

HORIZONS

OF HEALTH AND HOPE IN MONTEZUMA AND DOLORES COUNTIES

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

Feb 26 - May 28
Incredible Years
Parenting
Classes for parents
of
children 2-8 years
old.
5:30-8:00 p.m. at
Mancos
Methodist Church.
Dinner &
childcare provided
Call
Adrien at 564-1195,
ext 21.

28 TEEN MAZE
Community & Parent
Night. Fairgrounds -
5:00 to 6:30 PM

MARCH

1 & 2 TEEN MAZE
Fairgrounds - All Day

2 & 3 "The Vagina
Monologues"
Proceeds to benefit
Renew.
Mancos Town Council
Cham-
bers - 7:00 PM.
\$10.00

13 "Meth DOES affect the
WHOLE community"
Session
at Four Corners Child
Advocacy Center -
6:00 to
8:00 PM

18-24 National Inhalants
Education Week

Inside the Teen Maze

By Janet Woodson, Montezuma Center HS Student

On March 1 and 2 the community engages in the sixth annual Teen Maze, which is organized by the School Community Youth Coalition. Missy Miller, the Director of the Coalition and one of the event coordinators said, "The Teen Maze is to give youth an opportunity to ask questions around complicated issues, such as drugs, alcohol and sex - the things that teens are bombarded with virtually every day."

The School Community Youth Coalition began in 2000 and in the following year held the first Teen Maze for Montezuma and Dolores counties. Dena Guttridge discovered the Teen Maze program being used in Arizona, and proposed the program be moved to the Four Corners area. Rebecca Larson, former director of the School Community Youth Coalition, aided in beginning the Teen Maze

in our community.

The Teen Maze is only for youth. "It gives factual info," says Miller, "So when kids are out of the maze, they can make good decisions." The School Community Youth Coalition invites schools and specific groups, such as 4H, to travel to the Teen Maze. There is no admission to the Teen Maze. "All participants are given a specific scenario, set up as a maze, and they must navigate through the Maze and see the real consequences of their actions," Miller explained. She added, "We focus on the effects of their choices including the array of consequences."

The Teen Maze is used to encourage the youth to talk to their parents in a fun and factual way. The community is a large part of the Teen Maze as well. Miller stated, "The entire event is done by

continued on next page

Research highlights merits of new DARE To Be You Bridges program in area schools

By Jimbo Buickerood

Research results from participants in the DARE To Be You Bridges program utilized in Montezuma County show a variety of significant gains in building positive attitudes and behaviors relative to children's success at school. The research project aimed to determine if family-school relationships can be strengthened and factors that support children's success in school can be enhanced.

The Bridges program involved parents, teachers and children in kindergarten through second grade during

2002 to 2006 in local classrooms that elected to participate. Unique to the program was the co-involvement of children, parent and teachers. The program included 346 adult family members, 305 5-7 year old children, and 80 classroom teachers.

All participants completed surveys that gave valuable information on the project. Half of the participants attended 20 hours of workshops over 11 weeks. The results reported in the study are statistically

continued on page four

CALENDAR

APRIL

10 "Living with the
Consequences
of Another's Addiction?"
Session
at Four Corners Child
Advocacy
Center - 6:00 to 8:00
PM

April 10 - May 8 Guiding
Good
Choices Parenting
Classes for
parents of children 8-
13 years
old 5:30-8:00 p.m. at
The
Pinon Project. Dinner
and
childcare provided
Call
Adrien at 564-1195,
ext 21.

GIRL'S GROUP

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

A 6 week group for girls that meets about once per week. The group focus is teaching skills that promote increased self-esteem and self-confidence. Group objectives include positive thinking, focusing on successes and strengths, addressing unreasonable perceptions, self-awareness, and encouraging growth of self-esteem in all areas of life.

- March 6 - April 17
(except for Cortez
spring break)
- Tuesdays: 4:30 - 6:00 PM
- Four Corners Child
Advocacy Center: 104 N.
Linden, Cortez

Teen Maze gives glimpse of choices

volunteers. It is an important enough event that the community puts many resources into it. The more exposure teens have to the Maze, the more refusal skills they will have."

Four different tracks can be taken while in the Maze: the meth track, the DUI track, the substance abuse track, and the labor and delivery track. Each track teaches the consequences of certain actions, including financial and physical consequences. Each participant is given a specific amount of money that they receive because of their career, and money can be given or taken away throughout the Maze.

