

Places for Struggling Teens™

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"It is more important to get it right, than to get it first."

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Why Parents Flee Public Juvenile Facilities

By Lon Woodbury



One of the most common fears I hear from parents looking for help for their struggling teen is the fear that their child will wind up in the juvenile justice system. Many will do anything they can to avoid that fate for their child.

Why do so many parents have this fear?

Parents read and hear a constant drumbeat of horror stories about what sometimes happens to children placed in these public programs. The following are just a few of the stories I have run across lately while surfing the net as a sample of what parents are hearing:

- In July, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported a suicide at a public "psychoeducational" school for emotionally disturbed children by a boy who had such a horrible time at the special public school, that he hung himself. According to the article, students there were frequently placed in an "Isolation Room," were spanked, restrained and criticized. The title of the story was *Death Highlights Lack Of Regulation At 'Psychoeducational' Schools*.
- In August, a 20-year Canadian study following 779 low-income youth in Montreal found that children who entered the juvenile-justice system even briefly "were twice as likely to be arrested as adults, compared with kids with the same behavior problems who remained outside the system." *Why Juvenile Detention Makes Teens Worse*.
- And then there is the study released last March tracking Los Angeles juvenile offenders over seven years. *Most Adolescents Placed into Group Homes Still Involved with Drugs or Crime Seven Years Later*.
- Finally, there's the story of the death at a Florida Boot Camp run by the State which we have followed for three years where a young man was "disciplined" for alleged "malingering" his first day and died the next day at the hospital. It was reported that there had been 182 complaints of abuse at this facility with little or no action taken. However, in this 183rd incident, the "discipline" was on video tape. To me and to most casual observers, the discipline could better be called a beating. Even then, it is likely not much would have happened until two legislators forced the state to release the video. Once the video became public, this became a national story and action was finally taken, resulting in the facility being closed.

On the other hand, the news is not all bad. Some juvenile justice systems seem to be doing what they are supposed to do, rehabilitating the young people and preparing them for responsible adulthood. See, for example, Julia Steiny's article *Vermont's Juvenile Justice System Bucks Nationwide Trend*. The difference, according to Steiny, is that the Vermont system rejects the nationwide trend toward punitive methods and instead focuses on "treating" rather than "punishing" bad behavior, calling it "restorative justice."

With all these horror stories of what happens in public juvenile facilities, it is no wonder so many parents fear for their children when they are involved in behavior that might bring them into "The System." These parents are

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> The classification of (mis)behavior as illness provides an ideological justification for state-sponsored social control.
> – Thomas Szasz

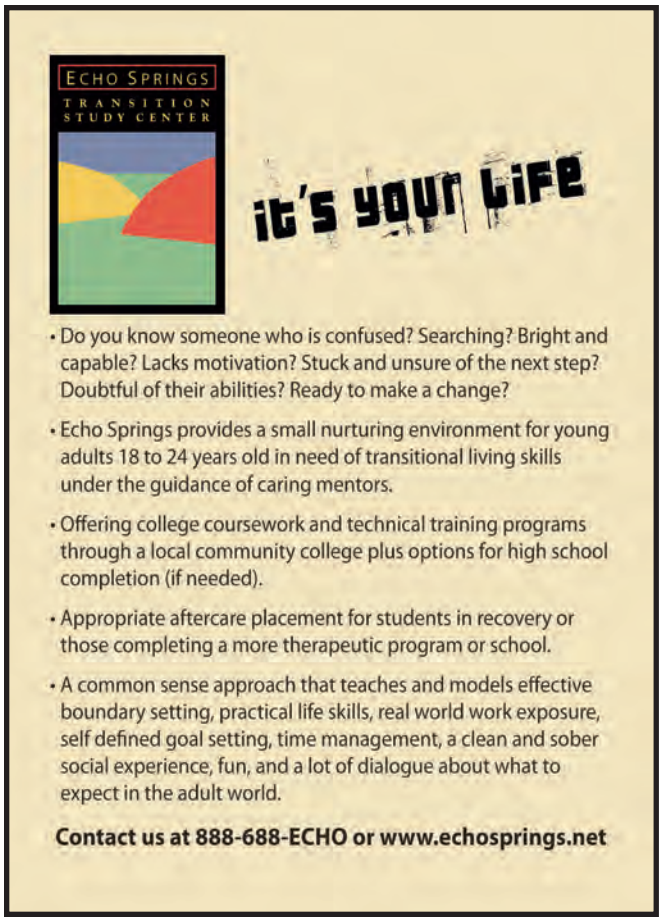
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SnH:

