



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Buddy Program and Aspen Youth Experience Join Forces to Serve a Greater Number of At-Risk Youth in the Roaring Fork Valley

Aspen, CO... The Buddy Program and Aspen Youth Experience (AYE) proudly announce an alliance in which AYE's Roaring Fork Valley youth programs will be operated and managed by the Buddy Program as of January 1, 2010. This program unification will continue vital services to our valley's most vulnerable populations when those services are needed most.

By integrating AYE's unique programs into its mission, the Buddy Program will be able to provide specialized in-depth programming to Little Buddies when needed and add Group Mentoring programs for its waitlisted children, while continuing existing services for AYE's Roaring Fork Valley youth and alumni. With its programs and services successfully conducted by the Buddy Program, Aspen Youth Experience will cease its own independent operations.

"This integration of services provides an ideal bridge to the shared desire of both organizations' Boards to economically and effectively provide programs that will meet the increasingly complex social and cultural needs of youth in our community," reports Buddy Program Executive Director Catherine Anne Provine.

"In the past year, AYE has redoubled its efforts to offer the most effective programming possible for our at-risk youth while making our donor dollars go the farthest. AYE is very excited for this opportunity with the Buddy Program to increase the programming for at-risk youth in our community." states Adam Frisch, AYE Board President.

"By including the AYE local programs under our operating umbrella, we can reach out to even more of our community's children who are in need," stated Dave Bellack, President of the Buddy Program's Board of Directors. "The Buddy Program's Board of Directors is committed to this initiative and optimistic about the impact it will have on the Roaring Fork Valley."

David Wiedinmyer, Executive Director of Aspen Youth Experience, affirms that "This move cuts duplicate overhead and enables donor dollars for these essential programs to go farther. At the Buddy Program, AYE's programming will continue serving our valley alumni, grow to reach more youth, and become an even stronger positive force in our community."



AYE's Roaring Fork Valley participants attest that the programs are essential. "This is an excellent program and I would like to keep going on this. I can't keep on living the way I have been living for so long. Many of us have experience so many things that we are too young to be experiencing. Thank you for these programs," said a recent participant.

"From a donor's perspective, this collaboration makes perfect sense," says Lawrence Altman, a donor to both AYE and the Buddy Program. "Donor dollars need to stretch further in these economic times and organizations that improve operational efficiencies will have a greater chance of success in the long run. I applaud the Buddy Program and Aspen Youth Experience for prioritizing the needs of our youth in the face of difficult economic times."

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Background

AYE's programs are designed to empower at-risk teens and young adults to overcome their obstacles and achieve their potential by providing transforming experiences and continuous follow-up support. AYE's unique programming combines intensive outdoor experiences, a year-round curriculum of life-skills development, and ongoing engagement, creating young leaders that ultimately affect positive change for themselves, their families, their schools, and their communities.

Since 1973, The Buddy Program of Aspen/Basalt has been pairing an adult volunteer, or "Big Buddy", with a youth, or "Little Buddy", in mentoring relationships called Buddy Pairs. Based in large part upon the Big Brother/Big Sister model, the mission of The Buddy Program is to "strengthen our community by guiding and inspiring youth through mentoring." Community Buddy Pairs meet two to three times a month for a period of at least one year, and take part in a variety of activities from hiking to going out to dinner. In the School-based Program, Buddy Pairs meet for an hour each week throughout the academic year, on their school campus. Along with supervision and support from Buddy Program case managers, the goal of Big Buddies is to increase their Little Buddies' self-esteem, confidence, and ability to make healthy, responsible choices.

Benefits of mentoring include:

Improving self-esteem

Keeping young people in school

Helping improve academic skills

Leading young people to resources they might not find on their own

Providing support for new behaviors, attitudes and ambitions

Increasing young people's ability to seek and keep jobs

Enhancing parenting skills

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