

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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Message from Erika

Back to School Challenges

By Erika Fernandez, Community Services Coordinator

A new school year is starting, and many parents are faced with the challenge of schools opening again.



I helped my two children with remote learning and it was a bittersweet experience. My 5th grader had trouble and slowly adjusted to the new learning style; however, my youngest struggled to adjust to online learning. She could not sit still and pay attention for the full online session; she would easily get distracted and lose focus. Her attitude started to change and was showing signs of stress and anxiety. She went from being excited to start school to hating everything about it. I felt like she learned less than what she would have learned being in full-time school.

Due to this experience and to prevent any further emotional and

social consequences I was eager for in-person classes. I even enrolled my kids in summer school, because I believe that the adverse effects of keeping kids out of the classroom are more severe than the risks associated with reopening.

With the rise in COVID cases, like many parents, I am concerned about the return to in-person learning. I am hopeful that our county will continue to create the safest environments for our children, as I want what is best for my kids, physically, mentally, and emotionally, and for the community. If you need parenting tips and resources on how to help families cope, check out our website.

Learn more:

[Coping During Coronavirus](#)

Find resources for families and parenting tips in uncertain times.

Spotlight: Interview with Kathleen Murvin Redleaf Resources

Making an Impact on Youth



In our newsletters we like to feature our Substance Use Services Division staff and contractors as well as community partners that are making a difference in their communities. This way you get to know us better and learn about the work that we do. Today we are talking with Kathleen Murvin, Consultant for Redleaf Resources, a VCBH Prevention Services contractor.

Before retiring from the Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) five years ago, Kathleen collaborated with Redleaf Resources to help bring a Student Assistance Program to the

CVUSD. The goal of the program is to help students get through school safely and successfully.

Describe your work with Redleaf Resources?

Kathleen: Redleaf Resources provides an evidence-based motivational interview structure called Brief Risk Reduction Interview and Intervention Model (BRRIM) that helps a family to feel safe when talking about a variety of risks and protective factors. With this confidential prevention tool, the facilitator, usually a school counselor, helps the student and their parents or guardians identify and utilize family, school and community partnerships to overcome obstacles to personal or academic success. Redleaf Resources knows how to build an infrastructure that fits nearly any organization's mission and staffing. It is available to anyone who asks for it.

How did you get interested in the field of prevention and student assistance programs?

Kathleen: I was fortunate enough to serve as a school counselor in Ventura County where prevention and collaboration were always emphasized. When VCBH offered to fund a grant for the CVUSD to start a centralized Student Assistance Program that would be available to all students and their families, Redleaf Resources shared their evidence-based methods to train counselor facilitators such as me. The CVUSD Board of Education has been 100% supportive of the BreakThrough Student Assistance Program, and thousands of students and families have benefited from strength-based family conferences and the resulting Family Prevention Plans. At Redleaf Resources, we like to say that the process is 100% beneficial for students, families and staff.

What is your passion for working in the community?

Kathleen: As a retired school counselor, I enjoy sharing Redleaf Resource's motivational interview tool with other school counselors and mental health support staff. I continue to attend prevention-oriented trainings and enjoy working with new school counselors who are completing their Pupil Personnel Services credentials. Rebecca Stelmar Cook, Brenda Rachels and Claudia Hughes from CVUSD's BreakThrough Student Assistance Program provided a Wellness website and virtual services to students, parents and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am most grateful that they continue the good work that Redleaf Resources helped to bring to the CVUSD and serves as a pilot program for any other districts or community-based agencies who are interested in implementing a viable Student Assistance Program.

What are the areas that you hope to make changes in?

Kathleen: I would like to ensure that a student's family is included in decisions that impact the student's academic success, social emotional well-being, or career plans. It is a privilege to work in tandem with schools and families to implement evidence-based and strength-oriented programs such as the one Redleaf Resources has developed over the past forty years.

Tell us one thing about you that helps us get to know you better?

Kathleen: My husband and I enjoy spending time with our three grandchildren. I attribute my resiliency to a handful of very special friendships that began 35 years ago when we dropped our children at Kindergarten. We call ourselves the CEOs, an acronym that stands for Celebrate Every Occasion!

