TAKING LICENSING TO NEW HORIZONS

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My family was in show business and, years ago, they took me to a Broadway musical in which the lyrics of the show-stopping song went something like this, "I am what I am. I bang my own drum. Some call it noise. I call it music." I recall these lyrics because anyone who knows me describes me as a person who bangs her own drum and, sometimes, I can be noisy. I question authority, especially when I feel it does not seem valuable or necessary.

This brings me to the much discussed questions these days of licensing and designated standards. It may seem odd that I, who believe so much in independent thinking, feel that licensing for therapeutic programs is both valuable and necessary. Let me explain.

I believe that being a former student of Rocky Mountain Academy, an emotional growth school, has been the biggest gift of my life. Rocky Mountain Academy (which is now closed) was formed and run by some wonderful, creative and "outside the box" thinkers. These people were visionaries looking for alternative ways for kids to grow and learn. It was a program with strict rules and regulations. I fought a great many of them, but when I was there, I knew that the people into whose care I was placed deeply cared about me and my growth. Fifteen years later, I found myself in the same industry that I, as a teen, fought tooth and nail not to be part of.

Now, older and somewhat wiser, I myself am running an outdoor emotional growth therapy program. It is called "New Horizons for Young Women." It is small in size, but large in commitment and integrity – a nine week program, only for girls age 13 to 18. We have 31 employees. It is not a boot camp nor a punishment program, but rather a structured environment in which young girls can grow in self esteem and responsibility. We have licensed therapists as well as wilderness instructors who believe in emotional growth. In short, I wanted to have, what I call, a therapy meets emotional growth environment. Some people had an issue with this philosophy because they felt one couldn't combine "regulated" professional therapists with "out of the

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I need this for?" they patiently explained how it would help our program. We did our best to show CARF just what a good, reliable and responsible program New Horizons is.

At first, CARF gave us accreditation for just one year. But after two years, we obtained the three-year accreditation. We are very proud to have this accreditation.

The reason I am writing all of this is to say that, although I consider myself independent and usually against all the red tape and bureaucracy, I feel our licensing has enhanced our confidence, that we are doing the right thing and, just as important, reassures the families of our girls that we are careful and responsible. These are no small matters.

The lessons I have learned through all this is parallel to my own life lessons and to the philosophy of New Horizons for Young Women:

- Standards and boundaries give you guidelines, which alleviate anxiety.
- When you alleviate anxiety, you have more energy for creativity.
- People have respect for others with standards and boundaries.
- Conforming does not mean giving up your own standards or boundaries.
- When authorities you must deal with know that you have qualified licensing, they are more apt to listen to you and to "hear" you.

In summary: I feel that our licenses and accreditation minimize risks and better prepare us for difficulties which may arise in programs and schools which deal with children at risk. They do not interfere with personal growth. They certainly have not interfered with mine but have, instead, helped me and my dedicated staff to grow and understand the complexities of the work we have chosen. I still bang my own drum but, with the help of others, the drum beat is getting louder and may indeed even lead to a glorious crescendo.

When an adolescent (or a person of any age, for that matter) begins to avoid his old friends and activities, it means that he is under a great deal of inner tension and should have psychiatric help.

~ Dr. Benjamin Spock

CLAN OF THE HAND

Third Honors Program Held by Redcliff Ascent
By Judith E. Bessette

As the sun set and the cool night began to unfold in the high desert area near Enterprise, UT, five men began playing drums – a selection entitled *Djabe* – signaling to those who had assembled that the third *Clan of the Hand* ceremony was about to begin. The *Clan of the Hand* is an honor society designed to recognize men and women who have made a significant contribution to working with troubled youth in a wilderness setting.

The evening activities were centered at the Outpost, a special place RedCliff has built for teaching outdoor skills to students as well as a place to hold ceremonies like their End of Trail graduation programs – and unique programs like the *Clan of the Hand*.

Guests followed the drummers, led by Clinical Director Dan Sanderson, PhD (Dr. Dan to those who know him) and were seated around a roaring fire in a pit at the Outpost's outdoor amphitheater. In a moving ceremony, George Church and Ken Stettler joined 2003 honorees Doug Nelson, Larry Dean Olsen, Ezekiel Sanchez, Larry Wells and David Wescott and 2005 honorees Kay Harris and Keith Hooker as the newest members of the *Clan of the Hand*.

While most of those previously inducted are well-known names in the outdoor and therapeutic world, this year's honorees share in being more behind the scenes – but every bit as important to the wilderness movement as their fellow *Clan* members.

George Church was one of the original four partners that breathed life into SUWS, managing the fledgling business's finances and recruiting its first students His work is all the more remarkable when you realize that his only outdoor experience was a ten-day Winter Survival Course he completed while in the Air Force! George's son Brian, who accepted the honor on behalf of his Dad, continues the family tradition of working in the therapeutic world to improve the lives of troubled teens and their families.

Ken Stettler spent 30 years with the State of Utah Department of Human Services, working both directly with troubled youth and in administrative capacities. Ken worked tirelessly to get state standards passed in Utah that protected children in outdoor programs while insuring that the rules were

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