

Thrive update

 **Boulder Valley** School District
Excellence and Equity

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Inform healthy kids make smarter students

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Get involved in a club or activity. It will help kids get excited and their own school spirit will grow.

from Robin Sackmann
Counselor, Aspen Creek K-8

>>Spring Break Can Be Good Therapy

Stress impacts children and adolescents as well as adults. While we cannot avoid many of the things that we find stressful, we can learn to manage them in ways that will reduce the harmful effects of chronic stress. There are a variety of research-proven stress reduction techniques that are fairly simple to learn and with practice are highly effective. Mental health professionals commonly teach many of these strategies to their clients. They include:

- **Reduce over-scheduling.** If you're feeling overwhelmed with everything on your plate, try to reduce one or two nonessential activities. This may require learning how to determine what is truly essential.
- **Learn relaxation techniques.** From simple breathing techniques to visualizing yourself in a peaceful place, relaxation techniques can significantly reduce your stress level.
- **Muscle relaxation and exercise.** Simply tensing various muscle groups for 5-10 seconds followed by 10-20 seconds of relaxing those same muscles can significantly reduce muscle tension resulting from stress. Moderate exercise can also be a great stress reducer.
- **Be aware of your thinking.** We tend to place a lot of stress on ourselves based on our perfectionist, pessimistic, and generally negative thoughts. By trying to be more aware of our thinking and shifting to more rational, logical, positive thoughts (and keeping things in perspective), we can significantly reduce our subjective experience of stress. This can be easier said than done and professional assistance is often helpful.
- **Have fun!** We tend to undervalue simply having fun and enjoying time with friends and family. Imagine if we placed as much importance on recreation as we do on achievement. Not only would we be healthier, we would also achieve more.

Take the time to assess your level of stress as well as that of your loved ones. Reducing stress will positively impact your family's relationships and quality of life.

So try to relax and have fun this Spring Break. Your mind, body, spouse and children will thank you!

by Dr. Jan Hittelman
Boulder Psychological Services

>>Great ideas to share with your kids

Spring break is around the corner and the Gateway Peer Educators want to give you some safe, drug free ideas and activities. We want to remind you that when it comes to drugs and alcohol, "everyone is not doing it." You can be social without going to parties. Boulder has a number of things to do that are fun and don't involve substances. Get creative, stay busy, laugh. If you are going out of town or on vacation, look for things to do in the area that do not involve drugs or alcohol. Many cities have a number of activities to offer and a zip line, parasail, snorkel, or dolphin swim can be more memorable than drinking or using substances. Take advantage of the surroundings and ask the locals what people do for fun. If you are staying in town, here are some ideas...

- Ask your friends to name their favorite movie and then have your friends over and watch all of them back to back.
- Do a video scavenger hunt. Make a list of things that each group needs to find and take a picture or video of, and then travel around town collecting evidence that you found it and then meet at a final spot to see who found all the clues first.
- Get a large group to assemble suddenly to perform an unusual, legal, and pointless act for a brief time. For example, "We are all meeting at 3 p.m. on Tuesday to have a giant pillow fight!"
- Make a list of all your friends who are clean and sober and plan an activity.
- Go to the recreation center and tube in the lazy river.
- Have a wii fit or video game tournament. Put together a bracket and compete.
- Do some ice blocking or sledding.
- Host an open mic night -- have friends come over and either play an instrument, perform a lip sync, or read a poem.
- Engage in community service or staff a community table.
- Come up with a small business venture (like snow shoveling) and market yourself on your street for extra money.
- Have friends name their favorite food and then make it.

Be present in your child's education. The more interest and enthusiasm you show, the more your child will do and share with you.

from Carol Azzolina
Counselor, Emerald Elementary &
Whittier International Elementary

Speak positively about your child's school.

from Robin Sackmann
Counselor, Aspen Creek K-8

Work with the teachers early in elementary and find your child's strengths in academics. Help them become passionate about something.

from Jennifer Phillips
Counselor, Arapahoe Campus

>> Alcohol Use and Spring Break

It's that time of year when we visualize the melting snow, the budding leaves, and the prospect of a spring break vacation. For many families, the imminent break from school comes with a mixture of joy and trepidation. Vacations simultaneously conjure relaxing images but they also bring anxiety and misgivings about sending our kids into the den of depravity often associated with spring break trips.

