

HORIZONS

of Health and Hope in Montezuma and Dolores Counties

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TEEN MAZE

Fun Event Provides Accurate and Valuable Information to Local Youth While Encouraging Discussion Between Parents and Teens

By Missy Miller, Director of SCYC and Greer Galloway, HORIZONS editor

"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." These are some of the thoughts which teens shared after taking part in the TEEN MAZE in 2008.

The TEEN MAZE is a life-size game board where teenagers are the game pieces, and life's choices are the dice. It is designed to help youth understand potential outcomes to some of life's decisions concerning substance abuse, sex, and careers. Realistic scenarios help teens navigate their way through the maze and find out about potential consequences of their decisions and behavior. The interactive "game" provides information on topics that include sexual abstinence, contraceptives, sexually transmitted diseases, peer and media pressure, tobacco, drugs, alcohol, rehabilitation, legal consequences,

labor & delivery, teen parenting, HIV/AIDS and post-graduation career and educational choices.

The ultimate goal of the TEEN MAZE is to stimulate teens to think about potential ramifications of their choices without placing judgement on any of the paths chosen. This goal is accomplished by ensuring that professionals in the fields of substance abuse prevention,



health, intervention, and education are available. Each room along the maze has a professional available to help youth determine how to make a positive choice, how to accept choices already made, how to make different choices, and how to determine what they want and create a plan to achieve their goals. For exam-

ple, a teen participant may enter a room and see an actual vehicle and photographs from an accident involving drinking and driving. Professionals are there to provide additional information and answer questions. The teens will think about this outcome when faced with a real-

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We listen to our community!

Our Youth Are Courageous Leaders

New Survey Shows Continued Progress in Reducing Youth Smoking

Congress and States Can Accelerate Declines by Implementing Proven Solutions

From December 11, 2008 Press Release Statement of Matthew L. Myers, President, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids . Submitted to HORIZONS by Julia Hesse, Tobacco Education and Prevention Director, Montezuma County Public Health

Washington, DC - It is good news for the nation's health that the 2008 Monitoring the Future survey released [recently] finds that smoking rates among 8th, 10th and 12th graders have declined to the lowest levels recorded in this survey for all three grades. However, like other recent surveys of youth and adult smoking, this survey also shows that smoking declines have slowed in recent years. It would be a serious mistake to declare premature victory in the battle against tobacco use when one in five high school seniors still smokes.

This survey confirms that we know how to dramatically reduce tobacco use. But elected officials at all levels must resist complacency and step up the fight against the nation's number one cause of preventable death. It is especially critical that the [new] Administration and Congress provide long-missing national leadership by enacting legislation granting the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulatory authority over tobacco products. Among other things, this legislation would crack down on tobacco marketing and sales to kids.

There is much to celebrate in the Monitoring the Future survey, which was released by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Since peaking in the mid-1990s, smoking rates (the percentage who have smoked in the past 30 days) have declined by 68 percent among 8th graders, 60 percent among 10th graders and 44 percent among 12th graders. These declines are a remarkable public health success story and will translate into improved health, longer lives and lower health care costs for generations to come.

These declines are powerful evidence that scientifically proven solutions, implemented primarily at the state and local level, are working. These include higher cigarette prices resulting from state cigarette tax increases and the 1998 state tobacco settlement; effective, well-funded tobacco prevention programs run by some states and nationally by the American Legacy Foundation; and a growing number of state and local laws requiring smoke-free workplaces and public places.

However, smoking declines among both youth and adults have slowed in recent years, following budget cuts to some tobacco prevention and cessation programs and huge increases in tobacco marketing expenditures. From 1998 to 2005, tobacco marketing nearly doubled from \$6.9 billion to \$13.4 billion, according to the most recent Federal Trade Commission data. Tobacco companies now spend the bulk of their marketing budgets on price discounts, which undermine efforts to discourage smoking by increasing cigarette prices.

The Monitoring the Future survey shows the impact of these harmful trends. It finds a statistically significant decline in smok-

ing this year only among 10th graders. There has not been a statistically significant year-to-year decline in smoking among 12th graders since 2003, and 20.4 percent of high school seniors still smoke.

