

Thriveupdate

 **Boulder Valley** School District
Excellence and Equity

Enhance Inspire
Inform healthy kids make smarter students

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MAY 2009

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Special Points of INTEREST

Saturday, May 16
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Boulder Youth Body Alliance 3rd Annual Jean Giveaway

at

Central Plaza of
Twenty Ninth Street Mall

>>The Secret Opportunity of Summer

For many people, summer is a time of transition: finishing the school year, preparing for the next, and moving up to the next grade or to a new school. Rather than being the main event, summer tends to be seen as a brief "in between" time in which we might squeeze in a family vacation or time at camp before the next school year begins.

The school year has a life of its own and we all seem to get caught up in the demands, timelines, and all too harried pace. Another challenge of the school year is trying to address all of the unexpected issues that require us to provide feedback and/or discipline for our children on everything from school responsibilities, risky behaviors, and household chores to even larger life lessons involving morals, values, ethics and overall good judgment. No wonder we feel so exhausted this time of year!

For most families, the tenor of these conversations during the school year is more negative than positive. It is often in response to a behavior or situation that requires correction. Several years ago a National Parent Teacher Organization study found that the ratio of negative to positive statements made by parents to their children was 18:1. That's 18 negative statements to every positive one! This dynamic is more common in our own homes than we might like to think.

This brings us to the secret opportunity of summer — as we decompress from the school year and find opportunities to relax with family, this is a great time to reconnect with our children in a positive way.

Schedule time together. Make time to do something you and your child enjoy together. Purposely schedule time to go for a walk, share a meal, go on vacation, and make a real effort to simply share and catch up.

Understand and communicate.

Look for opportunities to listen to your kids about what is important to them. Use teachable moments to talk to your kids about what is important to you.

Motivate from the inside out.

Now that they have some time off from having to follow a set curriculum at school, encourage your kids to discover their own unique interests and passions. Is there something they've always daydreamed about doing but haven't yet tried, like riding a horse or juggling or painting? Tap into those dreams!

Make sure our kids know we are there for them. They need to know that we will always be there to support them and that we welcome them to seek us out whenever they'd just like to talk. It is important to try and balance the necessary negative feedback that our children require with the unconditional love that they need most of all.

Empowerment starts at home.

With the fast pace of our lives, it's often easier to do things for young people rather than with them. Think of yourself as your child's empowerment coach — start small, provide choices that mean something to them.

Refresh your relationship. Make this summer a time of rejuvenation and strengthening of the relationship that you have with your child. It's a time to make sure our children know how much we love them and to provide genuine praise for the very many things that they do right.

by Leisha Conners Bauer,
Boulder County Healthy
Youth Alliance and
by Dr. Jan Hittelman,
Licensed Psychologist,
Boulder Psychological Services

>>Talking About . . . Sex

May is National Month to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and provides an optimum time to reflect on teen birth rates in Boulder County. According to the Colorado Health Information Dataset, in 2007 Boulder County was at about half the teen birth rate compared to the state data. However, 18 out of every 1,000 girls in Boulder County gives birth as a teen. Sexually active teens face unintended pregnancies because they are likely to delay accessing contraceptive services for reasons of confidentiality, cost, and a lack of knowledge about pregnancy prevention and accessing birth control.

Emerging Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (2007), identifies several effective strategies for preventing teen pregnancy including family partnerships where in which parents and guardians discuss values, beliefs, and sexual health decision-making with their children in a continuous dialogue. Open family communication can impact three significant behaviors that reduce the chances of unintended pregnancy:

- A commitment, or return, to abstinence
- Reducing the frequency of sex
- Increasing the correct and consistent use of effective methods of contraception.

To help make conversations about sex a little easier for families, the Women's Health Center Youth Services Program compiled the following tips from local teens:

- 1. Be Available** - Create a safe, consistent, and judgment-free space for your child to come to you with their comments, questions, or concerns about sex and sexuality.
- 2. Self-Reflect, Don't Project** - Check in with yourself about your own feelings about sex. Your feelings and concerns are valid, but how you relay them can determine whether or not your child feels safe and comfortable talking to you.
- 3. Choose Your Words** - Different people use a wide variety of words and phrases to refer to genitalia and sexual activity. Try to

use language that your child relates to while incorporating medically accurate and anatomically correct terminology. For example, a teen may use the phrase "hooking up." Ask them what that means (does it mean: kissing, oral sex, vaginal intercourse?) and then use their language if that feels comfortable in your family dynamic.

4. It's a Continuous Conversation - Having "THE TALK" only one time can make talking about sex awkward for both you and your child. Talking about sex over many small conversations allows more topics to be covered and demonstrates your commitment to the discussion.

5. Look Outside the Box - Talking with your child about sex does not have to happen at a designated time. Use examples from movies, books, or songs to prompt a thoughtful discussion about sex and sexuality.

