

# Coalitions join forces to promote community awareness, prevent teen suicide

Continued from page 1 prevention booth.

Coalition members also discussed another current priority of making the community more aware of the seriousness of families hosting underage drinking parties in their homes. Debbie Shronce, Tobacco Education Prevention Program Coordinator for the Las Animas and Huerfano Counties District Health Department, said recent studies have shown that close to 60 percent of underage drinking is being done at somebody's house. She said more community education is needed to remove the perception that adults hosting drinking parties for their kids and their friends are considered the social norm in today's society.

Shronce also reported that the final state tobacco prevention program budgets recently handed down had only minimal local effect due to Las Animas County's high tobacco use prevalence rate, as well as its current high and low socio-economic rates.

Shronce also gave a power point presentation on policy work, why state and federal grants are moving toward this as a best practice, and how established policy can enhance a community.

Her presentation specifically focused on the Chicago-based Midwest Academy, a national training institute committed to advancing the struggle for

social, economic and racial justice. From local neighborhood groups to statewide and national organizations, Shronce noted that Midwest Academy has trained more than 25,000 grassroots activists from hundreds of organizations and coalitions by teaching an organizing philosophy, methods and skills that enable ordinary people to actively participate in the democratic process.

Her power points included information on organizing, building and joining coalitions and their advantages and disadvantages, principles for effective and successful coalitions, questions to consider before joining a coalition and developing leadership skills in coalitions.

Shronce also recently sent letters to the editor of local media outlets reminding parents and their children of Colorado's Tobacco Free School Law that prohibits the use of tobacco products on and around any school property.

"I would hope that as a community we can provide the example necessary for the health of our children and refrain from using tobacco products for a few hours of our children's lives during the participation in sporting events and encourage non-smokers to voice their knowledge of the law in requesting that tobacco users on school property please abstain from the use of tobacco products," she said in the letter.



Photos by Tim Keller  
Musicians Valerie Powell, Eileen Terry, and Randi Whitman, from left, bask in the glow of an enthusiastic response from their Mandala Center audience Saturday night.

# September Sizzle sparkles at Mandala Center

By TIM KELLER  
The Chronicle-News

The Mandala Center presented its fall concert to a full house at the center west of Des Moines Saturday night. Raton's Randi Whitman joined her Denver friends Valerie Powell and Eileen Terry in presenting the trio's sixth Mandala Center concert to an appreciative audience.

The performance was sandwiched between other events in a busy weekend called the Volcano Triangle Fall Festival, including Saturday's Des Moines Street Fair and Folsom's spaghetti feed as well as Sunday's Capulin Volcano Run. Many who spent the day at Saturday's street fair were later seen - in spiffier clothes - at The Mandala Center.

"September Sizzle: An Evening Concert" presented two sets of music encompassing a wide variety of sources and styles. Terry's versatile piano skills anchored the concert as she accompanied flute melodies performed by Whitman and several songs



Raton's Randi Whitman performed on flute Saturday in an evening concert at The Mandala Center.

sung by soprano Powell.

Powell brought an actor's skills to her animated performances, even donning a black shawl to feign the cold inhabiting one song, and her knowing smile was infectious. The audience repeatedly gave her generous ovations.

Technical problems at The Mandala

Center caused the concert to be presented in candlelight with small musician's lamps. Although new executive director Lori Coon apologized, many felt that the lighting provided a welcome intimacy that accentuated the lush virtuosity of the music. An audience of four-dozen people watched and listened from vantages in four rooms radiating out from the Steinway & Sons baby grand piano near the Mandala Center's fountain.

For Coon, it was the first formal event at the center since arriving a week earlier from Jamestown, New York. Many Mandala Center regulars welcomed her during the wine-and-cheese reception held during intermission and lingering for an hour after the concert's end. Her predecessor, Gaye Brown, retired recently after spending nine years creating Mandala Center programs. Coon seemed to relish the task ahead, with the September Sizzle concert a popular success and great beginning.

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# Dad convicted of child abuse in missing girl case

Dad convicted of child abuse in missing girl case  
**IVAN MORENO**  
Associated Press Writer

**CENTENNIAL, Colo. (AP)** - Jurors on Monday found a father guilty of fatal child abuse, among several other charges, in the disappearance and presumed death of his young daughter.

The abuse charge was the most serious of 57 that Aaron Thompson, of Aurora, faced in the 2005 disappearance of his daughter Aarone. Jurors convicted Thompson of 31 of the

charges after nine days of deliberation and a six-week trial.

Thompson, who showed no emotion when the verdicts were read, also was convicted of conspiracy to knowingly commit fatal child abuse. He faces up to 80 years in prison for the two child abuse convictions alone.

Thompson also was found guilty of false reporting to authorities, concealing a death and conspiracy to conceal a death.

The charges he was acquitted of included second-degree assault and second-degree assault involving a deadly weapon.

He will be sentenced Nov. 10. Thompson reported his daughter missing in November 2005, when she would have been 6. He said she ran away after an argument.

Authorities believed she may have died about two years earlier. Her body has not been found.

Prosecutor Robert Chappell said he was satisfied the jury convicted Thompson on the most serious charges.



AP Photo/The Denver Post, Andy Cross

Aaron Thompson, left, along with attorney Lucienne, right, listen to defense attorney, James Karbach, during his closing arguments in the Aaron Thompson trial at the Arapahoe County Justice Center Tuesday afternoon Sept. 15, 2009 in Centennial, Colo.

