MOUNTAIN SPRINGS PREPARATORY ACADEMY

Cedar City, Utah
Jon Larsen - Admissions and Head of School
435-691-1934
info@mountainspringsprep.com
www.mountainspringsprep.com

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Mountain Springs is a co-ed private transitional college prep high school which usually has about 22 students ages 14-18. It is located in two, two-story buildings on the outskirts of Cedar City, Utah. They are a CERTS program (Certified Educational, Recreational, Therapeutic Schools and Programs), under the same ownership as Moonridge Academy, La Europa Academy and Kolob Canyon RTC.

We were met by John Larson, Head of School, who also handles admissions. After a brief orientation, several students met with us to explain the school as they saw it and answer our questions. They acted like typical teenagers in every way, positive about their school experiences and proud of their grades, which they told us were better than before they had enrolled in Mountain Springs. From their comments they all were very busy with studies, community activities, doing things with their friends, or enrolling in college courses in the local community.

The students then took us on a tour of the buildings, obviously excited with the opportunity of showing off their school. Everything was clean and neat. As lunchtime approached, the smells from the kitchen were heavenly, although on this trip we ate lunch elsewhere. The dorm rooms were comfortable, clean and picked up, yet still had the comfortable feeling of being lived in.

Larsen emphasized that Mountain Springs is a private high school. They see themselves as a transition or step-down school that prepares students to return to mainstream society through their academics and community involvement. Almost all the students had come to Mountain Springs Prep from a wilderness program, therapeutic boarding school or an RTC. However, by design, there are no therapists on staff. If therapy is needed, the school helps parents contract with local therapists or psychiatrists who are familiar with the uniqueness of this school. The staff sees themselves as mentors, with one of their main functions being developing relationships with the students to maintain and solidify the level of stabilization achieved in each student's previous program.

Mountain Springs Preparatory Academy is also a community-based school where students are strongly encouraged to be involved in community activities as much as possible. Days are filled with academics, responsibilities around the school and joining community activities.

The constant activity we saw and the positive attitudes of the students were impressive.

