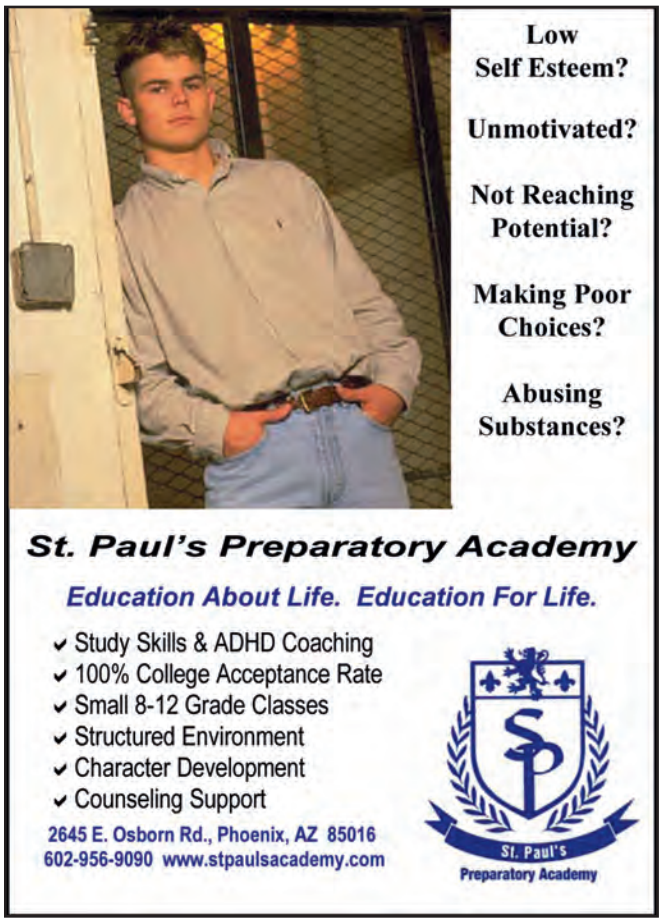




SUMMIT: Continued from page 13

to acknowledge that they had a girl or boy friend, but of course the school placed clear limits on any physical manifestation of the relationship. The issue became a clinical issue in the event the boy or girl had difficulty handling even this type of relationship. They were open and shared their reasons for being at Summit and discussed the progress that they had made. Across the dining room, it sounded like any normal high school at lunch time.

Because the professional and life experience of a program director tend to dictate how the school is run, Rick and I discussed his background and experience in detail. We first discussed the anomaly of Summit being a not-for-profit school which is unusual in this industry. Eighty percent of the programs west of the Mississippi are for profit. Rick felt that being non-profit allowed him and his staff to focus more directly on the student's needs. There were also other important benefits for Summit including the opportunity for Summit and their Board to apply for and receive an eight million dollar low interest loan supported by the Rural Development entity in Montana through the Department of Agriculture.

Summit is a certified school, accredited by the Office of Instruction through the State of Montana. Because of this certification, the non-profit status allows students from Summit to attend the Montana colleges and universities as residents. It also allows Summit students to compete with other local school districts in athletics and other competitive activities. Currently, Summit students compete in soccer and track and staff expects students to become competitive in swimming as well. Summit Preparatory School is accredited both by the Montana Department of Education and the Northwest Association of Schools; is registered with the State of Montana Board of Private Alternative Adolescent Residential Programs; is a full member of the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs; and is a member of the Child Welfare League of America.

To gain a greater understanding of the man in charge of the school, we discussed a few of Rick's previous experiences in the field. Rick and his wife, Jan Johnson, MSW, Associate Director, both graduated from the University of Illinois in Chicago, a well respected school for social work students. Rick's first work in Montana was in Missoula as the Director of St. Patrick's Hospital at the inpatient facility. From there, he was recruited to start Pathways Treatment Center, an inpatient psych and chemical dependency facility connected with Kalispell Regional Medical Center, and was its first Administrative Director. He