

# Thrive update

 **Boulder Valley** School District  
*Excellence and Equity*

*Enhance Inspire*  
*Inform healthy kids make smarter students*

Volume 2 | Issue 7

APRIL 2010

## insideTHRIVE

2 Transitions for Parents and Teens

3 Elementary College Nights

Q&A with Dr. J

4 BVSD School Counselor tips for transitioning to Middle School

5 Calendar of Classes & Events

*Remember to tell your child that everyone is new to the middle school. Present school as a place where they'll learn new things and make new friends. And as they make new friends invite them over to your house. This encourages new friendships and helps them connect outside of school.*

from Kristin Borostyan  
Counselor, Aspen Creek K-8  
and Louisville Middle School

## >> Transitions into Middle and High School

An elementary student moving on to middle school can be compared to a preschooler moving on to kindergarten. Students have a good concept of school, but the learning structures and systems within the school are extremely different. Adjusting to middle and high school are significant events in a person's life and deserve and require some extra attention and preparation.

When a child moves on to middle school, the whole structure of the school day shifts and children begin to change classes and move through the school day in a much more independent way. A very important piece of smoothly adapting to this independence is to really understand the new structures and systems in their new school. Identifying the differences is key. Details, of course, will be unique to each school, but the major changes include having seven or eight classes per day, each with different teachers and a passing period in between. Students don't walk around together in single-file lines anymore! Using lockers, changing into work out-type clothing for PE, knowing that the time spent outside after lunch is no longer called "recess," and that classes like music and PE are called "electives," not "specials," are some of the major changes to your child's new life in middle school.

Once students move to high school, the notion of different class periods and teachers is old news and the changes

now include concepts like earning graduation credits for each class. There are many more classes and electives to choose from. And there are kids that actually drive themselves to school! The stakes are higher now, grades mean more, attendance means more, and good decision making in friends and behavior is as important as ever.

Helping your child adjust to these types of school changes is just one part of supporting them with the physical, mental and emotional changes adolescence brings. With all these logistical details in mind, have conversations with your child about what parts of these new systems excite them. What parts concern them and why? What supports can you or the school provide to help them stay organized and to move through their new school life easily?

Remember that the school is your partner in supporting your child as you begin to answer these questions and this next exciting phase of your child's life unfolds. If issues arise and you need help supporting your student in his or her school, consider contacting the school counselor for assistance.

Learn more about BVSD School Counseling at their website:  
[www.bvsvd.org/counseling](http://www.bvsvd.org/counseling)

by Sennen Knauer, M.Ed.  
Elementary & Secondary  
Counselor Coordinator

# >> Transitions for Parents and Teens

Parents have many roles. Some roles continue throughout the parent-child relationship. Others change depending on the developmental needs of the child.

As kids transition into adolescence, they desperately need parents involved in their lives, whether they know it or not. Parents who successfully manage this transition recognize that what their kids now need is a parent coach - someone who can be there as a resource, a guide, a sounding board, and a safe harbor.

As parents, we all experience our own transitions. Our first and primary role is providing physical and emotional nurturing. We add the role of teacher through modeling, instructing, and guiding our kids. When our child gets active outside the home, we add the role of administrator or manager by supporting them in their interests, getting them to their activities, and helping them prioritize and problem solve. We continue in these roles into middle school.

As children transition into adolescence and become more self-directed and self-motivated, they no longer need administrator parents. At this point, they frequently fire their administrator parents. Many parents throw up their hands in panic, not knowing what to do. Some try to micromanage and get into power struggles with their kids. Others withdraw, telling themselves they have raised their kids and now their kids are on their own. Neither of these responses meets their kids' needs. Kids need to know that they are free to explore and experiment and that their parents will always be there when needed.

Parents who are able to transition their role are able to maintain a connection as their kids struggle with the multiple transitions and challenges presented to them – in their bodies, brains, values, belief systems, friends, classes, teachers, schools, etc.

*Stephanie Bryan, of REAL Parenting, and Mary Lynne Coleman, of Tools 4 Teens Life Coaching, are offering a class this spring that focuses on parent and teen transitions. Stephanie will work with parents to learn how to become parent coaches while Mary Lynne will share success principles with teenagers to empower them through life transitions.*

See [www.REALparenting.net](http://www.REALparenting.net) for more information.