If you are looking for more information on talking about sex and sexuality, check out these resources:

Sex and Sensibility: The Thinking Parent's Guide to Talking Sense About Sex by Deborah Koffman

www.teenclinic.org

For local resources to support pregnant and parenting teens visit: <http://www.bouldercounty.org/health/commhth/genesis/index.htm> or call 303-413-7529

Parents – We are interested in where you find resources about sexual health. Please take this short survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=se84RLk_2f2GCJcuIqKB yibA_3d_3d

Spanish link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qf6XtouwKw bo4ZYy0Be7XQ_3d_3d

by Blair Young,
Youth Services Director,
Boulder Valley Women's Health

>>Meet Local Thriving Youth

On April 16, the city of Boulder's Youth Opportunities Program and YOAB (Youth Opportunities Advisory Board) honored nine Boulder Valley students as Outstanding Youth Volunteers.

Community members nominate middle school or high school youth based on their meaningful local volunteer work. All nominees received a letter of recognition with nine selected to receive awards at a ceremony attended by Boulder City Council Members Angelique Espinoza, Crystal Gray, and Macon Cowles, School Board Member Laurie Albright, the awardees' families, school principals, and nominators. The keynote speaker was Rachel Fuchs, a Fairview graduate who recently returned from the Peace Corps.

The Youth Opportunities Program is part of the city's Department of Housing and Human Services. For more information contact Alice Swett at 303-441-4349, or swetta@bouldercolorado.gov.

The awardees were:

Sara DesGeorges, Grade 12, Fairview High School.

Helen Killeen, Grade 12, Fairview High School

Alison Lewis, Grade 11, Boulder High School

Maggie McCarthy, Grade 11, Boulder High School

Becca Miick, Grade 12, New Vista High School

Carlos Daniel Nolasco, Grade 12, Boulder High School

Katie Pemberton, Grade 11, Peak to Peak Charter School

Torie Salley-Rains, Grade 12, New Vista High School

Emilia Volz, Grade 12, New Vista High School

On April 30, seven Boulder Valley students were recognized by the Boulder County Commissioners as nominees for the Metropolitan Mayors and Commissioners Youth Award (MMCYA).

MMCYA recognizes youth from the Denver

metro counties that have persevered through adversity and give back to their community. Nominations are accepted countywide. Four of the county's nominees will also be recognized at a metro-wide banquet in Denver on May 16.

For more information about MMCYA, contact Leisha Conners Bauer; Boulder County Healthy Youth Alliance, 303-441-3839 or lconersbauer@bouldercolorado.gov

MMCYA nominees:

Shelby McGriff, Grade 12, Chinook West
Christopher Miller, Grade 7, Eldorado K-8

Kali Perry-Brezlau, Grade 12, Chinook West

Brian Pickus, Grade 12, Nederland Middle/Senior High School

Dallas Scott, Grade 9, Monarch High School

Veronica Silva, Grade 12, Fairview High School

Chelsea Welch, Grade 12, Monarch High School

>>Brownies for Breakfast

Summer provides you and your teenager a chance to live in a different rhythm, to break away from old patterns and to try new things. Consider the opportunities you and your teenager have in front of you this summer, and plan to make the most of them!

Three reasonable goals for your teens might include:

- To unwind, rest and recharge their batteries,
- To develop new skills and relationships,
- To spend quality family time together.

The “lazy” factor:

First, it's okay to give teenagers some time to be a bit lazy. While they probably shouldn't over do it, it's good for them to catch up on sleep and to enjoy some quiet time; this can be healthy and rejuvenating after a busy school year.

New skills and relationships:

Summertime also brings wonderful opportunities to get a job and/or to develop new skills. Teenagers have a need to feel important and powerful, and when these needs are channeled productively, kids develop maturity and responsibility. If the slow job market or your teen's young age is making money-generating employment unlikely, there are still many creative ways your teen can make summer productive. Perhaps your daughter can run a craft club in the neighborhood, or teach kids a new dance each week. Your son can teach younger boys soccer skills or chess strategies. When teens mentor younger kids they develop leadership and responsibility while helping the young ones. Other opportunities may arise to help out at a local community center serving lunch to seniors, restacking books at the library or assisting at a community recreation program.

Brainstorm with your teen and think creatively about how to find new opportunities that interest him and expand his network and skills. Teens often thrive when they have to stretch to fulfill obligations. Be sure they are appropriately supervised and that you are helping them to be successful.

What matters most:

At the end of one summer that had included a family vacation and several weekends away, one mom asked her two boys for their favorite memory from the summer. The boys agreed their favorite time was the morning they had all hung out together on the front porch eating brownies for breakfast! Family vacations and weekend trips are wonderful but don't underestimate the value in little, spontaneous events. How can you break the routine? Eat dinner out on the porch, have a dinner picnic at the park, take a hike together. It can be helpful for parents to appreciate moments together with quality connections rather than to always aim for the big events. Parents who have already raised their teens tell us that it's the time families spend together that matters most.

