



# Places for Struggling Teens™

*"It is more important to get it right,  
than to get it first."*

Published by  
**Woodbury Reports, Inc.™**

**March 2007**

**Issue #151**

## **SEEN 'N HEARD...**

### **FEBRUARY VISITORS:**

Greg Hitchcock, Randy Russell,  
Amanda Thomas...

### **MMS PRESENTS AT LEGISLATURE...**

### **ELK RIVER EXPANDS CURRICULUM...**

### **ISPA ANNOUNCES INDUSTRY AWARDS...**

### **ASPEN PARTICIPATES IN STUDY...**

### **ASPIRO MAINTAINS PRICE LEVEL...**

### **ICR WELCOMES MENTORS...**

### **RUDOLPH JOINS AIMHOUSE...**

### **LIFE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE ACCREDITED...**

### **ROGERS MEMORIAL CAC TO OPEN YOUTH PROGRAM...**

### **PARHAM TO HEAD NATSAP ED COMMITTEE...**

### **CALO TO OFFICIALLY OPEN...**

### **SCHROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NWA**

*[For details on these and others, read  
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## **UNLICENSED AND UNREGULATED?**

By: Lon Woodbury



In some circles, there have been growing demands from critics insisting that private parent-choice schools and programs, both residential therapeutic and emotional growth boarding schools, be regulated through licensing. One stated presumption is there is no oversight over these programs because they are unlicensed and unregulated. There also seems to be the presumption that with oversight, these programs will stop the perceived abusive and punitive methods that are claimed common. Another presumption is that lack of government or any other type of oversight is the rule, and that responsible programs are the exception.

I've always wondered exactly what programs these critics have in mind. True, there are some rogue operators who manage to get away with it for a time, despite being roundly condemned by legitimate professionals in the field, including responsible Educational Consultants and programs. Many have eventually been shut down by the authorities or otherwise forced to close their doors. I am aware of some who have settled in foreign countries to avoid any

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[Essays and articles appearing in this publication are the opinions of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the policy of Woodbury Reports, Inc.,™ or StrugglingTeens.com.™ We urge our readers to conduct their own investigation of the products and services identified herein.]

**Woodbury Reports™** is an information source to help parents find the right school or program when their child has behavioral/ emotional problems. We are specifically concerned with children needing more intensive intervention than local resources or day programs can provide.

Our focus is on high quality and effective Emotional Growth and/ or Therapeutic schools and programs, which can include short- and long-term outdoor programs, family style living arrangements, highly structured boarding schools, therapeutic boarding schools, RTCs or psychiatric hospitals.

An important goal of these schools and programs is to teach self-discipline through consequences, so the child will learn to be more responsible for his/ her actions. How attitudes are changed and who is successful is at the focus of each issue of Reports.

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**Places for Struggling Teens™** is published monthly. One year subscriptions are \$33 USD. Non-Continental US postal orders add \$5 USD.

**Places for Struggling Teens™** is published by  
Woodbury Reports, Inc.™  
**Lon Woodbury, Publisher.**

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PO Box 1107 • 7119 2nd Street  
Bonners Ferry, Idaho 83805

208-267-5550 (p)

208-267-9127 (f)

[lon@woodbury.com](mailto:lon@woodbury.com)

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ISSN: 1540-3718

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#### Judi Bessette, EdD

Research Affiliate

[jbessette@woodbury.com](mailto:jbessette@woodbury.com)

#### For More Info Contact:

#### Kristie Henley

[kristie@woodbury.com](mailto:kristie@woodbury.com)

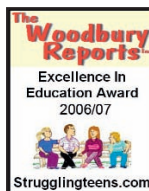
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**Lon Woodbury, MA**



**Loi Eberle, MA**



**Linda Zimmerman, LPCC**



**Larry Stednitz, PhD**

*"Some Children just need to be heard, not cured."*

**Lon Woodbury, IECA, MA, CEP**, is an educational consultant who has worked in schools and programs for emotional growth, character education, and consulting for parents of struggling teens since 1984. Prior to that, he taught in public schools and was involved in public policy while working for the US Senate and the Executive Office of the President. Lon received his BS and MA degrees from the University of Idaho. His practice includes a referral service for parents and professionals, and the publication of this Newsletter and the **PARENT EMPOWERMENT HANDBOOK™**, a resource of **Places for Struggling Teens™**.

## **UNLICENSED:** Continued from page 1

kind of oversight. (This doesn't include those who conscientiously follow US standards even when they are not forced to by foreign governments.) There are others I am aware of who take kids as a type of group home and claim their business license or permit (or some equivalent) is all that is necessary. But in my experience, these are the exceptions, the bad apples that any industry is plagued with. Apparently the critics believe that these rogue operations are the norm, thus the terms "unlicensed and unregulated." In their view, since the industry is "unlicensed and unregulated," federal legislation creating federal oversight is a vital necessity.

To answer the accusation that this industry is "unlicensed and unregulated," I went to the list of the top hundred schools and programs as viewed by the leading Independent Educational Consultants. These are the schools and programs found in my Parent Empowerment Handbook™, and are based on an annual survey among the leading Independent Educational Consultants. The last edition was published in early summer last year. These schools and programs are the ones with the best reputations. They are presumably the most often used for placement by professional Independent Educational Consultants and are leaders in our network. These schools and programs are at the heart of the industry that is being accused of being "unlicensed and unregulated."

Below is a list of those schools and programs that are licensed and regulated. I didn't include those only under the umbrella of a state's Children's Protective Service, or equivalent, with a mandate to intervene if any child in their jurisdiction is abused, which is a form of regulation. I also didn't include those who are just accredited for their academics, but that is also a form of regulation which includes a legal mandate in at least most states to report abuse if ever observed. In addition, I didn't include those that only have active parent activities, since a steady stream of parents and Educational Consultants through a facility is in itself an informal form of oversight. Finally, I did not include those who just have credentialed staff who have a legal responsibility to report unacceptable behavior, and also those who are members of professional organizations which also would have an interest in stopping abusive behavior they might become aware of. I did include those who are accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), because this is a designation that is difficult to obtain, and in many ways is the gold standard for competency, effectiveness and professionalism in healthcare organizations. As a result, I took a fairly narrow

view of the question of how many of the programs were regulated with state oversight. The list of 100 schools and programs includes many wilderness programs and therapeutic boarding schools, as well as many residential treatment centers and mainstream type schools who take students transitioning from more highly structured schools and programs. The following are the schools and programs, as reported to us for the Handbook, from the 100 leaders in the private industry of residential parent-choice schools and programs, that have either some kind of state licensure or JCAHO accreditation, or both.

### **Adirondack Leadership Expeditions**

Permit from New York Department of Health

### **Anasazi Foundation**

JCAHO accredited, licensed by Arizona Department of Economic Security and Department of Human Services as a Behavioral Healthcare Provider.

### **Aspen Achievement Academy**

JCAHO accredited, licensed as an Outdoor Treatment Program by the Utah Department of Human Services

### **Aspen Ranch**

Licensed as a Residential Treatment Center in Utah

### **Boulder Creek Academy**

Licensed by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

### **Catherine Freer**

JCAHO accredited, licensed as a Mental Health Program and an Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program by the State of Oregon

### **Center for Change**

JCAHO accredited

### **Chapel Haven**

Licensed by Connecticut

### **Copper Canyon Academy**

Arizona Behavioral Health Services licensed.

### **Explorations Home Base**

Licensed by Montana as a group home

### **Forest Heights Lodge**

JCAHO Accredited

### **Glenholme School**

Licensed by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families

### **Gray Wolf Ranch**

Licensed through Washington State Department of Health

### **Greenwood School**

Licensed by the State of Vermont

### **Hazelden Center For Youth & Families**

Licensed and accredited by JCAHO, and Minnesota Department of Health

Continued: **UNLICENSED/** pg 4



## **UNLICENSED:** Continued from page 3

### **Intermountain**

JCAHO and Montana State licensed

### **Island View**

Licensed by the Utah Division of Licensure and JCAHO

### **King George School**

Accredited by Vermont Department of Child and Family Services

### **The Learning Clinic**

Licensed by the State of Connecticut Department of Children & Families

### **Logan River Academy**

Licensed by the State of Utah Department of Human Services

### **Menninger Clinic**

JCAHO accredited and licensed by the Texas Department of Health

### **Mount Bachelor Academy**

Licensed by Oregon Department of Health and Human Services

### **New Dominion School of Virginia**

Licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia with Interdepartmental Licensure and Certification

### **New Haven Female RTC**

Licensed by Utah as a Residential Treatment Center and as an Addiction Treatment Center

### **New Leaf Academy**

Licensed by the State of Oregon

### **Northwest Academy**

Licensed as a "Children's Residential Care Facility" in Idaho

### **Provo Canyon School**

JCAHO accredited, licensed by Utah Department of Human Services

### **Remuda Ranch Programs**

JCAHO accredited, licensed by the State of Arizona

### **Redcliff Ascent**

Licensed by the State of Utah

### **Riverview School**

Licensed by Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services

### **Rogers Memorial Hospital**

JCAHO accredited, licensed by Wisconsin as Psychiatric Hospital

### **San Cristobal Ranch Academy**

Licensed in New Mexico as a Pharmaceutical Custodial Care Facility

### **Sierra Tucson**

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### **Spring Ridge Academy**

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### **Spruce Mountain Inn**

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**SUWS of the Carolinas**

Licensed in North Carolina

**Three Springs of Duck River**

Licensed Residential Child Care Facility in Tennessee

**Three Springs - Paint Rock Valley**

Licensed as an Outdoor Treatment Center by the Alabama Department of Youth Services

**Valley View School**

Licensed as Treatment Facility in Massachusetts

**Villa Santa Maria**

Licensed by New Mexico to provide Residential Treatment

**Vista Adolescent Treatment Centers**

JCAHO accredited, licensed by the Utah Department of Human Services

**Wilderness Quest**

JCAHO accredited, Licensed by the Utah Department of Human Services



Out of the 100 leaders in the industry of private, parent-choice, therapeutic and emotional growth schools and programs, about half (45) have some kind of state licensure and/or JCAHO accreditation. Actually, the percentage would be higher because some of the leading programs are in Montana, which does not yet have comprehensive licensure but is developing it with the cooperation and help from these schools. The percentage would also be higher if we excluded those that are included in the top 100 who are primarily mainstream boarding schools, that just take graduates of more highly structured programs as a transition and make no claim to be therapeutic, thus not needing licensure.

