

HORIZONS

OF HEALTH AND HOPE IN MONTEZUMA AND DOLORES COUNTIES

CALENDAR

November

1st 12:10pm - 1:30pm
Character Council
Sheriff's Office

5th 11:00am - 12:00pm
Violence Prevention
Johnson Building

9th All Day
Fundraising College
Contact Missy Miller to
register 882-1253 ext. 7#

13-14th All Day
Social Norms Training
Farmington

15th
Great American Smoke Out
Join thousands of others and
quit smoking/chewing for 24
hours? For a free Quit Kit Call
Julia at 565-3056 ext 233. *Do it
for yourself or a loved one.*

19th 10:30am
Meth Action Committee
Will be showing the
Break the Glass docu-
mentary
11:15am
School/Community Youth
Coalition
12:15pm
Early Childhood Council
Open to the public
Chamber Room Cortez Wel-
come Center

28th 8:30am
Horizons KSJD Radio
Show
Focus: youth

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Local Documentary Remarkable Success

Break the Glass: Life or Meth? is an hour long locally produced documentary on methamphetamine abuse and addiction uniquely told through real-life stories of recovering addicts in rural Southwest Colorado. This program was initiated by the La Plata Community Meth Forum and funded by the Colorado Trust Grant, SJBHD, local county providers, and individual sales.

Break the Glass: Life or Meth? has been shown to more than 160 people throughout the Southwest region since its premier on October 3, 2007.

The documentary takes its viewers on a journey through personal accounts of meth addiction stories, beginning with why they started, how they used, who their addiction affected, their dark sides, and ends with their newly restored hope for the future with recovery.

Director/Producer, Scot Davis, plans to use this video along with presentations to raise awareness of the issues surrounding meth addiction. So far the success of this project has been remarkable. Surprisingly it has worked as powerful tool

keeping the addicts from the documentary in recovery. Davis believes that they are likely to remain sober and use their experiences to help others since they have become recognized within the community and spokespeople for meth recovery. Additionally, using the media allows this information to be easily accessed, understood, and readily available.

Break the Glass: Life or Meth? is not your typical, "just say no!" video. Its graphic nature is recommended for mature audiences, and is specifically intended for local employees, community groups, and colleges. As support for the video, presenters, many of whom

are featured in the film, will be touring the region with the film and hosting discussions.

DVD's are available for purchase the first week of November for 35.00 dollars. Presentations will be given on a donation basis with all proceeds going to the La Plata Community Meth Forum. For purchase or to arrange a presentation, please contact: Scot Davis at 970-946-8979.

www.breaktheglass.info

FREE Showing
November 19th
10:30
Cortez Welcome Center
Chamber Room
Open to the Public

Meth Committees In Action

by Missy Miller, SCYC Director

The School Community Youth Coalition (SCYC) of Montezuma and Dolores counties hosts the Meth Action Committee (MAC) and the Mancos Meth Action Committee (MMAC). The goals of these committees are to educate the community on the

issues of methamphetamines and create tougher consequences for meth users, cooks, and dealers. These committees are currently hosting educational events for the community, providing information to businesses on how to identify and protect their interests, and working with community leaders to create and enforce policies that encourage a healthy

community.

In the spring of 2007, the MAC committee joined hands with the NEST Child Advocacy Center, Dare to Be You, and concerned citizens to educate and support community members who are affected by methamphetamine.

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Committees in Action

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This Community in Action series was a six part educational series which included how meth is made, addiction as a disease, coping mechanisms for families who have a meth user living with them, parenting skills, and how to access community services for support. Over 90 community members attended the educational series. For the fall of 2007 and winter of 2008 the MAC/MMAC plans to continue with educational forums and community information events. On November 19, 2007 the MAC group will host a preview of a video produced by the La Plata Meth Forum. Break the Glass; Life or Meth will be shown during the regular meeting at the Cortez Visitors Center. Additionally, the MAC will continue to host educational events throughout the spring, including the Teen Maze.

MAC/MMAC produced business packets to deliver to local business with

information on methamphetamine identification, user signs and symptoms, effects on business performance when a meth user is an employee, and how to ensure drug free businesses. These packets are available to the public. They will be distributed by committee members in order to help business owners and managers identify resources available.

In addition, the MAC/MMAC committees actively work on establishing community policies to ensure a healthy community. This process focuses on educating the community about the current policies, practices, laws, and ordinances that affect the community. The committee also works with local elected officials to establish new policies and strengthen current substance abuse policies.

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend either of these committees. The Meth Action Committee meets on the third Monday of each month at 10:30am at the Cortez

Visitors Center Chamber Room and the Mancos Meth Action Committee meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm in the Mancos High School Library. For more information contact the School Community Youth Coalition at 882-1253 x7#.

