

Thrive update



Enhance Inspire
Inform healthy kids make smarter students

Volume 1 | Issue 1

JANUARY 2009

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Special Points of INTEREST

Send your questions to be answered by "Dr. J" (p 3)

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>>About Thrive update

As a follow-up to the Thrive Handbook for Parents, Boulder Valley School District is debuting the monthly newsletter, Thrive Update. The purpose of the Thrive newsletter is to empower parents by providing scientifically valid knowledge that supports healthy youth development.

You will receive Thrive in place of the Parent Corps News. Thrive will periodically include articles from Parent Corps News. The school district offered Parent Corps News as a pilot to provide information, primarily to high school parents, on subjects impacting healthy adolescence. As the Thrive handbook was developed, it became clear that there was an opportunity for BVSD to regularly provide information, updates and resources to parents of students of

all ages that support parents in raising healthy children

Thrive will also include information that you've received from various other sources such as notices of workshops or events for parents and families. Regular features in Thrive will include a parent perspective column, Q&A with Dr. Jan Hittelman, a youth-authored column, and articles written by local community experts.

Our hope is that you will find Thrive informative, timely, and relevant. If you have any suggestions or comments, please let us know. We would love to hear from you as we shape the future direction of Thrive. Email us at communications@bvsd.org.

The Thrive Editorial Board
Email: communications@bvsd.org

>>What Teens Have to Say About...

Imagine yourself a teen and answer the following question.

Where do you get information about health topics? (Choose all that apply)

- Parent
- Other adults
- Health class at school
- Siblings
- Friends
- Internet

- Community agency
- Doctor/health clinic
- Other _____

A group of Boulder Valley high school students were asked that same question. The source of information receiving the most votes from teens was "parent," followed closely by "doctor/health clinic."

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>>Features

Students as Peer Educators

Ever ask yourself, "What is BVSD actually doing about Youth Risk Behavior Survey" (YRBS) results? Good news! This piece answers some of your YRBS questions, especially, how are we getting youth involved in the solution. We'll work backwards because it makes it a little more fun than the data collection phase. Here goes:

What's happening now?

Gateway Drug Peer Educators are high school students active in BVSD schools, and we're receiving excellent feedback about them from students, teachers and administrators. Not sure what a peer educator is? Simply put, peer educators are groups of students who have gone through training to become touchstones, guides, and educators for other students. The program is based on the notion that everyone, students and adults alike, tends to look to their peers for leadership and answers.

What? Students teaching students? How are they trained?

The community felt strongly that youth would need to be empowered to talk to other youth about these important issues—and that adults, separate from youth, could not solve these concerns.

Gateway peer educators take on 37 hours of training – including a section on telling their personal stories about how drugs/alcohol have impacted them, the effects of drugs on the brain (e.g., memory, recall) blood alcohol levels, how to talk to a friend who is abusing drugs and alcohol, when to get adult support for a friend, etc.

What's the history? How did this innovative program start?

After in-depth research on the effectiveness of peer education, BVSD's Safe and Drug Free Schools, under the leadership of Lisa Cech and in partnership with Boulder County Public Health's Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP), began the first Gateway Drug Peer Educator program. CAPE

(Coalition of Agencies for Peer Education) is the umbrella program of peer educators. It was created in direct response to YRBS data. Beginning in 2001, BVSD teachers, administrators, parents, counselors and interventionists came together to enact this proactive plan. Later that year, administrators and parents from every school in BVSD responded to Dr. Garcia's (then superintendent) "Call to Action" to create community around these issues.

What are students saying about the Gateway Drug Peer Educators program?

High school youth who go through the program and eventually talk to middle school youth say they are more confident staying clean/sober at parties, that they like being the responsible one, and that they know more about substance use and how it impacts their brain functioning. Eighty percent of middle school students who hear the presentation say it "improved their knowledge of drug and alcohol abuse." The program has been featured at national conferences and BVSD receives scores of inquiries from other districts wanting to start a program.

Sounds great! How does a student get involved?

Youth from every high school are recruited and interviewed for the program. The first year, 14 youth were involved in the program and presentations were given to 12 middle school classes. For the last three years under the direction of Deb Crowell, Assistant Coordinator for Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Kristen Nelson, Youth Education coordinator for TEPP, the Gateway program has had over 45 youth involved. Last year alone, 96 presentations were given.