So, where are these "unlicensed and unregulated" schools and programs we hear accusations about? Certainly not with the schools and programs we at Woodbury Reports and other professional Independent Educational Consultants primarily work with.

The wise man doesn't give the right answers, he poses the right questions.

~ Levi-Strauss


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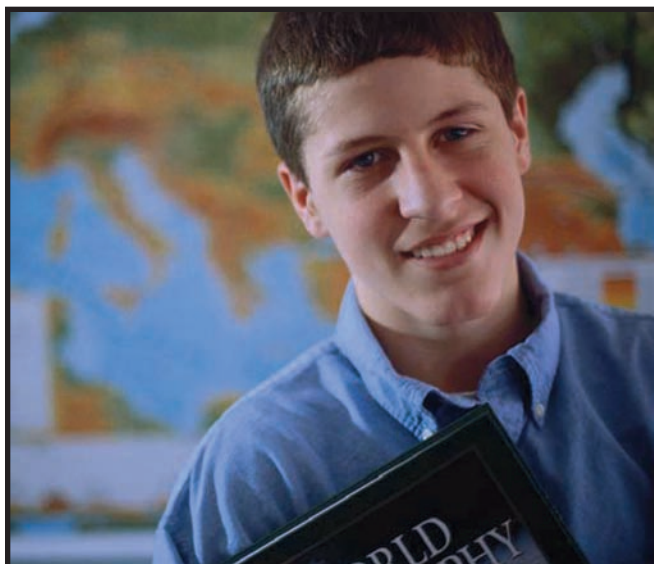


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## "IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THIS WAY"

### Five Critical Skills For Coaching Parents of Struggling Teens and Young Adults

Bill Valentine PsyD, CC

Penelope Valentine, CC

[everhigher@bendnet.com](mailto:everhigher@bendnet.com)

[www.nextstepforsuccess.com](http://www.nextstepforsuccess.com)

*This 6-part series is directed at those individuals, practices and programs currently working with, or wishing to eventually work with, parents of struggling teens and young adults. The series reviews the differences between coaching and therapy and identifies specific skills the experienced coach brings to the coaching relationship.*

### Part I

#### Coaching Defined

Coaching and coaches first gained public attention a decade or so ago in the business community. Executive coaching provided organizational leaders with confidential access to experienced experts in leadership, management and personal growth. Utilizing many of the same inter-personal and managerial skills, coaches can now be found in nearly every area of personal and business development. Indeed, the International Coach Federation, one of two international bodies accrediting coaches and coach training bodies, has a membership of more than 11,000 members in 82 countries! Parent coaches make up a very small portion of that coaching universe, and coaches for parents of struggling teens and young adults are an even smaller sub-set. It is this very specialization that calls for specific skills training for the would-be coach of these needy parents.

Coaching is quite different from therapy and consulting. While many therapists have switched to or added coaching to their treatment modality, coaches are not therapists. Likewise, many consultants also coach individual clients. Coaches are not consultants. Let's explore the difference.

#### Coaching and consulting

Consultants are problem solvers, providers of solutions. In most consulting situations the consultant and client(s) have little personal interaction beyond their work on business model examination and troubleshooting. Consultants are focused on results, solutions, reengineering, time lines and bottom line improvement.

Coaching relationships are personal, often deeply so. Coaches and coaching are personal growth and process oriented. The client is viewed as having the ability to solve their own problems with the coach's support and guidance. Coaches are people-centered and support their client in establishing and reaching personal goals.

Parent coaching may contain some elements of consulting, as for instance when the parent is receiving specific instructions on setting boundaries or establishing performance contracts with their children. More so than parents with more compliant children, parents of struggling teens and young adults may need to make time-sensitive decisions and look to their coach for his/her experienced-based advice.

### **Coaching and Therapy**

Therapists are generally working with less healthy individuals than coaches. The role of the therapist is to diagnose and prescribe treatment to bring about healing and resolution of issues often rooted in their clients' early years. The therapist is specifically trained in the mental health areas and is generally licensed by state boards of mental health or social services. Many therapists, especially those practicing brief-therapy modalities, are confrontative and directive.

The coach focuses on present situations and future action plans. Individual strength-based and forward-facing work is the hallmark of the coach. The coach is looking for those attributes of the client that can be built upon and client directed for personal growth and development.

Coaching and therapy have several common denominators; both adhere to personal confidentiality and the efficacy of both processes is heavily influenced by the quality of the personal relationship. Therapists and coaches have a real concern for the individual's inner needs and wants. Often, a parent coach will work on a parallel track with the child's therapist to ensure parent and family coherence with the child's work. Finally, professional certified coaches and therapists subscribe to the ethical codes and standards of their professions.

### **Why certified coaches?**

Coaching, as a profession, is at a time of rapid expansion and widely varying standards of excellence. Without a single validating body, coaches of all levels of experience and abilities are 'hanging out their shingles'. Part of the difficulty in bringing specificity and rigor to the training and credentialing

Continued: **SKILLS/** pg 8

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## **SKILLS:** Continued from page 7

of coaches has been the attraction that coaching has to the individual who feels they 'have a gift' but are unwilling to put in the time and study required for formal therapeutic training. Currently, there are any number of individuals and programs calling themselves 'coaches' who have no formal preparation for the practice.

However, there are a number of legitimate training organizations for coaches wanting in-depth skill training and the credibility of recognition from an international body such as the International Coach Federation or the International Association of Coaching. At the very least, a coach who has received certification by an accredited program has demonstrated a commitment to a professional approach to coaching.

Future essays will explore five of the more important skills the experienced coach brings to the relationship with parents of struggling teens and young adults. As was mentioned, these parents have much different challenges and needs than parents of more positively functioning young people. They will benefit from a coach and coaching that encompasses the following:

**Skill #1** - Recognizing the Human Condition in Every Client

**Skill #2** - Clean, Clear, Concise Communication

**Skill #3** - Revealing the Barriers to 'What Is'

**Skill #4** - Identifying the Areas for Primary Focus

**Skill #5** - Celebrating the Process

*[Bill and Penelope Valentine are the co-founders of Next Step for Success; a division of Ever Higher LLC, Redmond, OR, 541-504-4748. Next Step is an adult and family coaching service.]*

### **PART II:**

*Recognizing the Human Condition in Every Client*

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there is nothing in particular  
that an educated man should know."

~ Lippmann



For many young men and women, leaving home and transitioning to college or the work world is a daunting and overwhelming challenge. Thrust into the real world alone, with few advocates, they often are overwhelmed by isolation and lack of structure and support. Robert Fischer, M.D., psychiatrist, co-founded **Optimum Performance Institute** in 2004 to meet the needs of these young adults, ages 17-25.

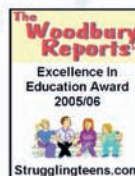


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# CAN YOUR CHILD COUNT ON YOU?

By Glenda Gabriel  
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As your sons or daughters progresses through their program, you probably wonder what life will be like once they return home. You likely have hopes and expectations of returning to a 'normal' family life. You get excited at the prospects, yet worry nags at you as you wonder how trust will ever be built. What if they backslide into old behaviors? What if things go back to the way they were?

Here's a newsflash for you. They worry about that too. They struggle with trusting themselves, because they do not want to go backwards either. And though they may not tell you directly, they also wrestle wondering whether or not they can trust you. They feel safe within the environment of their program where they know their staff, and even their peers, will hold them accountable. They feel the program structure in place has provided the parameters they need to make the tough changes necessary. The closer they come to going home, the more they worry about whether they can count on you to say what you mean and mean what you say. Don't count on them to tell you that. Don't count on them stressing how much they need rules and consequences to live by. After all, they are teens and that's pretty contrary just by the very nature of that stage in life. Regardless of whether or not they verbalize it to you, your children need to know they can count on you to hold them accountable, just as they have learned to rely on the staff. Your kids know you better than you think. By your actions, they'll determine if they can count on you when they return home. They will pay close attention to what you're doing, how open you are to staff direction, your level of participation and how you follow the program rules and guidelines.

You've enlisted the aid of professionals because your way was not working in creating the results you had envisioned for your child, or maybe even your family for that matter. Create a tight alliance with them and be willing to learn. Empower yourself by taking the focus off your child for the moment, and hold the 'mirror' up to you. How are you doing? Look at yourself from your child's point of view and be willing to take an honest look at how you're showing up to them. Here are two things your child will pay close attention to while in their program, and will give them clues as to how you're doing and where you stand.

**Packages:** Be it the holidays or their birthdays, programs generally have specific guidelines as to what types of gifts are approved, when they are allowed, the amount of gifts and/or size of packages. If you decide your child is 'such a special case' that you don't have to follow those rules and guidelines, first be willing to admit that has nothing to do with what is in the best interest of your child. Rather, it has to do with you and your approval needs, guilt, etc. If you do not follow your program's guidelines, be very clear you will be sending the message to your child that rules are made to be broken. In addition, you reinforce their 'sense of entitlement' attitude. If one of your complaints has been your child's attitude of entitlement or ingratitude, this is a good time to take a look at how you've contributed to that. The package guideline rules, like all program rules, are in place for specific reasons and purpose. For instance, to help your child realize that meaningful gifts, such as a heartfelt letter or family photos, matter more than material ones. Not to mention the simple practicality of limited space or being fair to the other kids in the program.