Different cultures create various rituals to mark changes and make them memorable. In our culture we value transitions that have to do with accomplishments and, except for death, are intentional. Weddings, graduations, and memorials are rituals that allow us to consciously and collectively honor transitions. These communal rituals help us to connect, support and recognize each other. When asked about the importance of these rituals, people often answer that what is meaningful is the act of witnessing. A transition without witnesses is somehow lost, and leaves a void. Humans need witnesses in order to feel honored and whole.

There are important transitions that we as a culture ignore, and whose rituals, if there were ever any, have died out. The passage from childhood to adolescence is one such transition. As parents we are constantly talking about the physical and emotional changes in our children. When did it all happen? It seems like it was overnight. These monumental transitions have actually been slowly taking place over time, sending out subtle and not so subtle signals. A young client once told me, "I want to wear a sign that says 'Beware explosives inside, may ignite at any moment.'" When I ask young clients what would be helpful, they tell me they want people to notice the changes in a positive way. They want WITNESSING. As parents and caregivers we can create rituals to mark this transition. Rituals need not be complicated. They need to be conscious, intentional events that honor and recognize the person.

The following are some suggestions from none other than the kids:

- Paint their bedroom, change the bedspread, and put away childhood objects.
- Go on a trip, or out for a special dinner, and create the space to talk about the losses of childhood and the excitement and fears of adolescence. End with a present to mark the transition -- a ring, a watch, a necklace.

There are numerous ways to mark transitions so that our children feel witnessed and honored in the most important changes in their life. **My advice: Have fun with it!**

by Marcela Ot'alora G., LPC  
Boulder Psychological Services

# >>Elementary College Nights

The term “college” doesn’t necessarily mean a four-year university anymore. These days, college can mean anything from a trade or vocational certificate to community college to a highly selective, private college. And even if your child is very young, now is the time to begin thinking and planning for your child’s educational plans after high school.

Sponsored by CollegenInvest, five BVSD elementary schools are hosting Elementary College Nights this spring. They are open to all families in BVSD. CollegenInvest is providing a simple dinner and will raffle off \$250 worth of savings account money at each site.

**Speakers will be presenting in Spanish and English on the following relevant topics:**

- Believe in your child. They CAN achieve some type of post-high school educational institution.
- Facts you must know when your child is choosing his/her classes in middle and high school and the long-term effects of such choices.
- CollegenInvest will provide information about the services they offer to help children of Colorado obtain post-high school education. Even on the smallest of incomes, it IS possible to develop a plan in preparation for your child’s education.

**April 6** Lafayette Elementary – 5-8 p.m.      **April 14** Emerald Elementary – 5-8 p.m.  
**April 29** Sanchez Elementary – 5-7 p.m.\* (*part of their “Spring in to Summer” event*)  
**May 3** Columbine Elementary - 5-8 p.m.      **May 12** Pioneer Bilingual Elementary - 5-8 p.m.

## Q&A with Dr. J

**Q:** *How can I help my soon-to-be middle school child adjust to adolescence?*

**A:** Just when we start to figure out effective parenting techniques, the onset of adolescence makes a lot of what we do as parents obsolete. If our parenting and discipline strategies do not evolve with our children’s development, we quickly find ourselves battling with them seemingly all the time. To understand why, we must first understand the key developmental task of adolescence: individuation. This is our child’s transformation from being dependent on us to becoming a self-sufficient individual. This process begins at the end of elementary school and continues into young adulthood. It includes profound emotional, social, physical, hormonal and neurological changes. No wonder our child suddenly becomes such a handful!

The trick is to support this process instead of fighting it. More specifically, consider the following suggestions:

■ **Honor the transition:** Create opportunities to celebrate this monumental shift in your child’s life by acknowledging it through discussion, ritual and recognition.

■ **Talking with instead of talking to:** Like it or not, the days of lecturing are over. It’s time to start listening more than talking.

■ **Use empowerment strategies:** When conflicts arise, look to your child to contribute to the solutions. Encourage your child to have a voice in the discipline plan.

■ **Join the experiment:** As scary as it may seem, experimentation is also part of normal adolescent development. When appropriate, allow for short-term negotiated agreements that give your child more control over his/her life. If the experiment fails, process that together and revise your plan.

■ **Shift from control to advice:** Your advice will prove valuable for the rest of their lives. By making this shift now, it is much more likely to be considered in the future.

■ **Express feelings of pride and love:** While adolescents may act like they don’t care, don’t be fooled. They need your positive feedback more than ever.