For more information about CAPE and to learn how someone can become a peer educator, go to <http://bvsd.org/students/Pages/cape.aspx>.

by Lisa Cech
BVSD Coordinator for School Climate



2007 Gateway Drug Peer Educator Retreat



2008 Gateway Drug Peer Educator Retreat

>>What Teens Have to Say About...

Continued from pg. 1

As participants in a youth summit¹, we had the opportunity to listen as these students talked about their lives and factors impacting their health. They talked about stress, depression, alcohol, sex, tobacco use, and harassment.

Here are some of the key points we learned:

Teens feel pressured in balancing their lives.

They recognize that they have more freedom and with that freedom comes more responsibility. Students at the summit talked about the time crunch. They are having difficulty balancing all aspects of their lives. Some students use alcohol as a stress relief and to help them forget about their problems. Some table groups talked about how later school start times would make their lives easier.

Sophomore year is a pivotal year.

The students described sophomore year as awkward, challenging, and an in-between year. They see sophomore year as having more drama. While they

acknowledge high school doesn't have nearly as much drama as middle school, the drama flares up during sophomore year. The students' perception is that sophomore year is a big drinking year.

Asking for help from adults can be challenging.

Students at the summit say they turn to their friends for help first but acknowledge uncertainty about what to do when a friend comes to them. They don't know where to turn and they worry that adults will overreact. They don't want to be lectured by adults; they are looking for open conversations that are relatable and personal to them.

There are a variety of factors that impact their choices.

Some students at the summit talked about the influence of media on their decisions; the media makes alcohol use and sexual behavior seem appealing. Perceptions also influence their behavior. They perceive that drinking isn't a big deal or that marijuana is less harmful than alcohol.

Parents, and other adults, have an important role.

Students at the summit talked about wanting to be adults and what they see are adults drinking. Some students say parents provide them with alcohol and ignore it. Other students talk about parental disapproval being a greater deterrent than legal consequences. What this tells us is that high school students are paying attention to the adults around them and are influenced by adult behavior. The students at the summits talked about wanting to be heard and that adults need to be ready listen.

¹The youth summit was held on April 17, 2008 with students from Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley high schools. Students represented all grades and a variety of social groups.

by Leisha
Conners Bauer
Boulder County Healthy
Youth Alliance

Q&A with Dr. J

For several years I have been fortunate to write columns that appear in BVSD school newsletters for the Parent Engagement Network entitled "Thriving During the Teenage Years" and "Thriving During the Elementary Years." In addition I write a column for the Camera called "Shrink Rap," which appears on the last Tuesday of the month in the FIT Section. Finally, I write a question and answer column for Rosen Publishing's online Teen Health and Wellness website, responding to teen's questions from around the country.

I am especially excited to participate in the Thrive Update by providing this monthly question and answer column

for BVSD parents, staff, and students. All questions are welcome and appreciated.

This column will respond directly to your questions and concerns. Readers who submit questions will be able to do so anonymously (e.g. "Concerned Parent"). If I do not have the expertise to answer your specific question, I will research it and possibly bring in other experts from the community to assist. If your question is not published, I will make every effort to respond to you directly.

It is important to us that your voice be heard. That's why Thrive welcomes submissions from parents as well as students for future Thrive newsletters.

This column provides a channel for

you to participate in this publication by submitting questions/concerns that others likely share.

Together we will provide a forum that will generate community discussion on issues that impact our children, families and ourselves.

You can submit your questions directly to me by phone (720-217-3270), fax (720-381-6089), email (Jan.Hittelman@gmail.com), or regular mail (1527 Pine Street, Boulder 80302).

I hope to hear from you soon.

Jan Hittelman, Licensed Psychologist
Boulder Psychological Services

>> SPOTLIGHT on BVSD's Community School Program

Coordinated School Health (CSH) is a national model that illustrates interrelationships among existing health-related components within schools and communities. BVSD follows this CSH model to provide structures that help coordinate the many efforts that contribute to student and staff health.

Coordinated School Health is directly related to helping students "thrive" because healthy, properly nourished students who feel safe are better able to concentrate on their work, attend school on a regular basis, and achieve academically in school and in life. See www.bvsd.org/csh for details.

