

Tulare County Office of Education
Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

RECONNECTING YOUTH



**A peer group approach
to building life skills**



**Building
Partnerships
between teens,
schools, and parents**

PROGRAM

What are the goals? "Reconnecting Youth" (RY) is a school-based program that emphasizes three primary goals: to increase school performance; increase 'drug use control'; and improve mood management.



"They helped me quit smoking and from starting any other drugs. They helped me realize that my life is not worth taking over being depressed or stupid stuff.

**-RY Student,
Spring 2004**

How does it work? This program applies the essential combination of small group work (10-12 students per class) with life skills training daily, semester-long class. In addition, program staff monitor class attendance, school achievement, moods, drug involvement, social interactions, and help youth make healthy choices for friendships and social activities.

***Social skills training. School bonding.
Mentoring. Social support. Advocacy. School
system crisis response plan. Teacher training.
Social activities.***

S.T.E.P.S. to decision-making provides a sense of personal control to help teens meet positive goals



PEOPLE



Who can participate? RY is designed to serve regular 9-12th grade high school students who:

- are having a poor school experience,
- are behind in credits, have slipping grades, or
- are skipping school or at risk of dropping out.

Of these students, a group is randomly selected and invited to take the class for elective credit. It is critical that students make an informed choice to participate, rather than be assigned or forced to take the class.

Who makes a key difference? Specially trained high school teachers are important contributors to positive outcomes for the students. Teachers play a crucial role in providing social support as they deliver the RY curriculum and serve as student advocates.



"I was into crank, weed, and drinking hard liquor on a daily basis but as soon I joined RY I knew I had a problem. All I used to think about were negative things. RY enabled me to stop the temptation; it has helped me control my anger and also helped me think in a positive way because I was once a negative person. I am able to talk to people with no problem and now I am clear-headed and I always talk about my problems. Even my teachers and friends have noticed this change. RY has taught me to be myself and not care what other people think, so I am always going to be myself."

-RY Student, Fall 2003

PAY-OFFS

"Reconnecting Youth" helps teens succeed!

- 88% increase in GPA's
- 45% decrease in hard drug use
- Increased personal control & anger management
- Stronger self-confidence
- Enhanced ability to handle stress
- More positive connections with teachers, friends, and family members



For more information contact us at:

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