



Communities and Schools in Action

A publication of the *Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools Initiative*

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Safe Communities~Safe Schools Initiative Ends

After six successful years, the Safe Communities~Safe Schools (SCSS) Initiative and this publication will end September 30, 2005. Launched in 1999 after the horrific events at Columbine High School, SCSS was created by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence in partnership with The Colorado Trust and numerous other agencies to prevent school-based violence. The Initiative served to help schools in two ways: assist with the development of comprehensive safe school plans for 15 schools/districts involved in the long-term project, and provide short-term training and technical assistance to any school or school district in the state who requested it.

All those involved with the SCSS Initiative accomplished a great deal of work. The original schools successfully implemented the SCSS model, which included conducting school climate surveys and developing crisis response plans. Using survey results, schools then embarked on a multi-year strategic planning process, creating goals and strategies to reduce and prevent violence and aggression. In many cases, those efforts continue today. As one coordinator at a Jefferson County elementary school told us, "If it weren't for Safe Communities~Safe Schools, we would have moved on to other areas of focus and would not be implementing the Bully-Proofing Your School program now."

Additionally, hundreds of schools and school districts have contacted CSPV for information and assistance on the components of the model, including: climate surveys, developing threat assessment teams, and crisis response plans. SCSS presented key public awareness efforts that reached thousands of constituents through publications, conferences and the website.

Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end! While we at CSPV remain hopeful for future funding to resume these efforts, full-time work on this initiative will cease. Resources, such as surveys, SCSS publications, the website, and limited assistance, will remain available to schools at no charge. And the Safe2Tell initiative and hotline remain very active. Please continue to visit them at 877-542-SAFE (hotline) or www.safe2tell.org.

We are extremely thankful to The Colorado Trust for their generous financial support of this initiative, and to all the wonderful school personnel whom we met along the way. We have enjoyed working with you and wish you well in your efforts to make your schools safe places, where teachers can teach and students can learn.

The Growing Concern with Substance Abuse

One only has to listen to the news or read the newspaper headlines to recognize the magnitude of underage drinking and drug abuse.

Peer pressure begins early. One-third of 4th graders and more than half of 6th graders say they have been pressured by friends to drink alcohol according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In 2003, 48% of Colorado students, ages 12 to 18, reported having at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. And, unfortunately, heavy alcohol use by youth leads to other delinquent behaviors.

How can teachers and school officials stem this rising tide of abuse? To address this problem, there's an extraordinary opportunity to implement Project ALERT (Adolescent Learning Experiences in Resistance Training) **FREE** in selected middle schools.

Project ALERT is a substance abuse prevention curriculum that reduces the use of tobacco and other drugs by middle school students. And Project ALERT is listed as an "Exemplary Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free School Program" by the U.S. Department of Education, and fully meets the requirement of No Child Left Behind.

As part of a research study funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation is offering this opportunity to selected middle schools:

- **FREE** Project ALERT training and materials;
- **FREE** ongoing technical support and curriculum updates;
- \$1500 for 3 years of participation;
- Compensation for collecting consent forms.

Half the participating schools will receive immediate implementation of Project ALERT while the other half will be assigned to a delayed implementation group. As a result of delayed implementation, schools in the second group will receive an additional \$1000.

For more information about this opportunity, please contact Heddy Kovach at hkovach@pire.org or call 1.800.941.5164 ext. 643.



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The following organizations have contributed their support, expertise and/or financial assistance to this initiative...

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SCSS INITIATIVE

CSPV, in partnership with The Colorado Trust, developed the Safe Communities~Safe Schools (SCSS) Initiative in response to requests from the Colorado education community. The goal of the Initiative is to help schools and communities create and maintain a positive and welcoming school climate free of drugs, violence, intimidation and fear - an environment which is strongly supported by the community, and where teachers can teach and students can learn. To achieve this goal, CSPV is assisting schools in Colorado in designing individualized safe school plans based on the five components of the Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools Model:

SCSS Planning Team
Site Assessments
Prevention Programming
Social Support Team
Crisis Planning.

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Don't go away just yet

Although we are saddened by the ending of Safe Communities~Safe Schools, CSPV is very pleased to announce that we will now be producing *The Challenge* newsletter for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. A quarterly newsletter focused on drug and violence prevention, *The Challenge* is available for a free subscription by visiting www.thechallenge.org.

If you already subscribe, you know that *The Challenge* provides information on evidence-based programming, practical tips, resources, and funding information. If you haven't yet seen an issue, we welcome you to sign up.

We will offer the same types of reliable information on drug and violence prevention, healthy choices for our young people, interviews with people who are making great strides, and much more. We will also be looking for feedback to use in a Questions/Comments feature, so please subscribe and send us your input.

Our first issue will be mailed later this year, so look for The Challenge in your mailbox!