Parenting an adolescent can feel an overwhelming and, at times, impossible task. By using effective strategies and hanging in there, your child will successfully come out the other side. And so will you!

**To learn more, please join me at an upcoming PEN-sponsored free event:**

***Middle School: The Shift from Childhood to Adolescence***

Monday, April 19th starting at 6:15 p.m., Mesa Elementary (1575 Lehigh St, Boulder)

**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

# >> BVSD School Counselor tips for transitioning to Middle School

*Really listen to what your child is saying and HEAR their concerns.*

from Carol Azzolina, M.Ed., CAC III  
Counselor, Emerald Elementary &  
Whittier International Elementary

*Your student is worried about lockers, pizza for lunch and gym class; you're worried about the best teachers and getting in to college. You both need to take a step back, take a deep breath, and ENJOY being in middle school.*

from Carl Sanchez  
Counselor, Sanchez Elementary

*Buy a combo and practice doing a combination lock.*

from Jennifer Phillips  
Counselor, Arapahoe Campus

*Help to create healthy outlets – sports, music, art, etc. – building on the students' interests and assets.*

from Tara Krams  
Counselor, Monarch K-8

*Encourage your child to share questions/concerns with their school counselor or classroom teacher. You can even go with them and support them in advocating for themselves and finding answers. Be sure to let your child do the talking – it is good practice for them!*

from Melissa Glorioso  
Counselor, University Hill and  
Creekside Elementary schools

*Allow school to incrementally become their responsibility; if you care more about it than they do it will become your responsibility.*

from Andrea M. Salvo  
Counselor 6-8,  
Peak to Peak Charter School

*Communicate regularly with your student's teachers and counselor and encourage your student to do the same.*

from David Stansbury  
Counselor, Monarch High School

*With new doors opening, other doors are closing. Keep in mind that there is usually a piece of sadness and loss that comes with moving on to another school. Make this a part of your conversations about this school year ending and help your child find healthy ways to express such feelings and say farewell to people and places that have had a tremendous impact on their lives.*

from Sennen Knauer, M.Ed.  
Counselor Coordinator,  
Boulder Valley School District

## >>Calendar of Classes & Events

### APRIL 2010

**After Hour Arts and the YMCA's Breakthrough Arts Present Free After School Art classes:**

Pottery, Figure Drawing, Hemp & Henna, Natural Highs, Yoga, Contemporary dance, Billiards, Cooking, Hip Hop Production, Silk Screening, Tye-Dyeing, It's All Fun & Games, and more! **Classes start April 5th and are offered every day of the week.** All teens are welcome. Free! Contact: Joy at [joy@septemberschool.org](mailto:joy@septemberschool.org) 303-473-0844 or Jess at [jessica.england@ymcabv.org](mailto:jessica.england@ymcabv.org) 303-443-4473 ext 4650

**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](http://www.bvgt.org). RSVP to [programming@bvgt.org](mailto:programming@bvgt.org)

**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, Dr. Jan Hittelman, LPC, Jeffrey Kuhn, LCSW

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

For more information: [www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com](http://www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com)

**Becoming a Love and Logic® Parent**

Sheryl Schwabe, MSW, CAC III

**Wednesdays, April 7 - May 12, 6:00-8:30 p.m.,** Louisville Recreation

Center, 900 Via Appia, Louisville. To register, call Sheryl at 303-520-6803 or email her at [sschwabe@comcast.net](mailto:sschwabe@comcast.net).

**Pathways to Parenting Success: Parenting Thru Divorce**

Children are more negatively affected by how parents divorce than the divorce itself. Learn how to parent effectively and minimize trauma.

Panelists: Harmony Barrett Isaacs LPC, Stuart Marshall, LPC, Jamie Lau

**Monday, April 12, 7:00-8:30 p.m.,** Meadows Branch Library, Boulder

For more information: [www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com](http://www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com)

**ADHD Parent Support Meeting (BVSD)**

**April 12, 6:00-8:00 p.m.,** at Fireside Elementary School, 845 W. Dahlia St., Louisville.

Contact Parent Liaison Anna Stewart for more information: 720-561-5918 or [anna.stewart@BVSD.org](mailto:anna.stewart@BVSD.org)

