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## CHANGES IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

by Lon Woodbury



I recently attended a great conference hosted by Open Minds (June 6-8, 2012) in New Orleans called "Planning and Innovation Institute," or "An Executive 'Crash Course' on INNOVATION in Behavioral Health and Social Services." (OPEN MINDS is a market research and management consultation firm headquartered in Pennsylvania). In plotting out the changes expected in the next short while, the main reaction I had was, wow, things are sure going to be very different, probably even for the private parent choice environment. The main purpose of the conference was to offer some speculations based on current trends, so here are some of the trends the presenters talked about.

The overall summary is that in health care, including behavioral health care, many changes are happening that are a result of a "perfect storm" that will be industry changing in many ways. The major factors driving these changes come from: 1) evolving health care legislation, of which Obama care is only a part; 2) limited dollars; 3) escalation of costs; 4) providers wanting to increase charges; 5) the increase of parity between physical and mental treatment; 6) new populations; and 7) the increased awareness of autism.

A major portion of the increase in costs will be the recognition of the need to deal with behavioral health conditions that accompany physical health problems. This obviously will expand the call for behavioral health services in the future and can be a major opportunity for those that are prepared.

Their prediction is that health care thinking will continue to be more about managing populations and less about individual services. Along with that is the trend for health care in general, only 2-3% is currently private pay, and that share looks likely to decrease. That is health care in general, and I suspect that for behavioral health care the percentage of private pay would be higher, but it still shows how private pay has been largely supplemented by some kind of managed care.

If these trends continue, there is a possibility that private pay and parent choice could virtually disappear which would include the possibility that therapeutic boarding schools and wilderness therapy, which are now primarily private pay and parent choice, could be absorbed into some national system not geared to parents choosing the intervention for their children needing help. However private schools have survived for the last century despite attempts to expand the public school system to become a total monopoly, so it would be reasonable to assume some private therapeutic schools and programs and individual practitioners somehow or other would continue to exist.

Another trend that was presented was the increasing need for collaboration between providers and with other levels to survive. This does not bode well for individual practitioners like Independent Educational Consultants and small owner managed schools and programs. Perhaps, however, those professionals can survive and maintain most of their independence through some

CONTINUED: CHANGES/ 2

## CHANGES

strategic agreements or affiliations with other providers.

Another trend is the increasing need for statistics to prove effectiveness. Research of this type has always been important, but the demand for statistical proof is increasing and survival well might depend on having it.

Another trend is the movement toward electronic medical records, and making all that information easily available to all authorized providers. We all have all heard of inadequate health treatment due to incomplete records, and similar lack of important records or insights in the network of private special needs schools and programs all too often exist also.

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## COMMENTS BY ANDY ANDERSON, MRA

These trends are not new. Whatever changes, Obama Care etc. The need for small/smaller schools and programs and the fact that collaboration has always been there and has been viable as a strategy forever. It is the reluctance of people to trust, share, assist and work for the greater good that it has never been widespread.

I saw this most clearly when I was the Executive Director at NATSAP. Conglomerates looked down at and pushed the smaller schools and programs around. The little guys could not compete.

Go to a conference and try to get referral sources to have dinner and one would find out several groups were taking very large groups of people on huge outings, costing a small fortune. As the great Chief Tecumseh stated, a twig is easily broken, a bunch of twigs is strong.

Part of surviving and thriving is not just about legislation, limited funding, parity, escalation of costs, and the fact that increased diagnoses of autism and the spectrum along with new diagnoses are growing.

Economies of scale are not guaranteed and pure. My observations are that economies of scale can provide quality services, but it can also push profit mongering, weakened quality and loss of connection between students, clients and families.

Particularly in private pay, parents wanting the best for their children are seeking the right fit where they are most comfortable and assured of the service quality and delivery. Private owners of for- profits and not-for-profits can compete and survive if not thrive.

The push is on to solve this problem as a national issue.

According to Open Minds, Behavioral Health Care, driven by the changes in Health Care in general, is changing and the future environment for providing behavioral health care will be significantly different than it is now. The individual provider as well as small owner operated schools and programs will be severely challenged to survive, but in my view there is a good chance that those prepared for these changes can survive and still maintain enough of their independence to continue to provide parent-choice personalized services.