There is even greater cause for concern this year. The country's serious economic downturn — and resulting state budget shortfalls — have already resulted in cuts to tobacco prevention efforts and greater cuts are threatened. If the states cut funding for these important and effective programs, the progress we've made will be put at risk. The states this year will collect \$24.6 billion in revenue from the tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes, so they have plenty of tobacco money to fund tobacco prevention.

There is no question that we know how to win the fight against tobacco use. What's needed is the political leadership to more aggressively implement proven solutions nationally and in every state. Recent landmark reports by the Institute of Medicine and the President's Cancer Panel have agreed on the steps that Congress and the states must take to accelerate declines in tobacco use — and eventually eliminate the death and disease it causes:

- Congress should enact legislation granting the FDA authority to regulate the manufacturing, marketing and sale of tobacco products. The U.S. House of Representatives on July 30 voted 326 to 102 to approve this legislation, and it has 60 sponsors in the Senate, including President Barack Obama and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. This legislation presents the incoming Administration and Congress with the opportunity for an early, bipartisan victory that would significantly improve the nation's health.
- Congress should also significantly increase the federal tobacco tax, fund national and state-based tobacco prevention and cessation campaigns, and require coverage by all public and private health plans of interventions (including counseling and medications) proven to help smokers quit.
- Every state should fund a tobacco prevention and cessation program at the level recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Unfortunately, as a report released last month by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and our partners showed, no state is currently meeting the CDC's recommendation, and only nine states are funding prevention programs at even half the CDC's recommendation. In the last 10 years, the states have received \$203.5 billion in tobacco-generated revenue from the tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes, but have spent only 3.2 percent of it (\$6.5 billion) on tobacco prevention and cessation programs.
- The states should also enact comprehensive smoke-free workplace laws and further increase tobacco taxes. To date, 24 states and the District of Columbia have enacted smoke-free laws that include restaurants and bars. Every state should do so. While 44 states and the District of Columbia have increased tobacco taxes in recent years, there are vast disparities in state tobacco tax rates, from 7 cents per pack in South Carolina and 17 cents in Missouri to \$2.75 in New York and \$2.58 in New Jersey.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, killing more than 400,000 people and costing the nation nearly \$100 billion in health care bills each year. While our nation has made remarkable progress in reducing smoking, political complacency and the tobacco companies' aggressive marketing threaten continued progress. If Congress and the states show the political will to implement proven solutions, we can win one of the most significant public health victories in our nation's history. More information on the Monitoring the Future Survey at www.monitoringthefuture.org.

Teaching Your Teen Resistance Through a Positive Relationship

From the Cortez Middle School Guidance Office

One of the best ways to keep your adolescent from becoming involved with drugs or alcohol is for you to be actively and consistently involved in their life. Just the simple act of regularly sitting down and eating dinner together as a family is a good way to keep connected. Generally, kids who feel that they are valued by the adults in their lives feel better about themselves and are less likely to take unhealthy risks. Some other ways to show that you care are:

- Talk with your adolescent. Ask about their day. Get to know their interests.
- Set clear rules and consequences. Be consistent with these.
- Know where your adolescent is and who he or she is with. Meet their friends and get to know their names.
- Show them that you care about their education. Talk to their teachers. Attend conferences and school events. Help with homework. Remember that your attitude about school impacts your adolescent's attitude about school.
- Have high expectations and encourage your teen to do their best. When they struggle (and we all do!), build them back up.
- Encourage your adolescent to be involved in the community as an advocate or volunteer. Support their membership in a club or organization. If you have the time, participate in the community with them.
- Make home as safe and enjoyable as possible. One idea is to set up a weekly or monthly family "game" night.

Model positive and responsible behavior. Teach them how to resist negative pressure from others. The behavior you model for them is the foundation for the person they will become.

Don't expect to be a "perfect" parent. There is no such thing! Being involved and letting your adolescent know that you believe in and support them is very powerful. Your adolescent may not let you know that they appreciate it now, but the rewards will be evident in the long run!

