clothing, were neatly hanging at the end of the beds. Each child had her own personal decorations and pictures as well.

Another aspect of the Discovery Schools is the focus on both the group and the individual. The primary task of the group is to provide for the most basic needs of the individuals, physically and emotionally, on a continuing basis. The primary task of the individual is to become and maintain one's self as a contributing member of the group. The Discovery Schools encourages the kids individually, and as part of a small family-like group, to deal with the non-negotiable tasks of living in a supportive community. The program works gradually, without a shock factor, providing the basic needs for the students (food, shelter, and clothing) and surrounding the students with a supportive community. When a student needs to be separated from the group, he/she will perform a work assignment with a staff member that proves useful to the entire group. Surrounding the boys and girls with positive relationships is never interrupted.

The Discovery Schools of Virginia are fully accredited secondary schools, serving middle and high school classes, as well as special education, remedial, and GED preparatory classes. They are licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education and accredited by the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities. Classes are small, averaging four to six students each and the teachers emphasize one-on-one individualized work, with each student working at his/her own speed. Although most of the teachers are special education certified, The Discovery Schools works primarily with children of average to above average intellectual abilities. They will accept a student with a lower ability to function on a case-by-case basis.

At the Discovery Schools of Virginia, attending school is a privilege. Students do not begin classes initially, but earn the right to attend a full school day by meeting therapeutic and academic goals. The school helps the student match college and future ambitions with the practical concerns that stem from personal readiness and family dynamics. The individualized academic experience is tailored to individual student needs. Every student participates in and receives credit for an integrated vocational curriculum. In special circumstances, the school is able to arrange off-campus internships with community businesses, based on the student's growth in the program. The average length of stay is 15 months, which enables students to catch up and get back on track academically and/or prepare for their college preparatory exams.

In speaking with the students on both campuses, I felt that they were genuinely happy being at Discovery Schools and had learned a lot during their time in the program. The children liked the feelings of accomplishment and pride they gained in working together, as well as building and maintaining their campsites. They explained that although they missed their families, they understood the needed separation, which allowed them to work on their relationship problems.

After my time at both campuses of The Discovery School of Virginia, I left with one parting thought; this visit did not disappoint my expectations.

> Self-trust is the first secret of success.
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> Ralph Waldo Emerson