As to collaboration and alliances, one only need look at ISPA. A little less than eight (8) years ago, professionals of conglomerates and very large programs laughed at me and told me ISPA had no chance to succeed. They said I would not gain 5 members if I worked at it for five (5) years. We have 17 strong small and smaller members and may grow to twenty (our limit, no one else's). I have also turned some folks away who did not fit our standard, philosophy and our call words – "caring for families and their loved ones comes first, profits come second". If you work really hard, do things really well and truly know your market, customer care and customer service, you will be successful.

ISPA members are doing quite well. If the sky is falling or about to fall, Open Minds may be right. Maybe we should look up, but we are too busy helping improve our services and business practices and listening to those we serve, not to keep our eyes on the ball.

"Parent choice" says it all. There will always be lots of parents that will not sit back and let the government or large corporations direct and instruct their actions, decisions and lives, not so long as America truly is the land of the "free and the brave".

Sincerely,

Andy Anderson, MRA

Founder and CEO, Independent Small Programs Alliance

*Thanks Andy. It was ISPA I had in mind in talking about alliances and affiliations for small owner-operated programs. -Lon*

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## VISIT REPORTS...

### MONTANA ACADEMY

Marion, MT

Rosemary McKinnon – Director of Admissions

406-858-2339 ext. 223

[rosemarym@montanaacademy.com](mailto:rosemarym@montanaacademy.com)

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

Visit by: Kristie Campbell, BS Psy, IECA, on May 25, 2012

The Lost Prairie is an amazing valley in Montana, truly hidden from the highway miles down a backcountry dirt road. At a back edge of the large prairie, nestled in the hills of Western Montana sits the campus of Montana Academy, a therapeutic boarding school for troubled teens. Montana

Academy is considered among professional independent educational consultants to be one of the best in the network and on my visit, I could completely understand why.

Montana Academy was founded in 1997 by John and Carol Santa and John and Rosemary McKinnon. Together the four of them have created a program of healing for bright students who are talented and full of promise, yet struggle with exterior influences that hamper their maturity. Often they are misbehaving at home, struggling in school and/or dropping out of extra-curricular activities, etc. All of their families stand behind them, actively participate, and remain engaged in their children's lives while they are students at Montana Academy. Currently, John McKinnon and John Santa are Co-CEO; Rosemary McKinnon is Director of Admissions and Carol Santa

CONTINUED: **MONTANA ACADEMY/5**





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## MONTANA ACADEMY

is Director of Education.

We arrived at Montana Academy mid-morning to find a serene campus as the students were currently in class. As we walked up toward the main lodge that houses the administrative offices and the cafeteria, students began changing classes and the thought crossed my mind that this closely resembled a well-established college campus. Students freely walked between buildings throughout the well-maintained grounds and we could hear laughter and the sound of childhood playfulness echo off the surrounding hills.

Upon arrival, we met with Rosemary McKinnon, Director of Admissions. Rosemary's expertise in both the student and the family selection is impeccable. Staff knows the type of student they work best with and therefore the screening process is very thorough. Montana Academy is a school where matching the family with the program is as important to the administration as matching the student. The parent's role is critical. Parents must visit the school as part of the interview process before a student is accepted, and they must make a commitment to incorporate program components into their busy schedules. In addition, all students attend a wilderness prior to enrollment to help them settle down and work through any rebellious resistance.

After a brief walk through the administration building, we walked around the campus, taking a full tour of all the school buildings and residences. Montana Academy has a full sized multipurpose gymnasium complete with exercise equipment and sound proof music rooms. The school house itself has numerous classrooms for all academic offerings and there is an impressive library/ computer lab on campus as well. The newest building is a full counseling center with separate offices for each of the primary therapists, and conference rooms for group sessions and family workshops. The boys live at one end of the campus in a large dorm-style building, while the girls live all the way at the other end. Both homes were well-kept and organized, but as usual, the girls make their home more personal and decorated.

