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youth matters

a newsletter of alternatives for youth

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Dear Alexa,

The annual holiday Valentine's Day is a wonderful reminder of the importance of love in all our lives. In Alternatives for Youth's prevention work with youth and families, we see every day the importance of youth being attached to their parents or guardians, having connection with other caring adults, and having healthy friendships with their peers. In other words, love from parents, adult friends and friends makes a huge difference in youths' lives!

quick links

[Calendar of Events](#)

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[AFY's Facebook Profile](#)

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This month, consider how you can show a youth in your life - your child, a youth friend, a friend's child - that you care for them and support them. Adolescents, especially, have plenty of negative and difficult interactions throughout the day. Check out our "No 'Kid'ding . . . Did You Know" article for some suggestions.

At AFY, we continue to provide a variety of programs run by safe and caring adults for youth who can really use one more second (or third or fourth) chance from an adult. We strive to help all youth have happy, successful lives.

spotlight: alpha martial arts



Who: [Alpha Martial Arts](#) is a new martial arts studio in Longmont at 701 Delaware Avenue. Opened in January 2010 by Sensei Michael and Shelby Wax, Alpha Martial Arts offers high quality training using a mixed martial arts curriculum to ages 4-60.

Michael has been involved in the martial

youth in action

The Good News about Our Community's Youth

We often hear about and concentrate on the problems and issues facing our community's youth. But youth in the St. Vrain Valley are also doing many amazing and positive things! This month, as we consider ways to show youth we care, we want to share some of the ways that youth show they care.

St. Vrain Valley youth are:

- **Excelling.** 77.6% of St. Vrain Valley students graduated high school in 2009, above the state average of 74.6%. For the last three years, St. Vrain Valley student growth rates have grown as fast as or faster than the state average in math, reading and writing. In AFY programs, we see the majority of our students making progress in grades, reaching grade level in core academic subjects, and improving attendance.
- **Leading.** 16 youth serve on [Longmont's Youth Council](#), actively advising the City Council with recommendations on issues concerning youth and assisting City Staff in considering youth perspectives in its planning. At each of the high schools, students lead the school through School Council.
- **Making Healthy Choices.** According to the 2007 Youth Risk



arts for over 10 years and currently holds a second-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do and is studying Gracie Jiu-jitsu. He has competed in creative forms, weapons, and traditional forms at the state, national, and world level for several years, earning numerous titles.

Shelby holds a second-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, has studied numerous styles of martial arts, including Shudokan karate, kickboxing, and Gracie Jiu-jitsu for over 18 years. She has competed at the national and international levels in sparring and forms.

Michael and Shelby are also both teachers.

Michael teaches middle school science at Flagstaff Academy and Shelby teaches business and technology at Carbon Valley Secondary Academy.

Support of AFY: As part of their grand opening, Alpha Martial Arts chose Alternatives for Youth as the non-profit partner in a fundraiser as part of their support of the community's youth.

Through the sales of "Resolutions to Go" boxes, Alpha Martial Arts raised \$300 for AFY's programs! Michael and Shelby presented the check to the AFY Board of Directors in February.

Thank you Michael and Shelby for all you do for our community's youth

Behavior Survey, among the St. Vrain Valley School District high school students:

- 81.4% do not currently smoke
- 90.4% believe smoking a pack or more a day poses moderate to great health risks
- 55.8% have not drank alcohol in the last 30 days
- 61.6% have never used marijuana
- 63.8% are abstaining from sex
- 72.9% exercises for 60 minutes for 3 or more days within a week of the survey
- 60.5% participate in team sports

- **Serving.** The [Volunteer Connection](#) regularly assists youth involved in honor societies, sports teams, and Scout troops with finding volunteer positions. 10-15 youth contact Alternatives for Youth each year to volunteer with our Homework Clubs, wanting to give back to other kids. 20 middle and high school youth volunteer with our Summer Program each year, using their summer to help younger kids.

St. Vrain Valley youth contribute much to our community! The next time you see a youth in action, take the time to thank him or her and recognize his or her contribution.

from the executive director

AFY's 25th Silver Anniversary - Thank you!

On Saturday, February 13, friends of Alternatives for Youth and community members gathered to celebrate AFY's 25th Silver Anniversary at Pinocchio's. The wonderful evening provided a time for all of us to reflect on AFY's history and contribution as well as a time to celebrate and support AFY.

We want to thank all of those who supported AFY at our Silver Anniversary. We could not have done it without you! Thank you to:

- Everyone who attended, danced, and participated in the auction.
- Jenny Hecht and her father, Les, who provided entertainment. The line up of funny and poignant love songs and incredible singing were a highlight of the evening.
- Tom Chenault for leading the live auction. I have never seen such a funny and lively auctioneer!
- Angie Pike and Lisa Matthews with All In, a Non-Profit, for all their work in organizing and running the event.
- Pinocchio's for hosting our lively crew.
- Brian Martinez for volunteering as DJ for the evening.
- Those who donated as part of the event.
- All who donated auction items - Angie Pike, Brent Roberts, Bridget Rauvola, Colterra, Gretchen Florescue, Hair Café, Inspire Salon, Japanga, Linda Disaver, Lisa Matthews, Little Sky Lavendar, Mike O'Shay's, Pumphouse Brewery, Solar Yoga, Sushi Hanna, Tenacity Wine Shop, Wanderlust Adventures, and Ziggy's Coffee.

