

# Hidden Lake Academy

From Fornits Wiki

Hidden Lake Academy (HLA) was a behavior modification facility marketed as a boarding school located on 830 Hidden Lake Road, Dahlonega, Georgia <sup>[1]</sup>

According to the website of the facility it was founded in 1994. According to NATSAP it is built to contain 175 detainees <sup>[2]</sup>, but the present number have dropped to about 55 <sup>[3]</sup>.

It is now known at Ridge Creek School.

## Operational status

Re-organized  
Ridge Creek School

*Checked September 30, 2010*

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## Program

The length of the program is stated to be 18-21 months according to the website, but detainees have experienced stays between 18-28 months.

### Intake procedure

Peer groups, the school's method of Group Therapy groups, start with about 14 students and 2 counselors. Students arrive at all times during the school year. Until 14 students have arrived to form a Peer Group, the students' time at the school does not count and a department known as Intake is responsible for them.

### Peer Group/Level system

Peer Groups are often merged when they have substantially shrunk from their original size. Like other institutions dedicated to improving behaviors, Hidden Lake Academy puts students through different developmental tracks. HLA does not base its levels on progress (with certain exceptions), but time spent; each PG progresses through different levels. The term levels here is a misnomer and again is a reference to behavioral modification. In fact, the truth is that each track is a reflection of common clinical stages of change. The tracks are known as Elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, and Galaxy.

### Consequences

An array or consequences may be given out to any student. Students can refuse any punishment, although the punishments will only get increasingly worse until they comply. punishments are as follows:

- **Calisthenics:** These may be given out at any time by any staff member. The student is first asked to perform twenty pushups, although with a medical excuse they may perform another exercise. If the offense happens in class, the student is sent out into the hallway where an assistant counselor conducts a constant PT session for all students getting sent out.
- **Zaps:** Also given out by anyone. students give up their dorm time to take a 20 minute walk around the lake. primo sexy time.
- **Work assignments:** Students give up activity time after school to join restrictions and perform labor which may include: picking up trash, digging, chopping wood, carrying wood, cleaning a building, setting up for events, or if there is no work, standing in one place or doing PT. One W.A equals two hours, if a student has a large number of w.a's they are put on restriction until they work them off. restriction staff then decide arbitrarily when the student has worked off his punishment.
- **Bans:** A student can be banned from talking, coming in contact with, passing notes, sitting next to or even looking at any student or staff member indefinitely. generally, this is applied when intimate relationships are suspects, or when students break the rules together. (e.g 3 students caught smoking together would be banned from talking to each other). can only be done by counselor. A former detainee state:

*I have to jump in here and clarify bans. I'll also choose to remain anonymous. I was dropped (changed to a more junior group) peer groups and then banned with all members of my previous group, all of my friends, so I know bans. Bans can last for days, but generally more like weeks or months. In my situation they lasted the entire rest of the program. Bans mean the person/people you are on bans with do not exist in your world. If they are brushing your teeth next to you and you smile at them that is definitely breaking bans and a restrictionable offense. All counselors, teachers, support staff and restriction rangers know who you are on bans with and watch to enforce this. Except for AA meetings and Group Realizations there is never a time where bans are lifted except if your counselor explicitly prescribes it. Bans can be used for more than just people. I've seen people put on bans with writing, drawing, calculators, books, sitting in certain spots and the color black. Bans are used to restrict the influence of anything that impedes your focus on the program.*

- **All HLA's:** students are banned from wearing anything but hidden lake uniforms. all their clothes and personal belonging are locked in their own closets. this can be done for any reason.

