

It takes a community

Compact seeks commitment from groups, individuals to improve local education

By Michael Martinez
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People were attracted to the media outreach launch event for the Ready for Life Community Compact — formed to assist the Washoe County School District improve education and the graduation rate — for a variety of reasons.

Andrew Strom, an admissions officer at Career College of Northern Nevada, was trying to find out if the compact would help him meet his objectives.

“I’m trying to get involved with more educational programs in the community,” Strom said. “Both of my kids are active in the school system here; they are just starting middle school and I’m trying to get more active.”

Laura Granier, an attorney and head of Washoe Ready for Life, which will administer the Community Compact with the school district, said that schools could not improve education alone.

“It takes a community, it takes a commitment from every single one of us,” Granier said.

She said the media campaign has three primary objectives:

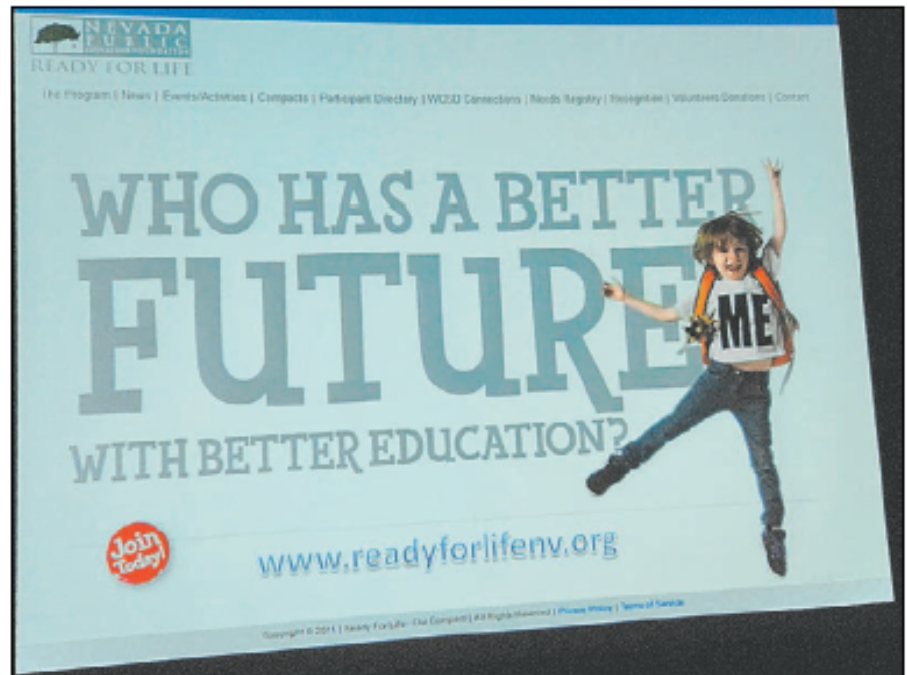
» **Awareness:** Letting everyone know why education should be important to them

“No matter who you are, no matter what you do, education touches your life,” Granier said.

» **Involvement:** Get more people involved and help them answer the question of what they can do.

» **Engagement:** “Which is what you do when you walk out of this room,” Granier said.

Rick Reviglio, co-owner and president of Western Nevada Supply and another leader in the compact, said there was only a fraction of those committed to the effort who were present at the launch.



Ready for Life Community Compact, a group that aims to support improving education and the graduation rate in Washoe County schools, unveiled its online branding last week. MICHAEL MARTINEZ/RGJ

TO JOIN THE COMPACT

To sign on to the compact, visit www.readyforlifenv.org or contact compact administrator Norma Restivo at 775-742-8179 or nrestivo@nvpef.org, the Washoe K-12 Education Foundation at 775-348-0256 or Lisa-Marie Lightfoot of the Washoe County School District at 775-851-5677.

“We need everybody to get involved,” Reviglio said.

He said his goal is to find out what educators and students need and match those needs with community resources.

“There’s so many great clubs that can make a difference, whether you’re talking about the Boys and Girls Club or any other of various organizations,” Reviglio said. “There’s so much great leadership in these organizations that can play a role and make a difference.”

Bill Heitman, president of Junior Achievement of Northern Nevada, thinks his group has something to offer.

“I just think it’s a great idea, and Daryl Drake and Fred Boyd and some of the other organizers thought it was a great way to get nonprofits involved,” Heitman said. “And of course it is for our high school dropouts, so anything we can do to combat that, I’m for.”

Volunteers are among the most vital components, compact leaders say.

Forrest Bietz, former owner of Colorall Technologies, helped put together last week’s launch event.

“My background is from special events and working with casinos,” said Bietz, who sits on the Artown board and is president of the Women & Children’s Center of the Sierra. “I just think this important for our community.”