"The Teen Maze is used as an initiation to the "tracks of life" and once

they are finished with the Maze, they can talk about what they went through during the Maze with their friends," says Miller. "They can also talk to the community and their family members." "The great thing about the Teen Maze," Miller continued, "is those in the Maze can receive factual information on challenges in their real lives without being judged. They can actually see the consequences of their choices in relation to the real world."

The Teen Maze takes place again this year at the Montezuma County Fairgrounds, and students and children in the area are all invited to attend. Six years, and still going strong - good job, School Community Youth Coalition!

Challenging tobacco use locally

By Julia Hesse

We should be outraged! Each year, worldwide, approximately **5 million** people die from tobacco-related illnesses. That number includes over 440,000 people in the United States who die each year, or 1,200 per day. That is the same as 3 jumbo jets crashing and killing all passengers, each and every day. Why are we, as a society, not more diligent about stopping these tragic, entirely preventable deaths? These "statistics" represent real people that you and I know and love, but they don't represent the human toll, the horrible, painful dying process, shortened life span and quality of life, the grief and emptiness of the people left behind. How have we allowed this to happen on such an unimaginable scale?

Let's take a look at the process that led us to this situation. Tobacco is a tall leafy annual plant that belongs to the solanaceae or nightshade family. This plant family consists of crops, perennial flowering plants and poisonous weeds as well as various herbs, shrubs and trees. Tobacco includes numerous species which are grown throughout the world. One species, Nicotiana tabacum or common tobacco, is the main source of commercial tobacco used in producing cigarettes. It is native to South America, Mexico and the West Indies, and

is different from the species used by Native Americans in various sacred and medicinal ways. (www.lsc.org/tobacco/farming/plant.html)

Columbus first noted the ceremonial use of tobacco in 1492, and by 1550 Spaniards were cultivating it in the West Indies for export to Europe. Jean Nicot, the French Ambassador to Portugal, popularized the idea that tobacco had curative powers and distributed tobacco seeds in Europe, where tobacco use gained popularity.

Tobacco use became widespread by the late 19th century, but was used only in small amounts, usually in a pipe, cigar, or pinch of snuff, limiting the potential for addiction and disease caused by habitual use. All of this changed with the invention, in 1884, of the cigarette manufacturing machine, which could produce 120,000 cigarettes per day, compared to handrolled cigarettes at 2,000 per day..

Fast forward to the present and we have, in the United States, 45 million adults who smoke, 3.5 million high school students who smoke and more than 6 million kids under 18 who are alive today, who will ultimately die from smoking, even though it is a well known fact that tobacco use is deadly.

continued on page 3

Target Tobacco Coalition outlines cessation strategy

(continued from page 1)

What led us to this current state of affairs? Studies have repeatedly shown that 90% of all tobacco users become addicted by age 18, 50% of those by age 16. Factors that lead to this sobering fact are the heavy marketing the tobacco industry employs to get youth to smoke. The tobacco industry spends more than **\$15.1 billion** each year to promote their deadly products, that's more than **\$41 million, spent every day** to market cigarettes. Put that together with the fact that nicotine is physiologically more addictive than heroin, cocaine, alcohol, and marijuana and teenagers' bodies are more susceptible to nicotine addiction than adults' bodies and you have a recipe for disaster.

In addition to tobacco industry marketing, parental role modeling is a major factor in youth tobacco use. Having a parent who smokes or uses spit tobacco is a strong indicator that their children will, even while knowing all of the dangers. Behavior that is modeled speaks louder than words. And when children reach their early teens, peer pressure adds another major influence.

What can we as individuals and as a society do to prevent such widespread devastation?

- First of all, be aware that tobacco use IS a problem. It's not a choice, it's an addiction initiated by kids to young to comprehend the consequences. Talk about it with friends and family. Share what you know, learn more.
- If you use tobacco in any form, commit NOW to quitting, and DO IT! The life you save may not only be your own. Refuse to model for your children, or any children, such destructive behavior.
- Never give tobacco to kids (or anyone, for that matter), and if you know someone who does, please talk to them about it in a concerned, non-threatening manner.
- If you know of a store where kids buy it, talk to the owner and encourage them to move all tobacco products out of sight and out of reach of kids. Call your local health department tobacco program and tell them.
- Support efforts to raise taxes on tobacco products. Higher prices have proven to be a major factor in cutting youth tobacco use.
- Support clean air policies. These result in a reduction of smoking in public places, making smoking less visible and reducing its appearance as "normal".