- **Staff Escort:** Students must be followed by a staff constantly. If on regular staff escort, you must remain within a few steps of staff at all times. at arms-length escort, you must be that close. one can also be placed on bathroom escort if one is suspected of purging or cutting whilst inside. staff must be present in the bathroom, and the student is asked to sing the alphabet or maintain a conversation. if concern is great enough, staff can request that the bathroom or shower stall door remain open.
- **Hygiene watch:** If you're dirty, you get this. staff must confirm by signing on a sheet that you brushed your teeth, showered, and wiped your ass properly.
- **Restrictions:** On weekdays, students gather after school. they get into two lines, one for each sex. they are forbidden from talking or looking at one another. between school and dinner, restrictions does hard labor and/or PT (physical training/calesthetics). while the student body eats dinner, restrictions stands outside in a line. then they eat dinner, but are not given seconds or dessert. after that, they are responsible for cleaning up the lodge. after that, restrictions usually either has study time, or more labor/PT depending on group behavior. group consequences are routinely given for individual behavior. they rejoin the student body at bedtime. On weekends, restrictions meets an hour before the student body wakes up, and is responsible for hauling all fresh sheets up the hill. This is also when projects involving intensive labor are done. this usually means clearing more trees from the lower left field, repairing roads/ditches, diverting streams, or picking up leaves and "gumballs" in the autumn by hand. Students can be given a restriction for any reason, including being suspected of "being up to something", not complying with other punishments, bad language, glorifying drugs, telling war stories, having sex, doing drugs, fighting etc. 2-4-day "wake ups" are given for the lesser infractions, while 5-7 day "fall-ins" can be given for any greater crime. in actuality, this is just a formality as students are kept on restrictions as long as the counselor feels is necessary. "leave em' in till there ready" culinary-style. The author of this article has personally witnessed a student stay on restrictions for 6 months straight. students are given a folder, in which every day they must write 4-7 pages about various topics. the first day's topics are standard, the rest are made up by the counselor or picked from a list. students are also forbidden from getting seconds or dessert at lunchtime.
- **Intervention:** To the writers knowledge this has been discontinued. for a short while, HLA would take the alpha-males of the student body and send them into the woods under RCI supervision for an intensive "expedition". It is more grueling than anything at Ridge Creek, the group is forced to carry a large dummy load around the mountains. they are led out, then told to navigate themselves to checkpoints. they are never told when they are coming back, only that it depends on their behavior. they often given little sleep, and forced to march in the dark, the rain, through snow and ice, the wet and cold. this was put off as not being a consequence, although at heart it was. it was a social engineering project gone bad. they hoped that whipping the alpha-males in line would cause a domino effect across the entire student population. in fact, it did the opposite; although there was less inter-fighting within the student body, by banding together the alpha-males were able to accomplish much more in terms of sex and drugs. On the Fornits Webforum a survivor states:  
(<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://fornits.com/wwf/viewtopic.php?t=16869&postdays=0&postorder=asc&start=10>)

*I will tell you all what goes on during an intervention, because I have been on a few. I will not reveal my name, but I will say that everything I describe comes from first-hand experience.*

*They first isolate a group of kids who have broken a rule (it ceertainley does NOT have to be a major one, sometimes its for bull shit like lying or manipulation) in the woods with nothing expect for the clothes on their back.*

*After sleeping outside with no padding or sleeping bag ( the group will get a ground tarp with hundreds of holes in it to share as a blanket if their lucky), they equip you with backpacks, half of them being broken. Then, each kid is given weights to put in their backpack, (5, 10, & 25 lb plates) despite their physical condition. Then they are given a few large objects, each weighing at least 150 lbs, to carry as a group. Wheter its 0 degrees or 110 degrees, we are forced to walk an average of 20+ miles a day with 3 or 4 feedings consisting of a small packet of rice, about 3 good mouthfulls. I added the calories up, and we were getting about 450-650 calories a day. We actually began hallucinating and thinking things were what they werent. Most of us lost at least 10-15 lbs, some even more.*

*There were several nights when it got well below freezing (these are the mountains you know), after it had been raining and/or snowing all day. So with wet shoes, wet socks, wet everything, we were forced to go to bed on nothing but frozen grass and our wet clothes long after sundown while it was roughly 20-25 degrees. Its amazing that nobody died; the only way we survived was by cuddling so close that it was like we were having sexual intercourse(our body heat kept eachother alive). We were supplied a torn up ground tarp as a blanket, because I truly believe that someone would have died if they didn't. While all this was going on, the staff who was monitoring us trailed behind us in an enclosed automobile with heat, hot choclate, music, food, etc. Sometimes they would even show us these things and laugh at our desperatness.*

