

Dr. Vicki Barber's Column.....

Supporting Community Youth

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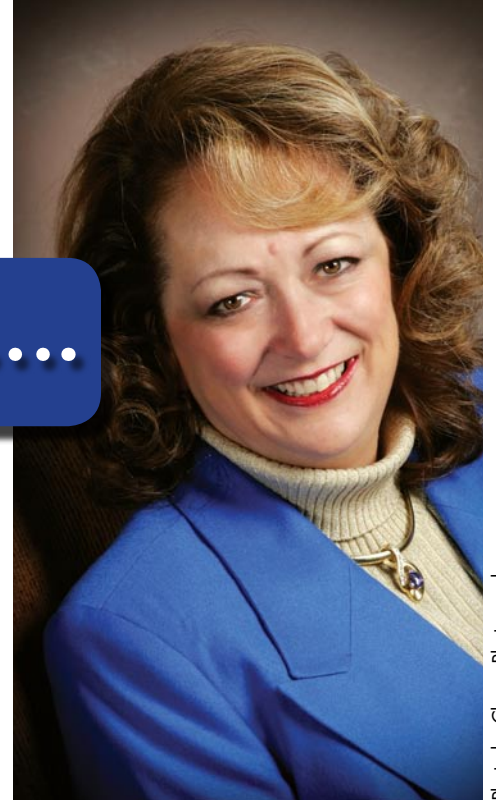


Photo by Charm Photography

Dr. Vicki Barber is a regular columnist for *Serrano El Dorado Magazine*.

We've all participated in conversations in which we discuss wanting to do something for our community. "The 4-H kids need more community involvement. I could teach gardening." "The bank has a community

'positive youth development' opportunities, including financial support. Youth development opportunities are activities that increase knowledge and build strengths, assets, skills, and talents to help young people reach

have a constant vigil over a child for just these issues, but parents are concerned for the welfare of their offspring. As parents, we know that our children are going to do just what we did when we were kids – try stuff out, so to speak – and that's what makes us nervous. Providing alternative choices – positive, healthy choices – is what the Vision Coalition seeks to promote.

Perhaps thanks to the current economic downturn or the increase in "green" thinking, or just with an awareness of the value of our own communities and the people within them, there seems to be more of a desire to support, help and be a part of groups who are putting in time to make our communities better places to live. The Vision Coalition has this as its mission, and is making a difference in the lives of youth in the community.

Is that your niche? Can you help? Or is there another place where you can bring about a difference? Getting engaged in our community means making changes, growing, connecting, and making our community what we want it to be. It's more than talking. It's about being part of what we'd like to see happening today. What's your vision for our community? Share it with others. Try it out and watch us grow! ☑

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beautification project going that needs more support. We really ought to get involved. Maybe a donation." Then life gets in the way – work and kids and sports and so forth. While contributing to the area would be optimal, there just doesn't seem to be the time.

Sometimes, though, there's a spark of interest that supersedes all of those other intervening variables. The drive to get engaged connects and there you are – in a group that really does support your community ambitions.

The Vision Coalition of El Dorado Hills is one of those efforts that truly entices you to engage in helping others. According to its purpose, the Vision Coalition facilitates "youth in El Dorado Hills by providing

their highest potential, in ways that are safe, healthy, and free from alcohol and drug use." It sounds pretty lofty, but take a look at some of the things being done:

- A teen council that talks about youth needs and interests
- After-school and weekend recreation programs
- Mentoring
- Alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention programs
- Coordination with law enforcement
- Resources for youth for positive health practices

Anyone who has or interacts with children is aware of the potential effects of alcohol and drugs on their lives. It isn't possible to