CALENDAR

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December

6th 12:10pm – 1:30pm
Character Council
Sheriff's Office

17th 10:30am

Meth Action Committee
11:15am
School/Community Youth Coalition
12:15pm

Target Tobacco Coalition
Chamber Room Cortez Welcome Center

26th 8:30am

Horizons KSJD Radio Show
Focus: mentoring programs

Alternative HORIZONS presents: The New Dogs On the Block



Meet Miles and Oscar, two of Montezuma County's newest therapeutic service providers. Miles, a gentle Great

Dane-Black Lab mix and, the very cute Chocolate Lab, Oscar, have been in practice now two months. Both were rescue dogs and now use their hardships to help others transform their tales into triumphs. Their owner and rescuer Mark Holton, MA LMFT (Licensed Marriage Family Therapist), has been in therapeutic practice ten years and just recently discovered these new tools in his therapeutic tool bag.

Along with practicing several alternative forms of therapy Holton has found great success using Miles and Oscar. In a recent interview Holton described how his work differs from the well known pet assisted therapy. He prefers to call his variation *Therapy with Canines*. The subtle difference is his canines are used to help individuals discover their hidden qualities.

Holton's insight occurred recently when he took a break from social work and returned to his former profession, working with dogs. Her began to notice a certain trust people extend when a dog is involved. As perfect strangers turned over their keys, pass codes, and access to their private lives so he could care for their beloved dog. Couple this with his already established therapeutic practice and you have *Therapy with Canines*.

Currently, Holton and his hounds work with special needs youth and adult recovery groups. They can either be found within the school district working under the BOCES contract or at CARS (Cortez Addiction Recovery Services).

The youth Holton works with are able to walk and train the dogs. The kids build confidence in themselves when they can successfully train these hounds to: sit, stay, or lay down; and they get an occasion to experience the rewards of positive reinforcement. Miles and Oscar also provide these youth an opportunity to bond and build relationships. They are excellent for youth with attachment issues as they allow them to practice saying "good-

bye" and "hello" the following week. Plus, Holton added, it helps with the desire for youth to come to counseling. "It gives them something to look forward to."

Miles and Oscars' roles are a bit different in the recovery groups Holton facilitates. Within the group setting they are more of a presence, they provide a common ground, and open people's hearts. "There's an immediate attachment people make with dogs which exposes their more vulnerable side." Holton then made some comment of the 'boo-boo-hee-hee' sounds he hears adults making with the dogs. Sounds of course they would never make with him alone. "They are the gatekeepers to the hearts and souls of many."

Holton is thankful for the success the dogs have brought to his practice. As far as Miles and Oscar go, when asked if they enjoy their new profession of course responded with gentle adoring eyes, which we translate "...it's not really work when you're having so much fun and getting so much attention. Plus, we get to go to work with our dad every day."

To speak with Miles or Oscar please contact Mark Holton 946-1539 or holtonmark1@gmail.com

Smoking Rates Decrease Yet Youth still at Risk

by Julia Hesse Tobacco Education
Prevention Program Director

September 2007 Governor Bill Ritter announced significant reductions in the smoking rates among youth and adults in Colorado. Adult rates dropped from 21.3% in 1990 to 17.9% in 2006. Among high school students, cigarette smoking declined from 18.2 % in 2001 to 14.6% in 2006. According to the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (STEPP) these successes can be directly attributed to the funding provided by Amendment 35, the 2004 voter-approved increase in the tobacco tax that funds the state's work in tobacco education.

While the drop in use is significant it is important to examine why young people continue to pick up the addiction when so much is known about dangers associated with tobacco's use. 90% of all smokers become addicted before age 18. If we understand why, we will continue to reduce the rates.

Two recent studies conclude teens become addicted to nicotine easier and quicker than adults. The first study¹ monitored 1,246 sixth-grade students over four years. Of those who were hooked, half were already addicted by the time they were smoking just seven cigarettes per month. Some youth found they were unable to quit smoking after just a few cigarettes. And in some cases researchers have found that just a single drag on a cigarette can be enough to cause addiction. The second study² sought to determine why adolescents become addicted more easily than adults. While person-

ality factors often determine which young people will try smoking, it appears that it is the manner in which the brain reacts to nicotine that is the most important in determining whether an adolescent will become hooked. Looking at 46 risk factors, *the strongest predictor of future addiction was an experience of relaxation in response to the first dose of nicotine!* Other significant factors included familiarity with the cigarette advertising character Joe Camel, and a depressed mood. Interestingly, girls exhibited symptoms of addiction faster.

