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youth matters

a newsletter of alternatives for youth

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spotlight: jazzgoods



What: [Jazzgoods](#), started in Colorado by two brothers, Paul and Tom Zilis, combines a passion for jazz and art with a passion for helping the community through financial support. Beginning with the "[American Music Campaign](#)" to help with the overwhelming needs in the Gulf after the 2005 hurricane season, Jazzgoods has begun to branch out to supporting other non-profits, including Alternatives for Youth. Paul Zilis is a former AFY board member who continues to have a heart for AFY's mission.

How: Following Jazzgoods' "American Music Campaign," Jazzgoods decided to use their joint talents

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Dear Alexa,

School is nearing to an end for the 2008-2009 school year, and it's almost time for graduations and celebrations of our youths' many achievements in school. Alternatives for Youth's programs are celebrating the end of the year with class celebrations, recognition of how hard our students have worked, and graduations.

As our youth are looking forward to the joys of playing outdoors, going to graduation parties, cooking out, swimming and a break from school, we are looking forward to new program activities, summer events and getting ready for the 2009-2010 school year. In our summer activities, we are building creative ways to keep youth engaged both in academic work and in positive, fun activities.

May also brings the famous [Bolder Boulder](#) Memorial Day race. If you are at the Bolder Boulder, make sure to catch our NorthStar Program Director, Emanuel Barr, singing the National Anthem during the Memorial Day Tribute in Folsom Field post-race.

We wish all the graduates a safe and fun celebration!

It's All about the Mission

AFY's Administrative Activities

Housed between the first and third floor of the Alternatives for Youth building are the administrative offices of AFY, providing a variety of supports to our program staff and youth. Five months into the year, 2009 is proving to be a busy year for our administrative staff as we continue and implement new activities to strengthen AFY and improve our work with youth. Current projects and activities include:



- Improving our marketing. Through a grant from the Latino Community Foundation of Colorado, we will be working with Dana Willett of Kemper and Company to strengthen our public relations work, increase our online presence, and produce a new brochure.
- Ongoing involvement in community committees, including the St. Vrain Community Council and Healthy Youth Alliance
- Overseeing program evaluation and improving our program evaluations
- Meeting with funders for site visits, grant reviews and committee meetings
- Setting up a database to track basic information about youth and families involved in our programs
- Attending state level planning meetings in April and May, including the Division of Behavioral Health's Behavioral Health Forums and the Colorado Prevention Leadership Council's public forums on the State Plan for Prevention, Intervention and

and experiences to launch a long-term fundraising effort for the continued relief and rebuilding efforts through the sale of original jazz and blues products in New Orleans and for other non-profits. The sales of jazz and blues products (cards and prints) through Jazzgood's website supports contributing artists and select non-profits.

Why: Jazzgoods, with extensive and varied experiences in supporting non-profits, community work and the arts, wanted to combine their passion and talent for jazz and art into a business that could give back a large portion of proceeds to help the community.

Partnership with AFY: In 2009, AFY began working with Jazzgoods to identify original art reflective of our community and the population we serve. Jazzgoods will sell the art on their website (www.jazzgoods.com) with proceeds going to the artist and AFY.

Check it out for a creative way to support AFY. AFY is so excited to be a part of Jazzgoods and this unique business!

thank you!

We send a big thank you to all of those who came out and supported us at our Baskin Robbins' Ice Cream Social and at Longmont Celebrates Cinco de Mayo.

Thank you for your support on behalf of all the youth we

Treatment Services for Children and Youth

- Tracking AFY's budget and keeping organizational spending on track
- Participating as an ongoing member of the committee revising the Colorado Common Grant Report Form
- Planning the 2009 events and fundraisers
- Collaborating with Boulder County non-profits and government agencies to survey Boulder County's prevention, intervention and treatment services for adolescents with substance abuse problems and their families and identifying how to address a gap in treatment services. The group is newly formed and at the beginning stages of planning.

As a non-profit, AFY is a mission driven organization, working in all ways to fulfill our mission "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." The work of our administrative staff is no exception, as we all work to help youth of the St. Vrain Valley School District succeed.

save the date!

Upcoming Alternatives for Youth Events

We have many opportunities this year to build on past events and present new ones. Please join us for the following events:

- AFY's 3rd Annual **Drop and Shop Rummage Sale**, Friday, July 24, 8:00-3:00. Clean out your garage, house, and closets and donate your items before and on the day of the sale. Then join us to shop all the goodies!
- **Summer Program Carnival**, Friday, July 24, 10:00-4:00. Bring your kids to play the fun carnival games dreamt up and run by our Summer Program teen leaders (this event is held in conjunction with the Rummage Sale).
- Dieciseis de Septiembre (September Sixteenth) Celebration, Saturday, September 12
- Our first **parent conference, "Parenting through Transitions,"** on Saturday, October 3 at the Longmont Radisson. Parents will learn about effective strategies for parenting through a variety of transitions that children experience through keynote speaker, Scoot Crandall, Executive Director of [Team Fort Collins](http://www.teamfortcollins.com), and through break out sessions. More details to follow.

More information will follow in our newsletter and will be posted on our website under [Calendar of Events](#).

afy:fyi



Program Updates

While the school year is coming to a close, Alternatives for Youth's programs are gearing up for summer and making plans for next year. Following are highlights from our four programs:

Celebrando la Familia's Homework Clubs, held on

location at five schools and enrolling 150 students, came to a close last week, and Girls Group, serving 20 girls at two schools, will finish up this week. Both activities finished the year with end of the year celebrations. Many of the Homework Club members will join us in June for our Summer Program, a low-cost academic and recreational program

serve!

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held for eight weeks over the summer. Joining the younger youth will be 15-18 high school students as teen leaders, who will be mentors, leaders and teachers to the younger students while gaining valuable leadership and work skills.