Rosemary discussed with us the different clans of Montana Academy as well as an important component called Sky House. In 2002, in order to avoid the mishap of regression after

graduation, Montana Academy implemented a transitional phase to their program. This transition from a protected ranch community back to what students call "the real world," provides ample challenges with the support needed to help them learn to succeed. All Sky House students enroll in college classes at the Community College and take internships or volunteer jobs in the community. Here they learn real life independent living skills. Currently 30 students live in the Boys' and Girls' Sky Houses in the Kalispell community.

In addition to excellent program components, Montana Academy also has a complete and professional lineup of staff. The clinical department is led by two clinical directors, Tim Corson, PsyD, and Nick Hong, PhD. Together they oversee all student case files and direct the clinical team. The rest of the clinical team involves both therapists and team leaders. Todd Cardin is the Director of Addiction Prevention and there is an MD and an RN on staff as well. All staff participates in several meetings per week to maintain open communication to keep everyone up to date on each student. Additional staff includes Team Leaders for weekdays and weekends, night staff, kitchen staff, administrative staff and teachers. Most of the teaching staff are Master's Level teachers, certified and well educated in their field of expertise. All of the staff we met were friendly; the students were obviously comfortable around them and yet displayed respect at all times.

The students appeared content and well-adjusted to life at the Academy. They were curious about us and at lunch, hung around us to ask us questions, and were eager to let us see who they were. The day we visited, the school

newspaper was distributed and all the students were curious to see what the "press" had covered and learn the news about their community. One thing that stuck out in my mind about Montana Academy is the information sharing that happens around the lunchroom. When someone has something to announce or celebrate, like a birthday, the visit of a parent, or a transition to a new level, they address the community and



## **MONTANA ACADEMY**

then make their announcement. Then the room erupts with applause and approval from the community. This creates a sense of genuine fellowship and draws visitors into the community as well.

Despite the fact there were 70 students and several adults in the cafeteria, it did not feel crowded or chaotic. The entire lunch gathering was extremely well-organized. Each group sat at their own table and, one group at a time, went to the buffet to serve their lunches. The food was made fresh, tasty with wide variety of healthy options. After meals, students have the opportunity to gather in a great living space adjacent to the

lunch room to relax and spend time with their group until their group cleans up their table.

We decided it was time to go, and as we walked back to our car at the end of our visit, I remembered why Montana is called Big Sky Country. Even in the mountainous area of the western side of the state the mountains open to reveal the sky and the entire area seems to be larger than life. The location, the staff, and the atmosphere at Montana Academy all promote a place of healing for these kids, allowing them to blossom into the young adults they will soon become.

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## **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.]*

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### **BRITEPATH, LLC**

Boise, ID  
Bradley Midgett, MA, MSW  
Director of Personal Development  
208-336-6025  
[info@britepath.org](mailto:info@britepath.org) | [www.britepath.org](http://www.britepath.org)

Britepath, LLC is an alternative, gap year program for college aged young adults who maybe struggling with academic challenges or feel like they are bored and restless, not knowing where they fit in or are searching for their place in the world. This program is not for those needing constant monitoring, but for those who have willingness to explore new ways of developing their own personal growth.

Bradley Midgett is one of the co-founders of Britepath, who initially started working with struggling teens as a wilderness guide. He then went on to earn two graduate degrees: Clinical Social Work and Intercultural Youth and Family Development. He has had his own private practice and ran his first international trip with young adults in 2001. Britepath's other co-founder and Director of Academics is David Nichols, who previous to opening this program, worked as a consultant and human resource professional. He then went on to join the Leadership School, as a teacher and found his new passion. David

has worked for a private boarding school for at-risk teens; as a private practice tutor and college admission coach and is a graduate of the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Rounding out this small programs team is Aida Hutz-Midgett, EdD who is the Academic Consultant. Aida is an assistant professor at Boise State University in the Counselor Education Department. Dr. Hutz was recently recognized at the 2011 Idaho Counseling Association Conference and was awarded the Volunteer Service Wing Award for leading by example.

