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# youth matters

a newsletter of alternatives for youth

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## spotlight: ashley silva



### About Ashley:

On any given Tuesday, you'll find Ashley Rose Silva, #19, catching for the pitchers of her 18-and-under 'A' league competitive tournament softball team, the "Colorado Lynx," impressing the college softball coaches who regularly show up to scout new players. "I hope to continue to meet scouts at pitching practices and weekend tournaments so that I can earn a college scholarship. I love being active and playing softball because my teammates are a positive influence on me," Ashley stated with confidence.

This vibrant, cheerful high school junior enrolled at Clearview in March 2009 and is thriving. Ashley appreciates being in a safe learning environment where she can "get school back on track." A prolific writer, science lover, and talented natural athlete, Ashley consistently goes above and beyond what is expected of her and is excelling in her academic classes.

### What She Likes about the Clearview:

"What I love about Clearview is how the staff holds us accountable and puts us on the road to success," she exclaimed when asked what she enjoys

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## Dear Alexa,

November is a wonderful time to remember all the things we are thankful for. Here at Alternatives for Youth, as the end of the year nears, we are so thankful for

- All the youth in our program who enrich our lives and our work.
- All the parents of our youth who strive to help their children succeed.
- Our community - the people, the collaborative nature, and the support for our programs and youth.
- Our staff and their passion and creativity to help the youth we work with.
- All those who gave their time and money to help support AFY's programs.

2009 has been an interesting year for us as we weather the economic crisis. But through the community's, staff's and Board of Directors' support, we have been able to continue and even expand our programs.

Thank you to all of you who have contributed to AFY and to the lives of youth in our community! Your contributions are truly appreciated.

## 'tis the season for giving

### How You Can Support AFY

Alternatives for Youth is dedicated to helping youth succeed. Through our programs, community collaborations and even this newsletter, we provide innovative and supportive programs to over 1,000 youth and the parents to help youth academically and socially.

You can learn more about our programs through our [website](#), monthly [newsletters](#) and newly released video, [AFY 2009 Year in Pictures!](#)



As the year nears to an end, there are a variety of ways that you can support AFY's work this giving season, including:

- **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](#) 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!
- **Attending our Holiday Party** on Friday, December 4, sponsored by [Salon Blue 22](#) and [Blondie's Boutique](#) with food and drinks donated by Twin Peaks Liquor. The Holiday Party will be from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at Salon Blue 22, 476 17th Avenue in Longmont. Tickets are \$10 at the door or free with the purchase of a Shop Local and Save Card from [Best-of-Longmont.com](#). RSVP by calling AFY at 303-776-8184 or emailing alexa@alternativesforyouth.org.
- **Donate items** we need for our programs, including art supplies (colored pencils, graphite drawing pencils, drawing tablets, calligraphy pens, pastels); gift cards to Target, iTunes, McDonald's, Dairy Queen, Blockbuster, or movies; bikes for middle school students; an outdoor, stand alone basketball hoop and basketballs.
- **Make a tax-deductible financial donation.** Donations can be mailed to Alternatives for Youth at 24 Ninth Avenue, Longmont, CO 80501 or made online through our [Contribute](#) web page.

We are so thankful to all those who contribute time and money to our programs. Contributions from people like you directly impact youth in our community. Thank you for considering a contribution to AFY.

## from the executive director

**Parenting Conference Offered Free to AFY Friends and Participants** Do you have a "challenging" teenager? Is he disrespectful? Does she lie? How about lazy? Maybe defiant? And you have tried everything and nothing works! ME, TOO!! But there is help!

My daughter, Sarah, was easy even though there were always the typical

about being a student at Clearview. A highly active and excitable teenage girl, she is also energized and inspired by Clearview's weekly YMCA workouts and the many field trips students here get to engage in. Ashley's favorite outing this Fall was to "Stemapalooza," a science convention for Colorado teens held in downtown Denver. Science is her favorite subject, and she enjoyed the intriguing demonstrations set up around the Convention Center. "I also enjoyed seeing all of the different colleges I could go to and the programs they offer."

**Dreams:**

After graduating from high school, Ashley hopes to attend Black Hills State College in South Dakota to play softball and major in Exercise Science. This will allow her to pursue her dreams of becoming a physical therapist working with professional athletes and being a member of the women's U.S. Olympic Softball Team. Until then, Ashley is determined "not to fall under any negative influences, to keep focused, and to know that nothing can come between me and my goals."

