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a newsletter of alternatives for youth

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spotlight: alex canby



Who: Alex Canby

Time with AFY: Alex began volunteering in fall 2009.

Position at AFY:

Alex is a regular volunteer at AFY with our Clearview Educational Program. Along with Clearview's English teacher, Alex leads the new P.E. class at Clearview, walking with the students to the nearby YMCA and leading them in class.

With his experience in martial arts, Alex has been able to incorporate martial arts into the P.E. curriculum. He says, "Martial arts are a path to understanding for the kids. They want to learn to fight and be tough, but the end result is a greater transformation where they become better people. In good physical health."

volume 3: issue 1

january 2010

Dear Alexa,

Happy New Year! We hope the beginning of 2010 and a new decade finds you ready to take on all that a new year has to offer. After the holiday break, we are excited to be back and continuing our work with St. Vrain Valley youth in our four programs.

Throughout the year, we look forward to sharing our latest news, events and achievements as the year progresses through this newsletter and our website at www.alternativesforyouth.org.

We wish you peace and joy in 2010!

afy prepares for 2010

AFY Ready for Challenges and Changes

The beginning of a new year gives all of us a wonderful opportunity to sit back, think about the year we just completed and make plans for the year ahead. Alternatives for Youth (AFY) has been doing just that as we get ready for 2010.



AFY finished 2009 in a strong position, organizationally, financially, and programmatically. Indeed, we have much to celebrate and give thanks for with the state of the economy. As we peer into 2010, we know we may have challenges but are also excited about the prospects of the new year. AFY administration and the Board of Directors are currently working to:

- **Prepare financially for 2010.** Though 2009 went smoother than planned, we know that 2010 may be a more difficult year. Foundations, which we rely on for many of our grants, are expected to have a decline in giving this year. Government grants are also at-risk, especially with cuts in the Colorado budgets. Additionally, more non-profits are seeking grant funds, making the process more competitive. AFY is stronger and smarter than ever before, though, and our administrative staff has many plans to meet any financial challenges head on, including alternative budgets, fundraising strategies, and cutting costs as needed.
- **Improve and add programs.** In 2010, we expect to see changes in our programs to improve our services and to reach a greater number of youth. As a part of this, our staff is continuing to work with a community coalition on starting a substance abuse intervention and treatment program for adolescents. We now have a clinical design and preliminary proposal in place so that we can begin seeking funding. Our goal is to have this exciting program begin in 2010!
- **Launch new fundraising activities.** Beginning in February 2010 with our [25th Silver Anniversary celebration](#), AFY will have new fundraising events to support our programs. We are excited to be working with All In, A Non-Profit, LLC, co-founded by Angie Pike and Lisa Matthews, on three big events.
- **Continue to be vigilant about helping youth.** As has been the tradition at AFY, in 2010, we will continue to be vigilant about what our community's youth need to be successful. Program changes and additions will follow the lead of feedback from the community, other non-profits and government agencies, and formal surveys, such as the [Boulder County Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#). In addition, our improved evaluation of programs will help us to understand what we can do better internally.

We look forward to sharing our progress with you throughout 2010!

About His Experience at AFY:
Just as the students have learned from Alex, Alex has learned from them. As a volunteer, he has "developed better communication and an understanding of what it means to be an at-risk youth." His favorite part of volunteering is "bonding with the kids."

We are so grateful for Alex's contributions to the lives of our youth!

Note: Portions of this month's Spotlight and the photograph come from the [Volunteer Connection's Volunteer of the Week](#) interview of Alex by Daniel Cantrick.

AFY's 25th Silver Anniversary Dinner, Dance and Auction

**Saturday,
February 13
7:00-11:00 p.m.
Ion Place in Prospect
\$75 per person**

Tickets include a wonderful evening of live music with BluezHouse, dancing, open bar from 7:00-8:00, and dinner catered by Paul Roberts from Two Dog Diner with wine from Tenacity Wine Shop.

Tickets available by e-mailing Angie and Lisa at allinnonprofit@aol.com, at AFY's office or by calling AFY at 303-776-8184

All proceeds will benefit Alternatives for Youth's programs, dedicated to helping youth in the St. Vrain Valley succeed in school and life.