This experiential program focuses on four areas of learning for the students: Interdependent living, Academics and Vocation, Exploration and Community integration. Students live in apartments with other students close to the university and public transportation, gaining necessary life skills and experiences. Students may enroll in courses during their semesters or gain vocational skills with the bustling town of Boise. International travel to Latin America is available twice a semester, where students contribute to those living in communities of underprivileged and learn that they can create positive change in the world, while also building self confidence and creating new and different types of relationships.

*[This information came from the Britepath website]*

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### **BRANDON SCHOOL AND RTC**

Natick, MA  
Timothy M. Callahan, Ed.D, Executive Director  
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Brandon accepts boys only that have a range of educational, emotional, and behavioral difficulties. Because of their difficulties, these boys have not been successful in public schools or in their communities. The boys range in age between 7 and 17.

Tim Callahan, the founder of Brandon School and Residential Treatment Center in 1966 has been the President and Executive Director for 28 years. Prior to Brandon, Dr. Callahan spent nine years developing and leading two public urban special education schools. Joseph Tondorf, MS, M.Ed, has served as the Chief Operations Officer at Brandon for over 18 years. He holds advanced graduate degrees in both education and counseling and served as teacher, counselor, and administrator within the Boston Public Schools for nearly two

decades. Brandon has been providing services to troubled boys and their families as a non-profit school and residential center. The goal of Brandon's treatment program is to move boys as quickly as possible to a less restrictive school and home setting.

The Brandon campus is located in Natick, less than 30 minutes from Boston. The campus located on a wooded 35-acres host walking paths, sports fields, gardens and various outdoor education opportunities. Facilities in the newly remodeled special education school include classrooms, full size gymnasium, computer room, conference areas, family spaces, and a full-service kitchen that houses our vocational cooking program. Campus residences consist of three colonial style homes designed specifically to house Brandon's stabilization/diagnostic services and specialty programs. Also on campus is a residential wing with single rooms, designed to accommodate boys needing enhanced structure and supervision. Off campus are three neighborhood-based houses where Brandon offers treatment in home-like settings.

*[This information came from the Brandon website]*





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The Special Education Expert advocates assist parents in determining if their children should be receiving special education services and then making sure each child receives the services they need. In many cases, they have helped parents to recover tuition costs for private school and residential placements. They represent clients at IEPs, SSTs, Due Processes Hearings, and Mediations as well as to Regional Centers, SSI, and state Mental Health, Disability & Insurance Agencies used to benefit students. They are able to help students and parents in all fifty states.

Two independent education advocates operate [Special-Education-Answers.com](http://Special-Education-Answers.com): Tim Runner and Jillian Bonnington. These experienced advocates work independently, but cooperate on some of their cases, especially when involved in Due Process.

Both advocates offer new prospective clients a free 30-minute telephone consultation.

You determine the level of service you need and they will provide it. Some of the services they provide on an hourly basis include: answering your e-mailed questions, providing telephone consultations, attending telephonically IEP and other meetings with your child's educators, attend in person IEP's and other meetings with your child's educators, perform a case review of your child's records and medical history, and file Due Process and represent your child at this hearing. They offer a special "Case Review" for a fixed fee to determine what course of action you should take given your child's school, therapeutic, and medical records. Upon completion of this review, they will present you with their recommended course of action including an alternative plan for you to follow.

The special education services available to eligible children are numerous. The Special Education Experts assist parents in finding what these services are and how to access them.

*[This information came from the Special-Education-Answers.com website]*

## SOBER ESCORTS, INC.

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Sober Escorts, Inc. is an escort service designed to assist individuals who are traveling to or returning from a treatment facility by providing a sober companion for the trip. Sober Escorts is not a transport service, but rather a companionship to assist and support the patient during their journey.

Director of Sober Escorts is Rick Parrish. All escorts undergo a background check before accompanying clients and all escorts are individually licensed and bonded.