**THRIVEupdate**  
for BVSD Parents

Published by BVSD  
Written by local Boulder experts and parents

**THRIVEupdate**  
Editorial Board

Managing Co-Editors

>> Leisha  
Connors Bauer  
Boulder Healthy  
Youth Alliance

>> Dr. Jan Hittelman  
Boulder Psychological  
Services

Publication Manager

>> Marsha Moritz  
PEN Co-Founder

Copy Editor

>> Maela Moore  
BVSD Communications

Contributors

>> Paula Nelson  
PEN Chair

>> Briggs Gamblin  
BVSD Communications

>> Sennen Knauer  
BVSD Counseling

>> Kathy McMenamin  
PEN Representative

Look for us on the web!  
[www.bvsd.com](http://www.bvsd.com)

# >>Calendar of Classes and Events

## APRIL 2010

### **PEN Presents: *The Homework Myth***

**Alfie Kohn**, author and national presenter

**Saturday, April 17, 8-10 a.m.**, Naropa University, Nalanda Campus, 6287 Arapahoe Ave, Boulder

Get your tickets while they last! Contact Betsy Fox, or go online at <http://www.naropa.edu/extend/index.cfm>

\$25/adult, \$10/students. Scholarships available. *\*open to adults and youth, childcare and Spanish interpretation available see contacts below.* Sponsored by PEN in collaboration with Naropa University.

### **PEN Presents: Middle School: The Shift from Childhood to Adolescence**

Learn how to help your child with this transition, while maintaining a healthy parent-child relationship.

Presenter: Dr. Jan Hittelman

**Monday, April 19 starting at 6:15 p.m.**, Mesa Elementary, 1575 Lehigh St., Boulder

### **Siblings Without Rivalry**

Stephanie Bryan, LCSW, CAC III

**Thursdays, April 22-May 27, 6:30-9:00 p.m.**, Dreamcatcher Direct Instruction Center,

5440 Conestoga Ct. (just NW of 55th and Arapahoe), Boulder. To register, call Stephanie at 303-397-0646 or visit the website at [www.REALparenting.net](http://www.REALparenting.net)

### **REAL Parenting Class for Parents and Success Principles for Teens**

Presented by Stephanie Bryan, LCSW, CAC III and Mary Lynne Coleman, MA

**Tuesdays, April 27-May 25, 6:15-9:00 p.m.**, Dreamcatcher Direct Instruction Center, 5440 Conestoga Ct. (just NW of 55th and Arapahoe), Boulder. **Interactive class:** Parents will learn skills to connect and stay connected to their teens. Teens will acquire skills to help them reach their full potential. Scholarships are available.

To register: [www.REALparenting.net](http://www.REALparenting.net)

## MAY 2010

Mark your calendars for the **PEN ANNUAL CELEBRATION LUNCHEON**

**Monday, May 3, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.**, Spice of Life Event Center, Boulder. Guest presenter: Corey Benard Jones

### **Pathways to Parenting Success: Understanding Learning Disabilities; From Diagnosis to School Success**

Increase your understanding of how learning disabilities are diagnosed, treated and impact children who have them.

Panelists: Iris Lee, Dr. Jan Hittelman

**Monday, May 3, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**, Meadows Branch Library, Boulder

For more information: [www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com](http://www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com)

### **Pathways to Parenting Success: Alcohol & Drug Abuse: What You Need to Know**

Help protect your child from substance use by getting the facts, learning how to address this topic within the family, and understanding the different levels of treatment available.

Panelists: Linda Cain, MSED, Ann Kloos, LCSW, Avani Dilger, LPC

**Monday, May 10, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**, Meadows Branch Library, Boulder

For more information: [www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com](http://www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com)

Interested in parenting classes for kids 0 to age 6? Check out the attached flyer about Foothills Parenting Classes where you will find nine *Love and Logic Early Childhood Parenting Made Fun!* classes listed starting April through August.

Go to [www.FoothillsParentingClasses.com](http://www.FoothillsParentingClasses.com) for more information.

**Interested in joining a Parenting Book Group? 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. 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](mailto:fawnda@comcast.net) or 303-604-2547.

### **PEN contacts:**

**General questions/volunteer:** Betsy Fox, PEN Lead Coach, [foxbetsy@msn.com](mailto:foxbetsy@msn.com), 720-563-7007

**Childcare:** Kathleen Sepeda, [kathleenSepeda@aol.com](mailto:kathleenSepeda@aol.com), 303-506-8929 \*free for kids 5 and over; rsvps required.

**Interpretation:** Eugenia Brady, [eugenia.brady@bvsvd.org](mailto:eugenia.brady@bvsvd.org), 720-561-5150