All proceeds from the 25th Silver Anniversary event will benefit AFY's four core programs. We look forward to all that the next 25 years of helping youth in the St. Vrain Valley succeed in school and life!

With many, many thanks,
Deb Roberts

and for your support of
AFY!

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afy: fyf



Program Updates

Alternatives for Youth's programs focus on helping all youth succeed in school and life, meeting each youth where he or she is and providing a continuum of services to meet his or her needs. Following are updates about our core programs:

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

Latino Parent Involvement in Education meetings, held in collaboration with other area organizations, in January and February provided information on the topics of "Positive Parenting," "CELA/CSAP - Tips for Success!" and "If You Have Health, You Have Everything." Upcoming meetings include the topics "Financial Fitness" on February 22 and "Healthy Relationships" on March 10. Meetings this semester are being held 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 also available on our [Calendar of Events](#).

NorthStar classes continue with seventh grade boys at Heritage Middle School and with five boys at Erie High School after school. 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](#).

Attendance Advocates, a partnership program with the St. Vrain Valley School District, are continuing work this semester at six schools, Heritage and Longs Peak Middle Schools and Frederick, Longmont, Silver Creak and Skyline High Schools. In the fall 2009 semester, Attendance Advocates made real progress with students and families, providing support such that 85% of students improved their attendance and 67% of parents showed improvement in involvement with their 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.

Clearview Educational Center is undergoing various shifts and changes and has been busy welcoming many new students. February went by fast with a fun filled day of candy and Girl Scout cookies on Valentine's Day and weekly equine therapy sessions at [Joder Arabian Ranch](#). During each equine therapy session, Naropa University counselors guide the students through different activities in addition to

teaching them how to clean and maintain the facility. The last two therapy sessions focused on boundaries, safety, and exploring the five senses. The students enjoy learning about each horse's unique personality and how sensitive and perceptive they are to the energy surrounding them. The students are growing more acquainted with each of the horses at Joder and are learning so much from interacting with them!

Clearview students are now regularly enjoying nutritious and delicious lunches purchased daily from Saint Vrain Valley school district. Students are also happily devouring the brand new books donated two weeks ago by Border's bookstore through Foothills United Way and enjoying their reading class more. Both high school and middle school students will begin planning and leading their own P.E. classes at the YMCA this week. Arrangements are also being made this week to start the Arts Bridge program with CU Boulder's student volunteers. And even though we've just received a bunch of new snow, spring fever is spreading throughout Clearview. We're all looking forward to warmer weather and more exciting adventures!

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

no "kid"ding...

Did You Know?

In our prevention work, we often discuss risk and protective factors for our youth - those life factors that put youth at risk for risky behavior and those life factors that help youth stay away from risky behavior. Some of the best researched protective factors are the [Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets](#).



Did you know . . .

- Studies of more than 2.2 million United States young people consistently show that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to thrive.

- Protective factors are effective for all young people, regardless of their gender, economic status, family, or race/ethnicity.

- Levels of developmental assets are better predictors of high-risk involvement (including problem alcohol use, violence, and school problems) and thriving than poverty or being from a single-parent family.

- The average young person experiences less than half of the 40 Developmental Assets he or she needs, and boys experience fewer than girls.

- Protective factors include positive relationships such as family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships, community valuing youth, and positive peer influence.

- Parents and adults who work with young people, can provide protective factors and developmental assets to young people. You can:

- Tell your kids you love them every day, even big kids.
- Give your kids a hug.
- Take the time to find out what interests your child or a child in

your life, including music, TV shows, books, hobbies, video games, sports, and shopping.

- Go to a youth's game or competition.
- Know how your child is doing in school, attending school meetings, checking grades and attendance, and going to parent/teacher conferences.
- Have fun together! Go on a hike, bake, visit a local attraction, take a road trip, watch a movie together. Take your cue about what to do from the young person.
- Be a young person's mentor or help a young person find a mentor.
- Schedule regular time with your child or a young person in your life.
- Have meals together.
- Celebrate birthdays, sending cards, e-mail messages or posting Facebook messages on their birthday.
- Be there no matter what.

As a parent or adult in a young person's life, you can make a big difference in their success and contribute to their assets. For more information and resources, check out these links:

[150 Ways to Show Kids You Care](#)

[Chaos Free Parenting Blog](#)

[SafeYouth.org: Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Violence](#)

[Search Institutes 40 Developmental Assets](#)

[Top 60 Ways to Show Kids You Care](#)

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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