Physical Education or therapy.

Therapy tends to be self-directed with a common problem to be worked on being the labels each girl brings with them to the school. Each girl participates in therapy groups three times a week, along with individual work on the issues they have identified in themselves with staff who emphasize nurturing the strengths and insight each girl has developed. Common issues addressed at the school are ADHD, ODD and anger management. Students with serious diagnoses such as Bipolar Disorder and Asperger's Syndrome might be considered for enrollment if those conditions are effectively controlled by appropriate medication. However, in general the school is not appropriate for girls with serious emotional problems if considered runaway risks.

The school's philosophy is that working with parents is vital to the healing of their daughters. The goal of the school in working with parents is to help the parents be ready to receive their daughter back home and support her in her new insights and self-awareness. The girls are in regular contact with their parents throughout their stay and parents are invited to visit the school frequently and share in their daughter's successes or struggles.

My impression from my brief visit was a healthy and positive environment that would do well for girls with common core issues. They are in no way designed for girls with serious clinical problems, but are doing well with girls with mild learning differences, mild depression, ADHD, ODD and OCD.

SOMMERSET

Springville, Utah
Brent Esplin, Admissions Director
800-848-9819
www.sommersetprogram.com

Visit by Larry Stednitz – November 3, 2008

Sommerset is a residential treatment program developed by Provo Canyon School. Although the program was originally developed for early adolescent boys in 1993, they moved to the current Springville, UT, campus in 2007 and added a complementary girls' program in June of this year. The program is specifically designed to work with boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 14. These young people struggle with behavioral, emotional and educational issues. Appropriate admissions criteria include self injury, poor peer relations, and parental conflict. A full range of diagnoses are accepted including Bi-polar, anxiety, social delays, depression, aspergers, ADHD, ADD ODD OCD and post traumatic stress disorders. Rule outs for Sommerset are those with significant run histories, severe assaultive behaviors and sexually reactive behaviors toward peers.. Students are described as behaviorally, emotionally and physically delayed.

Intellectually, students are selected on a case by case review and Sommerset will accept students with an IQ of 70 and above. Students with specific learning disabilities can be accommodated.

The program is housed in a 65,000 square foot facility that includes four cottages with a capacity of housing 32 youth each. The program currently has 42 students and is projected to eventually have a census in the 80's. Located in the valley in view of the Wasatch Mountain Range,

Continued: **SOMMERSET/** pg 12

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SOMMERSET: Continued from 11

Sommerset has a rural feel and offers ample space both in and out of the buildings.

The program leadership includes Jeremy Cottle, PhD, Chief Executive Officer, Brad Gerrard, Chief Operating Officer and Larry Winn, MS, LMFT, the Clinical Director. Dr. Cottle has his doctorate degree in philosophy, education and supervision with a minor in marriage and family studies. He is also an LCSW and has been a program director and therapist for five programs prior to Sommerset. Brad began his career in the early 90's at North Idaho Behavioral Health. Following NIBH, Brad served as the Director of Business Development for Provo Canyon School and for Universal Health Services. Brad has also worked with Aspen Education Group as the Director of Business Development.

Larry Winn formerly worked as the clinical director for early adolescents at Provo Canyon School for four years and has twenty years experience working as a clinician at Provo. Larry reported that this young population requires a different approach than the older adolescent. Slight but important adjustments have been made. For example, the program has employed more female staff, emphasizing the importance of nurturing. Sommerset uses quiet rooms instead of time out rooms for self-soothing and de-escalation. The building was formerly built for an older adolescent population and the program is currently in the process of "downsizing" and transforming the various furnishings to meet the needs of a younger population.

Sommerset uses a multi-disciplinary approach to treating its young adolescent population, with licensed therapists, a Board certified psychiatrist and RN nursing staff who are on site seven days a week. The clinical director said that the overarching philosophy underlying treatment includes relationship based approaches and mood regulation work. Specifically, the treatment includes medical management, individual weekly therapy, weekly family therapy via telephone, on-site family visits, gender specific groups, recreational therapy including winter and spring overnight trips and weekly leisure activities such as swimming, fitness, snowshoeing, rope courses, rock climbing, fishing, skiing, and bowling. Recreational therapists oversee all therapeutic recreational therapy activities.

The year-around academic program covers higher elementary and middle school, grades 5-9 and includes gender specific classrooms. The teacher to student ratio is 1 teacher to 6 students for the elementary classes and 1 to 9 for the middle school. The individualized academic program includes special education services and year around programming. Fifty percent of the Sommerset teachers hold special education credentials and the other fifty percent are in process of obtaining them. Upon admission, each student is given a standardized achievement evaluation to pin point academic needs and to have a pre-and post treatment evaluation tool.

I toured the facility and was able to meet with a boy and a girl both from California. The girl had been at the program for only one month and the boy for eight months. "Mary" told me that she liked Sommerset and her only complaint was that she was used to more people in her life. Sommerset made it harder for her to "hide" and to do what she wanted to do. She said there were too many rules and

