

Explanation of the petition

Dear Prospective Parents,

It is always and extremely difficult decision whether to bring up something that has been settled and proved to have no valid basis. Despite our trepidation to rehash the past, we feel that we have an obligation to address this issue. By doing this, we hope to provide you with a clear understanding of the situation that occurred.

In 2006, several parents filed a petition for a class action lawsuit against the school. The suit was simply a contract dispute; the parents wanting some of their tuition monies returned after their child attended Hidden Lake Academy (HLA). Despite a well orchestrated vigorous campaign by the plaintiffs and their attorneys to impose a negative effect on the school, very few parents joined the petition, and, predictably and ultimately the petition for certification as a class action was denied. The petition made no claims of harm or damage to a child. The claims made and reasons given were groundless.

Along with this petition a vicious, cowardly and unrelenting negative campaign was launched against HLA and the staff. Outrageous and untrue statements demeaning the school and staff were made. The sad reality is that there is no internet recourse, because there is no way to remove the written statements.

As the negative campaign unfolded it became very evident that the goal of the people involved was to discredit and to ultimately close the school by instituting as negative public relations as possible, creating as large a financial burden to the school as was possible, and by attacking the referral sources through fear and intimidation. There is no denying that the ordeal of an 18 month very negative campaign had an impact on HLA. By waging an unrelenting campaign of unfounded accusations and intimidation the plaintiffs' virtually destroyed our referral process.

Throughout this ordeal HLA chose to remain focused on the students and the program. HLA provides therapy, a fully accredited college preparatory program, and most importantly the opportunity for these children to get back on track with goals and objectives for the future.

In early 2007 Judge William O'Kelley issued a series of orders which dismissed all but one of the plaintiffs causes of action. While awaiting Judge O'Kelley's ruling on the last issue of class certification, the plaintiffs attorneys announced to our attorneys that they would not only file an appeal if Judge O'Kelley denied their motion for certification of class action, but would also resubpoena all our referral sources. They said that they would do this again despite the fact that Judge O'Kelley revoked these when they did it previously. An appeal would have continued litigation for almost two years. The plaintiff's attorneys then approached HLA regarding settlement of the entire case for a mere fraction of the amount they initially demanded. In order to move forward and be better able to serve its students, HLA agreed to a settlement of the case. Unfortunately, the small group of plaintiffs continue their harassment on the internet and there is nothing we can do legally to remove the slanderous statements Our attorneys have advised us to "rebrand". Therefore, HLA ceased to exist and a separate corporation Ridge Creek School was created.

Since the resolution of this matter, Ridge Creek School is rebounding with students once again enrolling. We are getting back on track; our referral sources are all back helping us to repair the damage that was done to the school. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to answer them.

Sincerely,
Faculty & Staff of Hidden Lake Academy

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