**What Keeps Her Busy:**

When not studying or practicing on the field, you might find Ashley playing in the park with her two younger sisters Samantha, 3, and Emily, 12, or spending time with her family at home. We hope to see Ashley continue to excel as a student at Clearview and as the Colorado Lynx's starting catcher. We are so very proud of her success!

*This month's Spotlight was written by Rhea Maze, English Teacher at Clearview.*

**\$10 resolutions to go box supports AFY**

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

**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**

teenage issues. But, my goodness, my son, Holt, was definitely a challenge! Holt always had a sweet spirit but somehow it seemed to get lost in all the chaos of his life. He was always an outgoing boy, adventuresome, smart and creative, although he didn't do all that well in school. We were a close family, still are, and we loved being involved in our kids' lives. So when things started going wrong, we were surprised, confused, hurt, embarrassed, angry, and extremely sad.

We had so many questions. What can we do? Why is he so angry with us when we do so much for him and with him? Why won't he help around the house? Why won't he talk to us? And heaven sakes, why is he skipping school...and using marijuana? What have we done wrong? How can we get him to change back to his old sweet Holt?

I have recently discovered an incredible parenting program that I wish I would have had when we were going through all of our struggles with Holt! BUT IT'S AVAILABLE NOW FOR YOU!

A company based in Boulder called [Vive, Inc.](#) has written a book and developed a video series on how you, as the parent of a challenging teenage, can reconnect with your youth. The parenting program is called [Chaos to Connection: 9 Heart Centered Essentials for Parenting Your Teen](#). I've read the book and seen the accompanying videos. I must admit it made me cry because I wish I had known about the approach that *Chaos to Connection* takes. It would have made a world of difference for me, for my husband, and for Holt! The book and series is not just about theory; it gives you stories and examples and walks you through very specific scenarios that will help you understand what to do. It helps you know how to take care of yourself as well as teaching you loving and productive ways to connect with your teen.

Vive is holding a **Chaos to Connection Parenting Workshop** for any family that wants to participate and learn about this wonderful approach to parenting on December 5, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Eastern Sun Academy, 6717 S. Boulder Rd. in Boulder. And . . . as a member of the Alternatives for Youth newsletter readership, the \$65.00 workshop is **FREE** to you! To register call Vive at 866-645-1781 or email [revans@vivenow.com](mailto:revans@vivenow.com).

From a mom who knows what parents of struggling teens go through, I truly would recommend that you attend! I'm going to the training myself, even though I no longer have that challenging teenager at home. I look forward to learning more so that I might help other parents. I WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

afy: fyi



**Program Updates**

Just as we are thankful for the support that makes our four programs possible, we are so thankful for the youth and parents involved in our programs. Working with our youth and parents is the highlight of each program. Following are updates about what the youth and parents are involved in:

**Celebrando la Familia** is continuing Homework Clubs at Heritage Middle School and Columbine, Spangler and Rocky Mountain Elementary Schools. Each location is providing bilingual tutoring and assistance with organization after school to a growing number of students.

Latino Parent Involvement in Education meetings, held in collaboration with other area organizations, will hold meetings in November and December at Spangler Elementary School. On November 18, the meeting topic is "Encouraging Positive Behavior - 40 Assets" and on December 9 the topic is "Finding Balance - Stress Management." 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](#).

Due to the weather Celebrando's Folklorico Dance Group was unable to perform at this year's Dia de los Muertos Family Celebration at the Longmont Museum and Cultural Center, but Celebrando staff helped with the days' activities, including serving food and making sugar masks. The Dance Group performed during the Niwot Timberline Symphony Orchestra's beautiful "Celebrate Latin America" concert, performing to Jose Garcia's *Huapango*.

**NorthStar** classes are continuing at Heritage Middle School with eighth graders. Evening classes for boys began in October at Erie High 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](#).

The **Attendance Advocate** program, a partnership with the St. Vrain Valley School District, is continuing in six schools, Heritage and Longs Peak Middle Schools and Frederick, Longmont, Silver Creak and Skyline High Schools. The Attendance Advocates are settling into their new

**Anytime Fitness****Support for AFY!**

To purchase a box or for more information, contact 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 and better! Alpha Martial Arts believes that you must be active in order to change the world around you for the better.*

*Anytime Fitness is a 24 hour, 7 day a week, 365 days a year health club.*

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offices and schools and working with students and parents as the students begin to experience problems with attendance. 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 truancy court, and improve academically.

