

Alexa Van Dalsem

From: Alexa Van Dalsem [alex@alternativesforyouth.org]
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2009 6:02 AM
To: alexa@alternativesforyouth.org
Subject: News from Alternatives for Youth

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

You're receiving this email because of your relationship with Alternatives for Youth.

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



youth matters

a newsletter of alternatives for youth

In this Issue

[Spotlight: Enrique De La](#)

[Cruz](#)

[AFY Classes and](#)

[Meetings](#)

[Collaborating for](#)

[Treatment](#)

[AFY: FYI](#)

[No "Kid"ding...](#)

volume 2: issue 2

february 2009

Dear Alexa,

In prevention work, as Alternatives for Youth does through various programs, we often discuss risk and protective factors for our youth - those life factors that put youth at risk for risky behavior and those life factors that help youth stay away from risky behavior. An important protective factor for all youth is attachment to their parents or guardians, attachment to other caring adults, and healthy friendships with other youth. In other words, love from parents, adult friends and friends makes a difference in youths' lives.

This month, as we celebrate Valentine's Day, consider how you can show a youth in your life - your child, a youth friend, a friend's child - that you care for them and support them. Alternatives for Youth provides a variety of programs run by safe and caring adults for youth who can really use one more second (or third or fourth) chance from an adult.

We recently completed our 2008 Annual Report. You can find the report, which details the activities, outputs and outcomes of our programs as well as the many people who have contributed to Alternatives for Youth on our website by [clicking here](#).

collaborating for treatment

Bringing Substance Abuse Treatment for Adolescents to Longmont

"I am hoping you can help me. I have a fifteen year old son who is using marijuana. I don't know how much or how often, and I don't know what to do. Can your programs help me?" says a parent calling Alternatives for Youth's (AFY) office.



quick links

[Calendar of Events](#)

[More about AFY](#)

spotlight: enrique de la cruz



Grade: High School Freshman

Participation with AFY: Student at

Clearview Educational Center. Clearview is Alternatives for Youth's alternative transition program for expelled middle and high school students of the St. Vrain Valley School District. Clearview provides academic curriculum, a life skills class, group and individual counseling, transition assistance for students returning to school, and parental support.

About AFY: Enrique has attended Clearview for four months. He likes the teachers, having fun in the program, and the calm atmosphere, which, he said "is much calmer than at Skyline."

Future Dreams: Enrique will return to Skyline High School in the fall. After high school, he is looking forward to working and possibly going to college.

afy classes and meetings with NorthStar and Latino Parent Involvement in Education

NorthStar evening classes are held twice a week for three weeks at the AFY building, providing instruction to middle and high school youth and their families on

"I like to hang out with friends and drink on the weekends and sometimes school nights," says a high school sophomore in one of AFY's programs. This call from a parent and comment by a student is not uncommon in our offices, but our resources for helping students who regularly use or are addicted to drugs and alcohol are, sadly, limited. So often, we cannot offer parents and adolescents help when it comes to major substance abuse problems.

While AFY's programs work to prevent substance abuse and to help youth identify problems with substance abuse, and while we know substance abuse problems can be a major problem in a youth's life, we have few treatment programs to refer adolescents with substance abuse problems and addictions and their parents to. And we're not alone in not knowing where youth and parents can go, especially if they are low income.

Through conversations with key stakeholders during our strategic planning process, substance use and abuse came up over and over again as either a key or the main issue affecting the success of youth. Longmont Municipal Probation sees approximately 80% of youth on probation struggling with substance abuse and not being able to complete probation as a result. In the St. Vrain Valley School District, many students are referred to a three-session parent and student alternative to suspension substance education class; but beyond these classes, the follow-up resources are very limited and parents often want further education and treatment. For youth in probation and the district's alternative to suspension classes, their families often cannot afford treatment options.

For these many reasons, and information from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and research (see "Did You Know?" below for more information), starting an adolescent treatment program for low income families in Longmont is a priority for AFY staff and Board of Directors. We have begun working with [the Next Step: A Place Where Families Recover](#) on this endeavor.

