It’s All About the Conversation

By Krystyn Dennis

In November 2007, five communities in Southwest Colorado met and decided to start a region-wide educational campaign to combat the issue of underage drinking. With funding from the El Pomar Foundation, the communities of Montezuma, Dolores, La Plata, Fort Lewis College, San Juan, and Archuleta set to work. What they have created is truly unique. What makes this project so unique? Well, ‘It’s about the conversation.’

The ‘conversation starter’ tip series hit the scene this month and will be popping up all over the four corners’ area. The School Community Youth Coalition (SCYC) and local graphic artist, Heather Leavitt, are working to bring these cards into a new dimension. "Working with the SCYC has been great! I’ve learned a lot about my community and it feels good to offer my graphic design services for this much needed resource," stated Leavitt.

Creating the cards was just the beginning. The campaign, Always Have Three, intends to reach the community in several ways. First of all, as an educational campaign, Always Have Three will consist of three practical tips that support parents of 10-13 year olds. Really, all families can benefit from the messages. Additionally, the campaign actively seeks to engage community members in the process. Members of the SCYC and other regional partners meet regularly with community organizations, schools, and youth to get their input in the cards’ creation. That is the ‘conversation starter.’ Asking community members what works and then sharing that information. “The conversations are the intervention,” stated Missy Miller, SCYC Director. “The cards are created by community members to get them talking; with their kids and each other about underage drinking.”

The ‘Understand’ card is now available and can be heard on the air, and seen in local newspapers. SCYC gives a big “Thanks” to the actual teens who helped create this first card. Once the ‘Understand’ card is understood, keep your eye out for ‘Create A Plan’, and ‘Be Involved’. Remember, ‘It’s about the conversation,’ so, when you hear people talking about Always Have Three tips, join them.

We See The Value Of Our Youth
Ten Parenting Principles for Success

Adapted from an article by Carolyn Webster-Stratton, PhD, Incredible Years Program

The social, emotional and academic development of children is an incredible process—as is the growth and development of parents. Give yourself permission to enjoy this process by trust your instincts, learn from and laughing at your blunders and imperfections, get support from others, take time for yourself, and have fun with your children!

1. **Pay attention** to your child’s cues and temperament and you will be able to tell when they are ready to learn. Notice if they get frustrated with a new task. Step in to offer enough support for them a sense accomplishment, but don’t take over!

2. **The Attention Principle**—state the behavior that you want to see, versus the negative behavior, i.e., feet on the floor please, instead of, quit jumping on the couch.

3. Children recognize **parents’ expectations** and will live up, or, down to them. Project positive images of your child’s future, and abilities to cope with troublesome situations.

4. **Nonviolent discipline** is essential to teach children consequences for misbehavior, while letting them know they are loved and expected to do better next time.

5. **Accept your child** as they are, highlight their strengths and accept their limitations. This will help them to reach their full potential.

6. **Balance** necessary commands and discipline with warmth, praise and sensitivity.

7. **Practice makes perfect!** Positive parenting skills become natural over time.

8. **Remember** it is normal for children to misbehave, and are more likely to respond to positive re-direction.

9. **Parents and children** learn. Experiment and make mistakes. Let your children see you learn and cope in more effective ways.

10. **Enjoy parenting!** Be confident and ready for inevitable problems and pitfalls. Have faith in your common sense and imagination, as you and your children learn together.


Submitted by Julia Hesse

In the 20th century, the global tobacco epidemic killed 100 million people worldwide.

According to a new report from the World Health Organization (WHO), tobacco could kill one billion people in the 21st century due to its increase of use in developing countries.

Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, made this statement in summary to the report, “the cure for this devastating epidemic is dependent not on medicines or vaccines, but on the concerted actions of government and civil society. The forces of political will, policies, and funding are now aligned to create the momentum needed to dramatically reduce tobacco use and save millions of lives by the middle of the century. Reversing this entirely preventable epidemic must now rank as a top priority for public health and for political leaders in every county of the world.”

Today, leaders in most countries know that tobacco is the single most preventable cause of death in the world. This year, tobacco will kill more than five million people. That is more than tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and malaria combined.

The solution to this problem is unique, as the cause for death is a legal product; it is the only product known to kill when used as intended. In this new report, the WHO outlines six recommendations, based on years of research and experience, for countries and communities to follow in order to reduce the deadly toll of tobacco use.

