The Spire School

Stamford, Connecticut
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The Spire School was founded in 2010 by Greenwich Education and Prep. The private day school is designed to help students, grades 8-12, develop resilience, responsibility and self-efficacy. The school's curriculum emphasizes wellness and personal growth for students who struggle with depression, anxiety, and other emotional challenges.

Executive Director, Frank Bartolomeo, Ph.D., has over 20 years experience in the child and adolescent mental health field. He has worked in residential treatment centers, schools, outpatient clinics, and hospitals in the Boston area. He has served as Co-Chair of the Children's Group Therapy Association in Boston. He has also worked for the Academy at Swift River as Executive Director. Greenwich Education and Prep schools are accredited by Middle States as K-12 Supplementary Education Centers.

Students of The Spire School are intellectually capable individuals who simply require additional direction or assistance to achieve their full academic potential. The academic program for each student is individualized and allows for students to address issues about their academic ability and potential scholastic achievement. The curriculum is based on a metacognitive approach and emphasizes exercise, nutrition, self-care, communication skills, listening, empathy, and conflict resolution.

The Spire School puts great emphasis on parental involvement in their child's academic progress and success. The staff of the program collaborates with family members and other professionals to best address the needs of the individual student.

[This information came from their website.]

Extended Insights...

Cumberland Heights

Nashville, TN
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Visit by: Candace Bynum, September 13 – 14, 2011

Each year music lovers in the Nashville area wait anxiously to find out who will be performing at John Hiatt's Concert for Cumberland Heights—a fund raiser held annually for the past sixteen years to raise money and awareness for the Adolescent Center of Cumberland Heights. Since its inception, the event has raised over $1.8 million. When it was announced that the 2011 concert would feature The Fray, everyone was excited. This group has worldwide popularity and the title of their hit song, "How to Save a Life," which chronicles the lead singer's experience with a friend struggling with the disease of addiction.

I was honored to have the opportunity to attend this year's festivities. The event started with a get-acquainted dinner, followed by an opportunity to tour the beautiful facilities the next morning. Located on the banks of the Cumberland River, the property sits on 170 acres of wooded countryside, providing a tranquil and inspiring environment for healing. The main campus includes 125 beds and over 200 employees. Programs include traditional men's and women's programs, as well as the focus of the concert—a 24-bed residential treatment program designed specifically for adolescent care.

The adolescent program serves youth ages 13 to 17 in single-gender groups. Adolescents participate in a 30 day intensive curriculum, with the option to remain an additional 90 days. With an accredited high school, River Road Academy, onsite, students are able to maintain, and most often improve, their academic studies with no lapse in credits or hours. Using a multi-dimensional curriculum that includes an introduction to the 12-steps combined with CBT, DBT, art, equine and adventure-based therapies, adolescents are able to address the impact their substance use has had on their lives and the lives of their loved ones, and begin taking the necessary steps toward a healthier and less destructive lifestyle. Students are guided toward internalizing their new-found knowledge and experiences of recovery, while developing new cognitive patterns to replace the old self destructive habits.

After my very educational day spent at the Cumberland Heights facility, we were treated to a night of music and fun. It began with a pre-concert party and silent auction for special guests and long time supporters of Cumberland Heights. John Hiatt, a long time and committed supporter of Cumberland Heights, put together the silent auction items which of course included a variety of music memorabilia.

The highlight of the evening was The Concert for Cumberland Heights at the historic Ryman Auditorium. The Fray wowed the audience and a great time was had by all. Their appearance was the latest in a long line of famous entertainers who have performed at the event including Lorrie Morgan, Lyle Lovett, Patty Loveless, Emmylou Harris, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Rosanne Cash, Rodney Crowell, Michael, Billy Currington, Trace Adkins, Peter Frampton, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. The concert, hosted annually by John Hiatt, is the single largest source of revenue for the facility. Proceeds are used to provide scholarships to adolescents in need of treatment, but who do not have the financial resources to access it. Hiatt started this fundraiser in 1996 because understands the addiction process and how it ultimately affects teenagers, families, and friends. His public stance about his own recovery from drugs and alcohol abuse has been courageous and inspiring and he is committed to giving back to the community that helped him help himself.

Over the 45 years of its existence Cumberland Heights has developed and grown. It has helped more than 70,000 patients and has directly touched the lives of more than 200,000 family members of patients. It has had patients from all 50 states and a number of foreign countries. They have made their presence well known as it was very impressive to see all of the support from the alumnae and community on my visit.