Despite cool, rainy weather, Celebrando's Program Director, Mary Vigil, and Program Assistant, Josie Vigil, helped to hold a successful Longmont Celebrates Cinco de Mayo on May 2. A large crowd of people enjoyed performers (including AFY's Folklorico Dance Group) and musicians, Chihuahua Beauty Contest, car show, authentic Mexican food, and the booths of many non-profits and businesses (including AFY's cake walk).

The final Latino Parent Involvement in Education meeting for the 2008-2009 school year was held on May 13. The Latino Parent Involvement in Education taskforce is finalizing a calendar of meetings for the next school year and will again provide education to parents about how to be better involved in their children's lives and schools.

Our **Community Advocate** program will wrap up services to truant students and their parents this week. Currently serving over 100 students, the Community Advocates have become a valuable part of each targeted school's resources. Community Advocates will be reviewing the success of the program and activities for the 2009-2010 school year in partnership with the St. Vrain Valley School District in the coming months.

NorthStar's classes at Heritage Middle School and the final evening classes final session, currently working with eight youth and family members, will finish up this week. All of the classes have focused on life skills, communication, and anger management. The Program Director, Emanuel, recently attended a training on the [Boys Council](#) curriculum, which he has begun using at Heritage Middle School and will use this summer in the NorthStar Boys Leadership Summer Boot Camp. The Summer Boot Camp, lead by Emanuel, will provide two, two-week sessions to seventh to tenth graders and will include, physical training and Boys Council class. During the camp boys will develop discipline to be productive young men; enhance their desire to succeed in school and life; and increase their passions in the area of community service and devotion to family. For more information about the Boot Camp, including how to sign up, [click here](#).

Clearview Educational Center had a busy final month of school. In May, students made a trip to Joder Arabian Ranch and to Celestial Seasonings, completed assessments, and finished final exams and projects in math, science and English. Classes will finish on May 22 with a potluck lunch and graduation ceremony for students returning to school.

On May 22, we will also celebrate the work of Clearview's Program Director, Angel Salathe. Angel began as a teacher at Clearview in February 2007 and became the Program Director in July 2007. Her vision was "to develop a rigorous academic program based on the best practices, knowledge and training of our highly qualified teachers." Angel has done just that, growing a four hour a day program to a full day program for middle and high school students that offers a rigorous and creative academic program. Angel has overseen the growth of the program to include experiential learning, a close partnership with Joder Arabian Ranch, a diverse staff of highly trained teachers and counselors, and the inclusion of a Transition Advocate. Angel is leaving Clearview to join her family in Minnesota. We will greatly miss her and applaud all of her contributions to making Clearview a model program helping expelled students.

no "kid"ding...

Did You Know?

St. Vrain Valley Schools finish classes this coming Friday, May 22. With summer here, the season has so much to offer. But as you look at three months without the daily activities of the school year over, do you feel overwhelmed with how to "entertain" your kids? Have you asked yourself, what are my kids going to do this summer? Have you wondered how to help your kids prepare for next school year? Many parents, grandparents, guardians, and even kids have probably asked the same question. Here are some ideas to help you have a wonderful summer break (and some facts to motivate you to action). Did you know:



- In the St. Vrain Valley School District, the summer break is 12 1/2 weeks long. That's 87 days of potential fun and learning for every kid!

- All young people experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. Typically, kids score lower on standardized test at the end of summer break than on the same tests at the beginning of summer break.

- You can check with your child's teacher to find out what skills he or she could benefit from working on and what books to read to keep them sharp and to prepare for the next year.

- On average, students lose approximately 2.6 months of grade-level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer months.

- You can encourage reading by helping kids choose books about a topic they are interested in at or above grade level. Kids age 2 to those who are finished with fourth grade can sign up with the [Longmont Library](#) beginning May 26 to earn prizes for reading in the "Be Creative" summer program.

- Ask your kids to help plan activities they want to do.

- Low-income children and youth experience greater summer learning losses than their higher income peers. Whereas, on average, middle-income students have slight gains in reading, low-income students experience an average loss in reading of over two months during the summer break.

- Keep summer learning fun!

- Take a break and take in a movie . . . for free! The Twin Peaks Mall movie theater will again offer free movies on Tuesday and Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. Schedules are available at the movie theater.

- Studies show that out-of-school time is a dangerous time for unsupervised children and teens, who are more likely to use alcohol, drugs and tobacco, engage in criminal and other high-risk behaviors, receive poor grades and drop out of school than those kids who have the opportunity to benefit from constructive activities supervised by responsible adults.

- Get creative and put together crafts, game, and gardening projects for your kids. There are so many websites (see below for suggestions) and books to give you ideas.

- Check out local and close by attractions - take a hike, go camping, visit a river, go on a picnic, walk Pearl Street Mall, find a new [park](#), enjoy a [pool](#), go to a [free concert](#), walk Longmont's [ArtLink](#), be a tourist in your

home state! There are so many fun things to do in our community.

- If you do plan lots of activities for your kids, also consider the gift of time for summer and help your kids (and yourself) relax and enjoy the slower pace. School will be here again before you know it!

We hope you have a wonderful summer break. You can find more information about summer, kids and activities for kids and families at the following websites:

[Erie Community Center](#)

[Family Fun](#) (lots of ideas for fun and low cost family activities)

[How to Make Summer \(Learning\) Fun](#)

[Let's Talk Colorado - Colorado Tourism](#)

[Longmont Area Visitors Association](#)

[Longmont Mom](#)

[Summer Fun](#)

[Summer Fun for Kids](#)

[Summer Learning Loss](#)

[Summer Relaxation Important Lesson for Kids](#)

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

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