**Off-grounds or home passes:** When leaving campus, there will be rules and guidelines in place that affect both child and parent. If you bend or ignore the rules, the message your child will hear is that when it comes time

Continued: **RULES/** pg 10

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## RULES: Continued from page 9

for them to return home, any home contract in place is made to be bent, broken or ignored. They know better than you do what is expected of them during these visits. They have worked hard to earn that privilege. By not honoring the structure that has supported their success, you are invalidating their hard work. On the flip-side, if you make a mistake, own it. Set the example for them by being accountable, correcting it, and getting back on track. Then there's the question of what to do if your child breaks a rule? They will pay attention to how you handle that too. Will you backslide into an old behavior of enabling by covering it up or not reporting it because you want to spare them their consequences?

The off-grounds pass and home pass are a dress rehearsal of life at home. Neither you nor your child will be perfect. Life is not that way. The way you handle the challenges and what you learn from them however, are key clues as to how ready you are to have your child home, and how things will go.

If you want to banish the feelings of helplessness you once lived with, then be willing to look for ways you can change and improve. Empower yourself by changing what did not work before. Be willing to ask your staff, and your child, for feedback as to how you're doing. Be willing to hear what you could be doing different to achieve a better result.

Your children need you to be the parent, not their friend. They need to know that you're working together as a family, and that it's not solely on their shoulders. Your children need to know, through your actions not just your words, that they can count on you to hold their boundaries in place as they gain strength within themselves, until the time they are ready to hold the boundaries on their own.

*Glenda Gabriel is a strong advocate for parent's rights and the parent-choice industry. In addition to being the mother of a program graduate, she's worked for many years developing vital parent support services for structured residential boarding schools.*

"A man who lies to himself,  
and believes his own lies,  
becomes unable to recognize the truth,  
either in himself or in anyone else,  
and he ends up losing respect  
for himself as well as for others."

~Feodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky



# VISITS... HIGH FRONTIER, INC.

Fort Davis, Texas  
Barry Blevins - Executive Director  
432 364 2241  
[semyhighfrontier@yahoo.com](mailto:semyhighfrontier@yahoo.com)

Visit by Larry Stednitz, February 9, 2007

High Frontier is a coed, private, non-profit Residential Treatment Center, founded in 1976. High Frontier's emphasis is on building self-esteem through a systematic Positive Peer Culture (PPC) model. The program uses cognitive strategies and alternative challenges as the vehicle for change.

Many, if not most, Parent Choice Programs and Schools would say they have a program that supports a positive peer culture. Very few however, actually use and embrace the Positive Peer Culture model of treatment.

Barry Blevins, the executive director of High Frontier, met with me at length, and discussed the essence of this complex model of treatment. He said that several things occur prior to and during the enrollment of a new student. Before a student is assigned a group, the teen group is briefed about the new student's problems and the circumstances bringing him/ her to the program. In an attempt to develop empathy and problem associations, the students are asked; "How did the group view their problems prior to entering High Frontier?" "What is important for Johnny to know upon arrival?" The group associates their previous thinking with how the new member will likely hope and fear. "What can the group expect Sally to say when questioned why she is at High Frontier? Will she blame others for her situation?" The group's first goal is to determine how to engage the new member in simple group participation.

Upon arrival, the new student is placed solely in the hands of the peer group. The staff members only act in a third person capacity as needed, often inserting Socratic questioning. Group members collect and distribute the new student's bedding and personal hygiene supplies. They accomplish traditional administrative roles as they explain and produce the paper work necessary for the new member to understand. Each new student is given a tour by the group and introduced to all individuals and important aspects of the campus. Students quickly see that it is the peer group who shares important information, a significant deviation from most

Continued: **HIGH FRONTIER/** pg 12



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## **HIGH FRONTIER:** Continued from page 11

programs' approach. The new student learns, "The other kids put their pants on the same way that I do". Students also learn that the others take responsibility for what they need and are not directed by staff.

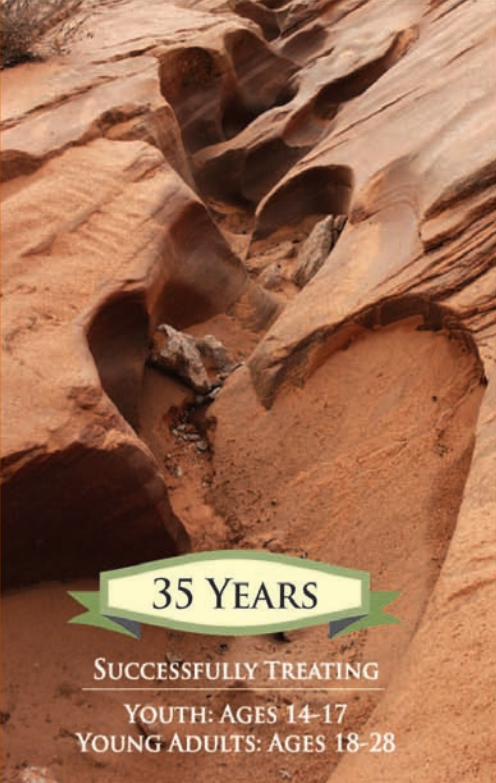
After being in the program for a few weeks, the new student completes a "life story," and then discusses potential goals with peers. For example, it is common for a student to want to "do his or her own thing", and to achieve autonomy. A student can achieve these goals through acceptance of personal responsibility. No one else is capable of doing it for him/ her.

New students often act out in a way that interferes with achieving goals, and invite adult staff members to step in to "get him back into line". Peers react to this gesture by asking "If you want independence, why do you act so childish and immature, requiring adults to intervene?" This type of behavior is no longer respected by peers and negative behaviors will not help in achieving these goals. For example, concepts that may have been considered "cool" at home are no longer respected. Behaviors are re-framed, and the student begins to understand that negative behaviors go against true values and goal achievement. This concept is reinforced throughout

the program. For example, if a student sees drinking and doing drugs as demonstrating manliness and bravery, the peer group may suggest that instead of bravery and manliness, it is a foolish way to attract authoritarian control. If a student glorifies fighting, peers may ask if that means the student enjoys hurting people. The student may be told by peers that it is brave and takes courage to be able to manage harmful actions and not hurt others.

If students refuse to get out of bed in the morning, staff does not give consequences, put them on a lower level or take away privileges. They are reinforced that the goal is to be independent and have freedom from adults trying to control them. Instead, peers may ask, "Why do you make other people be your boss, why are you making others parent you?" Students learn that the way to be free and autonomous is to give up childish behaviors and get on with taking responsibility for life.


Students at High Frontier experience a shift in their paradigm of how to look at life. What was cool (and destructive) before, is now immature and childish. What was avoided previously is now embraced. As students learn to understand this, they are able to address these issues with new students. Using the concept "that what you teach, is what you retain the



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best", teaching others becomes a powerful tool to further help the young person make a shift toward what they value in life.

The goal of PPC is that when students finally "get it", they become the master of their own fate and that they are truly in charge of their own lives. It is no longer "cool" to go against their goals in life.

High Frontier is not eclectic in their approach. All interventions at High Frontier are intended to support the PPC model. Each peer group goes to school together, recreates together, works together, eats together and plans their free time together. The core structures are formal groups, run by the students, and spontaneous team groups throughout the day. Although spontaneous, the groups are orchestrated to address themes and behaviors within the group.


I spent over a day with High Frontier, attending a formal group facilitated by the adult mentor, Tom Homrighaus, and talking to students, including one girl I had placed there. The PPC model was fully operating with eight groups of nine students walking together around campus participating in the program's schedule. I spent over an hour in a formal

meeting which was run fully by the students, with staff sitting outside the group, occasionally inserting questions designed to re-focus, re-label and reverse while reserving any significant input for the summary of the group meeting. All students I spoke with clearly understood their work and were very happy with the progress they had made. The father of the girl I had placed there was also on campus. He was ecstatic about the progress that his daughter had made. The students were fully engaged and appeared to be happy at High Frontier.

Barry made a point that in no way do the staff members relinquish their responsibility to ultimately be in control. Indeed, the group's role is to help, while staff will make no apologies for their authority. A very high staff to student ratio reinforces this. The program has 115 staff members for 84 students. In order to successfully operate a complex PPC model, a program must have a highly experienced staff. The administrative team has an average of 16 years experience in the model. Barry has been working at High Frontier for the past 20 years. The direct care staff averages 1.5 to 2 years and some have worked for 5 or 6 years. The program's clinical team of psychiatric consultation, nursing, 3 clinical psychologists and 5 other master level therapists, represent an average longevity of 12 years.

Books have been written by Larry Brentro and Harry Vorath, the founders of PPC. Those parents thinking of High Frontier and other interested parties could benefit from reading these books to further elucidate the subtleties of a well respected, but poorly understood model of treatment. The review of the Positive Peer Culture book that High Frontier is highly influenced by is located online.

The program is licensed by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Child-Care licensing Division.




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Visit by Lon Woodbury, February 5, 2007

Optimum Performance Institute (OPI) is a coed community based program for young people ages 17 to 25. In the process of my visit I met several participants; all looked pretty normal for that age group, including the girl rushing off to a college class with spiked hair and eyes blackened with makeup. I met several residents in their apartments, and although the apartments looked lived in, they were cleaner and more picked up than those of most young single people of the same age. I presume that being cleaner than typical young people on their own was a reflection of the influence of OPI staff who keep regular and frequent contact with the participants.