"It's one step closer to justice for Aarone," Chappell said to the media after the verdict was read. "I think if you were to ask that question to police, I think they would say justice will be the day that they find her body." Chappell said it was a tough

case for police because they initially believed it was possible to find and save the girl.

Thompson's attorneys left the courtroom without commenting.

Defense attorneys acknowledged on the trial's first day that Aarone was already dead when her father reported her missing, but that he was not responsible for her death. Thompson's defense sought to blame his live-in girlfriend, Shely Lowe, for Aarone's death, saying that Thompson's story that his daughter ran away because of an argument over a cookie was a desperate attempt to cover for Lowe.

She died in 2006 from heart problems.

Lowe told a friend in a secretly taped conversation played in court that Aarone died in her sleep. Authorities have never made clear how Aarone died.

But prosecutors described a grim picture of the Thompson house to jurors, telling them that the seven children living in

the home were repeatedly beaten with belts, television cords and a baseball bat by Thompson, who his children called "Big A."

In closing arguments, prosecutors said the house was a "torture chamber" and urged jurors to "do justice."

Children in the home told police that Aarone got the brunt of the punishment, and was often locked in a closet for hours for wetting her bed.

After Thompson reported his daughter missing, a massive search ensued in Aurora. But investigators soon became suspicious of the family, noting that they couldn't provide recent photographs of the girl.

Thompson was arrested in May 2007 after a grand jury indictment.

A mistrial was declared on two of the 57 charges. Defense and prosecuting attorneys agreed to the declaration of a mistrial on counts of conspiracy to abuse a corpse and abuse of a corpse after the jurors failed to reach a consensus.

background. If you are interested please contact Kristy at the Trinidad office (719) 846-2213.

## Electronics Recycling

Recycle electronics at the rehab center, one stop past UPS on Freedom Road, M-W-F 9 a.m.-3 p.m. For other recycling opportunities, pick up ReGroup's green and white bookmark at the library.

## Fine Print Policy:

The Fine Print is a courtesy service offered by *The Chronicle-News* to inform the public of upcoming events. Fine Print items must be 30 words or less. We reserve the right to reword any submission to fit available space. Placement is not guaranteed and is subject to space available. When possible, the Fine Print will run three times - the day of the event and two days prior. PLEASE NOTE: Fine Prints must be received by NOON the day before publication - no exceptions. Fine Prints to run in Monday's Edition must be received on Thursday by NOON - exceptions not available. Please email Fine Print to news@trinidadchroniclenews.com. The Fine Print section is not for advertising. If you wish to advertise an event, please call Aileen Hood at (719) 846-3311 Ext. 5.

## SCHOOL EVENTS

### FRIDAY Trinidad Schools

There will be an early release for all Trinidad Schools on Friday at 12 p.m. due to Homecoming.

### GENERAL INFO THIS HOMECOMING

Parade information: If you would like to participate in Trinidad High School's Homecoming Parade on Friday, Oct. 2 at 2 p.m., please call 846-4340.

## THE FINE PRINT

### Continued from page 1 SPPCRD Meeting

Spanish Peaks Purgatoire River Conservation District will meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday in the District Office.

### FRIDAY Mobile Bookstore

Here's a GREAT opportunity to purchase Children's and Christian books, DVDs, Music CDs and health products. The Mobile Bookstore from Pacific Press Publishing will be here on Friday from 1-3 p.m. - corner of Aiello and Strong just off Exit 15. Free prizes.

### PUBLIC SERVICE Planning Commission

On Monday, Oct. 5 at 1:30 p.m., the Las Animas County Planning Commission will host a work session regarding possible changes to the Las Animas County Master Plan and the Las Animas County Land Use Guild. This public meeting will be held at the Las Animas County Courthouse, 200 First Street. Copies of the draft land use regulations and the master plan addendum are available for review at Trinidad Public Library and the Las

Animas County Planning and Land Use Office. For more information, please contact Robert Valdez, Las Animas County Planning and Land Use Director at 845-2561.

### Fall Recycling Event

Friday, Oct. 2, 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. & Sat., Oct. 3, 8 a.m. - noon. Waste Connections, 2600 Road, will collect cardboard, paper, steel/tin cans & plastic for this FREE service period. Some items in these categories are not allowed, so please see flyers around town for specific instructions or call ReGroup at 719-845-8218 or email writer@hessarts.com. The LAC Rehab Center, one stop past UPS on Freedom Road, will extend its hours to be open for this event to collect electronics. Info: Rehab Center; 846-3391, x122. Fees apply for electronics; email terihansford@sccds.com to receive the electronics fee chart by email. Fees charged are for LAC Rehab Center disposal costs.

### NOAH'S ARK

Low cost Spay/Neuter Clinic - Sat. Oct. 3. Call 680-2385 between 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Monday-Friday to get an appointment for your dog or cat.

### SCRT

"Broadway Bound" hosts trip to Denver Oct. 10-11.

**Kit Carson Liquor Store**  
is reopening  
**UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT**  
Delivery Available!  
October 1  
9 a.m. to midnight  
Mon-Sat. 155 Elm St.  
Sun. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. 719-846-1370  
Look for Grand Opening!

La Casa in Jansen is having an  
**Indoor Craft Show & Outside Flea Market Event**  
October 17 & 18 and November 27 & 28  
We are looking for Vendors  
Hurry space is limited so call and reserve your spot now!  
Only \$25.00 for each set of two days  
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