



# Healthy Perspectives

Working Together to Strengthen Our Collective Health and Well-being

Spring 2004

## America's Promise Gains Ground Locally Under HCC's Care

Wouldn't it be great if all kids had an equal chance to fulfill their potential? We live in an America where if you come from middle class, it's likely you'll end up middle class in adulthood. If your parents go to college, you will probably give it a try, too. Yet statistics often support the opposite presumptions as well – youth who are raised in poverty often have a hard time breaking out. If children's parents don't attend college, there's only a small chance they'll go themselves.

America's Promise (AP), a national alliance founded in 1997 by U.S. General Colin Powell, is working to change those trends by supporting youth from all walks of life. AP's goal is simply to provide America's youth with five building blocks, called "Promises." By establishing collaborations between various groups in individual communities, AP creates a network of people committed to strengthening youth by delivering the five promises to them. The Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County (HCC) is the lead agency for the local America's Promise effort – called Larimer's Promise. "The Five Promises align perfectly with HCC's strategies to enhance the lives of area youth," said Andrea O'Connell, HCC assistant project coordinator.

### The Five Promises

1. Caring Adults
2. Safe Places
3. A Healthy Start
4. Marketable Skills
5. Opportunities to Serve

In 2001, Poudre Valley Health System (PVHS) was chosen as one of 15 hospitals nationwide to receive funding to develop a Five Promises Checklist in our community.

"We created a list of local groups and agencies who committed to step up to the plate and provide specific services to local youth," said Ruth Lytle-Barnaby, executive director, PVHS Foundation and Community Development.



The City of Fort Collins and Larimer County became Communities of Promise in June 2002. "America's Promise is very consistent with Fort Collins' Character City initiative, which strives to build character among adults. America's Promise has a similar focus with youth," said Fort Collins Mayor Ray Martinez. He states that 44% of Fort Collins' population is under 24 years of age. "Creating a better quality of life for our young adults is part of building our infrastructure for the future," Martinez said.

Currently, the Larimer's Promise effort is exploding with momentum. One of the local goals is to establish three Sites of Promise in Larimer County by the end of 2004. This goal has almost been reached. Larimer's Promise has officially designated one Site of Promise – the Boys & Girls Clubs of Larimer County – and soon will announce the designation of three more Sites of Promise (see related article on page 3). Sites of Promise must provide at least three of the Five Promises to their member youth and commit to provide the other two Promises within a reasonable timeframe. If the sites cannot provide all Five Promises alone, they must partner with other agencies that can. "Research has shown that when kids receive all

Five Promises, they are more likely to succeed," said O'Connell.

Another goal that has been reached is launching a Web site specific to Larimer's Promise activities. The site, [www.larimerspromise.org](http://www.larimerspromise.org), was launched in March 2004 (see related article on page 3).

Barbara Bradley, vice president of community development with the national America's Promise office, visited Fort Collins in March 2004. She believes Larimer's Promise is doing an exemplary job in delivering the five promises to enhance the lives of youth. "The Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County is doing a magnificent job of integrating the Five Promises into the work being done with and for the area's youth," said Bradley. "As the youth arm of HCC's work, Larimer's Promise is a model for other Communities of Promise across the nation. America's Promise congratulates Larimer's Promise!"

Besides establishing Communities of Promise and Sites of Promise, AP strives to create Partners in Action – partnerships with key community players, such as hospitals, schools, faith-based organizations and businesses to carry out select promises. While Poudre School District (PSD) has not officially become a partner, Jim Campaign, PSD safe and drug free schools/communities coordinator, believes the district indirectly carries out AP's mission. "Individual schools have taken on components of America's Promise through after-school programs, service learning projects and special programs," said Campaign.

To learn more about America's Promise and how to get involved, call HCC at 495.7503 or visit [www.larimerspromise.org](http://www.larimerspromise.org).