Only 1 in 4 Teens Report Parents Have Warned of Prescription Drug Abuse Dangers

Disconnect Between Parents and Teens

Findings from the Partnership/MetLife Foundation survey revealed an ongoing disconnect about the discussions that are taking place between parents and teens about drugs and alcohol. Parents reported discussing virtually all forms of substance abuse "at length" with their teens, but *alcohol is the only topic that 60 percent or more of teens reported their parents had covered in depth*. In fact, *just 26 percent of teens said their parents had talked to them about the abuse of prescription drugs to get high* – a troubling finding in light of the fact that 1 in 5 teens has reported engaging in this dangerous behavior.

Family 4'em

Events Being Planned

Fun for the Whole Family

By Missy Miller,
Director, School Community Youth Coalition

The School Community Youth Coalition, in collaboration with the Montelores Early Childhood Council and local school districts are sponsoring Family 4'em events. The Family 4'ems are about getting back to the FUNdamentals and reigniting the spirit of relationship in our families. Each school community (Mancos, Dolores, Dove Creek, Towaoc, and Cortez) will host three evenings events for families. Families will get to:

- Share a meal with other families
- Participate in a short educational activity (parents with parents and youth with youth— teens will lead youth activities)
- Enjoy a group activity with other families

Activities include art projects, scrap-booking, songs, and physical activities. Super and educational gifts are sponsored by the Colorado Department of Education. Please join in this fun evening with your family and your community. Events are currently being planned for March and April. For more information contact the School Community Youth Coalition at 529-7182 or the School Counselor at your child's school.

TEEN MAZE

Make a New Choice Today

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life decision about driving home after a party or getting into a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking.

The theme of this year's TEEN MAZE is *Make a New Choice Today*. Organizers know the experience will be fun and hope it will help encourage discussion between parents and their teens regarding their values and expectations while providing accurate facts and information to teens without attached value judgement.

The TEEN MAZE is the result of the dedicated efforts of more than 200 volunteers and the generous contributions of local businesses equalling about \$6,000. Most of the financial gifts are between \$100 to \$500. The TEEN MAZE project benefits the youth as well as the community as a whole by raising awareness in the community about drug and alcohol problems while helping to decrease the prevalence of the problems. Community members come together to serve our local youth in a powerful educational setting.

This will be the eighth year that the TEEN MAZE will provide an educational, interactive, drug-free activity for youth. Last year's participants, who were surveyed before and after the experience, were encouraged. There was a ten percent increase in youth who said they would talk to their parents about sexual activity or alcohol use; and students exiting the TEEN MAZE were both more sure they would attend college and were more favorable toward their school's disciplinary policy.

TEEN MAZE will be open to area youth April 30th and May 1st. All youth are welcome. They must be registered to attend and accompanied by an adult. For more information or to register, contact Missy Miller at 529-7139. An Open House opportunity for the public to tour the TEEN

Ways to STOP underage drinking



Show Concern You can help stop underage drinking by asking your kids about their plans.

ASK.	"Where are you going? When will you return?" Get information from your child.
ENGAGE.	Take part in your child's life by chaperoning activities. Talk safety by asking how your kids plan to get home from a party or other event.
PREVENT.	If you ask questions and find out where your child is going, you can prevent your child from getting into risky situations.

Teens Open to Discussing Drugs and Alcohol With Parents By Email, Cell Phones

Some Parents Missing Opportunities to Connect

NEW YORK, NY – Press Release December, 2008 – New research from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America and MetLife Foundation shows that many parents who don't use e-mail or text messaging to communicate with their teens may be missing important opportunities to connect with their kids about drug and alcohol use. The national survey of more than 1,000 teens and 1,000 parents confirms that while a majority of teens would rather have a face-to-face conversation with their parents about alcohol or drugs, *nearly one in four (23 percent) say they would prefer to have a "serious conversation" about this issue using e-mail or cell phone.* However, just *three percent of parents* would opt to communicate with their kids this way.

