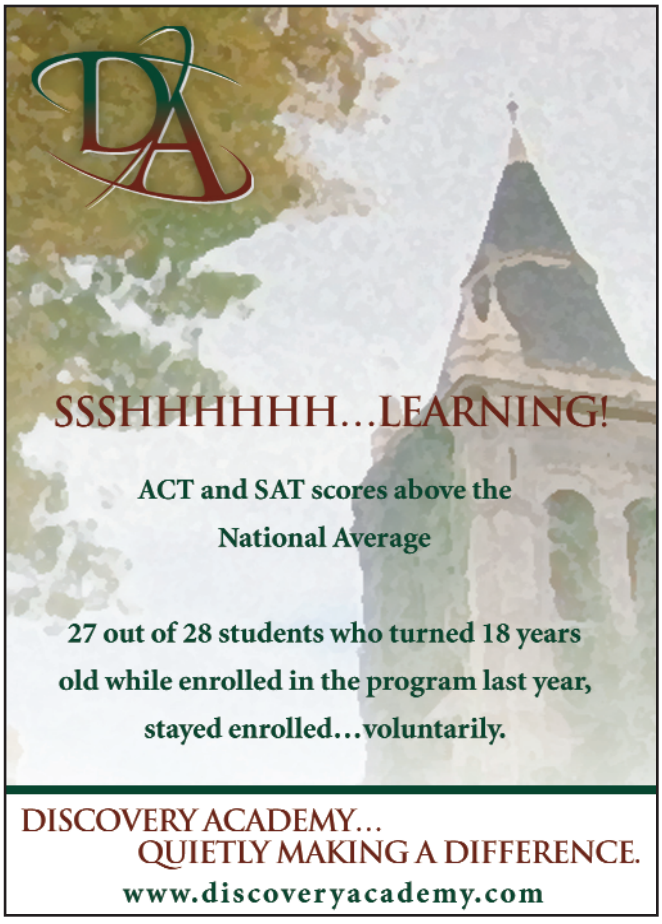
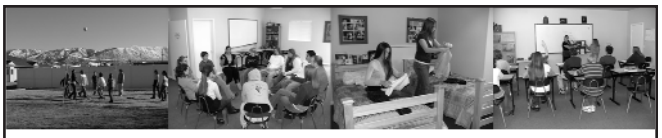
parents with an "Other Son." The author describes how they tried the police, a voluntary treatment program and the courts, among other things, with no positive effect. In all these attempts, they learned that he had his "rights" which the law demanded be respected. Many of the people they looked to for help understood what was happening, and sympathized with what the parents were trying to do, but their hands were tied by the law. The author in an anguished cry asked about the rights of others he was abusing and if anybody gave any consideration regarding the responsibilities he was shirking. The response was at best an ineffectual expression of sympathy from all sides.

The third level is a detailed description of what it took to get his attention and gradually bring their real son back to life, out of the self-centered, pleasure-oriented, irresponsible "Other Son." After all these failed attempts, what finally worked was a private boarding school that works with children with these attitudinal and behavioral problems. Called Everest and placed in Connecticut in the book, in reality it is a long time boarding school in Maine called Élan. Élan (Everest) follows the model of a therapeutic community where the main curriculum is to teach the students to be responsible for their actions. Their main tools in accomplishing this are a tight structure (where, contrary to most youth institutions, consequences are immediate and appropriate) and utilization of a positive peer culture.

This book is probably the best description I have read of how a therapeutic community works in the lives of real people. What she describes regarding therapeutic communities is a key ingredient for success that has been adopted by many of the successful therapeutic boarding schools in the private parent-choice network of residential schools and programs for struggling teens. The ideas of a therapeutic community have heavily influenced not only Élan, but many other schools including John Dewey Academy in Massachusetts, the now closed CEDU schools in California and Idaho and all those schools with key staff heavily influenced by what they learned at CEDU, which is a significant percentage of the successful schools and programs in this network.

This book is more than just another chronicle of a family in crisis caused by their teen in crisis. It is also more than just a description of a family lucky enough to happen to find a specific school that worked for their son. It is an indictment of public attitudes and resulting public policy creating rights for irresponsible teens that parents and society can't handle, and it is an insightful description of a workable solution, which is the whole idea of a therapeutic community. Any professional working with struggling teens would benefit from reading this book and understanding the underlying concepts the author spells out so well, whether or not they agree with them.

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Center for Troubled Teens

Youth Care is an adolescent, residential treatment center set in a home-like environment for youth ages 11 to 18 who are experiencing academic, emotional or behavioral problems including substance abuse.

Our intensive, therapeutic residential treatment for troubled teens is licensed to treat youth and adolescents with such issues as:

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- Self-Destructive Behavior
- Physical/ Sexual Abuse
- Thought Disorder
- Learning Disabilities
- Substance Abuse
- Poor Self-Esteem
- Family Maladjustment
- Pregnant Teens acceptable

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