# HCC Welcomes its New Coordinator



**Kim Sharpe, HCC coordinator**

Kim Sharpe is the Healthier Communities Coalition's new coordinator. For the past 18 years, Kim has had a very successful career in public relations and marketing. During much of that time, she was employed by the Education Commission of the States, a national, nonprofit organization that helps governors, legislators, state education officials and others identify, develop and implement public policies to improve student learning at all levels. She also owned KBC Communications, a public relations business, and represented a variety of clients, both local and national.

Additionally, Kim served in volunteer capacities with the Larimer County Unit of the American Cancer Society and Poudre School District.

When asked about her new role, Kim said, "HCC fills such a unique niche in the community, one I'm anxious to enhance. I also am very excited to be working at the local level where I feel real change occurs to effect people's lives."

Kim lives in Fort Collins with her husband, Clay, a Poudre Valley Health System paramedic, and their five children – Ashley (17 years old), Kyle (14), Blake (12), Sawyer (12) and Chad (9). In her spare time (right!), she enjoys weight lifting, running, golfing, hiking, backpacking, rock climbing and reading. Kim can be reached at 495.7503.

## A Real Life Look at the Five Promises

Here are a few examples of how the Five Promises are being carried out in our community:

### Promise One: Caring Adults

Communities need to help foster sustained relationships between youth and adults beyond the family, such as mentors and coaches. This happens every day at local agencies, like Partners Mentoring Youth whose whole mission is to match kids up with an adult who acts as a role model in their lives.

### Promise Two: Safe Places

This promise says kids need a safe place that offers structured activities during out-of-school time. The Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County, Fort Collins Youth Activities Center and B.A.S.E. Camp do just this.

### Promise Three: A Healthy Start

A healthy start includes making sure caregivers and young people have access to the services and

opportunities they need to be healthy. Healthy Kids Club, which delivers health awareness to elementary school kids, is a good fit. So is the Parent Education Network, and the Wee Steps and Bright Beginning programs, which all support families.

### Promise Four: Marketable Skills

This promise is broad-based, from teaching basic skills, such as reading and math, to providing job-specific skills. Locally, the Fort Collins Library's Read Aloud program and job-shadowing opportunities through the local high school PACE programs deliver on this promise.

### Promise Five: Opportunities to Serve

Giving kids an opportunity to give back to their community enhances their self-esteem, boosts their confidence and builds civic awareness. FirstCall 211's Student Community Involvement Team provides volunteer opportunities for area youth.

## Healthier Communities Coalition

### Board of Directors

Mary Robertson, Chairman  
First Call/211

Lynn Langton, Vice Chairman  
Thompson School District

Art Bavoso, Secretary/Treasurer  
Health District of Northern Larimer County

### Board Members

Darin Atteberry, City of Fort Collins

Dennis Breitbart, Loveland

Jim Campaign, Poudre School District

Paul Couget, Wingshadow, Inc. Eagle Homes

Jep Enck, Fort Collins

Gay Israel, Colorado State University

Ruth Lytle-Barnaby, PVHS

Brownie McGraw, Larimer County District Attorney's Office

Kathi Wright, Boy and Girls Club of Larimer County

Judy Moore, McKee Medical Center

### Staff

Kim Sharpe, coordinator

Andrea O'Connell, assistant project coordinator

### Our Mission

The Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County is an alliance of non-profit, business, government, and citizen leaders focused on improving the health and well-being of county residents, with an emphasis on youth.

### Contact Us

1029 Luke Street

Fort Collins, CO 80524

Phone: 970.495.7503

Fax: 970.495.7617

Email: krs4@pvhs.org

Website: TBA

*Healthy Perspectives* is the official newsletter of the Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County.

Newsletter created by Lynn Utzman-Nichols, HealthWrite Communications.



## Healthier Communities Coalition Support Form

I would like to support the coalition's efforts in bringing the community together to improve our youth's health and well-being.

Enclosed is my gift of:

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ |

**Healthier Communities Coalition**  
1029 Luke Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Please make your check payable to the Healthier Communities Coalition.

Thanks! For more information, call 495.7503.