Thank you, Kathleen, for sharing your experience with us!

Learn more:

[CVUSD BreakThrough Student Assistance Program](#)

Offering confidential services and supporting academic and personal achievement. One family at a time is how the BreakThrough team supports students and families because every student matters.

[Redleaf Resources](#)

Redleaf Resources, is best known for developing, implementing and providing training and technical assistance for the Brief Risk Reduction Interview and Intervention Model (BRRIM). BRRIM can provide Indicated Prevention Services in a variety of settings, including, but not limited to school districts, county mental health and substance abuse clinics, and community based organizations.

Spotlight: Meth - Don't Buy the Lie Campaign

Providing the Truth About Meth



The “Meth - Don’t Buy the Lie” campaign is targeted to young adults who may be at risk for trying meth. The goal of the campaign is to provide the truth about meth without preaching nor invoking the reflexive opposition which comes easily to people in this age range.

As part of this campaign, attention-catching geo-targeted messages were displayed at selected locations throughout the county. We will continue to share the campaign videos in upcoming editions of this newsletter to help increase awareness and educate the community about this problem.

Learn more:

Meth - Don’t Buy the Lie

www.TalkingAboutMeth.org

HablandoDeMeth.org

Snapshot: Drink Spiking Prevention Campaign

Protect Yourself & Your Friends



This campaign helps bring awareness to the problem of drink spiking at bars. Here are helpful tips we recommend to prevent drink spiking and stay safe when out with friends.



Be Careful About Alcohol

- If you drink, keep it manageable so you can stay aware.
- Drink water or a nonalcoholic drink in between to slow down and stay hydrated.
- Eat before or while drinking. Sip slowly and make your drink last longer.
- Don't mix alcohol & drugs - it increases risks and the potential for unpredictable reactions.

Safety Tips

- Stay at the bar.
- Hold your drink from the top.
- Avoid drinks from open containers.
- Don't leave your drink unattended.
- Get help. Seek help from a trusted friend or staff member.
- If you suspect your drink has been tampered with, please call 9-1-1.

Check out the website for more safety tips in English and Spanish.

www.planaheadvc.org

In the News: Drug Overdose Deaths Soared to

A Record 93,000 Last Year

The Washington Post, July 14, 2021

Deaths from drug overdoses soared to more than 93,000 last year, a staggering record that reflects the coronavirus pandemic's toll on efforts to quell the crisis and the continued spread of the synthetic opioid fentanyl in the illegal narcotic supply.

The death toll jumped by nearly 30 percent, from 2019, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, eclipsing the record set that year.

Opioids, primarily illegal fentanyl, continued to drive the death toll, as they have for years. Overdose deaths involving opioids reached 69,710 in 2020, up from 50,963 in 2019, according to the data. Deaths from methamphetamine and cocaine also rose. Nora Volkow, head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, said in an interview that fentanyl has so thoroughly infiltrated the illegal drug supply that 70 percent of cocaine overdose deaths and 50 percent of methamphetamine overdose deaths also involved fentanyl.

In many cases, she said, users are unaware that their drugs are laced with the powerful painkiller, which can halt breathing even if a minute amount is ingested. In others, users knowingly take multiple drugs. "Most of the deaths are from multiple drugs," she said.

Learn more:

[Drug overdose deaths soared to a record 93,000 last year.](#) The Washington Post, July 14, 2021

[Drug overdose deaths in 2020 hit highest number ever recorded](#), CDC data shows, CNN, July 14, 2021

The infographic is divided into three horizontal sections. The top section has an orange background and contains the text: "Overdoses are increasing. Fentanyl may be in any street drug." The middle section has a white background and is titled "Know the signs of overdose" in blue. It lists two bullet points: "Breathing slowly or not at all" and "Unresponsive". Below these are two orange bullet points: "Call 911 immediately" and "Give naloxone/Narcan®". To the right of the text is a small circular image of a white naloxone kit. The bottom section has a blue background and is titled "Could someone you care about be at risk?" in white. It lists two bullet points: "Always carry naloxone/Narcan®" and "Call for a free confidential rescue kit: 1-805-667-6663". At the bottom left of this section is a logo with the letters "NO" in orange and "OD" in blue. To the right of the logo is the text "Help for Addiction" in white, followed by "Access Line: 1-844-385-9200" and "Toll-free • Confidential • 24/7". At the very bottom right, in small white text, is "©2021 Ventura County Behavioral Health".

