

# HORIZONS

*of Health and Hope in Montezuma and Dolores Counties*

MAY-JUNE 2008

VOLUME I, ISSUE 8

## Teen Maze Asks: "Are You Normal?"

by Krystyn Dennis

This year over 510 middle school and high school youth from Montezuma, Dolores, San Juan, and Archuleta counties toured the Teen Maze. For the past six years The School Community Youth Coalition (SCYC) has hosted this event. It takes several months of planning and more than 200 community volunteers to turn the Montezuma County Fairgrounds into an interactive health fair. Twenty-five rooms laid out like a maze hold factual information for youth to experience.

Youth entered the maze thru the Healthy Lifestyles Room they received information about health and nutrition, an apple or orange and some string cheese and headed to the first Voting Room.

In the Voting Room youth are asked questions and are given an opportunity to use actual polling equipment. The League of Women Voters dispenses the ballots and also tallies the results. The results help gauge the affect the Maze has on the youth, as they pass through another Voting Room upon exiting the maze.

Once inside the maze the youth are given scenarios that take them on various paths. Scenarios describe potential experiences with a DUI, teen pregnancy, or even jail. Professionals are in each of the rooms and ensure the youth receive factual information they can use to make good choices. For instance the Tobacco Room demonstrated the dangerous chemicals and affects of cigarettes and spit tobacco. And youth

in the STD and Contraception Room were able to speak openly with nurses and counselors.

New to the Maze this year was the Normal Room. Upon entering the Normal Room youth were asked, "Are you normal?" Their "yes" or "no" answer determined whether they proceeded to the right or the left. They were then handed a sheet of stickers and asked to place them on posters with activities and behaviors they identified with or practiced. Once they completed that activity they were asked a series of perception

*"I had a really great time in the Normal Room. It was fun to talk with the students after they learned about what the normal behaviors in the community are by most of the youth. In general, their perception is that students are practicing unhealthy behaviors more than healthy behaviors and it was great to have the opportunity to work on changing those misperceptions. It was also fun to be in a room where I could brag about all the good stuff that youth are doing and all the positive value systems they have. I know that the rest of the volunteers who helped out in that room felt the same way. It was an exciting room to be a part of."*

*-Rebecca Larson, Omni Institute*

questions, such as, "In a class of ten students, how many do you think smoke marijuana?" Ultimately, the youth ended up in the Celebration Room which was full of signs, created by local youth, and vivid decorations, displaying positive behaviors our youth practice (using data from the HKCS 2008). Positive messages on the signs included information such as:

- 93% SWOS of students feel that teachers at their school treat them with respect.
- 87% of Mancos Middle School students have never smoked a whole

cigarette.

- 94% of Montezuma county students have never tried methamphetamines.
- 93% of Montezuma-Cortez High School students think it's wrong to steal (palm pilot, back pack, wallet)

Overall Teen Maze was a great success. And most youth passing thru consider themselves *normal*.

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*We Are Invested In Our Youth*



*We listen to our community!*



# EAT BETTER AND MOVE MORE

Southwest Health System, Inc., has received a grant in the amount of \$40,000 to establish LiveWell Montezuma, an initiative to encourage residents of Montezuma County to eat better and move more.

The grant awarded by LiveWell Colorado, provides funding to communities in Colorado to help reverse the state's obesity trends and reduce related chronic diseases. Montezuma County is one of five communities to receive planning and mobilization grants this year.

LiveWell Colorado grant recipients will convene stakeholders, conduct community assessments and develop comprehensive action plans for promoting healthy eating and active living through policies, programs and environmental changes in school, worksite, healthcare and other community settings. This grant opportunity will work to promote healthier lifestyles in Montezuma County over the next seven years.

An automated telephone voice survey will be conducted in May 2008 to further assess community needs. Three thousand residents will be asked to participate in this Montezuma County community survey. Survey results will be reported back to the community in August 2008 and will guide policy making decisions and programs over the next seven years.

"Good health is not achieved in clinical settings," said Wendy Weygandt, program coordinator "Instead, it happens in the places we live, work, learn and play — our communities. The LiveWell Colorado grant will enable Montezuma County to develop a sustainable plan for supporting healthy lifestyle choices in these environments."

*For more information contact Wendy Weygandt, Program Coordinator (970) 564-215 [wweygandt@swhealth.org](mailto:wweygandt@swhealth.org)*

## The Pros and Cons of FDA Tobacco Regulation

by Julia Hesse

Regulation of tobacco products moved forward this year, as the U. S. House Energy and Commerce Committee approved legislation granting the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to regulate tobacco products. This is identical to a bill passed by the Senate last August.

Since 1996, when the FDA first established a rule which, among other things, restricted tobacco marketing and sales to youth, tobacco control advocates have been working towards this goal. The new legislation would require that this rule, with some changes, be republished within one month and take effect within one year of enactment of the legislation.

This proposed legislation, with strong partisan support, would:

- Restrict tobacco advertising and promotions, especially to children.
- Ban candy-flavored cigarettes.
- Require tobacco companies to disclose: the contents of tobacco products, changes to their products, and research about the health effects of their products.
- Require changes in tobacco products, such as the removal or reduction of harmful ingredients.
- Prohibit health claims about so-called "reduced risk" products that are

not scientifically proven or that would discourage current tobacco users from quitting or encourage new users to start.

- Require larger, more effective health warnings on tobacco products. Prohibit misleading terms such as "low-tar," "light" and "mild."

