

VISITS...

NEW HAVEN RTC

Provo, Utah
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Visit by Larry Stednitz, March 1, 2007

New Haven is a residential treatment center for girls. The program is JCAHO accredited and licensed by the State of Utah as a Residential Treatment Center. New Haven is also accredited through the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools and the Utah State Department of Education.

New Haven accepts students who struggle with virtually all diagnoses, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, eating disorders, and borderline personality disorders. They exclude those students who are assaultive, psychotic, or pregnant. New Haven does not require psychological testing or wilderness treatment prior to enrollment.

During my visit, I met with Dustin Tibbitts, LMFTI, Executive Director, Laurie Laird, MEd, Education Director, John Stewart, LCSW, Clinical Director and Kristie Jensen, Admissions Director. Dustin has been with New Haven from its inception 11 years ago. The remainder of the executive team has been with New Haven for at least five years. New Haven has a wealth of experienced staff to carry out its mission. They recently increased their program by adding additional living quarters and have also recently purchased Sunrise Academy. All programs operate under a new corporation named Solacium.

The leadership expressed three main components of New Haven. These are: clinical sophistication, family focus, and values based education. The clinical team includes 13 Master level clinicians, and a psychiatrist is on grounds three days per week. Also included within the clinical staff are the clinical director and two assistant clinical directors.

Each clinician has only six students under his/her care. The choice of clinician for each girl is based on the "clinical profile" of each student. Each girl has standard individual therapy and a family session weekly. The numbers of sessions are modified depending upon clinical needs of the girl and her family. In addition, the family may have a different clinician for family treatment.

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NEW HAVEN: Continued from page 15

All girls participate in two processing groups per week as well as three additional specialty groups including adoption issues, trauma groups, DBT, equine therapy, art therapy, sexual reactivity, body image, life skills, recovery and emotions groups. The students also participate in an experiential/recreational therapy group four times per week.

As a core component of treatment, the academic program is held five hours daily. According to the school director, roughly 25% of the girls are impacted by ADHD, NVLD, dyslexia, and sometimes have multiple academic struggles. The school program is also able to enrich the academic offerings through drama and creative writing. With a rich array of treatments, New Haven stresses above all, that they are a relational program.

Family focus is the second primary focus. New Haven will not accept a girl if the parents are not closely involved. This includes weekly family sessions, with each family participating in a three-day family program every two months. Interestingly, the girls' progress is monitored by a level system, corresponding to their clinical progress. The parents also are expected to participate in a "parent" level system. Additionally, the family as a whole has requirements expected of them.

The third important component is the values-based education approach involving an extensive values-based curriculum. Both parents and the girls participate in this program offering. The goal is to "awaken" positive values and help families reconnect with strong values such as honesty, integrity, forgiveness, accountability and love.

My meeting with the girls made it clear that what I was told by the leadership team is being embraced by the girls. The girls I met with represented all levels, from the lowest to the highest, giving me a good cross section of students to talk with. I asked them what they thought about their treatment and progress. They were more than eager to talk about their relationships with staff. They stressed how individualized their treatment was. They repeatedly talked about their positive relationships with staff and how powerful these relationships were for their treatment. One girl said, "The staff members are much more like friends, except they know how to set limits." The other girls all chimed in, agreeing with how important their relationships were with staff. Another girl said, "They really do match the student with the therapist." I felt the girls' responses were genuine and represented a well-rounded cross section of population, all happy to be at New Haven.



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One thing I have struggled with regarding New Haven is the cost of them and other programs similar to them. These programs usually have a small group of students, typically fewer than 20. The daily charge is higher for smaller programs, compared to larger programs that may have 60 to 100 students. The reason is easily understood, as fixed costs can be spread over a larger number of students, resulting in lower cost to parents. However, New Haven additionally has a significantly higher number of staff available to work with the students. For 60 students, the program employs 100 full time staff and 75 part time staff, which is much higher than most of the less costly programs. Considering the very rich staffing made available to the students and their families, combined with the individualized services they offer, I now believe New Haven is worth the cost.

"Is it possible to attain true academic and personal success without addressing social, emotional learning skills? The accumulating evidence suggests the answer is NO."

~ Promoting Social & Emotional Learning, P. 3

CHERRY GULCH

Emmett, Idaho
Michael Ervin - Admissions Director
208-365-3437
www.CherryGulch.org

Visit by Linda Cain, MSED, November 9, 2006

Cherry Gulch officially opened on August 14, 2006, and is the collective effort of owners Dr. Andrew Sapp, Michael Ervin, Betty Ervin and Dr. Chris McRoberts. It has the maturity of a much longer running school, as everyone has years of experience and an extensive background in the therapeutic industry. Cherry Gulch was created to help boys attain their full potential and become pro-social young men through early intervention. Their focus is "Building Brighter Tomorrows for the Boys of Today." It is a ranch-style, therapeutic boarding school designed for 10 boys, ages 10 to 14 years old.

The typical student struggles with issues such as ADHD, anxiety, depression, bi-polar disorder, low self-esteem, learning differences, poor motivation, anger, oppositional-defiance, grief and loss, adoption, family conflict, and other behavioral or emotional

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SecondNature Wilderness Programs

Second Nature is a licensed treatment program that uses the wilderness setting in a clinically focused intervention to teach students accountability, communication skills and healthy emotional and behavioral habits. Treatment plans are individualized for each student and include flexible lengths of stay, single gender treatment, daily groups and individualized therapy sessions with doctorate level therapists weekly.

Second Nature works with students 13 to 17 with a range of emotional and behavioral issues including: Depression, Learning Differences, Oppositional Defiance, Attention Deficit, Attachment and Substance Abuse Disorders. Typical students fail to respond to limits and rules, act entitled, choose the wrong friends, underachieve, have low self-esteem, experience a decline in performance and may be experiencing parent-child conflict.

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