The Next Step, a Longmont non-profit, currently has a low cost intensive outpatient program (IOP) and DUI programs for adults; and their staff and Board have made a commitment to starting an IOP for adolescents. Viewing substance abuse as a family issue, the IOP for adolescents will provide education about alcohol and drug use, testing for use, support groups and individual therapy, and bio-psycho-social assessment and evaluation for adolescents; and, for families, we will provide education about alcohol and drug use, support groups and family therapy. In addition, the IOP will provide help to families in all stages of recovery - for families with adolescents who aren't ready for treatment, for families and adolescents who are both ready, and for adolescents not supported by their families. The IOP will be provided for free or low cost so that cost is not a prohibitive factor to adolescents and families getting help.

conflict resolution, anger management and communication skills. Classes began February 9 and will begin again March 2.

Free Latino Parent Involvement in Education meetings meet twice a month at Skyline High School on topics relevant to parents with school age children. Upcoming meetings are "Building Healthy Relationships" presented by Carmen Ramirez on February 25 and "It is Never to Late to . . ." presented by the Fire Department on March 11. Meetings are 6:00-8:00 p.m. and include free childcare and dinner.

For more information, a complete list of dates and registration information, [click here](#).

afy board of directors

Greg Wagner
Board President
Chief Probation Officer, Longmont Municipal Probation

Dr. Jack Hay
Board Treasurer
Retired Assistant Superintendent, St. Vrain Valley School District

Rick Beisel
Board Secretary
Attorney

Bob Arnold

Working together, AFY has offered grant writing assistance to the Next Step as well as space for adolescent classes and therapy to be held (for licensure, an adolescent IOP cannot be held in the same location as a program treating adults with substance abuse problems), referrals and support. We are so excited about the prospect of this much needed service coming to Longmont this year!

If you wish to help, the Next Step can use community support in the form of publicity as well as financial and in-kind donations. For more information, contact AFY or the Next Step.

afy: fyi



Program Updates

In December 2008, Hispanics in Philanthropy and the Latino Community Foundation awarded us a grant to improve our marketing. Over the next year, we are excited to begin work with a marketing consultant, to update our brochure and to look for improved ways of letting people know our impact on youth in the St. Vrain Valley community. Following are highlights from our four programs:

Celebrando la Familia's Homework Clubs continue to serve a full load of elementary and middle school students with 30-40 participants at Columbine, Rocky Mountain, and Spangler Elementary and Heritage and Longs Peak Middle Schools. At each site, students receive free, bilingual tutoring, building in organizational and life skills, and positive activities.

Latino Parent Involvement in Education meetings will be held in February and March at Skyline High School with a presentation by Carmen Ramirez with the City of Longmont on "Building Healthy Relationships" on February 25, the Fire Department on "It is Never to Late to . . ." on March 11, and Longmont High School on "What is a Healthy Relationship?" The monthly meetings are intended to provide education to parents about how to be better involved in their children's lives and schools. A complete calendar of meetings, held Wednesday evenings, is available on the [Alternatives for Youth](#) website.

Girls Group began at Longs Peak Middle School with 13 girls and at Heritage Middle School with 12 girls. The groups are a supportive and positive peer group that teaches a select group of girls life skills through the **Girls Circle** curriculum. Last year's girls learned valuable relationship and communication skills that improved their friendships and success at school.

Our new **Community Advocate** program, a partnership between AFY and the St. Vrain Valley School Districts, made up of three Community

Board Member
Owner, Aspen Laser
and Technologies

Carmen Ramirez
Board Member
Program Coordinator
and Mediator, City of
Longmont Community
Relations Program

Connie Syferd
Board Member
Executive Director,
Learning Services
Center, St. Vrain Valley
School District

Advocates working in four schools continues to work with targeted, truant students and their parents, as needed, to help students improve attendance and success in school. Mary Vigil works with students at Heritage and Longs Peak, Heidi Weekley at Frederick High School and Paula Fredman at Skyline High School.

NorthStar continues classes at Heritage Middle School providing seventh and eighth grade boys at-risk of suspension or expulsion with in school classes during the school day and classwork on life skills, communication, and anger management. Emanuel will held a series of six-session evening classes for students and their parents beginning January 19, offering similar teaching to students and their parents, and began a new evening class session on February 9. Evening classes are open to any families who will benefit from the instruction. For a calendar and more information about the evening classes, [click here](#).