Those six recommendations are as follows:
1. Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies;
2. Protect people from tobacco smoke;
3. Offer help to quit tobacco use;
4. Warn about tobacco’s danger;
5. Enforce bans on tobacco ads, promotion, and sponsorship;
6. Raise taxes on tobacco.

Colorado has made great strides in implementing some of these recommendations and will continue to do so until the need is no longer there. We benefit locally from following these recommendations with policies such as the Clean Indoor Air Act, Tobacco-free Schools; and laws against selling to minors. Funding for the Target Tobacco Coalition helps members spread the word about tobacco’s danger and support cessation classes for adults and teens.

The Colorado tobacco tax is among the highest in the nation and funds the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Program (STEPP). STEPP is responsible for ensuring that the tobacco tax income is spent on state of the art guidelines such as the WHO recommendations and other Best and Promising Practices.

We have seen tobacco use rates drop significantly since these efforts have been implemented.

We can expect to see more changes as nations unite around the largest preventable health threat. As we bring these policies to a local level where we will see tangible results such as fewer young people picking up the habit, and more adults choosing to quit.

For more information call Julia Hesse, Tobacco Education and Prevention Program Director, 565-3056 ext 233.
Speak Up!
Amplify Youth’s Voice!

Thursdays
Cortez Rec. Center
5:30-7pm
Dinner Provided
Promote Change thru Community Involvement
Call 970-882-1253 x 6#
For more information

Where Can a Father Go?

It is hard for many fathers to ask for help. There are barriers which can stop the father from asking. One is pride. Father’s work hard and believe that they should be able to handle any situation without help. So, it becomes hard to seek out help. The second is the fear of rejection or being looked down upon. So, what is a father to do?

The solution is the Responsible Fatherhood program. The program helps fathers in any age group become better fathers. There is no cost for the program and so far, every father who has made an effort to participate in the program has walked away with a positive experience and has increased his involvement with his children.

So, what happens in the class sessions? A typical night starts with dinner. After dinner, the children stay nearby where childcare is available. The fathers work with facilitators and discuss an evening topic. Situations are shared and the men help each other deal with their situations. As the class closes more questions are answered.

Continued on page 6
Teen Maze is a life size game board where teenagers are the pawns and life’s choices are the dice. Designed to help teens understand potential outcomes to decisions concerning substance abuse, sex, and vocational and educational issues, realistic scenarios help teens navigate their way through the Maze and learn about consequences of behaviors. The interactive “game” provides information on topics such as: abstinence, peer and media pressure, contraceptives, tobacco, drugs and alcohol, rehabilitation, legal consequences, sexually transmitted diseases, teen parenting, HIV/AIDS, and post graduation career and education choices.

The goal of the Maze is to encourage teens to think about the potential ramifications of sexual involvement, drug and alcohol use, and how to handle potential situations without placing judgment. This information is provided by professionals in the fields of prevention, health, intervention, and education. And ultimately help teens make safer choices when faced with real-life situations. The Teen Maze project benefits youth, as well as the community. It raises awareness about drug and alcohol problems and helps to decrease the prevalence of those problems.

The first Montezuma County Teen Maze took place in March of 2002 with 450 students involved. For 2008, the seventh annual Teen Maze expects to reach more than 500 students from the Cortez, Dolores, Mancos, and Dolores County school districts during the May 1-2 event. We expect 225 volunteers and over 80 organizations to staff rooms, cook and serve food, set-up and take down the Maze, and provide security.

For more information contact Missy Miller, Teen Maze Coordinator 882-1253 x7# missy@scycinc.org

Here’s what past participants have said:
“*I liked the event because I learned the truth in a fun way.*”

“*It taught me a lot about life. It was a reality check.*”

“*I learned to stay off stuff that a lot of people think is cool.*”

“*I learned you can be Drug-Free and still have fun.*”

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**April 2008**

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<td>April Fool’s Day</td>
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<td>National Turn Off Week.</td>
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<td>Teen Maze Set Up Montezuma County Fairgrounds</td>
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<td>Teen Maze May 1-2 Montezuma County Fairgrounds</td>
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Apathy

By Austin Cope, MCHS

Apathy, I have heard the word before. Can’t remember what it means, don’t really care. How ironic that it means not caring. People at my school say, I’m apathetic. They say that I don’t care about school spirit, my grades, my future, or anything. I guess it looks that way. I’m not so sure they know the full story.