The media-fueled images of hundreds of scantily clad, un-chaperoned bodies pulsing to the music fosters the perception that underage drinking is an expected rite of passage for adolescents.

While we, as adolescents, may have engaged in our own version of spring break debauchery, the thought of our children following in our footsteps is enough to send shivers down the spine. Many parents feel helpless in their ability to impact their children's decisions, especially when it comes to issues related to underage drinking.

Here are three tips for minimizing the chances that your children engage in underage drinking on their spring break vacation.

SET THE EXAMPLE

Take the stand that underage drinking is unacceptable by refusing to supply alcohol to your children, whether at the family dinner table or the beachside restaurant. Be cognizant of your own drinking behavior, remembering that our children pay far more attention to what we do than what we say.

TALK, TALK, TALK!

Engage in nonjudgmental open discussions with your children by broaching difficult topics prior to the vacation. Avoid advice giving; instead, use the opportunity to learn more about your children's attitudes and beliefs about alcohol.

GET OVER YOURSELF

Many parents feel hypocritical about demanding that their children refrain from behavior in which they themselves engaged as a minor. You have the benefit of hindsight and maturity. Use your experience and wisdom without guilt.

For more information on this important topic, consider attending an upcoming free community discussion at the Meadows Branch Library in Boulder on March 8 at 7:00 p.m.: Teen Alcohol & Tobacco Use: How to Address It.

by Jeremy Dion, LPC
Boulder Psychological Services

>> Are You Ready?

Spring Break 2010 is just around the corner. Here are some questions to help you prepare for spring break and for your teen's expectations about spring break.

Have you thought about the effects of a long break from the built-in structure of school, especially a break that carries so many expectations? What are your fears around spring break? What are your expectations?

If your kids are left to create their own fun time, they will. Whether you stay in town or travel, pre-teens and teens are testing social boundaries. Parents who have the most worry-free and relaxing break have done their homework up front and have been preparing for this bizarre "rite of passage" for a while.

I highly recommend the documentary "The Merchant of Cool." It's a great look at media and marketing efforts focusing on teens and what's cool and how that influence's teen behavior. For example, look at the focus of the spring break marketing. It is all about sex and drinking. Some studies have found that 97 percent of teens going to holiday destinations are binge drinking. Males average 18 drinks a day and the females average 10 drinks a day.

So be ready. Have and share your expectations for spring break and come up with fun ways to stay engaged with them during the holiday. Be creative and get involved. Do fun things together. Spend time with your teen (or preteen) and their friends. You get to know whom they are spending time with and learn more about their lives.

by Stuart Marshall, LPC
Boulder Psychological Services

>>It's Time to Turn Off the TV

Could you and your family do it for a day.... two days.....how about an entire week?

In 2009 the Nielsen Company determined that the average household has 2.86 televisions, yet there are only 2.57 people in the average American household. TVs are everywhere – in restaurants, airports, gyms, even cars. You can watch your favorite show on any number of screens from a small 4" iPod to the gigantic 70" man-cave version. We just can't seem to get away from them. Couple that with the popularity of video games and recreational computer use, what's a kid to do?

According to a study released in January 2010 by the Kaiser Family Foundation, each day youth aged 8-18 spend an average of 7 hours, 38 minutes using TV, video games, music, print and cell phones unrelated to school work. And since they are such great multi-taskers and can talk on their cell phone while playing a video game, these kids end up absorbing 10 hours and 45 minutes worth of content during that time.

One in three children in the United States is either obese or overweight, while one-third of all children today will eventually suffer from diabetes. A large percentage of these statistics are attributed to our kids simply not participating in enough physical activity.

