

*"We were inspired to help troubled teens in a non-traditional, but effective, setting utilizing a natural setting, small group experience, constructive involvement, and a committed staff."*

*– James "Mac" O'Connor*

### **New Dominion School Virginia Serves At-Risk Adolescents for Thirty Years**

*This year New Dominion School of Virginia celebrates thirty years of helping troubled teens. The Three Springs, Inc. program situated on 550 scenic acres in Dillwyn, Va. serves adolescents with behavioral, emotional, and academic challenges.*

Approximately 1,800 troubled teens from throughout the United States, have successfully completed the outdoor therapeutic program since it opened in 1976. Providing 12-18 month programs for male and female students, the school assists young people ages 11-18 who present issues including anger, oppositional behavior, depression, substance abuse, and learning disabilities.

When asked what motivated him to establish New Dominion three decades ago, co-founder James O'Connor replied, "We were inspired to help troubled teens in a non-traditional, but effective, setting utilizing a natural setting, small group experience, constructive involvement, and a committed staff."

New Dominion School offers a year-round, structured daily schedule of activities and provides students with opportunities to build self esteem and to develop honest and meaningful relationships. A strong experiential education program includes a ropes course training, and extended backpacking and canoe trips. "The school serves a unique population of teens who do not require psychotropic medications to succeed in a program," said Ben Montano, New Dominion School Administrator, "It's an opportunity for treat-



ment providers, parents, and agencies to identify a student's potential to function without medications in a safe and natural therapeutic environment."

An accredited school, New Dominion provides an individualized approach and small classroom size, and accommodates students who are unable to succeed in public school settings.

"My first day at New Dominion was filled with uncertainty," said David Jones, New Dominion School's first student. "When arriving at the school I had no idea of how much my life would be impacted."

A member of Panaka, the original school "group," Jones continued, "Becoming a part of the group is the

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#### CONTACT US

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### **Three Springs Adds Four New Programs to Our Family**

The last six months have been an exciting time for Three Springs, as we have added four new programs to our family. **In Indiana:** TSI opened **Three Springs Englishton Park** in January of 2006. The program sits on a 300 acre wooded estate, just off the Ohio River in Southern Indiana. Englishton Park, named for Indiana statesman Capt. William English, serves boys, ages 12-18, with significant emotional and behavioral issues. Englishton Park, endowed by English to help troubled children offers a therapeutic,

educational community that creates an opportunity for self discovery and educational achievement for the children in our care. The estate offers numerous amenities including a newly renovated residential area, a fully accredited school, two lakes, hiking trails and new high and low ropes courses. **In Florida:** TSI assumed the contract of three programs serving children from the Florida Department of Juvenile

*[continued page 2]*



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## EDUCATION

### Three Springs Foundation Grants College Scholarships to Students

The Three Springs Foundation was established in 1992. Since that time it has grown tremendously and now grants thousands of dollars in scholarships to deserving Three Springs, Inc. (TSI) graduates. **The Jeremy Steven Blanton Scholarship Fund** honors a former TSI student who died in an automobile accident soon after graduating from the Paint Rock Valley, Ala. campus. The goal of the Scholarship Fund is to assist current and former TSI students in pursuing higher education. Scholarships provide tuition assistance at any technical, community, or four-year college. Once awarded, the scholarship is renewable, based on documented satisfactory academic performance. For more information about Three Springs including how to apply for a scholarship, please contact Richard Williams at richard.williams@threesprings.com

## Aftercare

*Once a child leaves a treatment program the challenges of life in the “real world” can be overwhelming.*

One of the most common concerns expressed by program graduates is that their families and friends cannot relate to their experience. The graduates have learned a new level of personal responsibility and those who do not understand can be critical of their desire to maintain habits learned in treatment.

Coping skills learned in residential treatment become difficult to maintain when there is a lack of understanding from the support systems outside the program. Most graduates attempt to struggle through this transition process for a time; however, without proper reinforcement new habits die and the adolescent discovers comfort in old habits and friends.

At Three Springs, we have found the most effective step beyond solid discharge planning is a system for free aftercare. We believe that every child needs a place to return to where they can tell their story and be understood, and because of this belief we offer Aftercare at many of our programs.

Graduates need the option of returning to a safe place where no one questions their language and people can relate to their experiences. An aftercare system that embraces these ideals should be both the responsibility and expectation of a healthy program. There are many ways that a system can be created, however at Three Springs we have found that aftercare will only work with a solid commitment made by the staff and program.

This ongoing commitment reinforces that relationships are genuine, that their experience was real and the changes they made were important. To ask for financial return on this would only undermine the philosophy that the investment in the family does not



end because the billing for services has stopped. Aftercare participants learn that mistakes are inevitable and that growth comes from honest communication, personal forgiveness and solid goals. The staff is able to keep aftercare participants coming back by continuing to nurture the relationship through good listening and solid advice not through judgmental attitudes and lectures.

Some programs may have a system in place to indicate that the graduate has completed post treatment goals, but even then some graduates will return to share and give back, which is always acceptable. The aftercare process is not timed; it is based on need. The graduate will generally know when they have their feet firmly on the ground, and when they have outgrown this process. The advantage this process brings is the empowerment graduates feel as they make their own decisions and become more autonomous.

