed immense gratitude for Clearview with tears in his eyes, a gesture that deeply moved the hard working staff and some of the other students.

The graduation ceremony on December 18 will include food, academic awards, and special handmade, beaded key chains for the graduates. Each bead on the key chain represents the parting wisdom and warm wishes of a particular Clearview staff member. This keepsake will help students to hold onto the positivity and support they were surrounded by as students at Clearview. We wish our graduates all the best as they continue on with their education. Clearview is looking forward to a restful Christmas break and an even more exciting spring semester.

This month's update from Clearview was contributed by Rhea Maze, Clearview's English teacher.

no "kid"ding...

Did You Know?

All the joys of the big holiday season are upon us. How wonderful the holidays can be for kids with a break from school, time with family and remembering family traditions and holidays past. But just like adults, kids can have added



stress during the holidays from the excitement of the holidays and seeing family and friends. The holidays may be especially stressful for those whose families have changed over the last year due to divorce, moves, death, loss of income or jobs, mental health issues and military service overseas. There are things parents can do to help kids cope.

Do you know the signs of stress? These include:

- Tears for seemingly minor reasons.
- Nervous behaviors such as nail biting and hair twirling.
- Physical complaints, such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, diarrhea, etc.
- Regression to younger behaviors: bed wetting, eating with hands.
- Withdrawal from school friends or siblings.
- Any behavior that your child doesn't normally do could be a sign of holiday anxiety

Do you know what you can do? Parents and guardians can be proactive in helping their children enjoy the holidays by following tips appropriate for their children, such as:

Take it easy. This might require taking children out of the spotlight during holiday plays or performances at relatives' homes; reducing the time you spend at parties by combining parties and get-togethers; and limiting travel plans.

Rest and relaxation. Make sure kids get plenty of rest. While it may be exciting to stay up late, lack of sleep often leads to increased irritability. If you don't already know, ask your kids what is fun and relaxing for them. Do they wind down with music, reading, spending time with you, playing with siblings or doing fun activities like watching movies and sledding?

Remember routines. During the holidays children find their routines

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disrupted as they are often dragged along on shopping expeditions or taken to events over which they have no control. Especially for small children, when a routine is broken, stress can result.

Plan early and include your kids in the planning. Kids need some degree of control and predictability. Prolonged uncertainty, constantly changing plans or last minute decisions can all increase stress. Early planning may also help with sticking to routines.

Family traditions. Uphold and maintain family traditions even if a parent is absent. Kids count on certain traditions. They can have an important grounding effect by letting kids know that even though some things have changed, other things have remained the same.

Limit television and video games. Limit the amount of time kids spend alone watching TV or playing video games. Encourage physical activity and interaction with peers.

Don't promise things you can't produce. For example, don't promise a parent will be home in time for the holidays if the decision is really out of your control.

Don't try and compensate for an absent family member with lots of gifts. What most kids really want is your time and attention. During the winter months, it can become so easy to stay inside and depend on television for entertainment. Take time to get outside, even in the cold, and play with your kids.

Take care of yourself. Try to avoid getting overloaded with obligations. If you feel stressed, it increases the pressure and tension on your children. Cope with your own holiday anxiety. The less holiday stress you feel, the more relaxed your children will be.

Give back. Volunteer at a food bank, kids' hospital or community center. Find ways to give to your community; volunteering often relieves feelings of holiday anxiety. Check out [Boulder County's Volunteer Connection Holiday Opportunity and Donation Guide](#) for ways you can give back through volunteering.

Also consider giving back in your gift giving by giving gifts that support a cause (see [Gifts That Do Good](#) for suggestions) or sponsoring a favorite animal (see the [World Wildlife Federation](#) or the [Longmont Humane Society](#) for some ideas) You'll find that such gifts make the holidays more meaningful to your kids!

Keep up good eating habits. Between parents and guardians being too busy to cook a nutritious meal at home and all of the sugary holiday treats, kids and parents end up with a stressed out, hungry family. Plan at least one healthy meal as a family everyday. Remember to toss in a healthy snack while you're visiting the mall.

Attitude check. Both children and their parents need to have an attitude check before the holiday season begins. Take a deep breath, and have everyone in the family pledge to make the holiday season a time of joy and peace. Remind everyone that with the right attitude, that goal can be met. Remember to laugh together.

With some planning and attentive effort, everyone can enjoy and have fun during the holidays. For more information and resources, check out these links:

[10 Ways to Reduce Kids' Stress](#)

[Helping Children Cope with Holiday Stress](#)
[Holiday Stress and Children](#)
[Holidays & Meltdowns - They Go Together Like Peanut Butter & Jelly](#)
[Alternatives for Youth's Resource Page](#) for Boulder County services

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

Address:

Phone:

City, State, Zip:

E-mail:

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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