[View the electronic invitation.](#)

Thank you for being a part of our work and mission to help youth in the St. Vrain Valley succeed.

afy: fyi



Program Updates

With school back in session, our program staff hit the new semester running, providing a continuum of services from prevention to intervention to rehabilitation. As the new year and new opportunities dawn, we are continuing our four programs and looking forward to improvements in the year ahead. Following are updates about what the youth and parents are involved in:

Celebrando la Familia's Homework Clubs began the week of January 11, providing 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 December and January covered the topics of "Finding Balance - Stress Management" and "Positive Parenting." Upcoming meetings include the topics "CELA/CSAP - Tips for Success!" on January 27 and "If You Have Health, You Have Everything" on February 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 began with a new group of seventh grade boys at Heritage Middle School and will continue 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 worked with 281 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 settling into a brand new semester. Staff have been busy welcoming new students and organizing classrooms. The high school students just kicked off a career unit and are learning how to write resumes and succeed in a professional interview. They began reading new books and are writing creative short stories as well. The middle school students launched into a poetry unit and are researching famous poets and popular music artists. Padma Adepu, Clearview's math and science teacher, is delving deeper into the wonderful features of the Smartboard technology in her classroom. Of her success with this tool she stated, "Students actively participate when we use the Smartboard in class. They are showing enthusiasm and they actually like geometry now!" Staff are also initiating a ticket based reward system for students who consistently excel by going above and beyond what is expected of them. Everyone at Clearview is looking forward to the many exciting events that are to take place this semester including new service projects, field trips, and an art program. The semester is off to a great start!

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

no "kid"ding...

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Did You Know?

How parents should handle teenagers and alcohol is a common question. Some parents believe that it's better to give teens a "safe" place to drink, such as in their home, rather than risking teens "doing it anyway" somewhere else and driving drunk. But research has shown that this is not the answer! Did you know . . .



- The 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reports that a majority (53.4%) of current alcohol users aged 12 to 20 drank at someone else's home the last time they used alcohol.

- More than 40% of those reporting any alcohol use in the past 30 days report receiving alcohol from an adult.

- Drinking and driving is just one of the negative aspects of underage drinking. 12 years old is the average age for first use of alcohol in the U.S. Underage drinking has a negative impact on many areas of a teen's life, including the brain, sleep, education, safety (accounting for higher rates of suicide, homicide, sexual assault, date rape, and automobile accidents), and quality of life (adolescents who start drinking at 14 or younger are five times more likely to be "alcohol dependent" as adults).

- Parents who do host a party where teen's are allowed to drink are breaking the law and can be held responsible as well as face any number of legal problems if someone at the party gets hurt at the party or once they leave.

- According to the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health, parents who host teen parties with alcohol put teens at greater risk of drinking, getting into traffic crashes, being involved in violence and participating in thefts.

Adults with teens in their lives can help protect their teens from drinking by:

- Getting the facts about teen's and alcohol use and knowing that there is no such thing as "responsible drinking" for teens.
- Know the law, and don't host parties where teens are allowed to drink.
- Finding alternative ways for teens to have fun that don't involve alcohol.
- Setting a good example when it comes to drinking as well as expectations about a teen abstaining from drinking.
- At adult parties where alcohol and teen's are present, being aware of any teen's who are drinking and knowing ahead of time how they will handle underage drinking.
- Talking with teen's about the risks of drinking before alcohol becomes a problem. See below for resources about how to have conversations about alcohol with a teen.
- **Parents remain the number one tool for helping teen's to avoid alcohol use!**

As Media Advocacy Manager, Laurie Leiber, of the Marin Institute said, "Holding youth solely accountable for underage drinking is like blaming fish for dying in a polluted stream." You can do something to stop teens in your life from drinking! For more information and resources, check out these links:

[Colorado Regional Prevention Services Fact Sheet: Social Host Ordinances](#)

[Parents: The Anti-Drug](#)

[Preventing and Dispersing Underage Drinking Parties](#)

[Time to Talk: Get Help Talking to Your Kids about Drugs and Alcohol](#)

[Why There Is No Such Thing as "Responsible Drinking" for Teens](#)

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: _____

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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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