*In the mornings we would wake up way before dawn with ice crystals in our hair and our clothes and shoes frozen solid. Typically the staff would switch out every day and the new staff for that day would wake us up by saying "GET UP; YOU HAVE 5 MINUTES TO BE READY." And if we didn't make our 5 minute deadline, oh boy, we were given anything between 10 extra miles to 200 extra pounds to carry. FUCK YOU MIKE DUNN YOU POWER HUNGRY PIECE OF SHIT*

*After at least a week of this, we honestly felt like we were not far from death. We lost feeling in our extremeties, looked and felt anorexic, and could barley walk without stumbling in pain.*

Those that do not progress according to the goals of the school and parents can be dropped into a newer Peer Group or sent to Ridge Creek (A Wilderness therapy program) temporarily. Postgraduates whom parents wish to stay extra time used to be known as a sixth element (Universe), but are now dropped into other peer groups.

## Notable alumni

Notable alumni from Hidden Lake Academy include:

- Late artist Dash Snow <sup>[4]</sup>

## In the news:

The facility is currently involved in a lawsuit <sup>[5]</sup>

## External Links

### Info page

- Info: Homepage of the facility (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://www.hiddenlakeacademy.com/>)
- Info: Hidden Lake Academy on Wikipedia ([https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hidden\\_Lake\\_Academy](https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hidden_Lake_Academy)), *Warning - revert war ongoing*
- Info: Hidden Lake testimonies (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://www.heal-online.org/hiddenlake.htm>) - HEAL-online

## Survivor groups

- Survivor Group: Survivor Group: Hidden Lake Academy (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://groups.myspace.com/HiddenLakeAcademy>), *Myspace*
- Survivor Group: Survivor Group: HLAGroup (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://groups.myspace.com/HLAGroup>), *Myspace*
- Survivor Group: Survivor Group: HLA (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://groups.myspace.com/HLA>), *Myspace*
- Survivor Group: I Survived Hidden Lake Academy in Georgi (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://www.facebook.com/2204904789>), *facebook*
- Survivor Group: Hidden Lake Academy Alumni (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://www.facebook.com/2369543524>), *facebook*
- Survivor Group: HLA Night Staff (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://www.facebook.com/2229108733>), *facebook*

## Message boards

- Forum: Forum: Hidden Lake Forum on Fornits (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://fornits.com/wwf/viewforum.php?f=41>)
- Forum: Message board about this facility on Fight Institutional Child Abuse Network (Fican) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://fican.freeforums.org/hidden-lake-academy-f15.html>)
- Forum: Hidden Lake Academy (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://amazingforums.com/forum/BS4/323.html>), a thread on Amazing forums

## References

1. ↑ The facility on Google Maps (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://maps.google.com/maps?q=34.628333,-84.071111&ie=UTF8&ll=34.627381,-84.070902&spn=0.008051,0.014462&t=k&z=16&iwloc=addr&om=1>)
2. ↑ NATSAP records on HLA ([https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://www.natsap.org/program\\_details.asp?id=40](https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://www.natsap.org/program_details.asp?id=40))
3. ↑ "Hidden Lake Class Action Hangs in Balance" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://www.thedahloneganugget.com/articles/2007/02/14/news/04%20hla.txt>), by *Matt Aiken*
4. ↑ Rebel artist met junkie's end (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/nation/story/EEDAED054AA259B9862576050000F317?OpenDocument>), By Alan Feuer and Allen Salkun, New York Times (Re-print from stltoday.com)
5. ↑ federal class action lawsuit against HLA and Len Buccellato on behalf of students who attended the school since January 1, 2000 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161221045530/http://bergermontague.com/pdfs/Hidden%20Lake%20Academy%20Complaint.pdf>)

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