

SAPP Network News

January 2005

Above and Beyond

It never ceases to amaze me how quickly the year can fly by. One minute it's August, and the next, I look up and it's January. I hope your semester has been a great one. Ours has been busy, exciting, and always rewarding.

A community group continues to meet to discuss and act on impacting our Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) numbers. Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) has been at the helm bringing the YRBS results to sectors of the community and asking for their commitment to make a change. Although YRBS results are a community issue, we in the SAPP Office continue to work with schools on school climate and risk behavior issues. We sponsored a team of BVSD staff to attend the SAFE: teen (Suicide Awareness for Everyone) training. SAFE: teen is a school-based prevention program that trains teachers, front office staff, custodians, paraprofessionals, administrators, and students in identifying the risk factors and warning signs of suicide. The program offers skills for working with a suicidal friend or student, including what to do if someone suspects a young person is suicidal. We hope to pilot this training at one or two BVSD high schools this year.

One sub-committee of the YRBS group is looking at the health disparities in particular to try to lower the "risk gap." In some areas, our Latino youth have higher risk behaviors than our White youth. Additionally, our LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, questioning) youth have higher risk behaviors than their heterosexual counterparts. We hope to narrow that gap while lowering risk behaviors for all our students.

In addition, we have been working with a spirited group at Fairview High School to look at risk behaviors on that campus. With our data gathering almost complete, we are moving into the solution phase. As always students, staff, and parents have given us some of our most promising approaches.

As a member of the Parent Engagement Network (PEN), I continue to be amazed and impressed with their efforts. PEN, in collaboration with Compass House, Centennial Peaks Hospital, BCPH, BVSD Special Education, and others offered a symposium for parents on Saturday, October 22nd, at Monarch High School. The sessions dealt with (yes, you guessed it!) YRBS data, giving parents information and skills to help their youth. There was a session on youth depression and suicide, substance abuse, parenting skills, and a panel of youth talking about diversity on campus. Michael Bradley was also a highlight, drawing an auditorium full of parents and educators.

Finally, the Peer Education Program moves into its 4th year with another group of wise and wonderful students. Their mission and passion are to help shift the norms around drug use in BVSD, one middle school class at a time. Although SAPP is "training" them, I feel that I get more out of our interactions. They talk about their personal stories around substance use (or in many cases, non-use), and they are powerful.

I wish everyone a happy, healthy, and safe 2005!

Lisa Cech