April 19-25 is designated as **National TV Turn-Off Week**. This event is designed to address these issues and bring awareness to the overwhelming amount of time spent using electronics in our society. TV Turn Off Week provides parents and children alike with an fun, positive opportunity to explore other healthy, active alternatives.

One option to take advantage of during this week is the TV Turn Off Week Program at the Bob L. Burger Recreation Center in Lafayette. Here your Kindergartener through 12th Grader can receive a free week's pass to the center and participate in free activities. Youth completing an activity log can receive a free book and prize package. For more details and a list of 101 Fun Things To Do With Kids visit www.cityoflafayette.com/recreation or call 303-665-0469.

by Debbie Wilmot
City of Lafayette Recreation Department

Q&A with Dr. J

Q: *My child is in middle school and not interested in doing the daylong-supervised activities that worked so well in elementary school. How do I balance my need to provide him with safety and structure during break with his desire to relax and be more in charge of what he does?*

A: Middle school represents a dramatic shift in development as children begin their journey through adolescence. The challenge you're experiencing is a function of this transitional time in your child's life. Our children are aware of this shift much sooner than we are. It is important we understand that as our child changes, so too must our parenting techniques. Whether we realize it or not, as parents of middle school children, we are faced with a fork in the road in terms of our parenting approach; we can either

continue to parent as we did before, or allow our parenting strategy to evolve along with our children.

Parents of younger children need to provide them with structure, guidelines, and direction. When they begin moving through adolescence, we must shift our approach by encouraging our children to think for themselves. During this time of development, children struggle to create their own structure, guidelines, and direction. As parents we want to nurture this growth and become good advisors in helping them make healthy choices.

By letting you know that he wants to relax and be more in charge of what he does, your child is letting you know that you have come to that fork in the road. You can either try to force your way and register him for daylong-supervised activities during

spring break or you could have an in-depth discussion with him about his concerns as well as yours. Even if at the end of that discussion you make the decision to enroll him in those programs, you have shown him the respect that a young adolescent needs as he begins the journey to adulthood. Better yet, perhaps you can integrate one or more of his ideas into the spring break plan. Just as we can teach our children, they can teach us as well, if we are truly able to listen.

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.

by Jan Hittelman
Licensed Psychologist

>> Substance Abuse and the Power of Parental Influence

Did you know...

Nearly all BVSD parents surveyed believe they have at least some influence over their youth's decision to use alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana.

Most BVSD parents believe that teens are at "great risk" of harming themselves, physically or in other ways, by regular use of cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana or by binge drinking.

Three-quarters (74.5%) of parents felt that it was "very wrong" for parents to host parties where alcohol was available to minors, even if the parents remained on the premises, and most of the remainder (17.6%) felt it was "wrong."

Results from
Fall 2009 survey of BVSD middle and high school parents

Spring break, prom, graduation, and summer vacation are often times for celebration. Some quick tips for empowering your teen to make healthy choices:

- Keep talking
- Set clear expectations
- Encourage your teen to make each moment count
- Follow through with appropriate consequences
- Set a good example

by Leisha Connors Bauer
Boulder Healthy Youth Alliance

Get them involved in something...music, sports, clubs.

from Jennifer Phillips
Counselor, Arapahoe Campus

Help your child cultivate lasting friendships with peers.

from Allison O'Neill
Counselor, Manhattan Middle School

Know what is going on at school – read the newsletters, read the emails and handouts. Attend events, and if you can't make it yourself, send your child with another family member or with a friend's family. Make it clear that school is the priority and the focus of your lives as a family.

from Sennen Knauer
Counselor Coordinator,
Boulder Valley School District

>>Calendar of Classes & Events

MARCH 2010

Pathways to Parenting Success: The Secrets to a Successful Family Vacation

Too often family conflict can sabotage a successful vacation. Incorporate effective strategies to make your next vacation great.

Panelists: Elizabeth Matthews, LPC, Dr. Jan Hittelman, Jamie Lau-Mediator

Monday, March 1, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Meadows Branch Library, Boulder

For more information: www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

YFU is seeking host families, volunteers and students interested in going on a high school exchange.

