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Clearview expands program

Center helps middle and high schoolers who have been expelled

*By Magdalena Wegrzyn
 Longmont Times-Call*

LONGMONT — When seventh-grader Taylor Young was expelled from Coal Ridge Middle School in Firestone for fighting with other girls, she had one more chance: the Clearview Educational Center.

“You don’t have any options,” said Taylor, 13. “This is the only place you can go.”

Clearview is a transition program for middle and high school students who have been expelled from schools in the St. Vrain Valley School District. The center is part of a continuum of programs offered by nonprofit Alternatives for Youth.

Thanks to two grants of more than \$800,000, Clearview is now better equipped to serve students like Taylor.

Through the Colorado Department of Education, the St. Vrain Valley School District gave Alternatives for Youth \$688,000 of the Expelled and At-Risk Student Services grant to support Clearview and an early intervention program for truant students.

A Tony Grampas Youth Services grant provides AFY \$150,000 to support Clearview and life skills training classes.

Funding for both grants came during the summer, but Clearview didn’t spend much of it until the spring semester, which started Jan. 5.

AFY held off on spending the grant money until more office space opened up in its building, 24 Ninth Ave. Not wanting to disrupt students in mid-semester, most of the changes happened during the winter break.

“This has been a slam dunk, wham-bam, thank you, ma’am operation,” said Angel Salathe, Clearview’s director.

The grant money has allowed the center to hire three additional teachers, purchase eight computers and offer the students full, six-hour school days.

“To go full time is just huge,” said Deb Roberts, executive director of Alternatives for Youth. “Before, they just had too much free time to get in more trouble.”

During the fall semester, high schoolers attended classes for five hours and middle school students for four.

Salathe said the additional funding also has allowed her to hire a transition counselor who will follow students after they leave Clearview and are integrated back into the school system.

Clearview currently has 19 students: 12 middle schoolers and seven high schoolers. The center serves about 60 students every year.

“They’re good kids, but they’ve just made stupid choices,” Salathe said.

For Lupita Mora, 15, that choice was to become involved in a drug transaction. The sophomore was expelled from Erie High School in mid-December. At the end of her freshman year, her GPA was 0.0.



Teacher Yael Glick reads a seventh grader’s paper Thursday during class at Clearview Educational Center. Alternatives for Youth, which offers the alternative transition program for expelled middle and high school students in the St. Vrain Valley School District, received several grants that have allowed the center to expand. **Jill P. Mott/Times-Call**

“I hated being at school,” Mora said. “I didn’t even learn, because they’d sit me next to people I’d just talk to.”

Mora has been at Clearview for about two weeks and said she’s hoping the program will help her turn her life around.

“I want to graduate on time,” she said. “I actually want to make something of myself.”