



*Alternatives for Youth, Inc. (AFY) promotes 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. During over 25 years of experience, AFY has seen many changes in community need and has responded quickly with programs to address the challenges facing youth of the St. Vrain Valley School District. 2007 was an exciting year for us. We continue to see growth in our programs and in our collaborations with other groups and agencies serving the youth and families of the St. Vrain Valley. We look forward to continuing to provide and expand positive alternatives to the youth of our community.*

**Celebrando la Familia (Celebrate the Family)** utilizes education and positive engagement to help youth avoid drugs and stay in school while increasing youth leadership skills and pride in one's heritage. Youth and their parents participate in a variety of recreational, educational and cultural activities, including Girls Group, Boys Group, Summer Program, Folklorico Dance Group, Homework Club, and community celebrations. Of the youth served in 2007, 80% improved or maintained their academic performance and/or school attendance and youth maintained positive attitudes about substance abuse. Over 80 youth participated in our 2007 Summer Program, improving their academic skills and participating in positive extracurricular activities. Eighteen youth interns assisted in the success of the Summer Program and gained job preparation experience and leadership training. In May 2007, program director, Mary Vigil, received Longmont's Unity in the Community award, and in October 2007, she received Boulder County Community Action Program's "Multicultural Award for Community Service."

In 2007, Celebrando la Familia expanded one of the elementary homework clubs, bringing our after school student total to more than 90 regularly attending youth, expanded the Folklorico Dance Group's repertoire to include three new dances, and improved the homework club library with the purchase of easy to read English, Spanish and bilingual books. Celebrando la Familia staff continue to be main supporters and volunteers for community events, including Cinco de Mayo, Dieciseis de Septiembre, and Dia de Los Muertos, and to participate on community and civic boards. Staff members continue to partner with the St. Vrain Valley Gang Task Force, Longmont's Children and Youth Resources, and Longmont's Gang Response and Intervention Program (G.R.I.P.) to prevent and intervene in Longmont's gang activity. In the spring 2007 semester, Ms. Vigil worked with Children and Youth Resources to deliver the G.R.I.P. program to approximately 100 second and fifth grade students at Spangler Elementary School.

**Clearview Educational Center (CEC)** is an academic and life skills transitional program for expelled middle and high school students of the St. Vrain Valley School District. The program provides academic instruction through computer software, classroom instruction and tutoring, as well as group and individual counseling that focuses on building life skills. State certified teachers oversee the program, master's level counselors provide counseling and a special education paraprofessional provides additional assistance. In 2007, Clearview Educational Center served 58 middle and high school youth. Of the middle school students, 80% improved by at least one grade level in mathematics, language arts, and reading. 83% of participating students graduated from or continued in the program. Students showed improvement in taking responsibility for their actions, asking questions and for help, public speaking, attendance, cultural understanding and appreciation, and motivation to improve their spelling, grammar and math skills.

In 2007, Alternatives for Youth welcomed a new program director for Clearview Educational Center, Angel Salathe. Ms. Salathe brings extensive experience and knowledge of educating at-risk youth to lead Clearview. Under Ms. Salathe's leadership, Clearview expanded the instruction time for high school students by two hours each school day, implemented a for-credit math course for high school students, including the hiring of a part-time, highly qualified math instructor, began offering more for-credit classes to middle and high school students, changed the programs level system to positive rewards, and forged a

partnership with Joder Arabian Ranch to provide service learning and equine therapy opportunities to Clearview students. Counselor D.A. Erickson developed a life skills program for middle and high school students based on proven therapeutic models.

**NorthStar (formerly CRAM)**, a partnership between Alternatives for Youth and the St. Vrain Valley School District, is a diverse program that helps youth and their families navigate troubled times by providing classes for students at risk of being suspended or expelled as well as students in diversion and probation programs with the goal of keeping students in school and fostering anger management, conflict resolution and communication skills. Alternatives for Youth updated the program name in fall 2007 to better reflect the scope of the program.

NorthStar provides a day curriculum to students that includes units on effective groups, anger management, communication skills, assertiveness training, problem solving and conflict resolution through group activities, guest speakers and autobiographies. Parents of some students attend night classes and receive support through follow up phone calls. NorthStar served 75 students and 48 parents in 2007 with 89% of students completing the program, 55% reducing at least one failing grade and 61% reducing their discipline referrals in the 2006-2007 school year. Principals, teachers, school counselors and parents report that students improve behavior and maintain positive choices, reduce discipline referrals, improve relationships with school staff and peers, are more cooperative at home, and are able to work out struggles effectively. In the last three years of NorthStar's work at Heritage and Longs Peak Middle School, the expulsion rate at both schools has decreased by 40%.

Parents received support from the program director and community resources to build parents' capacity, relationships and communication skills. Unexpected, positive effects of NorthStar included providing support to two middle school girls who were victims of sexual harassment and drop out recovery work with youth invited to evening NorthStar classes by friends.

Alternatives for Youth employs highly qualified staff to include three program directors, ten program staff members and three administrative staff members, most of whom work part-time. As much as possible, we engage volunteers and youth workers to assist with our after school and summer programs and activities, thus mentoring their leadership capabilities. In April 2007, Deb Roberts, Alternatives for Youth's Executive Director, received a "Make Time for Kids Award," which recognizes people and organizations in the Longmont or Lyons area who strive to help youth succeed.

Support for our programs is generously provided by grants from Boulder County, City of Longmont, St. Vrain Valley School District, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, Foothills United Way, Adolph Coors Foundation, Amgen Foundation, Boulder County Drop-in-the Bucket, Brett Family Foundation, Burt Foundation, Community Foundation Serving Boulder County, Daniels Fund, Denver Foundation, Eberspacher Family Foundation, Education Foundation of the St. Vrain Valley, Elevations Credit Union, First United Methodist Church, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, Longmont Community Foundation, Lynn and Helen Clark Fund, Namaste Foundation, Ray Lanyon Fund, Rose Community Foundation, Schramm Foundation, and Women's Foundation of Colorado; event sponsorships from Bernard, Lyons, Gaddis and Kahn, PC, Bock Family Foundation, First MainStreet Insurance, Hispanic Education Foundation, Longmont Florist, Longmont Signs, Inc., Martin Family Orthodontics, Mountain View Orthodontics, Randy Vigil Primerica, Wal-mart, and Wells Fargo; and donations from community members, Molly Baldrige, Tom Cobb and Mary Blue, R.H. and Sara Dinius, Al and Nancy Dworak, Mary Lamy, Edward Lehman, Katherine Seetch, C. Briant Wolfe, Paul and Kim Zilis and through the IBM Employee Contribution Campaign, Community Shares, Niwot Elementary PTA, Odell Brewing Company. In addition, Heritage Bank donated \$5,750 worth of computer equipment and volunteers provided over 3700 hours of service, including tutoring at Clearview Educational Center and in our afterschool program, assisting in fundraising events and translating our website. Thank you to all who partner with us to provide meaningful opportunities for youth to succeed!