Youth For Understanding, a high school international exchange program, is inviting families in BVSD to an open house to learn about international education and building cultural bridges between the United States and over 50 countries. High school students from around the world will be headed our way this August to spend an exchange year in Colorado schools with our Youth For Understanding (YFU) program. Please join us for the "Go Global! Event" in Lafayette to learn more about all of the YFU programs and how you can get involved.

Wednesday, March 3, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Indian Peaks Neighborhood
Contact Lisa Chinnery to RSVP, lchinnery@yfu.org or 303.665.6508. www.yfu-usa.org

PEN Sponsors

Parenting Book Group Organizational Meeting

Thursday, March 4, 6:00-8:30 p.m., at Louisville Middle School, Library, 1341 Main Street, Louisville

"Please Stop the Rollercoaster: How Parents of Teenagers Can Smooth Out the Ride" is a guide for busy parents of teenagers who find themselves unsure of their changing role. PEN volunteers have organized parenting discussion book groups for the past two years using this resource. This kick-off organizational meeting will give information about the book, and organize parents into book discussion groups. Using a well established format, the discussion groups help parents examine and discuss important issues they are likely to face, using a book that offers a wealth of practical, succinct information. For more information contact: Fawnda Hathaway at fawnda@comcast.net or 303-604-2547.

Pathways to Parenting Success:

Teen Alcohol & Tobacco Use: How to Address It

Teens often underestimate the dangers of alcohol and tobacco use. Learn how to address this issue within the family and keep your child safe.

Panelists: Ann Kloos, LCSW, Karen Wilding, LCSW, TEPP Staff

Monday, March 8, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Meadows Branch Library, Boulder

For more information: www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

THRIVEupdate for BVSD Parents

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

>>Calendar of Classes and Events

MARCH 2010

ADHD Parent Support Meeting (BVSD)

Monday, March 8, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Fireside Elementary School, 845 Dahlia Street, Louisville.
Contact Parent Liaison Anna Stewart for more information: 720-561-5918 or anna.stewart@BVSD.org

PEN Presents

Compassionate Communication: Deepening Parent/Child Relationships

Two dates and times: **Thursday, March 11, 9:00-11:00 a.m.**, BVSD Education Center, 6500 East Arapahoe
Tuesday, March 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Peak to Peak Charter School, 800 Merlin Drive, Lafayette
Helping parents to establish and maintain strong connections within their families through honest and clear communication based on the work of Marshall B. Rosenberg, PhD- non violent communication. Led by Jeff and Traci Bushnell of the Center for Compassionate Connections. www.centerforcompassionateconnections.org

Supporting Strong Organization

Part of the BVSD series of Brainstorm Panels: Supporting our Non-Traditional Learners

Monday, March 15, 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the BVSD Education Center, 6500 East Arapahoe Road
Panelists include: Dr. Liz Turner, D.C., Family Chiropractic; Mary Collette Rogers, Kitchen Coach; Kristin B. Powell, Ph.D., PLLC, Clinical Psychology and Neuropsychology; and Deborah Kratovil, Learning Pathways.
For more information, contact Anna Stewart, Parent Liaison, BVSD Parent Support Center: 720-561-5918 or anna.stewart@bvsd.org

Orientation to Licensed Family Child Care

Speaker: Annette Crawford

March 23, 6:00-8:30 p.m., City of Boulder Children Youth & Families, 2160 Spruce Street
This bilingual English/Spanish workshop will help participants determine if becoming a licensed family child care provider is the right profession for them. For more information: www.bouldercolorado.gov/cyfhhs/rt or 303-441-1912

APRIL 2010

PEN Presents

Transitions

Thursday, April 1, 9:00-11:00 a.m., BVSD Ed Center, 6500 East Arapahoe, Boulder
Sue Wong provides a positive approach focusing on helping parents guide children of all ages in developing the attitudes and skills that will serve them well today and the rest of their lives.
Questions? Contact: Betsy Fox, PEN Senior Advisor: foxbetsy123@msn.com, 720-563-7007
For interpretation contact: Eugenia Brady Eugenia.brady@bvsd.org, 720-561-5150