We can make a difference. As more and more countries tackle the problem by banning tobacco advertising, raising taxes, regulating it as a drug, and creating smoke-free public spaces, smoking rates have dropped. More people quit and fewer young people start. If we work together as individuals and as a society we can make difference in the lives of millions of people.

For more information, or for help quitting tobacco, call Julia Hesse, coordinator for the Target Tobacco Coalition of Montezuma and Dolores Counties, 970-565-3056 ext 233.

Southwest Open students join in local service initiatives

Southwest Open School is one of five Colorado schools newly joining the El Pomar Youth in Community Service program. EPYCS is a leadership experience that teaches high school students the importance of service, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector, while empowering them to directly make an impact on Colorado communities through grant making.

Since 1991, EPYCS has provided unique opportunities for high school students to improve the quality of life in their schools and communities through informed grant making and service. Through a collaborative effort between El Pomar Foundation and 140 high schools across the state, EPYCS groups become educated about grant making. El Pomar Foundation provides a \$7,500 matching grant to each group that successfully raises \$500 or more.

EPYCS students then award a minimum of \$8,000 in grant funds to Colorado nonprofit organizations and government equivalents that best address the concerns outlined in their school's mission statement. Mission statements are developed based on input from a student body survey conducted at the beginning of each academic year.

The mission of Southwest Open School's EPYCS team is to support organizations in Montezuma County that provide services that help people in physical and economic distress. Particularly encouraged are programs that provide safe, confidential sanctuaries and supportive assistance.

In January, the Southwest Open School EPYCS team hosted a Renaissance Winter Ball. The event featured dancing, jugglers, fire dancers, henna tattoo artists and a fortune teller. Due to a great turnout, more than \$2,000 was raised. This money will be matched with an El Pomar Foundation grant of \$7,500 and in turn the SWOS EPYCS students will grant over \$9,000 to the community.

In addition to the fundraising efforts, the SWOS EPYCS team is involved in a community service project. Every Sunday student volunteers clean the Bridge Emergency Shelter in Cortez along with a team from the Dolores High School EPYCS program. A food drive is also being coordinated to assist the shelter.

Currently the students are evaluating the grant proposals received from several local nonprofit organizations. This process includes reading grant proposals along with conducting interviews and site visits to determine the best matches for funding.

Jennifer Chappell advises the EPYCS student group at Southwest Open School in Cortez.

The NEST

The Child Advocacy Center's new name, **The NEST**, is derived from Nurturing Environment for Safe Transitions. A logo is needed to accompany the new name and they are asking our community for sketches or drawings to adopt. Call The NEST at 565-8155 for more information.

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 Newsletter Coordinator at preventnews@frontier.net.

DTBY Bridges determined to be success

(continued from page 1)

significant changes that held for at least eighteen months after the class.

The program was held in high esteem by some Cortez teachers who elected to participate in the Bridges program for multiple years. In addition to the survey data, there were an array of positive comments offered by many participating teachers and parents. Montezuma County DARE To Be You Program Director Jan Miller-Heyl noted, "We saw a lot of breakdown of barriers between the school and community as a result of Bridges. People came forward to tell us how beneficial the program was to them personally."

Amongst the reported changes by children were improved social and academic skills, more favorable perceptions of school and less aggressive behavior in the children as reported by the teachers.

The parent participant survey data showed a variety of outcomes including an increase in confidence in their parenting abilities, a greater sense of support as parents, and more involvement with the schools including increased parent-teacher communication. Additionally, parents showed less depression and less stress related to being a parent after participating

in the class and an increase in the use of "child-centered practices" such as encouraging desired behaviors and ignoring unwanted behavior.

Overall the research reinforced the findings of other studies as related to the positive outcomes resulting from parent's increased involvement with their child's education and school. When parents believe that they hold an important role in their child's success in school, and this outlook is coupled with open communication between the family and the school, there is significant benefit to all involved. Many teachers in the Bridges class say their own support for family-school collaboration increased while parents also felt more of a family-school alliance and an overall increase in the welcoming tone in the schools.

For more information on this program or other DARE to be You programs, please contact the DARE to be You office in Cortez, 565-3606 or darecort@ext.colostate.edu.

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Montezuma County Partners
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