A key element of BVSD's Coordinated School Health effort is its partnership of community organizations, parents, teachers and students. Since 2002, the BVSD Coordinated School Health Partnership has been meeting to coordinate health-related efforts within BVSD and between the district and the community. More than 80 members are already involved. A different organization will be spotlighted in this section of "Thrive Update" each month. For more information on how to get involved, please contact Geoff Sandfort, BVSD Health Education Coordinator, at geoff.sandfort@bvsd.org.

The Community School Program

supports children through School Age Care, Kindergarten Care, Lifelong Learning, and Facility Use. Details and registration information are available in the "Community" section of the BVSD website at www.bvsd.org/community.

>> School Age Care (SAC) provides on-site before and after school licensed child care serving 625 children. SAC's well-trained, professional and caring staff members offer students healthy snacks and homework assistance, as well many recreational activities including group games, sports, arts and crafts.

>> Kindergarten Care (K-CARE) is an optional half-day, fee-based, licensed childcare program that serves 1,028 kindergarten students. K-CARE complements BVSD's half-day kindergarten school program with a developmentally appropriate curriculum that includes literature, dramatic play, the visual arts, music, large and small motor games, and the support to practice social skills.

>> Lifelong Learning offers classes for community members of all ages throughout the year. Winter classes for teens include Driver's Ed and SAT or ACT test preparation. Other upcoming classes

for youth include Digital Animation for Kids (Feb. 17-March 17) and YWCA Tech Tales: Telling Stories with Technology (Jan. 29-March 19). See the Lifelong Learning website at www.bvsd.org/LLL for a full course catalog, including details about three week-long Spring Break camps.

>> Community School Program also rents BVSD facilities to youth programs in Boulder County. Space available includes gyms, auditoriums, classrooms, multi-purpose rooms and playing fields. For more information, call 303-499-1125, x228.

>> From Parent to Parent

Networking with other parents is one of the many tools available to parents and the From Parent to Parent column in the new Thrive Update will provide parents with information from local parents.

We all come from different places in parenting that stem a lot from the way we were raised in our own families. We add to that initial learning with new information gained from the parenting books we take time to read, the parenting classes we find time to attend, the network we set up with parents of our child's friends, the counselors we seek when things really become difficult, and the conversations we have with our children's teachers and coaches. There are so many ways to get the guidance we crave.

From Parent to Parent hopes to capture tips and tidbits, "ohmygosh did you know this is going on" to "I discovered how to really get through to my child or teen." It's a place

for your voice and your experience in parenting that might help another parent coming along.

Statistics point to parents still having the most important influence in their child's life. Think about that... as you probably would not want to relinquish that influence to anyone else. This column will give you food for thought. So, when you have something of interest for other parents, this is a place where your experiences will be heard and may just be that message that will help another parent.

We invite you to submit your thoughts and ideas to communications@bvsd.org. Please keep comments to 300 words or less.

by Marsha Moritz
former BVSD Parent & PEN Co-Founder



Thriveupdate for BVSD Parents

Published by BVSD
Written by local Boulder
experts and parents

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Look for us on the web!
www.bvsd.org

>> Calendar of Classes & Events

JANUARY 2009

1/15: Healing Circles - Embracing Life's Transitions
Parent Engagement Network Community Conversation
Thurs., Jan. 15, 2009, 9-11 a.m. Lafayette Library, 775 W. Baseline Rd., Lafayette - A speaker from the Healing Circles Program will talk about the different types of loss and how to support children and teens as they experience loss.

1/21: Becoming a Love and Logic Parent for parents of teens
(Starts) (focused on teens, only)
Wednesdays, Jan. 21, 28, Feb. 4, 11, 18, March 4. 6:30-9 p.m., (six sessions) Superior, CO - For details contact the instructor Cyndi Goldfarb at 303-494-8373 or cyn@indra.com

1/25: Love and Logic Early Childhood Parenting Made Fun
(Starts) (for parents of children up to age 6)
Sundays, Jan. 25, Feb. 8, 15 (three sessions) 1-5 p.m.
Location: Dream Makers Preschool - For details contact the instructor Cyndi Goldfarb at 303-494-8373 or cyn@indra.com

1/26: BreakThrough Arts/AfterHourArts Classes
(Starts) in the Boulder/Superior/Louisville area. **FREE**
Classes take place 3:30-5:30 p.m. or 4-6 p.m. and are open to students 13-18 years of age. Examples include pottery, figure drawing, the art of billiards, trapeze, cooking and more.
For more information contact BreakThrough Arts at 303-443-4474 ext. 4650 or bta@ymcabv.org