The students at **Clearview Educational Center**, a transitional program for expelled middle and high school students, took advantage of Colorado's glorious fall weather this past month to engage in outdoor education. Just two days before the first big snowstorm, students and staff enjoyed a day of exploration in Rocky Mountain National Park. Following an educational video in the visitor's center about the formation of the park, they hiked up a snowy trail to Alberta Falls and took in panoramic views of snow capped peaks on a sunny stroll around Bear Lake.

The high school group returned to their service project site at Boulder County Open Space and Mountain Parks. There, they met up with park service employees and environmental experts for an on-going fire prevention forest thinning project. The students worked hard chipping fallen trees and learned about how their hard work rejuvenates and strengthens the health of the Ponderosa Pine forest. Most recently, all students were treated to a day of equine therapy at Joder Arabian Ranch in Boulder lead by Wilderness Therapy Masters students from Naropa University. The students gained valuable therapeutic benefits by working closely with the horses and learning to gain their trust.

In the classroom, students continue to be exposed to a myriad of valuable learning tools and lessons provided by the newly implemented Smartboard technology. The Smartboards allow students to positively engage and tangibly interact with the academic content. The students have also been conducting research, planning presentations, and growing more comfortable using the local library. Clearview students recently threw a birthday party for paraprofessional Ann Arling and a graduation party for "Dr." D.A. Erickson, a Clearview counselor who successfully defended her dissertation at CSU last week and earned her Ph.D.!

*This month's update from Clearview was contributed by Rhea Maze.*

**no "kid"ding ...****Did You Know?**

On Thursday, November 12, 2009, the week of November 8-14 was declared "Colorado Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Week" to bring attention to the growing problem of prescription drug abuse. Not only is sharing prescription drugs with friends or family illegal, it could also be deadly. Did you know (*adapted from [Rx Drugs. Not yours. Not Safe.](#)*):



- Nationally 1 in 5 teens (19%) report abusing prescription drugs that were not prescribed to them.

- 78% of parents talk to their children about alcohol and illicit drugs, but only 24% talk to them about the dangers of prescription drugs.

- Prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications were the most commonly abused drugs by high school students after marijuana. Teens now report that prescription drugs are easier to get than beer. They are often easily obtained from friend and family medicine cabinets.

- Most people obtain prescription drugs to abuse from family and friends.

- 5.5% of 12 graders reported past year abuse of cough and cold medicines.

- Many teens feel that prescription drugs are "safer to use" than street drugs.

- Yearly deaths related to the most commonly abused prescription drugs in Colorado nearly doubled from 298 in 2000 to 562 in 2008. Deaths related to the abuse of prescription opioids such as oxycodone, hydrocodone and fentanyl more than doubled from 180 in 2000 to 373 in 2008.

- In 2008, three times as many people in Colorado died from prescription drug abuse (562) than from drunk-driving crashes (173).

- In 2008, young adults under the age of 24 made up nearly 20% of the statewide admissions to treatment facilities for opioids and 29% of admissions for stimulants.

- From 2003-2008, 49% of drug deaths in the city of Denver were related to prescription drug abuse.

- There are things you can do to prevent the abuse of prescription drugs by teens:

- **Talk to your teen** about the risks of prescription drugs. Teens who learn about the risk of drugs at home are 50% less likely to use drugs.
- **Treat your prescription drugs** as you would cash or your

- credit cards.
- **Keep your prescription drugs in a safe, locked** place at all times. Do not store them in medicine or kitchen cabinets.
- **Dispose** of unused prescriptions properly.
- **Monitor** the drugs in your home. Track and count how many pills you have.
- **Talk to friends and family** (even grandparents) about securing their medications.
- **Do not discuss medications** you are taking. For information on how to properly dispose of prescriptions, read the [Federal Guidelines for Proper Disposal of Prescription Drugs](#).
- **Include pet medications** in your careful treatment of prescriptions.
- **Lead by example** - don't borrow, share, or abuse prescription drugs.

You can find more information about prescription drug abuse at the following websites:

[Office of National Drug Control Policy: Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention](#)  
[Parents. The Anti-Drug.](#)  
[Parents Resource Center: Support, Tools and Tips](#)  
[PBS's the.Medic's Five-Part Series on Prescription Drug Abuse](#)  
[Rx Drugs. Not Yours. Not Safe.](#)  
[Time to Talk](#)

*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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**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](http://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.

*Alternatives for Youth is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Donations to Alternatives for Youth are tax deductible. We do not sell or trade our mailing or e-mailing list to anyone.*

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