

## Report on PEN, Sept 2012

PEN (the Parent Engagement Network) began its 2012-13 programming at its Kick Off meeting for this school year this past Tuesday at the Ed Center at BVSD. The most impressive part was the presentations given by high school students themselves, who will bring programs into the schools utilizing fellow student speakers. All of the presentations address areas of risk exhibited by our youth in our school district. (See below). Betsy Fox, Executive Director, and BVSD School Superintendent, Bruce Messinger, gave some opening remarks. Then the meeting began with updates on Community Shares and Thrive's latest results to the Youth at Risk Survey given to all Middle School and High School students in BVSD. The results varied somewhat from last year's, and many will find them quite helpful, re-assuring and /or disturbing. You can view them by going to the website:

<http://www.bouldercounty.org/family/youth/pages/yrbsresultlinks.aspx>

A truly important suicide prevention program to be introduced and continued in the schools by students is sponsored by Colie's Closet, a non-profit created by a teen who lost a young cousin to suicide in Boulder. Coupled with the teen suicide prevention program, Second Wind of Boulder County, these teens will talk about the frequency and common surfacing of depression and hopelessness in the teen population and how important it is to seek help. Hotline and counseling information, as well as warning signs for friends to recognize, will be discussed.

Another program is the Anti-Defamation's "No Place for Hate" program, which has been jump started by a graduate of Manhattan, Clara Frostman, who is now a 9th grade high school student. She is bringing this presentation into middle schools, and Manhattan is the first school to introduce this as a full semester class this year! An amazing video she produced was also shown, emphasizing how painful and destructive bullying can be.

Boulder Youth Body Image is a support and educational group that also provides a newsletter for youth suffering from low-self-image and eating disorders. The number 1 reason for bullying is body image, and although 100% curable, anorexia kills many young people, and can start as early as age 9!

Natural Highs is an amazing program created by Addiction Counselor Avani Dilger, and has reached over 2,000 BVSD kids in 8 years! Run by trained and committed high school students to help other high school students, it encompasses education and support around drug use and abuse by youth. It has rehabilitated and given back motivation for being sober and living life for

hundreds of kids, and the team that spoke at this meeting was truly inspiring and heart wrenching. Look for a PEN presentation from this incredible group this season!

Mark your calendars for the PEN presentation "The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain" to be featured at Manhattan MS.! Mark Twarogowski will be bringing it to Manhattan on November 8th, 6:30-8:30. It sold out last year and is not to be missed! See below for further September and October PEN school presentations!

Cheers!

Trina Faatz, PEN representative for Manhattan Middle School

SEPTEMBER 27: High Performance Parenting for 6th Grade Parents: Louisville Middle School. 6:00-8:00 pm.

OCTOBER 15: Miss Representation- documentary. Monarch High School. 6:30-8:00 pm.

OCTOBER 25: Raising Resilient Girls, by Simone Marean. Monarch High School. 6:30-8:30.