There are currently 26 participants in the program, with about 25 staff. OPI treats a very diverse population and mixes young adults with situational difficulties and depression with others who may have been unsuccessful in school due to family dynamics, anxiety or posttraumatic stress. About a third of the present participants came with serious drug abuse problems, and approximately one third have been diagnosed with Asperger's. The staff informed me they are very successful with Asperger's participants because they have enough staff to provide the support and training in social skills to help those participants and can offer one-to-one assistance as needed. The participants I met were friendly and rather outgoing. They appeared comfortable in their apartments because it was their own space. Had I met them in any other context, I would not have been able to tell they were in a program, working on issues that caused them serious troubles.

The common denominator of all participants is they realize they needed some help. Before enrolling, the applicant must convince admissions they want to do something different. If admissions is convinced there is at least some element of acceptance they need help, and have some commitment to change, then the application is accepted. A six-month commitment is required although the average stay is ten months. At least one participant has been there for three years.



OPI is a community based program rather than a residential program. All the students live in apartments and the program is designed to transition them toward successful independent living. The program is very individualized. Staff base activities and experiences on the participants' interests, so in a real sense each participant has their own program, goals and experiences.

The basic outline of the program is two phases, with apartments dedicated to each phase. In Phase One, staff members live with the participants' 24-hours-a-day. There is a curfew and the participants' lives are about as structured as they can be within the context of apartment living. Participants stay in this phase at least three months based on the recommendations of the staff. Phase Two apartments are in a different area and the participants are more independent, but still have significant staff contact. This Phase also lasts for at least three months, with staff making the final decision as to when a participant has progressed enough to complete. After the two phases, if a participant chooses, their relationship changes to what is called Aftercare, which includes a higher degree of independence but still with a lot of staff involvement. The staff becomes more of a role model and mentor to the participants. Another follow-up option is called Outpatient, where participants see therapists on a scheduled basis, but the therapist plays more of the role of mentor and role model. Overall, the program works very hard to balance the differing needs of running a program for all the participants, while meeting the individual needs of each participant.

Executive Director Robert Fischer, MD, explains that the program is not diagnosis based. That is, they work with the participants from where they are mentally and emotionally, rather than working from some more abstract diagnosis that might or might not be accurate. Their three main focuses are academics, therapy and what might be called "Life."

The program provides whatever support and help is necessary to help the participants' complete high school, attend college or establish themselves into a career.

Therapy is an integral part of the program for each participant. This can include participating in AA or other specialized community groups and OPI's Residential Chemical Dependency Solutions Group. Since working in this field is always high stress, OPI has just started a regular staff group to help staff process the stresses that go along with working with young people with problems.

Continued: OPI/ pg 16



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*Swan Valley,  
Montana.*

## **OPI:** Continued from page 15

In what might be called support for "Life" training, the staff uses many tools to meet the interests of the participants. Some of the tools they have used to spark interest have been yoga, dance, boxing, sweat lodge and numerous other activities that one or more participants have expressed an interest in. These are all used as learning tools to support the goal of transitioning each participant into being an independent, responsible adult. Staff members are very flexible in promoting avenues that might provide a positive experience. Last year, some of the participants were involved with a trip to Peru as a horizon stretching special activity, and more trips like this are planned for the future.

Everyone we met, both participants and staff, were comfortable and dedicated. I was impressed by the positive attitudes all around. OPI emphasizes bringing lightness and play into their milieu and that showed, both in meetings with the staff and with the participants.

Although OPI is a new program, just about three years old, they seem to have found themselves and as a result their reputation is growing. After meeting the staff and participants, I can see why.

## **WEDIKO SCHOOL & TREATMENT PROGRAM**

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[www.wediko.org](http://www.wediko.org)

Visit By: Stephen Migden, February 18, 2007

The Wediko School and Treatment Program is a residential treatment center for boys, located in rural New Hampshire, about a two-hour drive from Boston. It is a unit of Wediko Children's Services, a social service agency that serves at-risk and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents in the New England area. The residential program serves boys ranging in age from 10 to 16. The current enrollment is about 35, with a capacity of 40 students. The majority of boys (30 of the 35) are from New Hampshire, with the remainder from various other states throughout the country. Currently, the five out-of-state residents come from states in the West, Midwest and Northeast. All of the students from New Hampshire are publicly funded. The other students are mainly private pay, although I was told

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that a number of them are in the process of seeking public funding.

Beth Vezina, co-director of the Wediko School and Residential Treatment Program, met with me to explain the program and answer my questions. She said that Wediko takes boys with a wide range of problems, including complex learning/ psychiatric/ family problems, as well as boys with histories of trauma and reactive attachment disorder, and those who have been aggressive or sexually inappropriate. About 20 percent of the population at Wediko has been adjudicated by the family court, mainly in New Hampshire. In order to benefit from the verbal and cognitive aspects of the treatment program, residents should have at least a low average IQ level. Boys with schizophrenia or significant brain injury or those who are active substance abusers or with histories of being sexual predators would generally not be accepted into Wediko's residential program. Most Wediko residents arrive there from special education programs in community-based public schools, and a few come from psychiatric hospitals or day treatment programs. The vast majority of boys are discharged back home, to live with their families.

According to Beth, Wediko utilizes a strength-based treatment model in which family involvement and

milieu therapy are central elements. Throughout the day the boys are given frequent feedback by their counselors and teachers, and an attempt is made to emphasize praise and positive reinforcement rather than criticism or punishment. Though it is not a licensing requirement, all but two of the direct care counselors have bachelor degrees; all supervisors have either masters or doctoral degrees. All of the residents participate in group therapy and family therapy; individual therapy is offered on an as needed basis. Most of the boys are on psychiatric medications and there is a nurse on grounds every weekday. A therapeutic horseback riding program, known as Horse Power which utilizes the facilities at a nearby farm, is available to boys who request it.

The academic program at Wediko is based on the New Hampshire state curriculum. Each class has from eight to ten students, one teacher and two assistant teachers. The school follows the IEP that most students already have, and individual tutoring in math and reading can be offered to those who need it. Aside from the core academic subjects and physical education, classes are offered in culinary arts, small animal care, landscaping and computers. There is an inter-scholastic basketball team that competes against neighboring schools.

Continued: **WEDIKO/** pg 18


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## WEDIKO: Continued from page 17

I visited Wediko on a weekend in the middle of winter, on a clear mid-February day. The rural campus is located at the end of a long, winding country road, giving it the isolated, country-like atmosphere that often helps to bring out the best in troubled teens. The attractive compact campus was, of course, covered in snow and ice. I was greeted by Keeley, a direct care counselor who was friendly and articulate and who appeared to be in her early 20's. She invited me in from the cold, explaining that she was returning to the weekend dorm with some supplies for a boy who had a mild cold. In the dorm, I spent some time talking with Jeff Grena, the weekend program coordinator, who seemed knowledgeable and caring. He explained the agency's policy of encouraging home visits each weekend; as a result only a few boys are left on campus for Saturday and Sunday. Those who remain on campus generally do so because of unique family or behavior problems or because their families live too far away. Even so, because home visits and family participation are considered important parts of the treatment program at Wediko, home visits do not have to be earned, and every family is required to have at least one on-grounds family therapy meeting per month, regardless of where they live.

I observed a group of about five boys. They were being supervised by two counselors, Keeley and a young man, also in his early 20's. The boys were seated at a table in the community room of the dorm, playing a game of Monopoly. Though a few seemed to have difficulty sitting still for the game, all of the boys played appropriately and seemed to be having a good time. However, as Jeff Grena had explained to me earlier, the Monopoly game had not been chosen merely as a way of having fun. Some months ago, the boys had been introduced to a computer version of this game, then to the classic version of the board game, and now to a contemporary version of it. The goal, according to Jeff, was to teach social and life skills by moving from the computer monitor to more direct interaction and social problem-solving while also learning some lessons about money and property ownership.

The Wediko School and Residential Treatment Program is a 12-month program with a 300-day calendar. A number of services, including family therapy, are offered on Sundays, as that is often the day on which parents return their sons to the campus and are thus available for face-to-face meetings. I was told that the program is licensed by the State of New Hampshire as an approved special education program and as a child care institution, and that it is certified by the state as an intensive residential facility. In addition to the New Hampshire based



residential program that I visited, Wediko Children's Services also has a consultation and treatment program for the Boston public school system, and a co-ed summer program for children and adolescents with behavioral or emotional problems.

***About the Author:** Stephen Migden is a psychologist and educational consultant who works with behavior disordered, emotionally disturbed and learning disabled students of all ages. His office is in Roslyn Heights, NY. Visit Dr. Migden's website at [www.psych-edservices.com](http://www.psych-edservices.com) or call 516 625-0824 for more information.*

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Visit by: Judi Bessette, January 30, 2007

From the parking lot outside the building that houses the learning center for the aptly named Sober College, the building looks like all of the other office buildings in West Hills, suburban L.A. But as soon as we met Annika Richards, a very outgoing young woman and the Marketing Director for Sober College, we were fairly sure what we were about to see would be something quite different from what was going on in all those other buildings.

Sober College works with young adults ages 17-26 in need of a supportive, sober environment supplemented by substance abuse treatment. Their curriculum builds competencies in five areas of achievement: Sobriety, Life Skills, Career Development and/or Education, Emotional Well-Being and Fitness. Students must commit to at least 3 months in the program but 12 months would be more typical. The program, opened in the fall of 2005, currently has 42 students.

Sobriety is first and foremost at Sober College. Many of the staff are in recovery and understand the issues these young adults face firsthand. Sober College embraces a 12-Step approach but believes that to maintain sobriety successfully, the other four competencies are a must. Sober College would like to have a hundred or more students enrolled and be accredited in its own right – but that's some years down the road.