My phone beeped a Chemical Romance tune, my mom calling to let me know that she was not going to be home tonight. Since it was the middle of English class, and I had forgotten to turn it off, my teacher promptly took it.

I got home to find my sister, in a full diaper emptying the cleaning supply cupboard. She was holding a bottle, about to chew on it. I took it away from her, and she began to cry. My brother came in waving a toy gun. ‘Bam, bam, you’re dead!’ he shouted, my sister kept hollering. I turned on the TV to keep them occupied, and started dinner. I was exhausted by the time they ate, bathed, and went to bed. I had math homework to do, after seeing the jumble of numbers; I could barely keep my eyes open, let alone find the slope of the line \((x, y)\). I fell asleep and woke the next morning to the beep of my alarm, and realized that I had a Geography project due.

At school when I didn’t turn in my geography project, my teacher told me I was failing. I had missed the deadline and couldn’t get credit for the project. Because of me, she gave the class a lecture about how we need to care more about our school and our future. The dance team girls threw looks of disgust. I felt ashamed, and gazed out of the window. I wondered what the point was anyway. Teachers want me to know facts about some country halfway across the globe, and expect me to remember it for a test. It doesn’t even apply to my life. Who cares about test scores and statistics?

At the pep rally as I watched the dance girls do their routine, I thought about how great it would be if one of them asked me to the Sadie Hawkins dance. They hardly ever look at me, and when they do, they sneer. I wished I had a girlfriend—someone to feel comfortable with, everyone else seems to be perfectly comfortable. I have no social life, and wish I could be part of a group. The dance routine ended, and everyone stood up and yelled, “go Panthers!” I didn’t get excited. I sat and waited for the day to end.

People say I don’t care about school. Maybe I don’t. I’m just trying to get by. I would love to care about life. I don’t want to worry about kids, or when my mom is going to be home. I would love to have a future, to get good grades, to be accepted. Things just aren’t that easy.

Note: The narrator of this story is imaginary, and used to demonstrate a view about apathy. While these examples fictional the circumstances are all too real.

I don’t Understand

I don’t Understand

By Joy Frazier, SWOS

I don’t understand…
Why we go through hardships in life?
Why can’t everyone just get along?
Why some dads are dead beats?

But most of all I don’t understand…
How the government makes the laws?
Why people act better than others?
Why we all make bad choices?
Why life is so confusing?

What I understand the most…
If we graduate we can get a better job.
If you obey the laws you won’t get into trouble.
You can always find something positive in all the negative things.

We Are Invested In Our Youth
On the **HORIZONS**

**HORIZONS** this month is centers around ‘understanding’. I discovered an interesting paradox as this issue came together. Page one asks for understanding from parents then, our youth contributions (page 5) share a feeling of *not being understood*. Reminds me a familiar quote “seek first to understand, then be understood.” (Stephen Covey)

On the **HORIZONS** we are invested in our youth and appreciate the opportunity to co-create healthier, safer, more peaceful communities. “A great big Thanks” to all of our contributors this issue. We appreciate your input and enthusiasm.

Much Gratitude.

Krystyn Dennis, Newsletter Coordinator

*Continued from page 3*

There are additional functions fathers can participate with, such as: river rafting, fishing, BBQ’s, bowling, football, and evening movies.

So, what else can the Responsible Fatherhood program do for a father? The staff are trained advocates and can help fathers manage finances, find better employment, work through legal issues, find daycare, and learn activities to do with their children. Each father can meet one on one with the staff and work through any issue they are struggling with.

*For more information about the program, call the Pinon Project at 564-1195.*

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**CHARACTER CHOICES**

March—Be a person of good character show **COMPASSION** (invest what you can to help heal the hurts of others) instead of being indifferent be invested.

April—Be a person of good character through **PERSUASIVENESS** (guiding vital truths around another’s mental roadblocks) instead of being quarrelsome

*Provided by the Character Council*

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**HORIZONS** is funded by state Title V funds through Montezuma County Partners and the Target Tobacco Coalition. Focused on issues related to supporting healthy lifestyle choices for the youth of Dolores and Montezuma counties, please send submissions including: calendar items, health news, ideas, and corrections to Horizons@scycinc.org

*Now printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper*

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**HORIZONS**

Montezuma County Partners

1104 East Main Street

Cortez, CO. 81321