Let Me Go, on PBS's POV (Point of View) series. The kids who attend Mulberry (most of them boys) can broadly be described as having attachment disorders, with some having Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD). "Hold Me Tight, Let Me Go" introduces five of Mulberry's students over the course of a year. Contact Cathy Fisher or Cynthia Lopez at 646-729-4748 for more information.

Directorships at New Lifestyles

(July 24, 2009) New Lifestyles, Winchester, VA, 540-722-4521, has announced their current directorships at the school: Pamela H. Throckmorton, PsyD, CAC, CCAS, Vice President/Licensed Clinical Psychologist, who served as Clinical Director at New Lifestyles for the past eight years; Matthew V. Bruffey, PsyD, Clinical Director of Specialized Services/Licensed Clinical Psychologist, who began his tenure at New Lifestyles almost four years ago; Paul M. Hill, PsyD, Director of Assessment/Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Sherri M. Yoder, PsyD, BCBA, Clinical Director of Program Services/Resident in Psychology who is anticipating her license as a clinical psychologist in September 2009 and Jonathan A Young, BA, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, who previously served as Program Supervisor. To learn more about New Lifestyles contact Jonathan Young at ext 221.



Pacific Quest's New Component: Malama

(July 24, 2009) Marney Sullivan, Admissions Director at Pacific Quest, Hilo, HI, announced Pacific Quest has acquired a new camp and has added a third branch to their program: "Malama" in which students who have completed Kuleana and Ohana (steps 1 and 2) will move to the new camp located closer to town and will focus on their transition, community service and leadership. Call Marney at 808-937-5806 to learn more.

Teens Show Link between Recession and Substance Abuse

(July 25, 2009) Phoenix Outdoor, Old Fort, NC, 877-305-0904, reports their addiction staff has observed more teens are expressing concerns and stress about how the economy is impacting their families, with studies showing stressed teens are more likely to experiment with drugs and alcohol, struggle in school and act out at home or in school. Teens are using drugs/alcohol as a way to escape their problems and worries rather than just to have fun or to fit in.

White Rock Academy Shut Down By State

(February 20, 2009) The Salina Journal reports White Rock Academy, a residential treatment center for troubled adolescents ages 11 to 18, was ordered shut down by state health officials due to several violations including their license being suspended after inspectors on three different occasions found emergency exit doors locked after being ordered to remove the locks, failing to provide mental health, drug and alcohol treatment to meet the level of care needed by the residents and charges that out of state youths did not have state authorities' permissions to be admitted to a Kansas facility.

Camp Twitch & Shout for Kids with Tourettes

(July 27, 2009) CNN reports on a weeklong summer camp for adolescent's ages 7-18 years old who struggle with Tourette syndrome, a neurological disorder which causes them to make noises and tics that they cannot control. Brad Cohen, 35, who struggled with Tourettes syndrome himself as a child, is now an elementary school teacher and the camp director. They recently celebrated the first year of Camp Twitch and Shout in Winder, GA, where the kids have plenty to do, from swimming and fishing to music and arts and crafts. Most have been teased or harassed in school, and the camp is a place just to have fun.

Brinkman House Opens

(July 27, 2009) David Brinkman and his wife