After greeting Robert Pfeifer, founder of the program, we were ushered into the main classroom in the  
Continued: **SOBER/** pg 20

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## **SOBER:** Continued from page 19

learning center to talk with Michael Cahlin, academic director, who is a freelance writer and educator. In his words, "If you can imagine a college that acts like a treatment program or a treatment program that acts like a college, that would be Sober College." Pfeifer describes the program as "an emotional growth college." Cahlin is in recovery and brings his past with him as a teaching aid and Pfeifer has many years of experience with young adults – especially those dealing with substance abuse.

Whether students need to finish high school, complete a GED, start or resume college work, all start with courses in the learning center under Cahlin's watchful eye. The four walls in this bright, pleasant room are covered with lists created by the students with titles like: 25 Signs Your Child Is Using; The Top 10 Signs; and Where Young Adults Hide Their Drugs. Cahlin has turned these three into A Toolbox for Parents – now part of every information packet Sober College sends out.

But the lists don't stop there. Some of the more poignant lists – hard for a parent to read – had titles like I Knew I Was Really Hooked When...and Rock Bottom For Me Was...and I Still Didn't Stop Even After... From hands-on classes in the learning center – classes like Preparing for Exams, Getting the Most

Out of Your Relationship With Your Professor and Application and Resume Secrets, students move into distance learning from the center or enroll in local and state community colleges.

For some, work rather than school may become their focus at Sober College. The program has created job opportunities that are overseen and supported by staff and workplace mentors to get them started in the workforce. As they progress, program participants can transition into other employment and career opportunities.

To see how the other three areas of achievement (life skills, emotional well-being and fitness) are addressed, we took a road trip to visit the men's and women's homes. Both are beautiful, classic Southern California houses where young adults share in household responsibilities like cooking and cleaning. Each house has a live-in house manager and someone is available for support 24-7.

The living environment affords each student the opportunity to put newly-learned life skills (from classes at the learning center or from on-line learning tools) into action. Each house has an outdoor smoking area but smoking cessation programs are offered for those who want to quit. Based on their

In 1983 Wilderness Treatment Center was the first program to successfully blend conventional treatment with a true wilderness expedition. Our in-patient center is located on a working cattle ranch in Northwest Montana. The setting is perfect for young men who can have a difficult time in the confinement of a conventional program. Treatment includes plenty of ranch work, group and individual therapy, educational lectures and films, attendance at AA/NA meetings in nearby Kalispell, plus a 16 to 21 day true wilderness expedition.

**As always, W.T.C. has a licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor present for the duration of every expedition maximizing the therapeutic value.** They meet some pretty big challenges facing life without chemicals; a good foundation based on a spirit of success and an ever increasing self-esteem is a great beginning in the journey of recovery.



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successes in the house, students eventually move into nearby apartments for even more independent living.

The entire household often participates in a variety of activities from community-based 12-Step programs to visits to the fitness center or going to the movies or the mall. With an emphasis on the need for learning to have sober fun coupled with the need for physical fitness, there are a wide range of outdoor activities including hiking, kayaking, biking and even surfing.

Fitness at Sober College includes physical and mental fitness. Using the idea that overcoming fear has a lot to do with sobriety, the program embraces high adventure activities like surfing and skydiving to achieve both. There are also opportunities for students to benefit from more traditional work with mental health professionals if needed.

At the men's house, they were finishing dinner and getting ready to head out to the gym. We had a few minutes to talk to a few residents and their house manager – a man who says he was born for his job. He was quite impressive – briefly sharing his own story with us and letting us know why he loves what he is doing.

The women's house sits high on a hill with a spectacular view of the city. It was nearly dark and the lights were incredible. Sober College is proud of the fact that they have worked hard to create a program for women that allows program participants to both set boundaries and push their limits. The women were getting ready to attend a group meeting where they would be processing a topic like body image or father-daughter relationships as well as talking about how the day had gone for each of them.

Emotional well-being is a vital competency at Sober College and they have taken the work of Daniel Goleman from Harvard seriously. Having program participants work toward a high emotional IQ is important because of the way empathy, self-understanding, emotional self-control and healthy relationships help students remain clean and sober and move forward in the other aspects of their lives.

We ended the visit over dinner with several staff members – the founder, marketing director, admissions director and the new clinical director. They were an impressive group, all knowledgeable, well-seasoned, and highly skilled. It was easy to see from their demeanor that young adults at Sober College would like them – and listen to them as well. The most palpable feeling we were left with had to do with their passion for their work and for these young people. It was a great visit.

## NEW PERSPECTIVES...

*[New Perspectives schools and programs are those new to Woodbury Reports, Inc., and are presented to expand your knowledge, with the disclaimer that we know little more about them at this time than what appears here. Inclusion in Places for Struggling Teens™, of course, does not imply any endorsement by Woodbury Reports, Inc. -Lon]*

### COLT SCHOOL

Missoula, Montana

Ray Baier - Director

406-722-2658

[info@coltschools.org](mailto:info@coltschools.org)

[www.coltschools.org](http://www.coltschools.org)

The Christian Outdoor Leadership Training program (COLT) provides troubled teens help with overcoming the conflicts they are struggling with by sharing the Christian life in an atmosphere of outdoor adventure and a focus on Christian character development. The COLT program is an accelerated and intensive model created to give families immediate crisis relief, short term options, and excellent Christian guidance and counseling.

"Today's teens face a world most parents would not have imagined when they were growing up. Drugs, alcohol, sex, violence, and rebellion are destroying lives daily. Many hurting teens lash out as they lose hope in life. Suicide is at an all time high." The COLT website states the school "interrupts this downward spin with adventurous and challenging activities led by our experienced, professional staff."

COLT is a Christian based program designed to communicate the life changing power of living a Christ centered life. Activities are an integral part of the COLT program with activities taught by experienced professionals who provide challenging new opportunities to learn outdoor recreational and other employment skills. These activities include: hiking, camping, rafting, fishing, horse back riding, X-country and downhill skiing, as well as snowboarding.

*[The information for the COLT School came directly from their website.]*

"There are no secrets to success.  
It is the result of preparation,  
hard work, learning from failure."

~ Colin Powell

# GERSH COLLEGE

Melville, New York  
Kevin Gersh, President  
631-385-3342

[info@gershacademy.org](mailto:info@gershacademy.org)  
[www.gershacademy.org](http://www.gershacademy.org)

Working with college age students with neurobiological disorders such as ADHD, Asperger's and other autism spectrum disorders, the Gersh College Experience, in collaboration with Daemen College in Buffalo, NY, is now offering fully accredited college level courses leading to a Bachelor's Degree in a variety of majors in the Arts and Sciences, Health and Human Services, and Pre-professional studies. The goal of the program is to provide students the level of support they need in order to earn a four-year college degree while developing the skills they need to succeed in the adult world.

Gersh students live in facilities in the North Tonawanda community close to the campus. Staffed with trained resident advisors, each residence has a living area, kitchen, dining room, study area, and three or four bedrooms. The residences serve as a base for students to develop friendships, learn



independent living skills such as budgeting, household management, culinary arts, and health and hygiene, while practicing their self-advocacy, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

For over seven years, the Gersh Academy on Long Island has provided day school programs for children from kindergarten through high school, all with neurobiological disorders. The Gersh programs are designed to help students "succeed by teaching them the way they learn." Kevin Gersh, the founder of these programs, understands the challenges his students face each day in school because he was diagnosed with his own neurobiological issues many years ago.

*[This New Perspective was written by our Research Affiliate, Judith E. Bessette, EdD. Judi gathered this information through their website.]*

"By blaming others, we fail to find the real solutions to our problems and we do not carry out our own responsibilities."

~ Jeb Bush



## Now she's running the class

For many alumni of The Family Foundation School, cutting class and skipping school was once the order of the day. But "The Family" is a powerful place where a therapeutic environment, the principles of 12-Step living, stimulating academics and talent-nurturing extracurricular activities can instill a real love of learning.

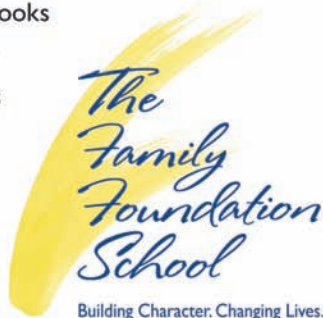
That's what it did for Ruth B., a 2003 Family Foundation School graduate who is now student-teaching in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Ruth graduates from University of Mary Washington in May and looks forward to teaching high school English in the fall.

Like hundreds of bright, underachieving teenagers who have difficulty managing their emotions and behaviors, whether due to ADHD, ODD, a mood disorder, or substance abuse, Ruth got the help she needed at The Family Foundation School, and her future couldn't be brighter.

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Bridget Peterson, Admissions Director  
888-896-5788

[Bridget@pinnaclewilderness.org](mailto:Bridget@pinnaclewilderness.org)  
[www.pinnaclewilderness.org](http://www.pinnaclewilderness.org)

Pinnacle Wilderness, an outdoor therapeutic treatment program serving youth from 13 – 17, is located in Central Utah. Using the peace and serenity of the mountains and desert to help troubled kids move forward with “knowledge of past mistakes, lessons of the present and opportunities for the future.” Using Native American imagery, the program uses the Circle of Courage as a guide for its teachings. Pinnacle uses quadrants of the Circle – Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity, universal needs in all youth, to develop self-confidence, respect and trusting relationships.

New students are integrated into gender-specific groups of up to 7 students, led by 3 staff. The average length of stay is 42 days. All students are eligible to earn 2.5 high school credits while on the trail issued through a fully accredited program, Blueprint Education. In addition to health, drug and hygiene education, students learn CPR and First Aid Training. Students participate in weekly individual therapy and the therapy/counseling staff members make weekly calls home to keep families informed.

