



PO Box 1466  
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*We would like to thank CHI Health  
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*Newsletter March 2016*

## History of the Youth Advisory Board

Youth provided the foundation for Buffalo County Community Partner's work in Building a Healthier Buffalo County. Buffalo County youth coined the motto "Don't do it for us without us," in 1999. This motto was used to develop county wide youth leadership to tackle issues faced by youth.

Starting in 1997, Buffalo County youth attended Youth Congress events to develop community specific projects. Some of those projects included:

Amherst – Youth Congress participants adopted a grade school class every Wednesday for an hour to read to them or join them for recess.

Ravenna – Hosted movie nights, youth retreats, sport/pizza nights, and invited other youth to join an overnight lock-in. In 2003, they built the Ravenna Youth Center.

Shelton – Bulldogs Against Drugs developed a Red Ribbon Week with drug free pledges, poster contests, radio messages, and worked to develop a mentoring program. In 2005, they developed the STAND youth group. Elm Creek – Hosted Red Ribbon Week activities, a winter dance, Teens Tackle Tobacco Rally and Tobacco is Trash week, and they created Buffateers group to reduce youth substance abuse.

Pleasanton – Presented clowning skits to grade school students and discussed how to be a drug free mentor and hosted an elementary health fair. They Supported the restoration of the Pleasanton Depot.

Sumner-Eddyville-Miller – Secured Nebraska Tobacco Settlement funds to host Teens Tackle Tobacco Rallies for area youth and to learn about the impact of tobacco.

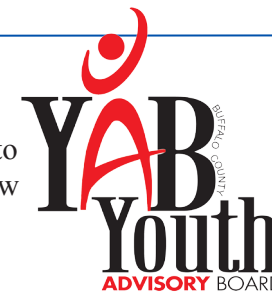
Kearney – Worked with DAFFY (Drug and Alcohol Free

Youth) to educate classmates on the impact of alcohol. Later, They assisted in bringing speakers to Kearney to educate parents on methamphetamines.

Youth Congress gave a formal voice to youth, placed them on equal footing with adults and empowered them to plan together. Overall, youth reported a 5% increase in feelings of empowerment after attending Youth Congress events over two years (2000).

In 2003, youth conversations lead to the formation of a youth lead board. Youth leaders presented by-laws and operating procedures to the Buffalo County Community Partners to start the Buffalo County Youth Advisory Board.

In 2005 the YAB received funding by the Governor's office to launch a media campaign, "Be a Responsible Parent." YAB reviewed youth surveys and selected a trend in which to make an impact. They develop concepts and contracted with SCORR Marketing to develop art for the campaign. YAB has continued with annual events to strengthen and engage youth within Buffalo County.



Buffalo County Youth Advisory Board Members celebrate 2012 Annual Campaign Kickoff with former University of Nebraska Lincoln Kickers: Alex Henry #90, Brent Maher #96 and Kyle Larsen #19. YAB Members front row: Justine Bauer (Elm Creek), Rosamond Thalken (Kearney), Mariah Henninger (Shelton), Isabel Thalken (Kearney); Back row: Lance English (SEM), David Mueller (Shelton), Bryan Wietjes (Amherst), Andrey Gallegnos (SEM).

## Get Involved!

Our current coalitions:  
Youth Advisory Board  
Positive Pressure  
Activate Buffalo County  
United Against Violence  
Diabetes Referral Network  
Alzheimer's Association

If you have a passion for making your community a better place to live, consider getting involved in one of our coalitions. Check out [bcchp.org](http://bcchp.org) to find out more about getting involved.

If you would like to partner with us through a financial donation, you may:

Contact Denise Zwiener at 308-865-2280 or [dzwiener@bcchp.org](mailto:dzwiener@bcchp.org)

Donate on our website, [bcchp.org](http://bcchp.org), by clicking the blue "Donate" button.