Autism and Giftedness: How to Develop the Child's Strengths - Dr. Temple Grandin

Monday, April 5, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Fairview High School
Based on personal experience, Dr. Grandin will discuss how and why people with autism think differently, economical early intervention programs that work, how sensory sensitivities affect learning, teaching people with autism to live in an unpredictable world, and careers and learning work skills.
Presented by Boulder Valley Gifted and Talented (BVGT). Free; donations accepted. For details, visit www.bvgt.org.
RSVP to programming@bvgt.org

Find one adult you can trust at school.

from Allison O'Neill
Counselor, Manhattan Middle School

>>Calendar of Classes and Events

APRIL 2010

Pathways to Parenting Success: Helping Your Child Transition Through School

Learn effective strategies to help your child successfully transition from elementary to middle, middle to high school, and onto college.

Panelists: Linda Cain, MSED, Lauri Benblatt, LPC, Jeffrey Kuhn, LCSW

Monday, April 5, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Meadows Branch Library, Boulder

For more information: www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

Becoming a Love and Logic Parent® class

Facilitator: Sheryl Schwabe, MSW, CACIII

Wednesdays, April 7 – May 12 (6 sessions), 6:00-8:30 p.m., Louisville Recreation Center, Louisville

This parenting class provides simple, practical and proven skills that can be used right away. It focuses on building and maintaining a loving relationship with our children while teaching them to be respectful and responsible. For more information contact: Sheryl Schwabe at 303-520-6803 or sschwabe@comcast.net

>> More helpful information about parenting is available in the Thrive Handbook.

Thrive Handbook (published by BVSD in 2008)

Available online at www.bvbsd.org/parents/Pages/thrive.aspx



Show them how you use the things you learned in school in your own work.

from Jennifer Phillips
Counselor, Arapahoe Campus

If we as parents are lifelong learners, if we as parents read for enjoyment and share that enjoyment, if we as parents insure that we are on time for our jobs and appointments, if we as parents eat healthy and get adequate sleep, if we as parents schedule time with our friends and family, then we have set a model for our children that will keep them engaged in school, and given them a model that will last beyond school and into adulthood.

from Mary Ellen Bayko
School Counselor, Bear Creek Elementary

Share your favorite stories from school growing up. Talk about your favorite memories at school with teachers, friends, classes, activities.

from Sennen Knauer
Counselor Coordinator,
Boulder Valley School District

Teacher Appreciation Essay and Poetry Contest

Who: Students in Kindergarten – Grade 12

What: Write an essay or poem about a teacher you appreciate or admire.

- Entries must be 500 words or less and typed.
- Each essay must have a cover page with the following information:
 - **Student name, current grade, school, phone number & parent email**
 - **Teacher name, school, grade or subject**

Where: Submit entries in any one of the following ways:

- E-Mail to Jeff Oliver at crm2333@bn.com,
- Fax them to 303-442-0038
- Bring them to the Barnes & Noble at 2999 Pearl St.

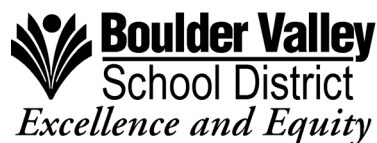
When: Last day to submit entries is Wednesday, **March 31st**.

- Barnes & Noble Teacher Appreciation Reception begins at 11:00 AM on **Saturday, April 17th**. Winning entries will be read

Prizes: The essays and poems will be judged and prizes will be awarded to teachers.

- One 1st place award will be determined in each of the following categories:
 - Kindergarten – 2nd grade
 - 3rd grade – 5th grade
 - 6th grade – 8th grade
 - 9th grade – 12th grade
- Each teacher who is the subject of a poem or essay will receive a certificate of appreciation and a copy of the poem or essay.

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