After an individual has been released from a treatment program, the initial phase of re-entry into "normal" life can be very challenging after the structured, supportive environment of a treatment facility. Sober Escorts provides a companion who assists during this phase by meeting the individual at the time of discharge, making the trip back to their home with them, attending an AA or NA meeting with them in the first 24 hours of returning home, helping make the client's home a conducive sober environment, and providing additional support and encouragement. The escort can stay with the client as long as needed. Sober Escorts also offers to-treatment escorts to accompany clients on the way to a treatment program, as well as escorts for social events such as weddings or business trips where a client may potentially face a stressful or pressured environment.

*[This information came from the Sober Escorts website.]*

## SEEN N HEARD...

**Glenn Singer, MEd** is the new Assistant Dean of Admissions at the **Family Foundation School**. Glenn comes to FFS with more than 15 years of administrative and admissions experience serving small, independent schools.

**Shadow Mountain Recovery** continues to expand the educational offerings for our residents. They now offer both high school and college credits.

**Pacific Quest** is proud to announce that **Dr. Shelly Ham** has joined the staff as the new psychiatrist. Dr. Ham visits students in the field, and oversees all Adolescent and Young Adult students enrolled at Pacific Quest. Dr. Ham works closely with our Clinical and Wellness staff to evaluate the psychiatric needs and ensure safe and healthy treatment for our students.

**Linda Zimmerman**, Executive Director of **Sandhill Child Development Center** in Los Lunas, New Mexico is pleased to announce that **Dale Parker, M.A.** has joined the Sandhill

team as Deputy Executive Director. Dale brings over 16 years of clinical and executive management experience to his position. Prior to coming to Sandhill, Dale was the Administrator of Rancho Valmora in New Mexico, and an Assistant Administrator at The High Frontier in Texas.

The **36th Annual Foundations Recovery Network Conference** is just around the corner. Moments of Change: Innovations in Integrated Treatment will combine some of the most popular topics Foundations has offered across the spectrum that encompasses integrated treatment. The conference will be held at The Breakers in Palm Beach, FL, October 8 - 11, 2012.

**Stone Mountain School** has announced that **Louis Shagawat, LCSW**, is the schools new Executive Director. Lou has more than 25 years of experience in behavioral healthcare, specifically working with children and adolescents. He

CONTINUED: SEEN N HEARD/ 10

## SEEN N HEARD

offers a diverse background in executive leadership, direct practice, clinical consultation and program development.

**Newfound Recovery** Introduces **Cornerstone Womens House**, a 12-step recovery residence for women, geared to continue progress after successful completion of a 30-90 day inpatient program. The main objective is to help women stay sober as they begin to transition back into the real world.

**John Stewart, LCSW**, Executive Director of **New Haven**, recently stopped by the Woodbury office for a visit and a discussion. He also took a few minutes to video-interview Lon, a project InnerChange has been pioneering for several years.

Under the blue skies of North Carolina, 22 girls at **Aulder Academy** made the promenade walk around the lake to the site of their high school graduation. The graduating class of 2012 was accepted into some 53 colleges and universities around the country.

**Todd Fiske**, Executive Director of **Summit Preparatory School** in Kalispell, MT submitted a letter of introduction as he stepped into his new role at the school in July.

As a part of the Summer Passion Projects Curriculum at **Fire Mountain**, the boys chose to build a 16 ft. skate ramp. Passion Projects aim to reignite a love of learning and enhance abilities in the areas of inspiration, focus and completion.

**Expedition Therapy** proudly announces the addition of **Bridger Ogden, LSAC** as Substance Abuse Counselor. Bridger is a Utah State Licensed Substance Abuse Counselor who has worked in the field of addiction treatment since 2000. He is a graduate of the University of Utah, College of Social Work's Alcohol & Drug Abuse Treatment Training Program. Bridger recently received his "Treating The Addictions" Certification through the Harvard Medical School. He has worked with adults in an intensive outpatient setting as well as adolescents in residential treatment.

**CRC Health Group** responded to an article by Art Levine in **Salon Magazine Online** titled "Dark side of a Bain success."

The **Independent Small Programs Alliance** announced three new additions to the membership in ISPA. **Compass Rose Academy**, **Latham School** and **reStart** all joined ISPA in July 2012.

**Sandhill Child Development Center** announced the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (**SEVP**) has approved them for certification and enrollment in the Student Exchange and Visitor Information System (**SEVIS**).