# Programs that Make a Difference | in your community

## Boys & Girls Club Community's First Site of Promise – More Sites Coming Soon

The Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County (BGC) delivers the Five Promises of America's Promise to every child who walks through its doors. Because BGC delivers these promises, it was designated as the county's first Site of Promise on March 30, 2004. Becoming a Site of Promise doesn't mean extra work in creating new programs. It does require a commitment to tracking youth the agency already serves and collaborating more closely with other agencies to deliver all five promises if the Site of Promise can't do this alone.



Boys & Girls Club member Kyle Sherry (center) accepts a certificate on behalf of the Club from America's Promise Barbara Bradley (right) as she and HCC's Kim Sharpe officially designate Larimer County's BGC as a Site of Promise.

"We're thrilled to be recognized for providing all five promises to our members," said Kathi Wright, BGC executive director. "We believe wholeheartedly that providing these services to children will make a difference in their lives and in our world. And America's Promise gives us a way to evaluate our work so we can see our impact over time."

The BGC is just one of many outstanding agencies in our community that serve youth. Now, all that's needed is for all those agencies to come together to make sure no gaps exist in service. "When agencies collaborate, youth get all the pieces they need to become healthy, contributing community members," said Andrea O'Connell, Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County (HCC) assistant project coordinator. HCC coordinates the America's Promise initiative in Larimer County.

Partners Mentoring Youth will be the next agency designated as a Site of Promise on April 21, 2004. "As agencies, we all meet different needs, but America's Promise provides a way for us to

collaborate and share information. America's Promise forms an umbrella over local youth efforts, building unity and making us more effective," said Tracy Cornutt, Partners of Larimer County executive director.

Working together under common goals helps to ensure no child slips through the cracks. "It's not a surprise to learn that when children have adults in their lives who care about them, they do better," said Ruth Lytle-Barnaby, Poudre Valley Hospital Foundation executive director. "My hope for America's Promise in our community is that it will help us decrease our need for rehabilitation efforts because our youth will be so well cared for from the beginning."

For their commitment, Sites of Promise receive local and national recognition, potential funding, Web site links and resource information. "Sites can use their tracking information to gain credibility with potential funders," said O'Connell.

For more information on becoming a Site of Promise, contact HCC at 495.7503 or visit [www.larimerspromise.org](http://www.larimerspromise.org).

### Local America's Promise Web Site Highlights County's Commitment to Kids

Get on board Larimer County's "Promise Station" and learn how this community is improving the lives of kids. The Promise Station, a new Web site ([www.larimerspromise.org](http://www.larimerspromise.org)) launched in March 2004, features information about how Fort Collins delivers the five promises of America's Promise (AP) to its local youth.

"The Promise Station is our community's online gathering place – a one-stop shop for information, ideas and resources about how we can help our kids make healthy, successful transitions into adulthood," said Kim Sharpe, coordinator of the Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County (HCC). HCC coordinates the local AP effort.

The Web site features local AP activities, supporting partners and a wish list of needs from HCC and Sites of Promise. Take an inspiring ride today!

## America's Promise Seeks Local Corporate Sponsorship

For America's Promise (AP) to be successful, people must be involved at every level. Schools, hospitals, cities, human service agencies and faith-based organizations can't do it alone when it comes to strengthening our youth. Kids also need support from the private sector. Companies have much to offer and can play a vital role in introducing youth to the work world.

The local AP effort – Larimer's Promise – is coordinated by the Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County (HCC) and is gearing up to secure some local corporate sponsors. "Financial contributions are important, but getting more people involved in mentoring or coaching youth is equally important," said Andrea O'Connell, HCC assistant project coordinator.

O'Connell envisions companies allowing employees to spend a few hours a month working with local youth. Options include providing job-shadowing opportunities and career mentoring, and donating time with local youth programs. However, companies might opt to offer money or in-kind donations, such as products or services like printing and copying.

