

Teen Advisory Council (TAC)

The **Teen Advisory Council (TAC)** is an important group in the Vision Coalition of El Dorado Hills that promotes strong youth voice. Up to 20 middle and high school students participate in weekly meetings, plan events and advocate for policy change to benefit youth. Teens join selection committees to review and recommend mini-grant proposals submitted by schools and organizations, which are then funded by the Vision Coalition to increase youth development supports and opportunities, and to prevent and reduce teen health issues such as alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

The **Parent Advisory Council (PAC)** meets monthly to discuss strategies and activities to increase parent involvement and improve family relations. To date, PAC has organized and promoted three parent education workshops called Parent Project[®]. The class provides activity-based instruction, support groups and curriculum addressing destructive adolescent behaviors. Parents meet one night per week, two to three hours per night, for 10 weeks. Parents share experiences and learn valuable skills to manage teen behavior problems. Homework is assigned using *"A Parent's Guide to Changing Destructive Adolescent Behavior."*

The classes range in size from 20 to 40 parents, and couples are encouraged to attend together to maximize the benefits of the class. Upon graduation, parents are encouraged to continue meeting and form their own support groups to reinforce their training.

"It works!" said one graduating couple. "The Parent Project provided step-by-step, useful solutions to virtually every problem and situation we presented. It's empowering!"

Executive Advisory Committee, Board and Staff

Our **Executive Advisory Committee (EAC)** is comprised of a broad spectrum of community leaders and youth service providers. The EAC meets quarterly to provide advice, consultation and assistance to staff and members of the Vision Coalition of El Dorado Hills. The committee is chaired by El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Vicki Barber, who explains, "Coalitions are powerful tools for community change."

Our volunteer **board of directors** meets monthly to support coalition activities, approve an increasing number of grants, and assist in processing a large number of contracts and invoices for our successful mini-grant program. Board members regularly attend coalition meetings, events and activities, such as our annual Youth Awards Ceremony and mini-grant site visits.

Vision Coalition's **staff members** are Executive Director DJ Peterson, Project Coordinator Raeann Jones, Community Liaison Della Clavere and Administrative Assistant Pam Eccles. In addition to monitoring the mini-grant program, they focus on advocating for youth through policy change, which includes partnering with decision makers in 12 sectors of the community. They organize meetings with schools, law enforcement, health, media, business, government, parents, youth, youth service providers and others to promote activities that increase supports and opportunities for youth.



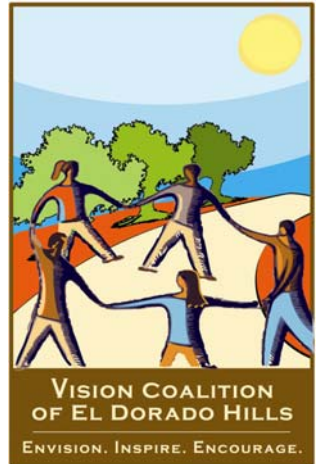
Annual Report 2008–2009

Vision Coalition of El Dorado Hills

A project of El Dorado Hills Community Vision, Inc.

Funded by a Sierra Health Foundation

REACH Community Action Grant



The Vision Coalition was established to mobilize the community of El Dorado Hills to adopt youth-friendly programs and policies, and to help prevent and reduce youth substance abuse and other teen health issues. The coalition receives grants from Sierra Health Foundation through its REACH youth program, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and others to promote the principles of Youth Development, which build supports and opportunities for youth. The coalition has more than **300 members**, including community leaders, agencies, organizations and individuals.

Our Vision and Mission is for all youth in El Dorado Hills to:

- » Have a successful and healthy transition from adolescence to adulthood
- » Be fully prepared with attitude, skills, knowledge and experience
- » Have ample opportunities for participation and decision making
- » Be safe, healthy and free from drugs, alcohol and tobacco

2008-2009 Vision Coalition Accomplishments:

- › Increased opportunities for youth to gain leadership skills and experience
- › Increased opportunities for youth to become involved in the community
- › Increased opportunities for youth to participate in decision making
- › Increased positive relationships among youth and adults in the community
- › Increased opportunities for youth to actively participate in quality youth programs
- › Increased number of places where youth feel physically and emotionally safe
- › Increased partnerships among agencies, organizations and individuals



To learn more or to get involved, call (916) 643-4393
or visit www.edhvisioncoalition.org



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We had another highly successful year with many amazing accomplishments. In this report, we hope to share the highlights of what we have been able to do through our work to mobilize schools, agencies, organizations, community groups and youth to increase supports and opportunities for youth in El Dorado Hills. Through our collaborative efforts, we have provided more high-quality services, youth-friendly policies and engaging programs that have made a positive impact on the lives of thousands of young people.

