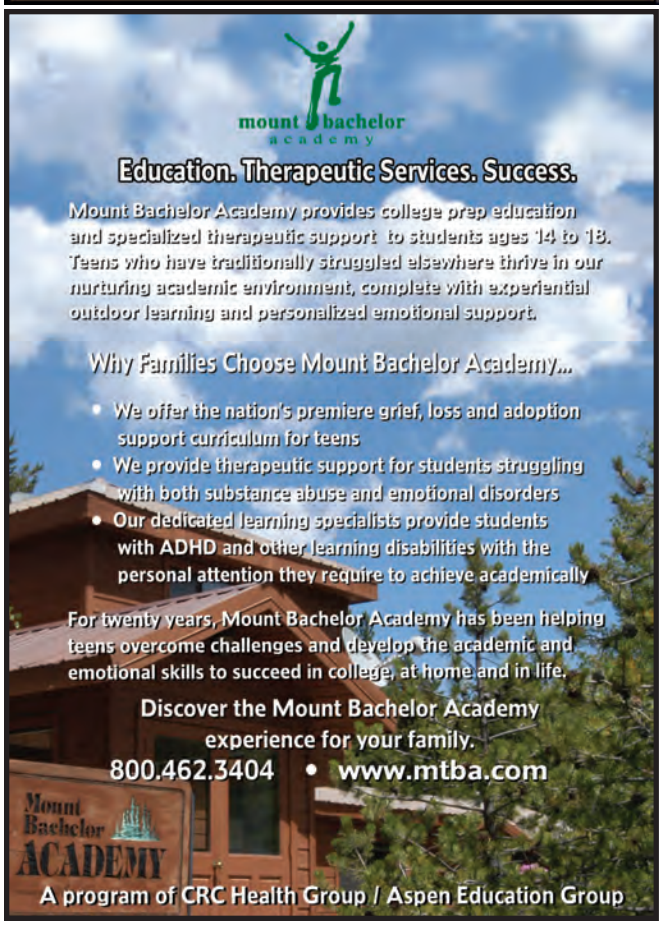




Soul Continuum

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Soul Continuum is a new program that offers International and domestic therapeutic adventures for young adults ages 16 and over. They may be struggling with family conflict, low self esteem, anxiety or depression or have been diagnosed with PTSD, NVLD or ADHD. Also appropriate for this program are young adults in transition status such as those between programs, including graduates of wilderness programs, residential treatment centers or therapeutic boarding schools who may be in need of a structured option or for those who may be having a difficult time leaving the nest or individuals experiencing difficult stage of life changes such as moves, divorces or death.

Owner and founder, Emily Phillips, a graduate of the Utah State University, started Soul Continuum in 2009. Emily has worked at Aspen Youth Alternatives as a field specialist, Tahoe Turning Point group home, Island View and Aspen Institute. Assisting in the field is Michelle Murphy, LCSW, who specializes in child and adolescent care. She worked as a therapist in both private and public practice. Lisa Hampshire, LCSW, who has worked with families for the past 15 years, is the coordinator for the weekend retreats.

This program offers 28 day therapeutic interventions overseas, incorporating service projects, adventure, language and cultural education with exposure to different economic situations, different societies and religions. Participants explore their past, present and futures and learn to overcome fears through self discovery and relationship building while exploring such places as Nepal, Peru, Thailand and Croatia. Also offered at Soul Continuum are weekend retreats designed to reconnect relationships for Mother/Daughters, Father/Sons, Couples, Siblings and Alumni. Individual therapy, group therapy and activities are designed to target these connections with a wide and varied menu of activities to choose from.

[This information came from the Soul Continuum website and brochures, in addition to correspondence with Emily Phillips.]

EXTENDED INSIGHTS...

Happy Days at Cherry Gulch

By Sonja Rhodes

So, I went to work and was met at the lodge stairs by the little boy (fairly new) who said "Ms. Sonja, can I go out to the horses today???!!!!" In his face, I saw this look of doubt, or worry, or anticipation. His little eyebrows were raised and his forehead wrinkled with question.