Ford Motor Company is a shining example of a company that embraced America's Promise. Ford invested \$5 million to implement Promise Stations – localized Web sites – in several communities. Promise Stations give communities venues for information about their youth programs, and help them to unify their approach and comprehensively help kids. Larimer County is directly benefiting from

this grant – the local Promise Station, [www.larimerspromise.org](http://www.larimerspromise.org), was launched in March 2004 (see related article on page 3).

Sears, Roebuck and Company is another national corporate sponsor. In 2001 and 2002, Sears awarded grants to help strengthen the following Communities of Promise: Dallas, Milwaukee, Orlando and Phoenix (Sunnyslope). O'Connell believes that if everyone joins together, "we can make this a community where youth are supported in becoming their best." For more information about becoming a corporate sponsor of Larimer's Promise, contact HCC at 495.7503 or visit [www.larimerspromise.org](http://www.larimerspromise.org).

### A Brief History of America's Promise at the National Level

U.S. General Colin Powell founded America's Promise in April 1977 after the Presidents' Summit for America's Future. Presidents Clinton, Bush, Carter, Ford and Nancy Reagan representing her husband, challenged the nation to make youth a national priority. Their call to action included a commitment on the part of the nation to fulfill the Five Promises. Also attending were nearly 30 governors, 100 mayors, 145 community delegations, dozens of prominent business leaders and several thousand concerned citizens. The Summit was co-sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, the Corporation for National Service and the United Way of America.

America's Promise has created a diverse and growing alliance of more than 400

*"America's Promise is pulling together the might of this nation to strengthen the character and competence of youth. And it's working."*

*--Founding Chairman,  
General Colin L. Powell*

national organizations and more than 400 local efforts involving community and state partners across the nation to fulfill the Five Promises. These

communities have formed grassroots coalitions among the public, private and nonprofit sectors to generate more resources for young people who need them.

In essence, America's Promise is attempting to unite citizens of all nationalities, religious faiths and political parties in a common goal – meeting the needs of our children and youth.

To learn more about America's Promise, visit the national Web site at [www.americaspromise.org](http://www.americaspromise.org).

[Excerpted from the national Web site.]

## Loveland “Heroes” Honored by Youth

Did you have an adult hero in your life? Someone who taught you a lot, inspired you or challenged you to be all you can be? If so, you're like many Loveland youth who nominated their adult heroes to receive special recognition.



Youth and their mentors and families enjoy the 2003 Heroes event.

More than 100 adults will be honored at the

3rd annual Heroes Among Us event, a special dinner and recognition ceremony to be held Wednesday, April 28, from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the First National Bank Exhibition Hall at The Ranch. The adult role models, as well as the youth who nominated them, will be served “hero” sandwiches by many local celebrities, including Loveland Mayor Larry Walsh, Loveland City Council Member Don Marostica and Loveland Fire Chief Mark Miller. Tom Wagoner, Loveland’s police chief, will give the keynote address.

“This night goes to show you that heroes aren’t overpaid athletes or bizarre acting entertainers,” Wagoner said. “Heroes are those people right here in Loveland who help bring positive change in the lives of the rest of us.”

“This heart-warming event recognizes the devotion of the adults in our community who work to make a positive difference in the life of a child,” said Kim Sharpe, Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County (HCC) coordinator. “We also hope the event will motivate many more adults to share a small part of themselves with a kid who needs them.”

Heroes Among Us is sponsored by HCC. Other event sponsors include the Larimer County 4-H program, FirstCall 211, Macdonald Financial Services, Partners Mentoring Youth, Subway®, Thompson School District, United Way of Larimer County, Wells Fargo Bank and Yancey’s Food Service.

For more information about becoming a youth mentor, contact Partners Mentoring Youth at 613.2187 or HCC at 495.7503.

### How Partners Mentoring Youth Helped One Man Change One Boy’s Life

Tyler, a 17-year-old former Fort Collins resident, had not seen his father for years. However, thanks to Partners Mentoring Youth of Larimer County, he has a father figure in his life – John.