Parents take part in a two-day orientation and parenting workshop at admission and return for a two-night, three-day trek with their teen at graduation. During the family trek, staff members explain Post-Pinnacle Planning, a year-long plan for continued support that includes resources in the family's home community. Alumni who may be struggling at home are welcome to return to the program for up to six weeks to reaffirm their new life skills.

The program founders bring their own life experiences to Pinnacle. The Clinical Director is a Licensed LCSW/Marriage and Family Therapist and the field staff have both experience and training in Wilderness First Aid and CPR. Several staff members are also certified EMTs. The program is licensed as an Outdoor Wilderness Program by the Utah Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing.

*[This New Perspective was written by our Research Affiliate, Judith E. Bessette, EdD. Judi gathered this information through their website.]*

## BOOK REVIEWS... LAST CHANCE IN TEXAS

**The Redemption of Criminal Youth**

By John Hubner  
Random House:2005  
ISBN-10 0375508090

Book Review by Karen S. Austin

Journalist John Hubner was given unprecedented access to the Giddings State School in Texas. This facility is known as one of the most aggressive--and most successful--treatment programs for violent young offenders in the United States. Giddings is home to “the worst of the worst”: four hundred teen offenders convicted of crimes ranging from aggravated assault to murder. Hubner observed group sessions through a one-way mirror and also spent much time speaking with the teens. He checked the events reported and the narratives of the youths against police records, interviews with victims of the crimes and case files. Youths who fail to meet the tough criteria for parole from Giddings will be sent to adult prisons to serve out long sentences, hence the “Last Chance” in the title.

The underlying philosophy is that if youth offenders are simply put in a cell to “do time”, all they have to do is sit there and feel sorry for themselves. This is “easy time”. They convince themselves that they have been wronged. In contrast, Giddings looks like a prep school. However, the kids do hard time. They have to face themselves and deal with the events that got them there. They examine what they did and take responsibility for it. The result is the key: KIDS WHO GO THROUGH THAT DO NOT GO OUT AND REOFFEND. A three year study tracked graduates of the Giddings Capital Offenders program. After thirty-six months on parole, only 10 percent had been rearrested for a violent offense and only 3 percent were rearrested for a violent crime in the year following their release. In contrast, a California study showed a recidivism rate of 74 percent within 3 years for youth serving prison time.

This is not a comfortable book to read. These children have grown up to inflict on others the violence and abuse that was inflicted on them. At Giddings they participate in traumatic group therapy sessions where they recount their own sufferings and their crimes. The outpourings of suffering and anger lead to remorse and ultimately to empathy. An especially moving and effective part of the process is the participation by some parents of murdered children. These courageous parents share their stories--and their grief--with these young criminals, allowing the

Continued: **LAST CHANCE**/ pg 24

## **LAST CHANCE:** Continued from page 23

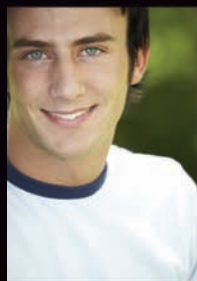
teens to truly grasp the pain they have caused their victims. This type of confrontation is what opponents of the teen help industry believe is abusive. The Giddings program shows how powerful and effective it can be.

What struck me were the many similarities to the treatment techniques used in the teen help programs such as emotional growth boarding schools, wilderness programs and substance abuse treatment centers. Some of the main components appear to be firmly rooted in well-accepted principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy; other techniques are considered unproven by mainstream psychologists. It has been difficult to isolate its many components in a way that would allow rigorous therapeutic research. Giddings, just like many teen help programs, relies on a connection among every aspect of the program. Every behavior, whether in the classroom, the lunchroom or the athletic field, is checked and evaluated. If two students scuffle, they are separated, everyone grabs a chair, forms a circle and tries to figure out what happened and why. In the group sessions, tough, hardened kids will be sitting with arms around each other or stroking another person's hair. They have learned to give and receive affection in a way that they were unable to do growing up.

I would recommend this book as a "must read" for any parent with a struggling teen. It allows great insight into the pain of the most extreme young criminals. There is horror, but there is also joy and progress. There are results that are not always explainable and techniques used that may appear extreme and painful to the participants. "Last Chance" defines the feelings many parents have as they make the difficult decision to send their child to a residential program. Hubner's book shows that there is ALWAYS hope.

Karen Austin practiced law in Texas for 25 years. She learned of the Giddings program during a seminar on Forgiveness and its role in the criminal justice system and the litigation of torts. She is the parent of a son who attended two emotional growth programs from 2003-2004 and who is now a freshman in college and a daughter who is a senior in college. She recently moved to Nashville, TN.

"What's done to children,  
they will do to society."  
~ Karl Menninger



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# EXTENDED INSIGHTS...

## FINDING ONLINE CHARTER SCHOOLS

Phoenix, Arizona  
Doug Covey - CEO Blueprint Education  
800-426-4952  
[www.blueprinteducation.org](http://www.blueprinteducation.org)

There are many benefits to an online charter school, including the flexibility of learning anytime and anywhere, the support of qualified professional educators, and an individualized and self-paced learning program that adapts to children's unique needs.

A charter school is a state-funded institution that has more control of its programs than traditional public schools. Charter schools often experiment with nontraditional methods of teaching and learning.

Many states offer online charter school programs for elementary, middle, and high school students. Online charter schools have classes over the Internet with a portion of the learning done offline through selected readings, projects, chapter reviews, and study sessions - blending the best of online and offline components. Because online charter schools are a public service, the state pays for all textbooks and course materials.

Interested in enrolling a child in an online charter school? Here is what you will need to do in order to find out what schools exist in your community:

### **Step 1 - Determine if your state allows charter schools.**

Since 1991, 40 states have signed into law charter school legislation. In order to find out if your state allows charter schools, check out state-by-state information at the U.S. Charter Schools website ([www.uscharterschools.org](http://www.uscharterschools.org)). If your state is not listed, it does not permit charter schools at this time.

### **Step 2 - Find the list of charter schools in your state.**

If your state has a charter school website, check that first. If not, try your state's Department of Education page.

### **Step 3 - Search for distance learning programs.**

Once you find a list of charter schools in your state, locate the programs that operate through distance learning. School names that include words such as "virtual", "online,"

"correspondence" or "distance learning," is a good starting point. Some states even have a separate list for online charter programs.

### **Step 4 - Identify the school.**

Some states require online charter school students live in the same district that their charter school operates. At times, charter school operation areas are negotiated individually. One school may only admit students from their local district. Another may enroll students from a large portion of the state.

### **Step 5 - Identify the schools accreditation.**

Accreditation assures parents that the school is focused on raising student achievement, providing a safe and enriching learning environment, and maintaining an efficient and effective operation. Make sure the school is accredited by one of the six premier American regional school accrediting commissions. If the school is not properly accredited, secondary and post-secondary schools may reject the credits earned.

### **Step 6 - Evaluate the school.**

Not all charter schools are equal. Try to find a program that is well established, time tested and trusted curriculum, and has a high student satisfaction rate. Talking with parents, teachers, and students before enrolling can help put your mind at ease.

### **About Blueprint Education**

*Blueprint Education is a non-profit organization that has been helping students succeed since 1969. Services offered by Blueprint Education include distance learning, curriculum design, and alternative education. Blueprint Education's programs and courses meet the high quality standards of the NCA-CASI, (North Central Association - Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement), CITA, Commission on International & Transregional Accreditation), and the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association). For more information call 800-426-4952 or visit their website.*

"Reading is the greatest plague  
of childhood."

~ Rousseau

## NEWS & VIEWS...

### **ABUSE/ NEGLECT CAUSE DEPRESSION**

(January 3, 2007) Science Daily reported a study contained in the Archives of General Psychiatry that indicates children who have been abused or neglected have a higher risk of major depression when they become young adults.

### **OUTDOOR SUCCESS IN UK**

(January 13, 2007) The UK Telegraph reports the success of the Bermondsey Out Doors project (Bods), an education charity for young people from troubled and deprived backgrounds.

### **WARNINGS OF HOME CHEMICALS**

(January 17, 2007) CBS News reported on comments by the Executive Editor of Family Circle magazine that parents should beware children as young as 12 and 13 are increasingly getting high on common household chemicals.

### **RESTRAINED JUVENILE OFFENDER DIES**

(January 25, 2007) The Baltimore Sun reported a 17-year-old juvenile offender died in Maryland after being restrained by a private facility operating under state mandates and funding.

### **CHARTER/ PRIVATE SCHOOLS PAY BETTER**

(February 6, 2007) According to a report by the Center for American Progress, charter and private schools make much greater use of pay innovations than traditional public schools, and there is some recent evidence that they have been more successful at recruiting teachers with higher academic credentials.

### **MARYLAND TO OVERSEE TRAINING**

(February 7, 2007) An article posted on the BaltimoreSun.com website stated a new Bill has been proposed in Maryland that would require the state to oversee all private residential program staff training.

### **BOYS/ GIRLS HAVE DIFFERENT STRESSORS**

(February 7, 2007) A study reported by CBS News Healthwatch reported that girls have twice as many stressors from interpersonal relationships than boys, while boys have twice as many stressors from achievement attempts than do girls. It further concluded that while boys use physical activities to cope, girls tend toward depression, thus a possible explanation for girls having higher levels of depression.

### **HARVARD DOC SUPPORTS SHOCK THERAPY**

(February 8, 2007) United Press International reported in Health/Business News that Michael Miller, editor in chief of the Harvard Mental Health

Letter, asserted that Electroconvulsive Therapy is the most effective therapy for severe depression.

