

CASE STUDY

“Rollercoaster” in action



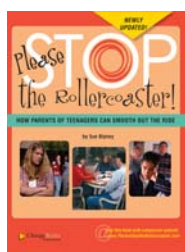
Boulder Colorado’s Parent Engagement Network (PEN) is a community-based, grass-roots group whose mission is:

CREATING A CARING, CONNECTED, SAFE COMMUNITY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALL YOUTH AND ADULTS.

Boulder’s Parent Engagement Network has evolved into a “parent-driven movement” that proactively provides programs that empower parents and help them build connections. Boulder’s PEN is supported by the school administration as well as the Boulder County Healthy Youth Alliance and other community groups. It is parent-run, and collaborative in its approach.

Boulder’s large school district consists of 34 elementary schools, 17 middle schools and 12 high schools. The PEN, being district wide, has found that its success in individual school communities is somewhat dependent on parent leadership at the individual schools. They rely on their PEN representatives at the schools to serve as liaison between the central PEN and individual school.

The PEN does not deliver parenting classes. Paula Nelson, a founder and a member of the district leadership team of Boulder’s Parent Engagement Network, was enthusiastic when she learned that the *Please Stop the Rollercoaster!* program provides the curriculum for parent discussions while imparting practical, research-based information. The book-group format fit nicely with community members’ interests, and they appreciated that the format aligned with PEN’s goal of *connecting* parents and *empowering* them, without telling them how to parent.



Rollercoaster! in Boulder.... The Details

Who runs the *Please Stop the Rollercoaster!* (PSR) groups?

Numerous middle schools and high schools in the district are offering PSR groups. Some of these groups are self-directed or run by parent volunteers, and some of them are led by school counselors.

WHO

How do they organize and promote the groups?

To initially launch the program, the PEN hired Sue Blaney, *Rollercoaster!* program author, to train community leaders and to speak to parents in a kick-off program. For ongoing promotional efforts, the district level PEN provides flyers and promotional materials that each school-based group can use. (Additionally, promotional support tools are available from PSR publisher ChangeWorks.)

HOW

Continued on back

WHEN**When does the program run?**

Boulder offers the program at various times during the school year, with some discussion groups commencing at the start of the school year, and others beginning at later times. The popular program has been offered for several years in a row.

WHO PAYS?**Who pays?**

Boulder purchases the *Please Stop the Rollercoaster!* books, containing the participants' course material, in bulk from ChangeWorks Publishing to take advantage of group discounts, and in turn they charge parents for the books. Boulder also uses some local and some national funding sources, including grants from The Office for Safe and Drug Free Schools and from Drug Free Communities, to fund their parent support programs and workshops. The PEN's parent outreach focus is an important part of Boulder's prevention efforts, and they have been showcased nationally for their innovative approach.

RESULTS**What results has Boulder seen?**

PEN leader Paula Nelson says *Rollercoaster!* "provides the framework for parents to create a community that will support them throughout the teen years... Parents are spreading the word about what a positive support the bookgroups have been for them. Many groups have stayed together after they have completed the book; some have repeated the book and others have read authors mentioned in *Rollercoaster* for further discussion on a topic. The information in *Rollercoaster* is right on the money. Each chapter allows you to discuss topics in as much detail as necessary for the group, and the questions offer an excellent guideline."

Learn more about Boulder's PEN at
www.ParentEngagementNetwork.com

Learn more about *Please Stop the Rollercoaster!* at
www.PleaseStoptheRollercoaster.com



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