FEBRUARY 2009

2/1: Resources for Couples: Relationship Traps & How to Avoid Them - Wendy Conquest, LPC
Sundays 1:00-2:30 p.m. Trinity Lutheran Church, 2200 Broadway, Boulder (NE Corner Broadway & Pine)

2/2: Active Parenting for Stepfamilies
(Starts) Mondays, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23, March 2, 9, 16 (six sessions - no class Feb. 16) 6:15-9:15 p.m. Dreamcatcher Direct Instruction Centers, 5440 Conestoga Court, Boulder. For details contact the instructor Stephanie Bryan at 303-397-0646 or stephanie@REALparenting.net

>>Calendar of Classes & Events

FEBRUARY 2009

- 2/3:** **Becoming A Love and Logic Parent**
(Starts) Tuesdays, Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24, March 3, 10, 17 (seven sessions) 6:30-9 p.m.
New Vista High School, 700 20th Street, Boulder. For details contact the instructor Stephanie Bryan at 303-397-0646 or stephanie@REALparenting.net
- 2/7:** **Love and Logic Early Childhood Parenting Made Fun** (for parents of children up to age 6)
(Starts) Saturdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28, March 7 (five sessions) 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Parenting Place, 1235 Pine #A, Boulder. For details contact the instructor Sheryl Schwabe at 303-520-6803 or sschwabe@comcast.net
- 2/8:** **Resources for Couples: Healthy Communication - Elizabeth Matthews, LPC**
Sundays 1:00-2:30 p.m. Trinity Lutheran Church,
2200 Broadway, Boulder (NE Corner Broadway & Pine)
- 2/10:** **Love and Logic Early Childhood Parenting Made Fun** (for parents of children up to age 6)
(Starts) Tuesdays, Feb. 10, 17, 24, March 3, 10 (five sessions) 9:15-11:30 a.m., 1530 55th Street, Boulder. For details contact the instructor Stephanie Bryan at stephanie@REALparenting.net or 303-397-0646
- 2/11:** **Love and Logic Early Childhood Parenting Made Fun** (for parents of children up to age 6)
(Starts) Wednesdays, Feb. 11, 18, 25, March 4, 11 (five sessions) 6-8:30 p.m., Louisville Recreation Center,
900 Via Appia, Louisville. For details contact the instructor Sheryl Schwabe at 303-520-6803 or sschwabe@comcast.net
- 2/12:** **Becoming A Love and Logic Parent**
(Starts) Thursdays, Feb. 12, 19, 26, March 5, 12, 19 (six sessions) 6:30-9:00 p.m.
Mesa Elementary School, 1575 Lehigh, Boulder
For details contact the instructor Cyndi Goldfarb at 303-494-8373 or cyn@indra.com
- 2/15:** **Resources for Couples: Effective Co-Parenting - Marcela Ot'alora G., LPC**
Sundays 1:00-2:30 p.m. Trinity Lutheran Church,
2200 Broadway, Boulder (NE Corner Broadway & Pine)
- 2/22:** **Resources for Couples: Communicating with Difficult Ex-Spouses - Jamie Lau**
Sundays 1:00-2:30 p.m. Trinity Lutheran Church,
2200 Broadway, Boulder (NE Corner Broadway & Pine)
- 2/26:** **Gatekeeper's Keys: Compassion, Courage, Critical Information**
FREE half day training session on depression awareness and suicide prevention
Thurs., February 26, The First Congregational Church, 1128 Pine Street, Boulder.
Register at www.hopecoalitionboulder.org for info contact: valstone2@hotmail.com.

A Weekend with Dr. Michael Bradley

- 2/27:** **Reception and Dr. Bradley's Presentation: "When Things Get Crazy with Your Teen: The Why, the How, and What to do NOW!"** Fri., Feb. 27, 6-10 p.m., Unity Church, 2855 Folsom St., Boulder
(Part 1) Tickets: \$25 before January 31, \$35 prior to event, \$45 at the door
- 2/28:** **"For Crazy Parents of Crazy Teens: Solving Problems While Loving Your Child" Workshop,**
(Part 2) Saturday, Feb. 28, 10 a.m.-noon - September School, 1902 Walnut St., Boulder
Tickets: \$45 by January 31, \$60 by February 27, For more information, please call 303-443-9933