**White's Residential & Family Services**, one of Indiana's largest and oldest nonprofit social services agencies, announced the formation of the **Compass Rose Academy**. It is with mixed emotions we share that one of our valued therapists, **Mike Hench**, will be leaving **Second Nature Entrada** at the end of August 2012.



**Saving Teens in Crisis Collaborative** is pleased to announce the addition of **Cathy Villines** to our team. Cathy will be leading our development efforts. In that role, her duties will include developing and managing partnerships between STICC and the treatment community, along with fundraising.

**Squaw Valley Academy**, located in Lake Tahoe, CA, has appointed **Rand McKellar** to the position of Associate Director of Admissions. Mr. McKellar will focus primarily on domestic student recruitment and

school publications. He is enthusiastic about the school's financial aid and ability to serve students transitioning out of therapeutic programs. Mr. McKellar comes to SVA from St. Johnsbury Academy in Vermont where he served as Marketing Coordinator before being promoted to Associate Director of Admissions.

**Forging Futures** announced its national launch today after six months of providing service in the greater Pittsburgh area. Forging Futures is designed to bring the services of family systems therapy, placement advice, addictions intervention, and aftercare services under one roof.

**Lakeview NeuroRehabilitation Center** proudly announces that **Noel Sullivan** has recently joined professional team as our new Executive Director, overseeing the New England operations.

**Alpine Academy** just completed the 5th Annual Alumni Reunion Weekend. This year's reunion attendance was record-breaking with almost double the number of returning students than the year previous. In all, with students, former parents, and current parents, nearly 300 people were hosted on campus for the festivities.

**WinGate** welcomes **Mary Lou Wise** and **Hal Tyler**. Hal Tyler, LAPC, is a Primary Wilderness Therapist at WayPoints for Young Adults and Mary Lou Wise, LCSW, is a Primary Wilderness Therapist at WinGate for Adolescents.

Parents, family and friends gathered together beside the beautiful banks of Oak Creek to honor the 40th Graduating Class of **Oak Creek Ranch School**.

**Four Circles Recovery Center** announced the addition of equine therapy to their adventure program.

**Rosecrance** is now offering evidence-based outpatient mental health and substance abuse treatment services in



McHenry County.

Students from **Shortridge Academy** in Milton, NH will spend this summer creating a new festival event for kids for the Non-Profit Woods, Water, and Wildlife Festival. As part of their Positive Youth Development program, Shortridge students volunteer regularly for such community support organizations.

**Montcalm School for Boys and Girls**, a private, therapeutic boarding school located in Albion, MI, has named **Kevin Wing** the Director of Counseling Services. Wing comes to Montcalm School from Starr Commonwealth, where he has spent 22 years in various roles. Most recently, Wing was Intake Director for Starr's residential programs in Albion, but he has also served as an outpatient therapist and an intensive in-home counselor working with children and adolescents.

**Legacy Outdoor Adventures** is starting a group for older adolescent boys. Since its inception last year, Legacy has been treating young adult males who are struggling with substance abuse and co-occurring mental health issues and those who have struggled to transition to responsible adulthood. The Legacy team is now ready to apply the Legacy program model to adolescents.

A 4th Circuit Federal Judge vindicates school credit and released time for students' right to receive a religious education. This story and more online.

## CONFERENCE CALENDAR

~ SEPTEMBER 2012

**September 13-16:** 70th AAMFT Annual Conference, Charlotte, NC, [www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org)

**September 19-22:** 24th Annual ATTACH Conference, Baltimore, MD, [www.attach.org](http://www.attach.org)

**September 20-22:** 18th Annual Counseling Skills Conference, Las Vegas, NV, [www.usjt.com](http://www.usjt.com)

**September 27-29:** Third Annual Process Addictions Conference, Atlanta, GA, [www.bfisummit.com](http://www.bfisummit.com)



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### PLACES FOR STRUGGLING TEENS™

published by Woodbury Reports, Inc.

**Lon Woodbury, Publisher** - 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*.™

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ISSN: 1540-3718



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