

# Mountain Youth and Eagle County Schools expand collaboration

## Collaborative grant funding brings teacher training

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**VD** Staff Report



The staff of Mountain Youth is dedicated to improving the lives of local children.

*Daily file photo*

Thanks to a collaborative grant between Eagle County Schools and Mountain Youth, teachers will be trained in “WhyTry” and “Botvin LifeSkills” — part of a comprehensive wellness and prevention plan that ultimately helps young people thrive in school and beyond.

The grant funding is provided by Climax Molybdenum Co., a subsidiary of Freeport-McMoRan, through its Climax-Area Community Investment Fund and will ultimately impact every elementary student in Eagle County Schools. The company has facilities near Leadville, in Kremmling and in Empire.

“It’s these partnerships that create a stronger community. Helping youth with coping and resiliency skills from a young age builds strong emotional connections and promotes healthy risk taking,” said Mikayla Curtis, Mountain Youth’s manager of strategic impact, in a news release. “Learning these skills in elementary school will help youth practice and retain them as they develop.”

Eagle County Schools provides students the platform to build skills around social emotional wellness. These efforts have existed for many years, however, and there is a need to have additional evidenced-based or research-based curricula for teachers. For youth, this means teachers have resources they feel they can implement in their classrooms on a daily basis — no special assembly required. These skills will impact the student over their educational career with Eagle County Schools.

“Individual and family skills taught through in-school programs and the Eat Chat Parent series reinforce social emotional development across the community and create a place where youth thrive,” Curtis said.

Most middle and high schools in Eagle County already provide Botvin Lifeskills and/or Why Try to their students. Expanding these programs into elementary schools is a natural progression since children who can cope have the tools to overcome internal pressures, peer pressure and life circumstances that may impact their health. Additionally, thanks to this funding, teachers will be able to receive one-on-one coaching and follow-up support from Mountain Youth facilitators.

If you have a child in elementary school, ask them what worries them, then ask them what skills they've learned to better cope. Mountain Youth and Eagle County Schools want to keep the learning happening at home, so families can work through challenges youth may face together.

## **About Mountain Youth**

Mountain Youth was founded in 2001 and has grown over the decades. The demand for programs increases every year: in 2019, Mountain Youth engaged 15,377 residents, creating a safe place for conversation, giving young people a voice, providing accurate information and creating a community where all youth thrive.