John is a young, single professional who was 12 years old when he lost his own father. Because of this, he was inspired to make a difference in someone else’s life. John went through the Partners’ training program to become a senior partner, qualifying him to be teamed with a child who could benefit from regular interaction with a stable, caring adult. Tyler’s mom wanted “Ty” to have a healthy male influence – since his father was anything but that – so she signed him up for the Partners program.

John and Ty hit it off immediately and enjoyed weekly outings together. The program only requires a one-year commitment, but the two still keep in steady contact – five years later. Even when Ty’s family moved to Louisiana three years ago, their partners’ connection didn’t end. John often flies out to visit Tyler and also has paid for Tyler to come back to Fort Collins to visit him.

Shortly after this past Christmas, John received a disturbing e-mail message from Tyler’s mom. Ty’s father, who had been in

and out of jail for years, located them and said he wanted to come back into their lives. He said he wanted to be Ty and his sister’s father again. The teens had mixed feelings of excitement and anxiety – finally their dad, despite his questionable ways, was coming home.

However, Ty and his sister’s feelings were shattered one morning two weeks later when they awoke to find their dad gone, along with most of their mom’s money from her bank account. The family was left with no money for Christmas. Fortunately, John had made each of them a personalized, Japanese Kanji art piece, which arrived right before Christmas. Ironically, the Kanjis spoke to their situation perfectly: Ty’s was inscribed with the words “Self-Confidence.” His sister’s said “Fighting Spirit” and Ty’s mom’s read “Family, Strength and Love.” Ty’s mom said the Kanjis meant more to them than anything else last Christmas. John got a special gift from Tyler as well: Ty said that no matter where his dad is or what he is doing, he could never steal the special bond that Ty and John have formed.

Because of John, Tyler knows what it is like to be a healthy man in today’s world – one who walks with honor and self-confidence. That’s the amazing difference one caring adult can make.

# Community Tidbits .....

## Upcoming Events Promoting Youth in Our Community

### **April 21, 4-6 pm – Parent Education Network (PEN) Planning Meeting**

PEN will review existing parent education programs in the county, discuss service gaps and strategize for improvement. Held at Foothills Gateway in the Main Conference Room.

### **April 28, 5:30-8 pm – Heroes Among Us Dinner**

Over 100 adult role models, nominated by local youth, will be honored at this 3rd annual event. Held at The Ranch, First National Bank Exhibition Hall.

### **May 21– Fort Collins Youth Fest**

Activities for junior and senior high school youth, such as Bungee trampoline, inflatable

slide, rock climbing, games, contests, art, demonstrations, a battle of the bands (4-8 pm) and “splashdance” (8-10 pm). \$5.

Adult volunteers needed. Held at the Youth Activity Center, 415 Monroe; 416.1714.

### **June 4 - Loveland Youth Fair**

Held at the Winona Pool (South of 1st Street on Boise Avenue). Call 495.7503 for more information.

### **June 9 - Shared Alliance for Youth Meeting**

Held at the Loveland Museum-Gallery, 503 N. Lincoln Avenue. Call 613.7367 for more information.

## Watch for HCC's New Logo, Web Site!

Along with HCC's new coordinator and a renewed commitment to taking action in our community comes an updated look and feel for HCC. Watch for a new logo, Web site and approach to community change. The HCC Web site, [www.healthylarimer.org](http://www.healthylarimer.org), will feature HCC activities, as well as other youth-related happenings in our community and useful information. HCC's Web site should be live by the end of May 2004.

## Do You Work With Youth? Come to Caring & Sharing!

*Caring & Sharing* is a forum designed to bring youth-serving providers together for interaction and information sharing. Call the HCC office at 495.7503 for more information (or to sign up to give a presentation about your agency/program) and for meeting times and locations.

### Upcoming Meetings:

**April 9** Featured speaker: Deirdre Sullivan, Health Educator with the Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership.

**May 14** Featured speaker: Tony Tucker, Sanctuary of the Family.

**June 11**

**July 9**

Meetings generally are held the second Friday of each month from 8:15 to 9:45 am.



Healthier Communities Coalition

1029 Luke Street

Fort Collins, CO 80524