Enjoy your time with your teen this summer!

© 2009, Sue Blaney

Sue Blaney offers tips and tools for successfully raising teens at: www.PleaseStoptheRollercoaster.com

by Sue Blaney, Author,
Please Stop the Rollercoaster!
How Parents of Teenagers Can Smooth Out the Ride

Q&A with Dr. J.

Q: It seems that there is new and updated information about important teen/young adult health issues being issued almost daily. How do we sort through it all and make informed decisions and healthy choices? For example, I would like to see more comprehensive information about the Gardasil vaccine made more widely available. Unless we research and press our doctors with questions, all we hear about the vaccine is from the commercials on TV shamelessly promoting it for the manufacturer's profits.

A: The short answer is that we do the best we can. I have always viewed parenting as an impossible job to always do well and this question reflects that. It is, however, important that we do the best we can in educating ourselves, and (more importantly) our children, with the information they need to be happy, healthy and safe. It is certainly our hope that the Thrive Update will continue to be one useful source of information for parents. We are fortunate that there are a variety of other free community resources (like those listed in our calendar section), which provide important information that parents need to know. In addition to acquiring and sorting through all of this information, we want to be effective in communicating what we learn with our

children. This can at times be even more challenging. Here are some tips on how to have an effective discussion with our children about health and safety issues:

- Do more listening than talking: make every effort to first give your child an opportunity to express their views on the subject at hand. You can always offer your opinions after they have had a chance to share their point of view.

- Don't Lecture: try to make it more of a discussion grounded in an atmosphere mutual respect.

- Timing is Everything: Choose a time where everyone is in fairly good spirits and your child doesn't feel like they are being kept from something that they would prefer to be doing. This is why talks in the car are often so effective.

- Revisit the Topic Again: These messages and information needs to be discussed in an ongoing way, not just one time. As your child matures their views will change as well as their recall of these important conversations.

It can also be helpful to check in with a medical and or mental health professional, especially when the information out there is conflicting or confusing. Concerns regarding the Gardasil vaccination are a great example. The vaccine is supposed to prevent the majority of cervical cancers that are

acquired through sexual contact. There is some controversy because there have been reports of significant and sometimes life-threatening reactions in young women who have been given the vaccine. Because this is a new drug, it is very difficult to determine if the reactions were caused by the vaccination itself or are associated with other factors. In time we will better understand these important concerns. The best that we can do as parents is to stay informed and be in consultation with health professionals that we trust.

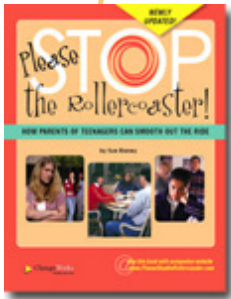
For more information about Gardasil: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/vaers/gardasil.htm>.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): <http://www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/gardasil092908.html>.

Do you have a question?
Submit your questions directly by:
Phone: 720-217-3270
Fax: 720-381-6089
Email: Jan.Hittelman@gmail.com
Post: 1527 Pine Street, Boulder 80302

by Dr. Jan Hittelman,
Licensed Psychologist,
Boulder Psychological Services

>>Please Stop the Rollercoaster! How Parents of Teenagers Can Smooth Out the Ride



Please Stop the Rollercoaster! is a guide for busy parents of teenagers who find themselves unsure of their changing role. Grounded in research, this book offers a wealth of practical, succinct information. It guides parents to examine and discuss the most important issues they are likely to face. www.PleaseStoptheRollercoaster.com, by Sue Blaney (280 pages)

National author and communications expert Sue Blaney has presented several times for the Parent Engagement Network known as PEN. Local parents have used her book "Please Stop the Rollercoaster! How Parents of Teenagers Can Smooth Out the Ride" to guide discussion groups throughout Boulder

Valley School District.

The success of these book groups have led to an organized effort by PEN leaders to bring more of the book groups to our area. One of the local groups has been running for three years (growing to include other parenting resources after finishing the Rollercoaster discussion and study).

Contact penrollercoaster@yahoo.com to receive a detailed letter outlining how the groups work and to receive information about the book group kick-offs. Kick-off meetings by experienced leaders are planned for fall 2009 throughout BVSD. Groups will be organized at the kick-off meetings.

By leaving your name, email address (or home address if you prefer) and school affiliation, you will receive information

as the kick-off meetings get organized, likely in September. Sign ups for the book groups will happen at the kick-offs. Contacting the email address is a good way to get the information as it becomes available.