### **FRENCH SOCIALIST PROPOSES BOOT CAMPS**

(February 12, 2007) The Washington Post reports that the French Socialist Party candidate for President, Segolene Royal, proposes Juvenile Boot Camps in her campaign platform.

### **FINAL REPORT FOR NCLB RE-AUTH**

(February 13, 2007) The Commission on No Child Left Behind released its final recommendations for the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The entire Commission report can be read, ordered and downloaded online.

### **POT DOWN, PRESCRIPTIONS UP**

(February 14, 2007) Drug Czar John Walter's released a report suggesting that teenagers abuse of prescription drugs may be increasing because they are more readily available and teens believe them to be safer than street drugs.

### **ABSTRACTS: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

(February 16, 2007) Keith Russell PhD, krussell@umn.edu at the University of Minnesota School of Kinesiology is calling for Abstracts for the 2007 Symposium on Experiential Education Research (SEER) for the 35th Annual Association for Experiential Education (AEE) International Conference in Little Rock, AR, November 8-11, 2007.

### **AUTISM GENOME PROJECT RESULTS**

(February 19, 2007) United Press International Health and Business News reported that the Autism Genome Project, an international consortium to find the genetic causes of autism is publishing its first set of results.

### **REGIONAL PSYCHIATRIC CONGRESS**

(February 18, 2007) Since many professionals were not able to attend the multi-day 2006 Psychiatric Congress last year, the highlights of that Congress will be presented this Spring in one-day sessions in Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, New York, Washington DC, San Francisco and Houston. The purpose is to help professionals learn the latest research and thinking on many topics.

*"Liberty means responsibility.  
That is why most men dread it."*

*~ George Bernard Shaw*



## SEEN N' HEARD...

### PERFECT BALANCE OFFERS REFERRAL BONUS

(Jan. 17, 2007) The following email was forwarded to me (Lon) from a program (**emphasis added**). "My name is Ian Foster. I am the Director of Perfect Balance Programs. I appreciate your email. We take at-risk youth on month long international service trips. If you have any parents who are looking for an alternative type of program, **we are more than willing to give you a referral bonus for the help.** If it seems appropriate to you, you may email me or call me to discuss further possibilities. My phone number is 801-722-8008. Sincerely, Ian Foster."

### LIFELINE EXPANDS

(January 19, 2007) Shane Peterson, Director of Admissions for Life Line Treatment Program, North Salt Lake, UT, 801-628-1358, announced the ribbon-cutting of their new Family Living Center.

### TELOS RTC OPENS ACADEMY

(January 23, 2007) Latricia Nell, Human Resources Manager for Telos Residential Treatment Center, Orem, UT, 801-426-8800 x 129, announced Telos Academy, the educational arm of Telos Residential Treatment Center (RTC), opened its doors Tuesday, January 16, 2007.

### RUDOLPH JOINS AIMHOUSE

(January 24, 2007) Jude Rudolph, Marketing Director for AimHouse, Boulder, CO, 303-554-0011, announced that she joined AimHouse on January 17, 2007.

### STAFF CHANGES AT AULDERN ACADEMY

(January 24, 2007) Debra Dombrowski, Communications Manager for Three Springs, Huntsville AL, 256-880-3339, announced Glen Ritter, formerly lead teacher, has been promoted to Academic Dean; Brienne McKay, formerly Admissions Counselor, was promoted to Assistant Academic Dean, and Jeff Johnson will serve as interim Admissions Director.

### NEW CLINICAL DIRECTOR AT SAN CRISTOBAL

(January 24, 2007) Christy Leach, Director of admissions at San Cristobal Ranch Academy, Taos, NM, 866-918-8383, announced Dr. Linda Salvucci has joined San Cristobal as the new Clinical Director.

### LIFE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE ACCREDITED

(January 29, 2007) Robert Crawford, Owner of Life Development Institute, Glendale, AZ, 623-773-2774, announced the Institute was approved for full accreditation by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA-CASI) in January 2007.

Continued: Seen N' Heard/ pg 28

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"There are many ways in which the emotional mind is childlike, the more so the stronger the emotion grows. One way is categorical thinking, where everything is in black and white, with no shades of gray...

Another sign of this childlike mode is personalized thinking, with events perceived with a bias centering on oneself..."

~ Daniel Goleman

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## **Seen N' Heard:** Continued from page 27

### **2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT**

(January 29, 2007) Alan Ranch, Queen Creek, AZ, 480-688-5003, announced they will host their Second Annual Charity Golf Tournament with Agape Youth Ministries, Phoenix, AZ, 480-471-8253. The tournament will be held at The Links at Queen Creek, Saturday, March 3, 2007 at 8:00am. Registration & Warm-up begins at 7:00am. Anyone interested can contact Alan Ranch directly.

### **SILVERADO HOSTED 1ST PARENT WORKSHOP**

(January 31, 2007) Denise Westman, Director of Admissions and Marketing for Silverado Boys Ranch, Panguitch, UT, 435-676-8482, reported that the ranch's first Winter Parent Workshop was a success.

### **EYA NAME CHANGES**

(February 1, 2007) Martha Chamberlain, Director of Marketing and Communications for Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Clearwater, FL, 727-461-1236, ext. 490, announced that two of the Eckerd programs have changed to the new name of Eckerd Academy. E-Sun-Alee will be known as Eckerd Academy at Deer Lodge in Deer Lodge, TN and E-How-Kee in Brooksville, FL, will be known as Eckerd Academy at Brooksville.

### **BOYS IN THE FIRE WILDERNESS ADVENTURE**

(February 4, 2007) D. Forrest Melton Jr., owner of Alive Adventures, Boise, ID, 208-331-2852, announced a five day and five night Boys in the Fire, March 23rd-28th, rite of passage for boys lost and confused in their seeking Manhood. They also plan a HEART FIRE - HEART SONG Young Women's Wilderness Program this summer as well as Family Ropes Courses this spring.

### **AIM HOUSE HIRES SPECIALIST**

(February 6, 2007) Kelly Corn, Director of Operations at AIM House, Boulder, CO, 303-554-0011, announced that Tevara Paranto, LCSW has joined the clinical team of as eating disorder specialist. Tevara comes to AIM House with more than 10 years of experience providing therapy for individuals, families and groups in a variety of settings.

### **BACHMAN ACADEMY SUMMER QUEST 2007**

(February 6, 2007) W. Kane Ayres, Director of Admissions for Bachman Academy, McDonald, TN, 423-479-4523, announced their Summer Quest will be from June 10 to July 28, 2007.

### **BRUNO OPENS CONSULTING PRACTICE**

(February 7, 2007) Ann Bruno, MEd, Tucson, AZ, 520-370-9020, announced she opened a new education consulting practice for students in the special needs population, specializing in addictions placements and support for families with young adults with addictions, "Creating Opportunities For Families."

### **MCCAULEY TALKS AT ASCENT**

(February 8, 2007) Jay Cohen, Communications Manager for Idaho Educational Services, and Ascent, Naples, ID, 800-974-1999, announced a workshop hosted by Ascent took place on January 16, 2007, where Dr. Kevin McCauley spoke to over 100 professionals on nature of addiction.

### **OXBOW ACADEMY OPENS**

(February 8, 2007) Jennifer Jones of Oxbow Academy, Wales, UT, 800-898-1244, announced the program is now open. Oxbow Academy is a licensed residential treatment center for boys age 13-17 with sexual dependencies.

### **ASPEN PARTICIPATES IN STUDY**

(February 8, 2007) Kristen L. Hayes, Communications Manager for Aspen Education Group, Cerritos, CA, 562-467-5531, submitted a Press Release reflecting Aspen's participation with the University of Minnesota, in an ongoing Private Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare study on Treating Teen Substance Abuse. For more information contact Amy Sandler at 562-468-4479.

### **CAIN ON ATTACHMENT/ ADOPTION PANEL**

(February 9, 2007) Educational Consultant Linda Cain, At Risk Alternatives, Boulder, CO, 720-299-8844, will participate as a panelist at the Attachment and Adoption-An Interactive Panel Discussion and Luncheon on February 22, 2007, sponsored by the Colorado Alliance of Caring Professionals.

### **SCHROM EXEC. DIR. OF NWA**

(February 9, 2007) Jay Cohen, Communications Manager for Idaho Educational Services, and Northwest Academy, Bonners Ferry, ID, 208 267-3626 ext. 5025, announced that John Schrom has been named the Executive Director of Northwest Academy.

### **NEW STAFF AT NEW SUMMIT COSTA RICA**

(February 9, 2007) Heather Tracy, Executive Director of New Summit Academy, Alejuela, Costa Rica, (USA call

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forward) 414-921-1388, announced Dr. Mariana Schielzeth has joined the staff coordinating medical services and teaching Biology and Chemistry, and Elvia Vargas has come on board as office assistant.

#### **FL CHAMBERLAIN TO HOST IN HOLLAND**

(February 9, 2007) FL Chamberlain School, Middleboro MA, 508-947-7825, announced they are hosting Pathways To Success: Changing the lives of youth in Utrecht, Holland, Netherlands, April 13-14. This presentation will feature two experts in neuropsychology, education and mental health: Dr. John J. Ratey, MD, Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and Sam Goldstein, PhD, a member of the faculty at the University of Utah.