Clearview Educational Center staff are settling in to their new routine of full day school and expanded programming. 14 middle and high school expelled students are now attending the program full time on two floors of our office building; 10 former Clearview students are receiving transition support with their return to school; and all attending students are receiving individual and group counseling, academic work on PLATO software, and class time in English, math, science and social studies.

This month, students participated in a field trip to Care Manor, a retirement home, and interviewed residents about memories for an English project. The idea and project for the field trip were made possible by the new English teacher, Yael Glick, who began at Clearview last month, and the new parapro, Stacy Cummins, who had worked at Care Manor.

Students also visited Joder Arabian Ranch for service learning. Clearview students were recognized last year for providing 163 service hours to Joder Arabian Ranch. Through a program at Joder, the students' service time made \$1,620 for the horses out of a total \$4,000 available through the program. Students are currently engaged in helping Joder rebuild their training area and jumps, which were destroyed in the Old Stage Road fire last month.

The new and expanded programming has been wonderful this semester, giving all students more time for counseling and academic work so they are better prepared to return to school in the fall and giving students who have returned to school continued support with our Transition Advocate through regular meetings and check-ins.

no "kid"ding ...



Did You Know?

As Alternatives for Youth continued our strategic planning process in January, our Board of Directors discussed and chose three top priority improvements or programs for our organization to pursue. One of these priorities is founding an adolescent substance abuse treatment program in Longmont,

which we wish to help form in collaboration with other non-profits and

agencies in Longmont. Substance abuse is a dangerous and problematic issue for many of our adolescents, affecting their successful growth into healthy adults. Did you know:

- According to the 2007 Boulder County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, of surveyed youth:

- 43.2% reported using alcohol in the past month
- 22.3% reported using alcohol
- 8.7% reported using marijuana before the age of 13
- 28.3% reported binge drinking in the past month
- 24.0% reported using marijuana in the past month.

- Middle school students in St. Vrain and Boulder Valley School Districts rank drugs and alcohol as the top second or third concern and that peer pressure and stress are among factors influencing alcohol and drug use.

- The eighteenth annual national study of teen drug abuse by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America reported that today's teens are more likely to abuse prescription and over the counter medications than many illegal drugs and think that abusing medicines to get high is "much safer" than using illegal drugs.

- Another report by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division Colorado Department of Human Services on prescription drug abuse found that teens who abuse prescription drugs are twice as likely to use alcohol; 5 times as likely to use marijuana; 12 times likelier to use heroin; 15 times likelier to use Ecstasy; and 21 times likelier to use cocaine, compared to teens who do not abuse such drugs.

- The health risk of drug and alcohol use and the potential for addiction for our adolescents are concerns in and of themselves, but there are other negative consequences, including:

- Drug use is particularly harmful to adolescents with addiction to certain substances developing more quickly and easily in adolescents than adults.
- Research also shows that such use may also lead to failure in school and low education, poor health, degraded peer and family relationships, engaging in criminal activity, becoming threatening, violent and menacing, accidental injury and death due to overdose, and psychiatric disorders such as mood and anxiety disorders, conduct disorders, antisocial behavior, psychosis and schizophrenia.
- Families experience fractured relationships and split as a result of the on-going destructive and damaging behavior of the drug-abusing young person

- 60-80% of youth in the juvenile justice system have substance abuse issues.

- Analysis of the 2005 Boulder County Youth Risk Behavior survey data demonstrated an increase likelihood of students engaging in additional risk behaviors if they smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or use marijuana before age 13.

- Annually the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division serves over 5,000 adolescents in every modality through their licensed treatment

programs. There is an estimated 28,990 substance abusers 10-18 years of age in Colorado, leaving approximately 23,586 young people that do not receive services.

- Many parents are unable to afford the few options for adolescent substance abuse treatment offered in Boulder, Lafayette, Denver and surrounding areas.

You can find more information about adolescent substance abuse at the following websites:

[Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, Treatment Section Homepage, Adolescent Services](#)
[Boulder County Healthy Youth Alliance](#)
[Boulder County Public Health Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#)
[Parents: The Anti-Drug](#)
[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

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

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.

[Forward email](#)

Email Marketing by

✉ **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to alexa@alternativesforyouth.org by alexa@alternativesforyouth.org.
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



Alternatives for Youth | 24 Ninth Avenue | Longmont | CO | 80501