"Parents who are waiting for the 'right time' to talk to their kids about drugs and alcohol may be missing everyday opportunities to connect on this important issue," explains Missy Miller, Director of the School Community Youth Coalition, and local spokesperson for the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. "While nothing can take the place of an in-person conversation between parents and teens, for some parents, emails, cell phone conversations, and even texting can help start a conversation with a reluctant teen and reinforce talks you've already had. Parents can also reach teens at times when use tends to be likelier: after school, on weekends and during unsupervised time."

The survey underscores that "Generation Text" has arrived – when asked which was more important for everyday communication with friends, texting or social networking; *teens were far more likely to communicate directly by texting (63 percent) than to rely on websites like Facebook (38 percent) to stay connected.* And teens don't only want to hear from their friends. *A majority of teens (67 percent) were open to receiving texts from their parents after school* – a time when teens are most likely to be unsupervised. For many parents, texting may be an additional tool for monitoring and staying in touch with teens.

"Some parents may still feel apprehensive about embracing technology as a way of communicating with their children," said Sibyl Jacobson, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. "But, in today's world, it is vital that parents connect with their kids in any way possible. Our work with the Partnership allows us to highlight important health issues like adolescent alcohol and drug abuse and continue to empower parents to recognize the important influence they have in their children's lives."

For parents who are reluctant or don't know how to send text messages, the Partnership has created a downloadable guide called "Time To Text." The tool is free at TimeToTalk.org, and gives parents quick tips on how to text, suggests different messages to send to teens and provides a cheat sheet parents can keep in their wallet.

GREAT THINGS All Kids Need

Support

Empowerment

***Boundaries &
Expectations***

***Constructive
Use of Time***

***Commitment to
Learning***

Positive Values

Social Competencies

Positive Identity

These are the 8 categories of Developmental Assets®; the qualities and relationships all kids need to succeed. To learn more, visit Search Institute® at www.searchinstitute.org or call 877-240-7251

CALENDAR

Ongoing

Fatherhood Classes

5:30-8pm, Wednesdays

Training Annex at 105 E Arbecam, Cortez

February

- 12th 14th Annual Creating Cultural Harmony Conference "Visions of Our Community: Diverse, Strong, Beautiful"**
San Juan College. For more info, call Jennifer Larramendy 505-566-5877
- 13th Positive Community Norms Regional Gathering** with Jeff Linkenback, Shiprock
For more info, call Missy Miller 529-7139
- 23rd Meth Action Committee Meeting***
10:30am, Cortez Welcome Center
School Community Youth Coalition Meeting*
11:15am, Cortez Welcome Center
*Note change of date due to Presidents' Day
- 24th Teen Maze Room Leader Meeting**
11am, Cortez Welcome Center
- 25th HORIZONS On Air**
KSJD 8:30am

March

- TBD Family 4'em Gathering**
For more info, call 529-7239
- 24th Teen Maze Room Leader Meeting**
11am, Cortez Welcome Center
- 16th Meth Action Committee Meeting**
10:30am, Cortez Welcome Center
School Community Youth Coalition Meeting
11:15am, Cortez Welcome Center
Target Tobacco Coalition Meeting
12-1:30pm, Cortez Welcome Center
For more info, call Julia 565-3056 ext 233

Cultural Relevance

By Greer Galloway, HORIZONS editor

Have you ever felt like someone just did not understand you? Have you ever missed out on opportunities because an organization did not recognize your unique situation? Have you ever felt that your cultural view was not valued? Organizations in Montezuma and Dolores counties are recognizing the need for more cultural awareness, and ensuring that their programs are relevant and useful to individuals of all the diverse cultures in our area.

Members of the Target Tobacco Coalition and the School Community Youth Coalition, recently took part in a short training presented by Jose Rodriguez, the Director of the Intercultural Communication Achievement Network (ICAN), based in Cortez, as part of their individual efforts to develop Cultural Competency Plans. ICAN works with a wide range of different organizations to help them develop a truly multicultural view of their work and to integrate this view into their respective missions. Mr. Rodriguez described his goal to "assist people in maximizing the potential that different human beings bring" to any organization or community during a recent HORIZONS On Air interview. Julia Hesse of the Target Tobacco Coalition shares her experience: "The training encouraged participants to examine where they have experienced oppression in their own lives and began discussion about how we may perpetuate oppression toward others through our work."

