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youth matters

a newsletter of alternatives for youth

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november 2011

Dear Alexa,

November is a wonderful time to remember all the things we are thankful for. Here at Alternatives for Youth, 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 give their time and money to help support AFY's 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. We wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!

'tis the season for giving

Gifts to AFY Change Lives!

Alternatives for Youth is dedicated to helping youth succeed. Through our programs, community collaborations and even this newsletter, we will provide innovative and supportive programs to over 2,000 youth and their parents in 2011 to help youth academically and socially.



As the year nears to an end, please consider making a tax deductible donation to AFY to help us continue our work. You can increase the impact of your donation to AFY by donating as part of [2011 Colorado Gives Day](#) on December 6. Colorado Gives Day is 24 hours of giving to support the nonprofits that protect and nurture quality of life in Colorado, and all individual donations to AFY will be increased by FirstBank's Incentive Fund.

Donations of all amounts help our youth:

- \$15 provides an Attendance Advocate for a week to a truant youth
- \$50 provides an academic and recreational Summer Program for a week to a disadvantaged elementary-age youth
- \$125 provides a week of individual counseling and life skills classes to an expelled student at Clearview Educational Center
- \$150 provides Parents Involved in Education meetings for a family for an entire school year
- \$300 provides a semester-long life skills NorthStar class to a middle school student

quick links

[Support AFY!](#)

[Calendar of Events](#)

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follow us on:



mark your calendar!



**Support AFY during
Colorado Gives Day
December 6, 2011
begins 12 a.m.**

24 hours of giving to support the nonprofits that protect and nurture quality of life in Colorado

All individual donations to AFY will be increased by FirstBank's Incentive

Fund

-

Last year, Colorado Gives Day raised \$8.7 million for nonprofits! For more information about Colorado Gives Day, [click here](#).

- \$380 provides a six-week iThrive intervention group for a teen struggling with substance abuse and for their parents

You can learn more about our programs through our [website](#) and monthly [newsletters](#). Your donation of any level will help AFY continue to provide unique and effective programming to youth and parents in the St. Vrain Valley.

Donations can be made securely online as part of [Colorado Gives Day](#) on December 6, online any time by [clicking here](#) or by check mailed to AFY, 24 9th Avenue, Longmont, CO 80501. Thank you for your support!

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Program Updates

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

are involved in:

NorthStar classes began at Heritage Middle School with a group of 12 girls. NorthStar provides a life skills classes using the [Girls Circle](#) curriculum with middle school students. In the coming months, we plan to begin a second NorthStar class at a St. Vrain Valley School District middle school.

Our **Attendance Advocate staff** are continuing their work with truant students at Altona, Coal Ridge, Longs Peak and Trail Ridge Middle Schools and Frederick, Longmont, Silver Creek and Skyline High Schools. Each of the Advocates is a case manager for truant students and their parents, working to uncover the underlying causes of truancy and to address those causes to support students in staying in school and graduating high school. Advocates focus on students who have missed 13 or more days of school.

Clearview Educational Center is providing a transitional program for 10 expelled middle and high school students from the St. Vrain Valley School District. In addition to academic work in English, math and history, all students participate in individual therapy and life skills classes.

This month, we say goodbye to Clearview's Program Director, Jenny Hecht. Over the last two school years, Jenny has transformed Clearview, enhancing our services to expelled students with new volunteer and field trip opportunities, volunteer teachers, creative programming, and restorative justice processes. Jenny will be joining the staff of Fairview High School as an interventionist. We are thankful for all of Jenny's dedicated and hard work with our youth!

iThrive Longmont is a teen focused and family supported substance abuse intervention program for youth in the St. Vrain Valley and Boulder Valley School Districts. In the fall session that began October 13, iThrive served 5 families, providing a place for teens and parents to talk and process, receive support, and learn the tools and skills they need for recovery and for repairing relationships. iThrive will begin a new session on December 1. Interested families can call Deb Roberts at 303-776-8184 to register. For more information, visit iThrive's webpage at www.thrivingteens.org.

In addition to our programs, AFY staff are involved in several community-wide collaborative efforts. Our staff continues to support **Parents Involved in Education** meetings, held in collaboration with other area organizations with the goal of helping parents increase involvement in their child's education. The December 1 meeting's topic is "We are family - Strong! Connected! And Fun!" Meetings are free, held at Northridge Elementary School from 5:45-8:00 p.m. and include childcare, light dinner and Spanish translation. A complete list of meeting dates and topics are available on our [Calendar of Events](#).

no "kid"ding...

Did You Know?

Thanksgiving provides a day to slow down and remember all the things we have to be thankful for. Even in tumultuous times, there are things for which we can give thanks. And giving thanks is good for you! Did you know:



- Giving thanks can change your perspective from grumpiness to happiness and block negative emotions.

- An "attitude of gratitude" helps us to celebrate the present and magnifies positive emotions.

- Studies have found that practicing gratitude consistently has physical, psychological, and social benefits such as being happier and more optimistic, experiencing less depression and stress, having fewer health complaints, exercising more, and sleeping better.

- You can help yourself, children, and teens develop gratitude in simple ways:

- As a family or individually keep a gratitude journal in which you write daily about things you are thankful for from every day things to extraordinary things.
- Model gratitude with your children either in thanking others or in genuinely thanking your children.
- Create family traditions around gratitude. For example, at Thanksgiving, you might go around the table and have each person say what they're thankful for; draw names and say one thing you're thankful for about that person; or have each person write down what they are thankful for.
- Find ways to serve others - a neighbor, an elderly friend or family member, a nonprofit as a volunteer.
- Teach children and teens the value of money. A system that includes saving, spending, investing, and giving may work for your family. As your child sees how much things cost compared to how much they earn and how much things you buy for them cost, they may develop gratitude for those things.
- Include gratitude in your daily conversations, taking time to notice and appreciate things you have, see, or enjoy.
- Have kids help around the house. Chores give kids a chance to experience the effort involved in taking care of a house and family.
- Give as a family to other families or children. Giving to others may inspire your kids to give.
- Don't give your children or teen everything they ask for. Hearing no is good for them. When you get everything you want, it's more difficult to be grateful.
- Give thanks through thank you cards after receiving gifts.

This Thanksgiving is the perfect time to continue or grow how your family and children give thanks. You can find more information and tips on gratitude at the following websites:

[Grateful Nation](#)

[Making Gratitude the Main Course at Thanksgiving Dinner](#)

[Teaching Children to be Grateful](#)

[Teaching Children to be Grateful](#) (younger kids)

[10 Ways to Become More Grateful](#)

[Why Gratitude is Good](#)

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.

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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