*Adapted from an article written by Robyn Warner, M.S.*

## Four New Programs *[continued from page 1]*

**Justice. The Marion Juvenile Correctional Facility** is located near Ocala and serves high-risk young men. This is a secure, 42-bed program for boys ages 14-18. The **Withlacoochee Juvenile Residential Facility** is located just west of Orlando and serves low-risk young men. WJRF operates as a therapeutic community for 14-18 year old boys with a 3-4 month length of stay. The residents work weekly

at peer counseling and with the Department of Forestry on community restoration projects. **Union Juvenile Residential** is located near Jacksonville and serves young men at moderate risk who have been convicted of a sexual offense. This secure residential program serves 20 boys ages 12-18 and complements the three other sexual offender programs Three Springs operates in Florida.

# mind.body.spirit

FOCUS ON TSI STAFF

Erin Braley



## Old Friends — Letter from a Three Springs Graduate

*I was the second admission to the North Carolina campus, coded as B002. Before that, I spent a year at the Paint Rock Valley campus.*

I graduated in mid-1990 at the age of 16. I'm now 31 years old and living happily in Sarasota, FL. I'd be lying if I said that my life has been a smooth, flawless ride since my Three Springs days, but the teachings I picked up there have been a solid foundation of my existence. I learned important qualities and life steps such as being responsible for myself, not fearing success, self confidence, self reliance, and most importantly, Three Springs taught me the value of living life clean. I am now living in a wonderful southern home with a nice load of pets and two and a half acres of land. I work as the assistant Registrar for New College of Florida, the Florida honor's college.



After Three Springs, I found the motivation to finish high school and go on to receive a college degree. Although I wish I had kept these values close to my judgment for my entire post Three Springs life, I always seemed to go back to them. After a long haul, I find myself volunteering at different centers to help troubled teens and young adults, mainly by sharing my experiences with them. Although I can't pretend to know anything about what the kids are

into these days, I think I'm not too old to understand what they might be going through. It makes me very happy to see that Three Springs has expanded to so many campuses. A powerful program like that can be a saving grace in this day and age. I know many people will write and express how well the program has done for them and how well they have done

since leaving. I wanted to express that even with someone who graduated fifteen years ago and continued to have troubles doesn't have to give up on the teachings. Even through my continuing issues, I was able to lead myself through it to small victories. Just because you mess up doesn't mean you have to give up. Every client who goes through that program will come out with the same values. Even if they don't make the greatest decisions, they'll have the tools to pull through. Although I'm not president or

CEO of a major corporation, I'm also alive and not in prison. My life is a happy one and I don't struggle too much. I am able to share my experiences to help others and my attitude stays on the bright side for the most part. These things, I am very thankful for and owe a lot of my ability to pull through and make a life for myself to Three Springs. So, in short, thank you for everything you did for me and especially everything you do for others.

## New Dominion School *[continued from page 1]*

first step in changing and growing for all the members. It is a time when goals are set and then met. It is also a time of struggle which eventually leads to growth."

Parent conferences, support group meetings, and workshops assist parents in strengthening communication skills with their child.

Long-running outcome studies conducted of the New Dominion program have consistently demonstrated significant gains for students in academic accomplishment, behavioral and school adjustment, interpersonal skills, and leisure activities.



With a background in helping children with adoption issues, attachment difficulties and mood disorders, Erin Braley was a perfect fit when she joined the Three Springs staff at Paint Rock Valley (PRV) in 1993.

In 1996 Erin left PRV to pursue her M.A.; she returned to Three Springs as the Administrator of the Blue Ridge, Ga. program in 2000. She now serves as Regional Director of Operations.

As a Nationally Certified Counselor Erin trains teachers, therapists and non-profit organizations in dealing with adoption and other adolescent issues.

Erin graduated from the University of Michigan with a Baccalaureate degree in Sociology and from Eastern Michigan University with a Masters degree in Community Counseling.

### SPECIAL FEATURE

#### Did you know?

That over 70 of Three Springs employees have been with the company for at least 10 years? And members of the Senior Management Team average 15 years with TSI!

*Helping troubled children  
discover lasting solutions.*

www.threesprings.com

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THREE SPRINGS



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*— Greg Graham*

## Three Springs — IN THE NEWS

### *Three Springs Courtland Expands Facility*

In response to increasing demand for therapeutic services, Three Springs Courtland announced today the expansion of its intensive residential adolescent treatment center.

The three month construction project added room for seven additional children, ages 12 to 18, increasing the number of beds from 39 to 46. Those beds are now available to boys in need of residential treatment.

"I am very excited about the expansion of our facility - this allows us to serve a greater number of youth who are in need of our help," said Administrator Greg Graham. "The staff at Courtland is very caring and devoted to the treatment of these boys."

The program at Courtland provides two distinct therapeutic services; one provides treatment for boys with severe emotional and behavioral disorders. The other service provides treatment for boys who exhibit inappropriate sexual behavior. The two distinct popula-



tions are separated from each other and each receives treatment specific to their needs as administered by qualified staff members including teachers, therapists, counselors and nurses.

"With the additional bed space, we can provide more boys with the help they need," continued Graham. "After successful treatment, these children have a greater chance of living productive lives."