**Overdoses are increasing.
Fentanyl may be in any
street drug.**

Know the signs of overdose

- Breathing slowly or not at all
- Unresponsive
- **Call 911 immediately**
- **Give naloxone/Narcan®**

**Could someone you care about
be at risk?**

- Always carry naloxone/Narcan®
- Call for a free confidential rescue kit:
1-805-667-6663

**NO
OD**

Help for Addiction
Access Line: 1-844-385-9200
Toll-free • Confidential • 24/7

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Snapshot: SAMHSA's Substance Use Prevention Campaigns

Talking About Underage Drinking



This resource from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) illustrates the correlation between alcohol use and other substance use to inform parents and communities. It is one of a series of prevention campaigns to help parents have the difficult conversations with their youth.

SAMHSA's new "Talk. They Hear You." campaign mobile app helps parents prepare for some of the most important conversations they may ever have with their kids. It shows them how to turn everyday situations into opportunities to talk with their children about alcohol and other drugs, and equips them with the necessary skills, confidence, and knowledge to start and continue these conversations as their kids get older.

Learn more:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

[Be Prepared to Have the Difficult Conversation](#)
["Talk. They Hear You." Application](#)

Out & About in the Community

Community Outreach News

Our Community Outreach team, Alma and Ignacio Ixta, attended the Day by Day Ministries event at the Oxnard Performing Arts & Convention Center on July 18.

The Ventura County Health Care Agency provided health screenings and shared how to access health care and resources, including VCBH, Logrando Bienestar, Public Health and more. It was great to see everyone in the community again!



Calendar

We will keep you posted on upcoming events in each newsletter.

Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing: Basics and Best Practices

8/26/2021, 9:00am, PT
Public Health Law Center

[Register](#)

Advocating for Advocacy in Prevention

8/31/2021, 3:00pm, PT
PTTC

[Register](#)

A Gestalt View of the Latino Experience with Substance Use Disorders



Helpful Resources

If you are looking for resources in the community, check out our websites. We continually add news, campaigns and more.



Ventura County Limits

This website is a portal to help learn about our efforts to address substance use challenges in our communities.

www.venturacountylimits.org

Ventura County Responds

This website tracks what is being done in Ventura County to address the opioid crisis and provides the latest information for prescribers and community members.

venturacountyresponds.org

Vaping FactCheck

Learn about the risks of vaping and the impact on teens. Keep informed about the latest research and news.

www.vapingfactcheckvc.org

Social Determinants of Health

The Social Determinants of Health website provides resources, news, and features community agencies or “Drivers of Change” who are working to building healthier communities through individual, organizational and community wide effort and engagement.

www.healthequityvc.org

Ventura County Behavioral Health

The Ventura County Behavioral Health Department (VCBH) provides mental health and substance use treatment services. Learn about our services and how to access help.

vcbh.org

Follow us on Social Media

www.facebook.com/VCBbehavioralHealth

www.facebook.com/venturacountylimits

twitter.com/vclimits

Check out our Newsletters

www.venturacountylimits.org/community-connections

www.healthequityvc.org/newsletters

Supporting Health – Preventing Harm

Ventura County Behavioral Health, Substance Use Services - Prevention, works upstream to reduce alcohol and drug-related problems in our community. Initiatives are aimed at limiting harms related to impaired driving; underage and binge drinking; marijuana and vaping, especially as it relates to harms to youth; prescription drug abuse; and addressing health disparities among vulnerable populations.

A primary goal is to delay the onset of first use of alcohol and or other drugs by youth. We collaborate with schools, parent groups, government agencies, medical partners, law enforcement, community-based organizations and more.

Contact Us

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*Photo: Alma Ixta and Erika Fernandez
pre-COVID-19.*

*Photos by Alma Ixta: Day by Day Ministries event at the
Oxnard Performing Arts & Convention Center*



STAY CONNECTED