I asked "Well, how are things going for you today?" And he said "Pretty good, I haven't gotten into too much trouble." So I said that he could probably go, his face lit up and he ran across the room, then back and asked "Can I get ready?" The shift manager said he could go because his behavior had been fairly good so I sent him off to get ready.

I found another boy to go with us and off we went—-happy chatter all the way to the horse barn warming my heart.

We brushed, cleaned hooves and saddled. This boy did it all with such care and constant questions "Is this right Ms. Sonja? Did I do it good? Oh... Thank you!!!" Smiley, smiley, smiley..... And lots of anticipation of getting on, but we had to wait till all the horses are saddled, and for him it must have felt like an eternity!

Finally we headed up to the arena and he was instructed on how to get on the horse safely and how to direct the horse... His horse was Lucky. His FAVORITE horse, in fact, he told me, Lucky was his BEST friend! They understood each other, he said!

So I instructed him as he told me "Yeah, I know—-I rode at other schools I went to" but Lucky wouldn't go forward. We discussed some things, gave him a little more slack in the reins, shifted his energy forward, and looked where he wanted to go... Finally he was off, but it was a bumpy start. The horse chewed his bit, walked very, very slowly (mirroring the boy's energy that was stuck on idle without his knowing it)... The boy said that this horse just wouldn't listen, what was wrong with him?

I said "Well, it's not really that he won't listen, it is just that you don't understand each other yet." I continued to give instruction and he continued to work really hard to figure it out, yet I could see the concern in his face. This was so much work, he thought. Why isn't this working? He wondered.

Then the other boy that was riding got called away for an outing. Disappointed, the other boy slowly got off his horse and walked away, head hung—-yet obedient and polite, saying he'd ride the next week.

This left the little boy on Lucky with all my attention. I was able to keep his focus and reveal the simplicity of horse language. Simple, yet so complex, I suppose.

This boy found his focus; he watched and mirrored the way I rode. I showed him a way to just pick that rein up the tiniest bit and turn the horse. He was happy, it was no longer work.

Another boy came out, and began barrel racing. So this young boy on Lucky followed and learned the pattern. As he did I gave him more little tips, toes up, back straight, focus—awesome! Perfect! Great job!!!!

And next thing he was trotting and then loping and he was in harmony with his horse. His face was covered with a smile that spread from ear to ear!

Another boy came out and joined us too; they loped around the arena together. The other two boys eventually tired of riding but this boy wanted to stay forever! He rubbed Lucky's neck and talked softly to him as they walked around together cooling down. He came over and asked me "So do you think I did ok today?" I told him "You were amazing, I am very proud of what you learned—it wasn't hard anymore was it? It became really easy didn't it?" He smiled and said "Yeah it did!!!! And it's sad, because at first it was really hard and I thought about giving up on him. I'm glad I didn't—he's a really good horse, he and I are good friends—we understand each other."

This little boy went on to unsaddle, put everything away, straighten the boot area, and help with all the animal chores and then went on to coach a boy in the lodge who was bent on negativity... And I noticed no matter how that boy pushed him away and tried to continue to be difficult, this young man stayed with him and coached him to a better place.

How rewarding to be a part of such growth and learning. It never ceases to amaze me how a horse can teach a lesson in a day that would take people months to do simply because we're willing to listen to the horse.

God bless the horses, and God bless the little boys.

About Cherry Gulch: *Andy Sapp, PhD, is Founder and CEO of Cherry Gulch, a ranch-style, therapeutic boarding school designed specifically for 10 -14 year old boys. Cherry Gulch's supportive, encouraging and respect-based approach is designed to build students up— rather than tear them down. Cherry Gulch is passionate about providing early intervention and prevention to help boys reach their full potential and become well-rounded, pro-social young men. They are dedicated to providing outstanding therapeutic and academic services to students and their families, accomplished in the context of a safe environment working toward "Building Brighter Tomorrows for the Boys of Today." Dr. Sapp can be contacted at 208-365-3437 ext. 502, DrSapp@CherryGulch.org, www.CherryGulch.org.*

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