## Upcoming Events:

March 11--**Tips Training**

March 24 Responsible Beverage Server Training. [bcchp.org/tips](http://bcchp.org/tips)

March 16--**YAB Youth Summit**

*Leadership Conference Teens*  
Visit [bcyab.org/youth-leadership-summit/](http://bcyab.org/youth-leadership-summit/)

March 16--**Worksite Wellness Lunch**

*Presentation on History and National Data describing worksite wellness programs.*  
[activatebuffalocounty.com/worksite-wellness](http://activatebuffalocounty.com/worksite-wellness)

### Buffalo County Community Partners Contact Information

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Visit [bcchp.org/board](http://bcchp.org/board) for complete board member listing or [bcchp.org/contact](http://bcchp.org/contact) for complete staff listing and contact form.



# Youth Advisory Board Timeline



Isabel and Rosema Thalken pose with the posters YAB created when they partnered with the Storm Hockey in 2009.

## Melissa Farris

*Past YAB member*

"You often feel powerless as a teenager, but YAB changes that. It empowers youth to get involved, think critically about what the community needs, and give back. It is the first opportunity I remember feeling like what I was doing was really making a difference."



Newspaper clipping from the Kearney Hub, October 16, 2003. The article described how Farris was a role model for other teens.

Melissa Farris, Marketing Specialist, Boys Town Founding Member of BCYAB  
2005 Graduate Pleasanton High School.  
Served on BCYAB:



1999 Hosted *Youth Congress Events*.

2002 Hosted a joint Buffalo County Health Summit with Youth and Adults to develop a county wide youth empowerment and leadership board.

2004 Developed the Buffalo County Youth Advisory Board (YAB) board and secured funding for activities.

2005 Buffalo County named one of 100 Best Communities for Young People by America's Promise Alliance.

2005 Started *Buffalo County Youth Day to State Capitol* with 10 youth and grew to over 200 students, to advocate for increases in alcohol and tobacco taxes, smoke free workplaces and seat belt use.

2007 Hosted first *Annual Buffalo County Youth Summit* to engage youth in leadership and social entrepreneurship.

2010 Hosted *Youth 4 Youth* event which brought together Leadership Kearney Youth and Buffalo County Youth Advisory Board members with Leadership Kearney Adults.

2011 Hosted *Show Me The Money Workshop* to bring resources to youth and parents to apply for scholarships and empower youth.

2013 Started *Annual Youth Academy for Democracy* because youth numbers outgrew funding available to travel to Lincoln annually.

2016 *Annual Youth Summit* returns to engage youth in leadership and entrepreneurship.



The Summer - Eddyville-Miller YAB celebrated Red Ribbon week with members of the Elks lodge. This campaign focussed on providing tools to teachers.



Sutton STAND and YAB members, Zach Olizer and David Mueller, autograph Take A Stand posters for an elementary Red Ribbon week assembly.



Vicotria Harmony (Amherst), Isabel Thalken (Kearney), and Lance English (SEM) accepting the CHI Building a Healthy Community Youth Award.



Accepting 100 Best Communities for Youth Award in Washington D.C. Cindy Richter, Chamber President; Denise Zwiener; Nancy and Senator Tom Osborne; Kevin Ripp, YAB member; Marsh Wilkerson, United Way Executive Director.

## Kevin Ripp

*Past YAB member*

"I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Buffalo County Youth Advisory Board during its early years. I remember being very excited about the opportunity to serve for this organization that placed a great emphasis on youth empowerment. After being a part of numerous organizations throughout my undergraduate career and now in professional school, YAB still sticks out in my mind as one of the best extracurricular experiences.

Although the Buffalo County Community Partners offer invaluable guidance and manpower, the youth on the board are the driving force behind everything the group accomplishes.

Not only does YAB give the youth of Buffalo County a medium to voice the issues they face, but it also gives them the means to develop unique strategies to do something about them. Furthermore, YAB instills within its members the importance of community-minded citizens and the capacity of all of its citizens to have a positive impact on the places they call home. I have a feeling Buffalo County will benefit in the years ahead as more and more youth transition from YAB members to community leaders."



Photo Courtesy of Pleasanton Public Schools  
Pleasanton High School sophomore Kevin Ripp talks with a state senator from the distance learning room at the school.

Newspaper clipping from the Kearney Hub, October 11, 2005. They ran an article about Ripp's involvement with YAB.



Kevin Ripp  
UNMC College of Dentistry  
2008 Graduate Pleasanton High School.  
Served on BCYAB:  
2003-2008