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BOULDER:

Overall, I was impressed with the feeling of participation and enthusiasm I saw among BCA students. My student/client talked excitedly about his various expeditions, especially his first time dog sledding. In addition to hearing about snowboarding, I saw photos of BCA students kayaking in Alaska, hiking in Glacier Park, and receiving equine training in the nearby indoor/outdoor arena. The students appear to be having fun and engaging in academics.

Having visited BCA many times, I was surprised at how the recent changes have created even a more enthusiastic feeling on campus among staff and students. I also realize the challenges sometimes encountered by students at this school are consistent with learning and developmental issues and social skills that are not well developed. BCA staff appears well suited to help students academically and emotionally to overcome their dysfunctional coping mechanisms and develop more effective ones. Director Paul Johnson expresses a willingness to continue developing and expanding their approach, rather than simply relying on the progress they have made in the past.

SYCAMORE CANYON ACADEMY

Oracle, AZ
Kathy Shingler, Admissions Director
800 390 7425
info@sycamore-academy.com
www.sycamore-academy.com

Visit by Larry Stednitz, January 27, 2009

Sycamore Canyon Academy, a program of Rite of Passage, was founded in 2008 and is located on twenty acres approximately thirty minutes outside of Tucson, Arizona. Rite of Passage is a not-for-profit organization that has worked with youth throughout the country, typically from the juvenile court system. Although Sycamore Canyon opened its doors just two years ago, they transitioned several staff members who have lengthy experience with Rite of Passage. Unlike its parent company, Sycamore Canyon also works with private pay youth and has eight youth funded privately and twenty youth funded by Pima County Probation Department. The program accepts "softer" youth from the Department and carefully screens those that they accept. Sycamore Canyon administration is committed to offering services to the youth of Arizona. The typical length of stay is between four and nine months.

The director is Ike Shipman, MSW. Ike has over 12 years working with troubled families and youth. His wide ranging experience includes being a teacher, coach, therapist, case manager and program director. It was apparent that Ike is thoughtful and well experienced. Throughout my visit and inquiry into the program model, the program is well thought out with several "best practices" components.

The students, aged twelve to seventeen, typically have shown oppositional behavior, histories of alcohol and drug abuse, and involvement with negative peers in their communities. Many may carry a wide range of diagnoses including conduct disorder.

As one would expect in working with this population, structure is very important. There are three broad goals: to help youth break old habits and develop a healthy routine, good nutrition and normative life style choices. Accountability is carried out with high expectations of the students, and the program implements a modified positive peer culture which has been recognized as a viable approach to working with this population. The students are never out of sight from staff members. The program implements three phases, each phase resulting in more privileges and freedoms, with students moving from large open dormitories to individual rooms as they reach the highest level.

Guided groups are held regularly, as are scheduled team meetings to deal with day in and day out functioning of the program. The students can call "spontaneous" groups to deal with student or staff concerns. Individual therapy is available to the students, but group work is stressed. The therapist works closely with the students through psycho-educational life and coping skills. This component includes "best practices" in order to improve their life and coping skills.

Included in this approach, Sycamore Canyon implements a program called Pathways which addresses issues such as anger management and alcohol and drug abuse as well as self discovery and skills to make changes in their lives. Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is a multi modal psycho-educational intervention designed to increase pro-active choices in their life and assists youth in managing their behaviors. The overall therapy program uses a cognitive behavioral approach.

Family work is important. The families who live in Pima County attend a parent seminar and visit every other week. They are on the telephone with the case manager weekly. The program uses another "best practice" used in parent seminars. This program is called Active Parenting which is designed to increase family cohesion and reduce family conflict. The parents who live outside of Arizona are expected to attend four parent meetings within a year they are at Sycamore.

Another treatment focus is their fitness program. The components of this focus are regularly scheduled calisthenics, running and, when ready, participation in cardio-vascular work on a circuit course. Eventually, all students are required to run three miles within thirty minutes. This program component is designed to develop confidence, discipline and improved overall health.