This law does not deter free sampling of tobacco products at events such as rodeos, music festivals, races, and other community events.

User fees paid by the tobacco companies will fund the FDA's newest duty and will create a new, separate center for tobacco product regulation within the FDA.

While this legislation is supported by more than 630 public health, faith and other organizations across the country, including every major national public health organization (see list at [www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/fda/organizations.pdf](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/fda/organizations.pdf)), it does have its legitimate (non-tobacco industry) opponents. Agreement on the need for regulation is virtually unanimous and opponents rightly question how the FDA could regulate a product that is inherently unsafe in any quantity and are concerned that regulation will give legitimacy to tobacco use and the tobacco industry. FDA regulation may also falsely reassure users that their product is safe. It could also provide legal

cover for the industry by claiming in court that smokers knew of and assumed all the risks of consuming FDA regulated products. A suggested alternative track is regulation by a separate authority funded by industry profits or taxes.

The fact that Philip Morris, maker of Marlboro and other tobacco products, supports this legislation is alarming. They have proven to be masters at manipulation and positioning themselves as socially responsible while framing tobacco use as an individual choice by informed adults. This regulation could play right into their hands.

This interesting conflict highlights the unique place tobacco has in our world. It is the only commercial product that, when used as directed, kills. It is the most addictive substance known to humans. Because of this, it is also tremendously profitable. The fact that this product, which kills more than 440,000 people per year, remains unregulated will finally change. FDA regulation may not be the perfect solution but it should be a vast improvement and our health will be better off because of it.



*Montezuma and Dolores Counties*

# Ways to Say “I Love You”

- ☺ Spend a little time each day playing entirely at your child's direction.
- ☺ Find something about your child's appearance to compliment.
- ☺ Find something about your child's music to compliment.
- ☺ Do one of your child's chores for him.
- ☺ Send an encouraging note with your child's lunch.
- ☺ Cook something together.
- ☺ Talk in the car on the way to school instead of listening to the radio.
- ☺ Take a long walk together, at your child's pace.
- ☺ Read the funny pages together.
- ☺ Do a jigsaw puzzle together.
- ☺ Find a board game you both enjoy and schedule regular tournaments.
- ☺ Develop a secret gesture only the two of you know the meaning of.
- ☺ Take your child out to lunch every now and then, just the two of you.
- ☺ Say it. Just say it, say it, say it, say it, say it.

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# Pinon Project Plans for the Summer

by Vangi Mc Coy, Incredible Years Coordinator

School's almost out. Now what? You must continue to work when school is no longer in session and worry about what your tweens and teens will be doing in your absence. Involve your children in the decision-making process and you will increase the likelihood of compliance and buy in from your child. Be honest and upfront about limits and boundaries, and be prepared to listen to what they have to say. Brainstorm and negotiate activities that are acceptable to both of



you. Include details of the responsibilities and also the consequences if the guidelines are violated. A written schedule/contract of expectations and consequences will leave no room for argument, and remind you both of what was agreed upon. Revisit the contract on a regular basis so both of you can weigh in on how well things are going and you can adjust it to fit changing needs. Including your children in this process gives them practice in decision making, which is a skill they will be using for the rest of their lives! For more information contact: Vangi McCoy 970-564-1195 ext. 45 [vmccoy@iik.org](mailto:vmccoy@iik.org)

## SUMMER 2008

### Create a Plan Understand & Be Involved

**Work together** Include your teen when making decisions.  
*Guide with a question HOW - WHEN - WHERE?*

**Connect with the community** Recruit the help of friends, teachers, and neighbors.  
**HAVE YOU SHARED YOUR PLAN?**

**Have an alternate plan** Make sure your teen knows, if things don't go as planned, they can ask for help.  
**CAN THEY COUNT ON YOU?**

*Always Ask 3*

## On-Going Events

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>
Violence Prevention Coalition	11-12pm	First Wednesday of the month	Johnson Building
Character Council	12:10-1:30pm	First Thursday of the month	Sheriff's Office
<b>Speak Up!</b>	5:30-7pm	Every Thursday thru May	Cortez Rec. Center
MAC	10:30		
SCYC	11:15	Third Monday of the Month	Cortez Welcome Center
ECC/Target Tobacco Coalition	12:00		
<b>HORIZONS on the air</b>	8:30am	Third Wednesday of the Month	KSJD
Responsible Fatherhood Program	6-8pm	Every Wednesday Dinner & Child care provided	Pinion Project 300 N. Elm, Cortez

For more information contact: [Horizons@scycinc.org](mailto:Horizons@scycinc.org)

## On the HORIZONS

Hard to believe that summer is upon us and in only a few days school will be out until August. We hope you have had a very successful school year and are ending on a positive note.

Here on the Horizons we wish you and your family a safe, fun, and wonderful summer. Keep your kids active and Create A Plan with them. Be on the watch out for our Family 4'em and our activities throughout the summer.

As always we invite you to become involved and bring more Health and Hope to Montezuma county.

Take care, be safe, and have fun.

Krystyn Dennis  
Horizons Coordinator  
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## CHARACTER CHOICES

May – Be a person of good character by gaining **WISDOM** (see and respond to life's circumstances from a perspective that transcends current circumstances) instead of being foolish.

June – Be a person of good character through **ALERTNESS** (be aware of what is taking place around and have the right responses) instead of being careless.

*Provided by the Character Council*

**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](mailto:Horizons@scycinc.org)

*Now printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper*

## HORIZONS

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