For information on local quit smoking or chewing classes please call 565-3056 ext 233; For help quitting now and free nicotine replacement patches, call the Colorado quit-line 1-800-QUIT.NOW

Together these studies show that as brain development continues into adolescence, and perhaps because of this, the adolescent brain appears to be more vulnerable to nicotine than the adult brain. Researchers have also determined that addiction-related changes in the brain caused by nicotine are permanent and remain years after a smoker has quit.

The teenage years are when most drug experimentation happens. What seems to be a relatively benign experiment with a cigarette can lead to lifetime nicotine addiction tragically shortening life and significantly reducing its quality.

Until the Tobacco Industry ceases the aggressive marketing of its product (\$13.3 billion per year, mostly targeting children and adolescents) we need to educate youth about the chances they take when choosing to try that first cigarette.

¹ National Institute on Drug Abuse, Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, July 2007;

² National Institute on Drug Abuse, October 1 issue of the Journal of Pediatrics.

Health Perspective

Does doing hard drugs influence a person's eating habits?

Absolutely!!! The most common "hard drugs" that are used are cocaine, heroin, and amphetamines. They all have an effect of people's nutrition habits. Generally people become so preoccupied by their drug use that not only their nutrition goes by the wayside, but everything else in their life does as well. In addition, it is common for heavy drug users to develop an aversion to food. In this case, users have to force themselves to drink liquefied food because they cannot even swallow.

What are the affects of drug use on a person's nutrition?

Meth, for example, acts on control centers in the lateral hypothalamus, a central area on the underside of the brain. This is the part of the brain that controls involuntary body functions such as body temperature and the release of hormones. Meth usage depresses the digestive system and interferes with the two neurotransmitters, nor epinephrine and dopamine. Malnutrition quickly develops in long-term users as they literally starve their bodies. The body's reaction to being starved is to use its energy stores. Heavy users experience a breakdown of their muscle tissue to compensate for inadequate nutrition. This muscle breakdown then creates a burden for the kidneys to filter the excess protein in the blood. If this isn't enough, drug user's bizarre eating habits can further damage the liver. By constantly dosing on drugs and not eating for days, their liver works overtime removing dangerous by-products. As a result, muscle and tissue breakdown while the body searches for more protein stores. This is especially concerning if a drug user repeatedly goes on and off drugs. The body goes in to a cycle of starvation and over eating. The drastic weight loss and the weight gain overwhelm the organs of the body, creating stress on normal bodily functions. The good news is if a user has the courage and strength to kick the drug habit, the body realizes it has been feeding off of itself and the individual's appetite will return. Simply put, meth use is very hard on the body.

The University of Iowa Student Health Service provided the information for this article.

Colorado State University Extension provides unbiased, research-based information about family and consumer issues, horticulture, natural resource, agriculture, and 4-H youth development. The Montezuma County Extension Office is located in room 102 of the county courthouse or by phone at (970) 565-3123. Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Montezuma County cooperating. Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

Please submit any health or drug related questions you may have to our panel at Horizons@scvcinc.org

On the HORIZONS

It's that time of year again. The seasons, time, and weather are all indicative of it. Yes, indeed change is upon us once again. Here at **HORIZONS** we have experienced our own transformation. A new coordinator, email address, and the addition of the **Alternative HORIZONS** and interactive **Health Perspective** sections. Our purpose has remained unchanged as always we encourage collaboration, communication, and yes, community change.

As coordinator of **HORIZONS** I invite and encourage you to share your tales of success, hope, and alternative practices with the community. Each of us has purpose and it is up to us as: educators, treatment and prevention workers, and family and community members to bring forth our strengths and resources in order to facilitate change in ways we never before thought possible. Hope and courage are our allies; as are the resiliency of the human body and the relentless nature of the human spirit.

Here at **HORIZONS** we commend your efforts and commit to collaborating with local community members working toward this same goal.

Let's get creative with the resources we have available to co-create the community of our dreams.

Happy Trails!

Krystyn F. Dennis, Newsletter Coordinator

Please note our new email address:

Horizons@scycinc.org

CHARACTER CHOICES

November Be a person of good character through **DETERMINATION** (purposing to accomplish right goals at the right time, regardless of the opposition) and not faintheartedness.

December Be a person of good character through your **THRIFTINESS** (allowing myself and others to spend only what is necessary) and not extravagance.

HORIZONS

is published bi-monthly and focuses on issues related to supporting healthy lifestyle choices for the youth of Dolores and Montezuma counties. The newsletter is funded by state Title V funds through Montezuma County Partners. Submissions including calendar items, health news, ideas and corrections can be sent to Krystyn Dennis, Newsletter Coordinator, at Horizons@scycinc.org

HORIZONS

Montezuma County Partners
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