- DJ Peterson, Executive Director, Vision Coalition of El Dorado Hills

Last year we applied for and received SAMHSA's Stop-Act Grant for \$50,000 to address underage drinking. In collaboration with SAMHSA and Sierra Health Foundation, we were able to expand our programs and services by providing needed funding, publicity, community mobilizing and other assistance from Vision Coalition staff. In 2008-2009, the coalition supported the following programs, services and activities.

The **PARTY (Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth) Program** is a half-day, hospital-based, injury-awareness and prevention program for youth age 16 and younger. The goal of PARTY is to educate and inform youth on the dangers and consequences of poor behavior choices when engaged in all forms of activities. Through education and exposure to hands-on activities, youth learn to avoid potential risk and make alternate choices.

Groups of 50 to 60 students follow the path of an injury survivor from incident, transport and treatment through rehabilitation. They interact with a team of health care professionals and emergency medical staff including paramedics, police officers, nurses, physicians and trauma survivors. Students have a chance to talk with people living with traumatic injuries who provide personal perspectives on the results of poor decisions. Students learn first-hand about the consequences of risky behavior.

Through the **Every 15 Minutes** program, students in El Dorado Hills learn that someone in the United States dies from an alcohol-related traffic collision every 15 minutes. This two-day event is designed to dramatically impress teenagers with the potentially dangerous consequences of drinking alcohol, using a simulated traffic collision, a mock funeral service and other events to get the message across.



Point Break is designed to break down educational and social barriers that exist between students on middle school and high school campuses. Through a seven-hour, high-energy workshop that includes interaction with caring adults and relevant discussion about bullying, painful life experiences and emotional expression, Point Break draws students together by focusing on empathy and respect. Students respond to the day's challenges with self-reflection and acknowledgement of personal responsibility. The end result is students who begin the pursuit of behavioral change.

Point Break continues with six weekly follow-up "Breakthru" sessions that include goal setting, how to make measurable change and how to listen well. These sessions challenge students to examine their own behavior and make changes. Upon completion of the curriculum, participants are "change agents" leading their peers by example.

"It really changed my own perspectives. I wish more people could have been there with me to sense that community. I've gone on and built bridges with people that I hadn't before."

- Oak Ridge High School senior

The **Youth Enhancement Program (YEP)** is funded by the Vision Coalition and is a partnership of the Vision Coalition, the CSD Teen Center, Marina Village Middle School and Foothills Family Counseling that provides school and community-based mental health services to youth in El Dorado Hills.

These mental health services provide a comprehensive school-based mental health program, in addition to the regular school counseling program. Parental or guardian permission is required for YEP participation.

YEP provides mental health assessment, treatment and referrals in addition to drug and alcohol prevention and education. Services include group counseling, individual appointments, art therapy and educational workshops. Art Expressions classes are provided weekly at the CSD Teen Center.

Topics addressed during the classes include peer relationships, self-esteem, stress management, tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Services are delivered by a licensed marriage and family therapist with a background in school counseling.

Youth Development Training and Mental Health Policy Change

Executive Director DJ Peterson provided the top administrators in the El Dorado County Mental Health Department with an orientation and training about the philosophy of an asset-based youth development approach that research shows helps prevent and reduce issues such as alcohol and drug use, depression and poor mental health.

The administrators learned that the approach is cost effective, as without this type of prevention, treatment programs are extremely expensive and come with a costly human toll of suicide attempts by depressed youth.

As a result, the department plans to make training available for all mental health workers and providers on how they can help youth and young adults build assets using the 40 Developmental Assets framework and other positive youth development principles and practices. This training will be a major benefit for youth throughout the county.

Major Reductions in Youth Substance Abuse

Data from the California Healthy Kids Survey consistently shows major reductions in prevalence rates of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among youth in El Dorado Hills! Although we are showing tremendous progress, there is still more work to be done, especially regarding alcohol, the most widely used substance. Between fall 2004 and fall 2008, there was a 43% reduction in tobacco use among 9th graders and a 24% reduction among 11th graders. There was a 12% reduction of 9th graders who used alcohol, and a 24% reduction among 11th graders.

Youth Leadership Training

We worked with Hands for Hope to recruit and send youth leaders to the third annual **REACH Youth Leadership Camp**. The program provided an opportunity for youth to live for a week in a rural camp setting, with more than 100 participants from many communities in the Sacramento region. Workshop sessions and challenging, fun activities, such as a high ropes course, kept youth engaged as they gained leadership skills and planned positive actions to take when they returned to their home communities.



We worked with Solomon's Porch and Mercy Housing to recruit and send teens to the **National Teen Leadership Program** held at California State University, Sacramento. The three-day live-in program provided youth with opportunities to meet more than 100 youth from throughout the nation as they engaged in workshops and challenging activities, such as a low ropes course, in coordination with the California National Guard. Parents were invited to a two-hour workshop on youth development.