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Estes Kids Doing “Pretty Good” – Could Benefit From More Services, Community Center

Larimer County, CO—Kids in Estes are doing “pretty good,” according to more than 20 people who work with children and youth, as well as some youth themselves.

The Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County (HCC) conducted interviews and collected information about the needs of Estes’ children and youth. The information collection is part of a larger effort to compile data and understand how all the kids throughout Larimer County are doing in a variety of categories.

Doug Frisbie, Estes Park member of the HCC board of directors who conducted many of the interviews, says, “the organizations participating in the interviews represent the most knowledgeable and experienced professionals who work with kids, year in and year out. The information from the interviews give our community a sound basis for filling the gaps between needs and services.”

HCC asked people what they think Estes’ strongest assets are for kids and most pointed to the community itself: “Estes is a caring community” and “people [in Estes] care about kids.” Other assets include the schools, child- and youth-serving organizations and the close proximity to Rocky Mountain National Park. Youth mentioned alternative education and volunteer opportunities.

On the flip side, HCC asked what they think the most critical issues are for children and youth. Family finances and the lack of affordable, quality, licensed child care topped the list. Other critical issues include permissive parental attitudes toward and involvement in problem behaviors, alcohol and substance abuse, lack of mental health services and a lack of safe places for kids to be when not in school.

One of the most consistent messages heard during the interview process is that the Estes community as a whole could benefit from a community center where all the child, youth and family service providers could be housed, along with space for recreation, such as year-round sports and dancing; learning, studying and tutoring; arts and crafts; music lessons and performance; cooking classes; vocational and continuing education; and a place for kids to hang out – like a teen lounge. People did acknowledge the Youth Center, but said it doesn’t provide an environment conducive for studying. Older youth said it’s not a place kids want to hang out after about 7th grade.

For more information about the Estes interview process or the larger HCC child and youth data compilation project, call the HCC office at (970) 495-7503 or email krs4@pvhs.org.

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The Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County (HCC) is a coalition of nonprofit, government, business and citizen leaders focused on improving the health and well-being of our children and youth. HCC does this by serving as a relationship broker, networker, communicator, convener, facilitator, researcher and capacity builder for the family and youth service providers throughout Larimer County. HCC was established in 1994 and is located in Fort Collins, Colorado.

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