Education is offered in a variety of ways. The classroom teacher ratio is one to fifteen. They are well organized and provide traditional education, as well as experiential and computer driven course work. Special education services are provided as Sycamore Canyon has several students with IEPs. The program offers computer programming for academics as well. This school component allows a student to begin a course which he can continue at home on his own computer after leaving the program.

Part of Sycamore Canyon Academy's academic program is the Sonoran Desert Curriculum where students have the opportunity to enroll in college level seminar classes at the community college. The focus of the Sonoran curriculum is to teach the history of southern Arizona. Students also

CONTINUED: **SYCAMORE/** 12



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High Frontier is a non-profit Residential Treatment Center for emotionally disturbed adolescents, ages 12 to 18, with a documented history of severe behavioral and/or emotional problems who cannot be served in a less restrictive environment.

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- Pregnant Teens acceptable

Students live in a home-like setting, which includes living rooms, bedrooms and a large family kitchen. In this residential setting, students learn the value of chores, positive interactions with others, and developing family relationships.

YOUTHCARE

For further details contact:
Youth Care, Inc.
PO Box 909, Draper, UT 84020
800-786-4924 or 801-572-6989
www.youthcare.com

SYCAMORE:

collaborate with local archaeologists to learn about those who lived there around 780 AD. Metaphorically, the students learn the local place of which they are a part, expanding this concept to learn their positive role in their own community. Trail maintenance and other community based services are also offered.

Sycamore Canyon is licensed by the State of Arizona Department of Economic Security. The program operates an on-site charter high school accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

I took a tour with two of the boys, one from California and one from Arizona. Wearing their highest levels letter jackets, these boys were courteous, knowledgeable and well groomed. They discussed the program components of the program and were obviously in sync with the staff's descriptions. One was excited about the possibility to return to the program as an intern. The boys were able to articulate the group work, the family sessions, and knew the three phases in detail, including how to move up to phase three and express clearly what was expected of them. Not surprisingly, the running program was their most difficult part of the program. Both boys discussed their fears of going home and staying away from negative peers, but they also talked about how much they have learned and their hope for a better and more productive life.

> If you have to demand it, you probably haven't earned it.
>
> ~ Anonymous

SEEN N' HEARD

SAFE HARBOR CELEBRATES 15 YEARS

(January 5, 2009) Safe Harbor, a treatment center for women in Costa Mesa, CA is excited to be celebrating its 15th Anniversary. They announced the addition of Dr. Tami Brannon-Quan, PhD, MFT, and CAS to their treatment team. Dr. Brannon-Quan, who specializes in the treatment of women with eating disorders and body image issues, has co-authored the book "Love Your Body: Change the Way You Feel About the Body You Have." For information on Safe Harbor, contact Stephanie Fierman, VP of Public Relations at 205-533-0737.

ELK MOUNTAIN ACADEMY CELEBRATES 15 YEARS

(January 15, 2009) On January 15, Elk Mountain Celebrated its 15th Birthday. Elk Mountain Academy, founded by Carl and Loretta Olding in 1994, is a small program in Heron, MT, for boys and is a member of NATSAP and the National Association of Independent Schools. For more information, contact Carl at 406-847-4400.

SPRING CREEK LODGE CLOSED

(January 16, 2009) Spring Creek Lodge in Thompson Falls, MT, originally opened almost 30 years ago by Nancy and Steve Cawdrey, closed its doors January 9, 2009. The Lodge, which once had over 500 students enrolled, was a residential boarding school for adolescents with drug, alcohol and behavioral issues. Enrollments over the past several years had dwindled down to less than 50.

7th ANNUAL WILDERNESS THERAPY SYMPOSIUM

(January 20, 2009) The Call for Papers for the 7th Annual Wilderness Therapy Symposium's deadline is March 1, 2009. The Symposium will be held September 11-13, 2009 in Boulder, CO. For specifics and more information, contact Rob Meltzer.

MOODRIDGE STUDENTS' MUSIC ON LIVE RADIO

(January 20, 2009) While taking some students on tour of the radio station at Southern Utah University to explore vocational opportunities, the radio host invited the girls in to talk on the air and

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