

with questions. At present, both students were sexual abuse victims. Although therapy with this group will be geared toward helping the boys process this and all their issues, it is not presently intended to be a sexual abuse victims' facility.

At present, the academic curriculum is through National High School, a SACS accredited curriculum. All classroom time is supervised by certified teaching staff, and immediate help is available from the teacher and tours online at NHS. Eagle Summit is in the process of developing its own academic curriculum and will be seeking licensing through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Accreditation will be sought through the most appropriate accrediting body.

Adventure based trips will fill many weekends and will include, but not be limited to, hiking, canoeing and white water rafting.

Monthly on-campus Family Weekends are scheduled. Parents and other family members will be able to spend the weekend engaged in structured therapeutics with their son, other students and their families. Families prepare meals as a family unit. There is no extra charge for these activities and families can stay on campus at no charge. Eagle Summit is able to transport visiting relatives to and from campus as part of their tuition.

GREENBRIER ACADEMY FOR GIRLS

Pence Springs, WV

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Visit by: Lon Woodbury, June 25, 2009

The drive onto the 140-acre property is impressive, from the manicured lawns to the towering "mansion" dominating the property from the top of the hill. The "mansion" is the heart of the school with administrative offices, lunch room and many classes and dorms there.

The "mansion" is about a century old and has a timeless feel to it. It has had a checkered history: at various times it was a resort, a penal facility for women, a hotel, a speakeasy, and now, a school for girls. It is spacious, and feels well lived in, with a charm from a past era.

On the tour I could see the rest of the grounds were also well cared for. Toward the back of the property were housed the horses. All the girls participate in equine therapy and also have the choice of riding and caring for the horses. Next to the equine complex is a very sturdy Yurt which is used for a variety of group functions, including drumming.

During the tour, I could see groups of students moving from class to class and others sitting on park benches busy with their studies. All seemed to be in good spirits and serious about their academics. In an interview with a few of the students, the girls spoke of their plans, spoke highly of their experience at Greenbrier and seemed confident. The girls seemed safe enough to be open and relatively comfortable, considering they were meeting a stranger. All in all, my experience at Greenbrier was very pleasant and the environment felt positive. Incidentally, most of the students come there from successful wilderness programs, which allow them to start working the program quickly.

My first interview was with Karen Hurt, the Academic Director. The school conforms to the West Virginia

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recommended curriculum and is based on four years of four core subjects: English, Science, Math and Social Studies. Hurt explained that their focus is on developing critical thinking with a broad integration of academic and experiential education through a theme approach. Important in each theme is an expanded understanding of differing points of view.

Recent common themes have been: "What is Truth?" (i.e. Hamlet) and "Enjoy the Summer." Integrated as part of the common theme of each trimester would be Art (Student art work covers the walls), African Drumming (earning music credit), and working with various animals (falconry for example is one option available). A wide variety of experiential approaches are utilized and integrated in with the other classes. In addition to the ones I just mentioned there are also group trips, reader-writer workshops, and many physical activities.

A discussion with Founder L. J. Mitchell covered the highlights of the major concepts behind the program. Working with Brent D. Slife, PhD, at Brigham Young University, they developed the concept they call "strong relationality." The assumptions inherent in its theory about human nature and human relationships guide the major part of the program of the school. One way of explaining that is the importance of the presence of virtue in relationships, present, past and future. The goal is to help the girls learn how to aspire to have virtue in all five types of relationships. Of course this includes relationships about how a girl feels about herself.

The Five relationships are identified as Trust of Self and Others, Respect of Self and Others, Humility and Honor, Courtesy and Compassion, and Empathy and Forgiveness. These are presented as the Five Aspirations of Relationship. Each of the courses is well defined and described with each girl

with specific behaviors that will indicate increasing mastery. During their time at the school, each girl is focusing on one of the Aspirations of Relationship, moving among them based on what she needs.

The first Aspiration a girl starts to work on is Respect. In all five Aspirations, they are broken down into more specific guides or objectives called "TOTES." A TOTE is a written plan as a guide to learn the virtue of that Aspiration and the TOTES accompanying it, with each TOTE having an objective agreed upon by the therapist and student. There are four to seven TOTES for each Aspiration, with the student working on one TOTE at a time. As you can see, this concept of Strong Relationality permeates every aspect of the students' lives while at the school.

Another aspect of this theory is the idea of strong and weak relationality. Weak relationality is a relationship that is the means to an end (I'll be your friend if you give me something), while a strong relationality itself is a goal. In practice, at the school, a student's obstacle becomes an objective for a TOTE.

The idea is to work on the beliefs of the students regarding who they are by creating a context and experience to provide a threshold experience that ruptures the false beliefs with which the students arrived.

There is considerably more to this, but if you are interested in digging deeper into their theory, L. J. Mitchell will be happy to supply an ample supply of research regarding or relating to this. A search engine search on the name Brent D. Slife will also bring up all kinds of information that relates to his philosophical perspective that has formed the program at Greenbrier Academy.

From my brief visit, the theory seems to be working and girls are maturing well at Greenbrier. It belongs on a list of girls' schools that consultants and parents should consider.

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