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

Windsor, New Hampshire
Rand Lounsbury, Admissions Director
603-478-5236
rlounsbury@wediko-nh.org
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 to16. 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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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 or call 516 625-0824 for more information.*

SOBER COLLEGE

West Hills, California
Robert "Rob" Gilson, CTC - Admissions Director
800-336-0053
www.sobercollege.com

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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