Work with cultural competency, or cultural relevance, emphasizes the understanding that each individual sees the world through his or her own "world view." By identifying and understanding each others' world views, efforts toward ensuring that no one is overlooked or misunderstood simply because of a different world view can influence all aspects of an organization. It may mean bilingual signs, a different teaching method, a more sensitive discussion of a particular piece of literature, adjusted rules or requirements, or a changed meeting time or advertising technique. Whatever the outwardly visible results of the plan are, the process of developing cultural relevance and competency brings the people of a com-

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SPRING 2009

Area Organizations Look at Cultural Competency Plans

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munity closer together by helping us see that we are all human, and our unique cultural backgrounds provide a richer experience for everyone rather than a divisive ground for potential misunderstandings and disconnects.

As part of the process of developing a formal Cultural Competency Plan, organizations like the School Community Youth Coalition are asking themselves questions such as,

- What are the different cultures in our area, and how are we involved with each?
- Are we training our staff to be culturally sensitive, and are our staff a part of these different cultures?
- Are our printed materials and other resources offered in appropriate different languages?
- How can we involve representatives of different cultures and backgrounds in all phases of our work?

This important work can enrich the quality of life for members of our community in many ways. Individuals and organizations throughout southern Colorado and northern New Mexico are also taking part in the 14th Annual Creating Cultural Harmony Conference, which will focus on "Visions of Our Community: Diverse, Strong, Beautiful." See the Calendar section for information on how to participate in this conference, and watch for ways to get involved and share *your* culture and *your* worldview.

CALENDAR

March (continued)

24th **Teen Maze Room Leader Meeting**
11am, Cortez Welcome Center

25th **HORIZONS On Air**
KSJD 8:30am

April

TBD **Family 4'em Gathering**
For more info, call 529-7239

14th **Teen Maze Room Leader Meeting**
11am, Cortez Welcome Center

20th **Meth Action Committee Meeting**
10:30am at Cortez Welcome Center
School Community Youth Coalition
11:15am at Cortez Welcome Center

21st **Helping Every Child Succeed**
with Vangi Mccoy. \$5 Dinner included.
6-8pm, Trinity Preschool, Cortez

22nd **HORIZONS On Air**
KSJD 8:30am

29th **TEEN MAZE Community Open House**
5-6pm, Montezuma County Fairgrounds
Only opportunity for non-youth to tour!

30th **TEEN MAZE**
Montezuma County Fairgrounds. See article on pg 1 for more information on how to attend Or call Missy Miller for more info 529-7139

May

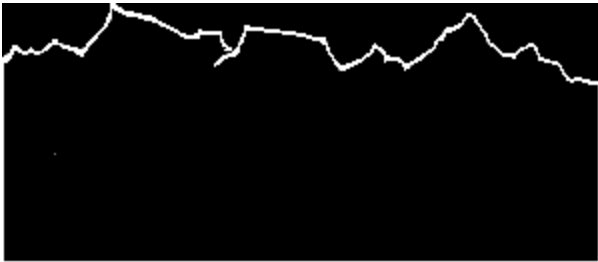
1st **TEEN MAZE**
Montezuma County Fairgrounds. See article on pg 1 for more information on how to attend or call Missy Miller for more info 529-7139

Can You Believe?
8 out of 10
students in
Montezuma County
have an adult in their
life who believes they
will be a success.
Believe It.

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CHARACTER CHOICES

February

Be a person of good character through

FORGIVENESS

Clear the record of those who have wronged me;
avoid rejecting others and holding a grudge.

March

Be a person of good character by having

SINCERITY

Eagerly do what is right with transparent motives;
avoid being hypocritical.

April

Be a person of good character by practicing

VIRTUE

Consistently do what is right to make moral excellence evident
in my life; avoid impurity.

Provided by the Character Council

HORIZONS

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