#### **SPRING WORKSHOPS AT ROGERS MEMORIAL**

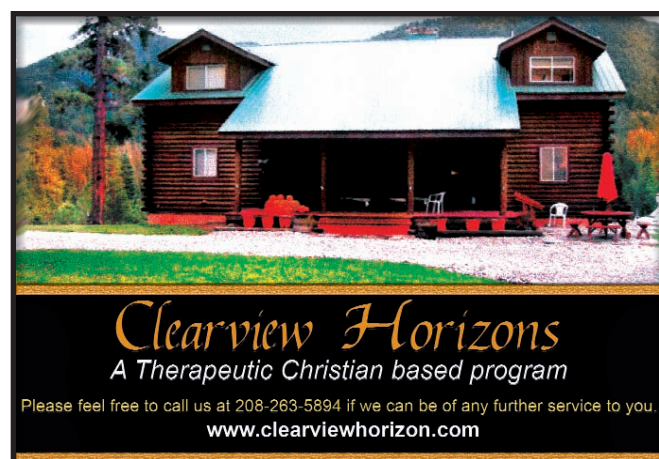
(February 9, 2007) Rogers Memorial Hospital, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, 800-767-4411 ext. 566, announced their Spring Continuing Education Workshops. The first, titled Advanced Issues in the Assessment and Treatment of OCD will be March 16, Understanding and Treating Self-Inflicted Violence-April 27, Practical Strategies for Treating Eating Disorders, also on April 27, and Treating Traumatized Children on May 11.

#### **MMS PRESENTS AT LEGISLATURE**

(February 9, 2007) John Mercer, Director of Mission Mountain School, Condon, MT, 406-754-2580, gave testimony to the Montana Legislature to assist the state of Montana in creating proper licensing for private residential schools and programs.

#### **ADIRONDACK LEADERSHIP IN THE NEWS**

(February 11, 2007) The Adirondack Daily Enterprise featured the activities of the Adirondack Leadership Expeditions, Saranac Lake, NY, 877-252-0869, an Aspen Education Group program, Cerritos, CA, in an article titled "Troubled teens must face themselves amid outdoor rigors."



#### **CALO WELCOMES ARMSTRONG**

(February 12, 2007) Ken Huey, PhD, CEO of Change Academy Lake of the Ozarks (CALO), Lake Ozarks, MO, 801-913-0688, announced the addition of Sarah Armstrong, to the admissions team. CALO works with youth struggling with issues of attachment, trauma, and affect regulation.

#### **ELK RIVER EXPANDS CURRICULUM**

(February 12, 2007) Beth Ragland, Vice President of Marketing, Elk River Wilderness Challenge/ The Pinnacle Schools, Huntsville, AL, 866-906-8336, announced that Elk River Wilderness Challenge has expanded the core accredited academic curriculum to include honors, AP and elective courses.

#### **SECOND NATURE FOOTSTEPS**

(February 12, 2007) Jason York, Admissions for Second Nature Wilderness Programs, Duchesne, UT, 866-205-2500, announced that Second Nature Blue Ridge, Blue Ridge, GA, has opened Second Nature Footsteps, for adolescents ages 11-14.

#### **SUWS THERAPY FOR ASPERGERS**

(February 12, 2007) SUWS Adolescent Program, Gooding, ID, 888-879-7897, announced in a press release on PR Web, they accept and work well with adolescents with Asperger's.

#### **AULDERN WELCOMES CLINICAL DIRECTOR**

(February 13, 2007) Debra Dombrowski, Communications Manager for Three Springs, Inc., Huntsville, AL, 256-880-3339, announced Stephanie Krone is the new Director of Clinical Services for Aulder Academy, Siler City, NC, 919-837-2336, [www.aulderm.com](http://www.aulderm.com).

#### **ISPA GAINS FIVE MEMBERS**

(February 13, 2007) Andy Anderson, Managing Partner of The Independent Small Programs Alliance (ISPA), Clearwater, FL, 727-512-9144, announced that the Strategic Business Partnership has been joined by five new member/partners. The new member/partners include: Gersh Academy/Gersh Experience of New York, the University of Miami Online High School of Florida, RedCliff Ascent of Utah, the Discovery School of Virginia, and Waterfall Canyon Academy of Utah.

#### **HOPE RANCH UPDATES PROGRAM**

(February 14, 2007) Jim Carpenter, Admissions Director for Hope Ranch, Whitefish, MT, 406-862-7871, announced they have re-written the program curriculum to include a 6-level "core curriculum", and have moved us from a 24-month, time-based program to a progress-based program averaging 17 months in-program.

Continued: Seen N' Heard/ pg 30

## **Seen N' Heard:** Continued from page 29

### **THOMAS STOPS BY WOODBURY**

(February 14, 2007) Randy Russell, Founder of SouLore, Sagle, ID, 509-671-1598, and Greg Hitchcock, Executive Director of Wilderness Quest, Monticello, UT, 888-929-2225, made sure to bring Amanda Thomas, Colorado Referral Relations for VIVE!, Boulder, CO, 303-449-2516, by the Woodbury office on her trip through north Idaho/ western Montana.



### **CALO TO OFFICIALLY OPEN**

(February 15, 2007) Ken Huey, PhD, CEO of Change Academy at Lake of the Ozarks, (CALO), Lake Ozarks, MO, 801-913-0688, announced the opening of their co-ed program for youth ages 13 to 17. Appropriate teenagers will be admitted into the program starting March 5th, 2007.

### **EYA OFFERS SUMMER CAMP**

(February 16, 2007) Karen Bonsignori, Marketing Manager for Eckerd Academy at Deer Lodge, Deer Lodge, TN, 727-461-2990 ext. 305, announced that Eckerd Academy will offer its first summer program for boys ages 13 - 17. The eight-week residential therapeutic camp will be held June 18 - August 10, 2007.

### **ASPIRO MAINTAINS PRICE LEVEL**

(February 16, 2007) Brian Church, Director of Business Development, Aspiro, Riverton UT, 801-979-6301, announced that despite increasing prices on other comparable programs, Aspiro is leaving their prices unchanged for the next year.

### **LASTMAN TO PRESENT AT NLD CONFERENCE**

(February 17, 2007) Janyce Lastman, Educational Consultant, Toronto, Ontario, 416-221-0057, advised us that she will be speaking at the 11th Annual Nonverbal Learning Disorders Symposium in San Jose, CA, March 16-17, 2007.

### **ROGERS CAC TO OPEN YOUTH PROGRAM**

(February 19, 2007) Beth Baus, National Outreach Representative for Rogers Memorial Hospital, Oconomowoc, WI, 800-767-4411 ext. 309, announced the Child & Adolescent Center (CAC) at Rogers Memorial Hospital will open a new program this spring for children ages 8 to 11.

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### **PARHAM TO HEAD NATSAP ED COMMITTEE**

(February 20, 2007) Ann Kozak, Marketing Specialist, Family Foundation School, Hancock, NY, 845-887-5213, reported that Sidney F. Parham, PhD, Vice President of Academic Affairs at the school, was appointed chairman of the Education Committee of the NATSAP at the association's board meeting in January. Dr. Parham was elected to the NATSAP board in November 2006 and has served previously on both its Education and Membership committees.

### **BETTON HOUSE COMPLETES 3<sup>RD</sup> SEMESTER**

(February 20, 2007) Michael A. and Roxanne Losicco, Directors-in-residence, Betton House, Scranton, PA, 877-723-8866, announced that the program ended its third semester of operation as a sober college dormitory and transition program with eleven students successfully completing the semester at Lackawanna College, Keystone College, Marywood University and the University of Scranton. Five of the students have moved on to other schools or into campus dorms, while six remain at Betton House for the spring 2007 semester.

### **ICR WELCOMES MENTORS**

(February 20, 2007) Guy LeGuyonne, Director of Communications for Introspections Costa Rica, 888-280-4227, announced Ryann Moore, MSW and Ashley Arthur have joined ICR as new members of the mentoring staff. Ryann earned her Masters Degree in Social Work from Portland State University and her BA in Social Work and Child Welfare from Florida State. Ashley came to ICR from SUWS Wilderness Program in Idaho where she was a head instructor.

### **HOMEWARD BOUND CEO RADIO INTERVIEW**

(February 20, 2007) Brad Matheson, Director of Enrollment at Homeward Bound Family Transition Management, Lehi, UT, 801-768-1441, announced that President and CEO, Tim Thayne was interviewed live on Utah radio station K-Talk (AM 630). During the interview, Tim shared his insight into the world of complete care for struggling teens and their families, from intervention to wilderness programs, residential treatment, out-patient therapy, and transition.

### **NEW RESOURCES AT VISIONS**

(Feb. 20, 2007) John Lieberman, Director of Operations at Visions Adolescent Treatment, Malibu, California, 818-889-3665, announced they had opened six beds in a new house for 12 to 17 year-old boys and girls with dual-diagnoses. They have also expanded their outpatient program with a sober high school called Scholastic Academy Visions (SAV).

### **GATEHOUSE RESIDENTS LEARN TO GIVE**

(February 20, 2007) Glenna Conway, Admissions

Director for Gatehouse Academy, Wickenburg, AZ, 888-730-0905, submitted a Press Release explaining that Gatehouse Academy now uses an "Adopt A Family" technique to teach their students the meaning of giving as part of their recovery process.

### **AOSNC ANNOUNCES MOBILE CLASSROOMS**

(February 20, 2007) Ryan Madamba, Executive Director of Academy of the Sierras, North Carolina (AOSNC), Brevard, NC, 866-364-0808, announced that AOSNC students are participating in a month-long expedition throughout Georgia and Florida, hiking, snorkeling, surfing and canoeing while also receiving diet and nutrition instruction, which are a fundamental part of the school's overall mission.

### **ISPA ANNOUNCES INDUSTRY AWARDS**

(February 20, 2007) The Independent Small Programs Alliance (ISPA), Clearwater, FL, 727-512-9144, announced the organization has established four awards to be presented to Professionals, Organizations or Schools and Programs annually. The first ISPA "Distinguished Service Award" was given at the ISPA Dinner Meeting on January 31, 2007, in La Jolla, CA, and was awarded to Woodbury Reports - Struggling Teens, Bonners Ferry, ID, 208-267-5550, presented by ISPA Managing Partner, Andy Anderson.



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