Learn more about Boulder's PEN at: www.ParentEngagementNetwork.org

Learn more about **Please Stop the Rollercoaster**, valuable parenting tips and Sue Blaney at: www.PleaseStoptheRollercoaster.com

Questions about this fall's BVSD Rollercoaster book groups or request for a book scholarship can be sent to: www.penrollercoaster@yahoo.com

by Paula Nelson,
Chair, Parent Engagement
Network (PEN)

A great new resource to share is *Secrets to Success in Parenting Your Teen*, a downloadable e-book written by Sue Blaney. This free 19 page e-book offers helpful, actionable advice collected and synthesized from experts and parents around the country. Sue Blaney is the author of the acclaimed parent discussion group program *Please Stop the Rollercoaster! How Parents of Teenagers Can Smooth Out the Ride*.

Please use this link for the book: <http://pleasestoptherollercoaster.com/blog/2009/04/09/secrets-to-success-in-parenting-your-teen/>

>>SPOTLIGHT: YMCA

Every day for more than 50 years, the YMCA of Boulder Valley has played a transformational role in the lives of thousands of people. Each year, more than 30,000 youth, adults, families and seniors are impacted by YMCA outreach and wellness services located at more than 60 locations throughout our community. These programs include anything from summer camps and youth sports, to after-school enrichment for youth in elementary, middle and high school and wellness programs for all ages.

Each YMCA across the nation is volunteer founded, volunteer led and volunteer based. Collectively, YMCA's are the largest not-for-profit organizations in the nation and benefit from the leadership of more than 600,000 volunteers. The YMCA of Boulder Valley is no different. We currently have over 2,000 volunteers that range in responsibility from policy making to campaigners to youth sport coaches to group exercise instructors.

With a mission that "no one is turned away due to an inability to pay," the YMCA is committed to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities. As the needs of our community grow and become more diverse, the YMCA is committed to collaborating and expanding our program and facilities to ensure that the critical needs of our youth and families are met. We do this in a variety of ways:

- Model school-based programs, offered at 13 elementary schools in the Boulder Valley School District, that serve 450 families each week. These programs fill the time before and after school creatively and constructively and provide working parents with the knowledge that their children are well cared for and supported.
- Cutting-edge middle school and teen programs that serve over 600 youth each week. Middle school Refueling Stations, Break Through Arts, skateboarding and cycling programs provide safe, substance free environments for youth where

they can explore their creativity, connect with caring adults, and build the assets needed to make a successful transition to adulthood.

- Unique, year-round sports programs, reaching 9,000 youngsters and teaching the values of fair play and sportsmanship. Youth learn skills and values, they learn to believe in themselves, and they grow stronger, in spirit, mind and body.
- Outstanding summer camp programs, rich in YMCA camping history and traditions that serve over 6,500 youth each summer. Campers experience new challenges and adventures, combined with outstanding leadership and positive peer relationships.
- Nurturing, holistic health and wellness programs that serve over 12,000 adults and seniors, many of whom are "health seekers" – those attempting and struggling in their pursuit of health – as they work to adopt and maintain healthier habits.
- Fun family activities that work to create and build positive connections between family members and the larger community. Sports skills clinics, family recreation opportunities and a wide variety of fitness offerings for all ages help families to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

In these difficult economic times the YMCA of Boulder Valley is here to support the individuals and families of the Boulder Valley School District. Visit our website, www.ymcabv.org, or one of our centers – Mapleton YMCA, 28th and Mapleton, Boulder or Arapahoe YMCA, 95th and Arapahoe, Lafayette – to learn how the Y can support your family.

by Karen Brown,
Director of Middle School and Teen Programs
and Summer Day Camp Director

Thriveupdate for BVSD Parents

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experts and parents

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

>> Calendar of Classes & Events

MAY 2009

5/12 **Presentation: "Creativity and the Young Gifted Child"** - Dr. Diana Howard, Denver Public Schools
Tuesday, May 12, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Lafayette Elementary School, 101 N. Bermont Ave., Lafayette. Presented by Boulder Valley Gifted and Talented (BVGT). Free; donations accepted. For details, visit www.bvgt.org RSVP to programming@bvgt.org

5/13 **Enrollment Fair for CHP+ and Medicaid**
Wednesday, May 13, 2:00-7:00 p.m., Kaiser Permanente Baseline Medical Office, 580 Mohawk Drive, Boulder. There will be free vision screenings, face-painting and entertainment for children -- however children do not have to be present to get enrolled. If families cannot attend, they can call Boulder County Healthy Kids Initiative at 303-441-1589, anytime to apply or check on income guidelines or go to www.bchealthykids.org. CHP+ is for children under the age of 19 and also for pregnant women.

5/16 **Boulder Youth Body Alliance 3rd Annual Jean Giveaway**
Saturday, May 16, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. BYBA is collecting old jeans at Central Plaza of Twenty Ninth Street Mall. Jeans will be turned into quilts for kids with HIV/AIDS through the National Pediatric AIDS Network.