

criticism. When a child needs help, the parents must accept the reality they are the real experts on their own children and take action to help their children rather than allowing the state or other professional to step in and take over.

As it turned out, his youngest daughter began making poor decisions and Lon himself turned to professional help to pull her back from a self-destructive path. From working for a program, to working for parents, to being a parent of a child needing a program, he has experienced all aspects of the journey through the network of emotional growth/therapeutic schools and programs. For almost 30 years Lon has connected with so many families on so many levels with the main underlying theme being "some children just need to be heard, not cured."

Today, Lon provides a nationwide referral service for parents of adolescents with behavioral and emotional problems. He publishes a Directory, the *Parent Empowerment Handbook*, based on research into quality schools and programs and to continue his work empowering parents in their efforts of finding the best placement for the child who is making poor decisions. He also publishes an online educational newsletter *Places for Struggling Teens* for parents, professionals and schools and programs to provide current information on what is happening not only in the network but in the public school system. Lon hosts an Internet Radio talk show on LATalkRadio.com at 12:00pm, Pacific Time on Channel One, titled *Parent Choices for Struggling Teens*, where

he interviews professionals about family dynamics and possible solutions for families. Finally he oversees the publishing of a resource, *Strugglingteens.com*, a website over 100,000 pages strong of press coverage, articles, visit reports, etc. on the private parent choice, emotional growth/therapeutic schools and programs.

Prior to becoming an educational consultant, Lon taught in the public school system and worked with the U.S. Senate and the Executive Office of the President on public policy. He earned his BS and MA degrees from the University of Idaho and is a long-time member of the Independent Educational Consultant Association (IECA). In addition, Lon is a Certified Educational Planner (CEP) and an Associate member of the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP). He has made several presentations to professional conferences, was chairman of the Special Needs Committee for IECA, and served on several committees both with his professional associations and related groups.

About the Author: *Kristie Campbell is the youngest daughter of Lon and Denise Woodbury. She has worked for Woodbury Reports, Inc. as an intern and a consultant since 1999, working her way up to Assistant Director of the company. Kristie graduated from Explorations Wilderness in 1993 and Mission Mountain School in 1994. She has written articles for the Woodbury Reports Newsletter based on her experiences, has visited numerous schools and programs, attended and presented at IECA and NATSAP Conferences and is the editor of the Parent Empowerment Handbook and Strugglingteens.com. Kristie graduated with a BS in Psychology in 2011. Member: APA, IECA, Affiliate Member NATSAP. 208-267-5550, kristie@woodbury.com*

VISIT REPORTS...

SANTIAM CROSSING

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Visit by: Loi Eberle, MA, CPC on February 6, 2012

It was a lovely drive to Santiam Crossing through the lush Oregon countryside in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. From the interstate near Albany, OR, I turned onto a local highway, then to a winding county road, and finally down a dirt road that seemed somewhat questionable given the recent flooding in the area. Soon I saw my fears were unfounded; the winding road ended up in a clearing where an A-frame building housed the Santiam office. Nearby was a pond where a kayak was tied to the dock, waiting for warmer weather. They also have a floating gazebo where they hold meetings and have individual therapy sessions. Though it was a chilly February morning, inside the cozy A-frame office a woodstove created a warm environment for my meeting with Clinical Director, Jenevive Rollins, LCSW, CADC I and a group of her female clients who were soon to graduate.

Jenevive explained that Santiam Crossing is a four part program consisting of wilderness adventure, therapy, academics, and community work. The typical length of stay is between six and nine

months, averaging about seven and a half. There is a six-month minimum stay. Their only criterion is that students must come directly from the wilderness program, with no interruption between graduation from the wilderness and enrollment at Santiam Crossing. They will accept students from all wilderness programs, including Catherine Freer Therapeutic Wilderness Program with which they are affiliated.

During my conversation with the girls it was particularly interesting to hear them discuss their past and how strongly it contrasted to their currently lives. They described how they had distanced themselves from negative behaviors, and were glad that their relationships with their family had deepened and that communication had greatly improved during their stay at Santiam. They were obviously encouraged that the individualized online instruction and the teacher-lead classes had helped them catch up on lost credits. Once a student arrives at Santiam, he or she is assigned an academic advisor who outlines coursework and encourages them to develop an active interest in school subjects and in working toward on-time graduation.

Santiam is accredited by The Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC). It is a good environment for students to do credit recovery, as there are teacher-lead classes and self-paced curriculum with some media packets. Due to small class size, Santiam teachers demonstrate the enthusiasm and expertise necessary to get students excited about learning, are certified and

have success working with non-traditional learners with a variety of mild to moderate learning difficulties. They are also able to provide more advanced instruction when appropriate. Santiam credits are based on seat hours as well as the satisfaction of goals and objectives determined by the State of Oregon. Santiam students can do online college courses and dual enrollment. Their students often are ready to apply to a four-year university upon graduation. The students I interviewed described the confidence they had gained in their academic ability while there and how they had learned to advocate for their academic needs.

Professional development is available to Santiam students, including certification in swift water rescue, basic horsemanship, wilderness first responder, bike repair and rock climbing certification, most of which is conducted by a neutral third party, though there is also some in-house certification offered. The students participate in a 10-day adventure once a quarter, which involves going back to the wilderness for 10 days. Activities vary depend on the season. Students receive two leadership credits upon completing the wilderness component. Santiam also offers a "third classroom" for students having trouble concentrating through a school day. With the teacher's permission, these students can spend half an hour to a couple of hours doing physical work such as wildfire training, trail building, sawing wood, construction and maintenance, stream restoration or food stocking and pantry clean-up. The students can earn elective credit for their participation.

Students are able to have a home visit when they reach Level 3, which usually takes four to five months to attain. Family calls occur every other week, and parent workshops occur on the weekend once a month. If a family is unable to visit, it is possible to arrange a video phone call via Skype. During my visit the girls had just returned from an expedition. All the students occasionally go on service project excursions into the local community.

Santiam enrolls students between the ages of 13 and 18 years old. Typical students need to have a 'reasonable IQ' which might include a lot of variation in the subtest scores of the cognitive

testing. An appropriate student is one who likes experiential education and is willing to agree to their safety requirements. Typical students may be experiencing depression, low self-esteem, anger, defiance, impulsivity, attentional issues, attachment issues, motivation issues, poor academic achievement or substance abuse. He or she may have had suicidal ideation in their history, but should have no psychotic features, no FAS or developmental delays. They will consider a student with Axis II traits, and ODD. The therapeutic part of the program is client-centered and individualized. Each student is assigned to a mature, experienced, master's level clinician that specializes in working with adolescents and families. Therapy includes individual and group therapy as well as mindfulness and DBT. The youth counselors hold bachelor's degrees, preferably in psychology, social work, or a related field, and have experience working with adolescents.

Students sleep in canvas cabins heated by stoves, and cook their meals in outdoor kitchens with propane stoves. One instructor sleeps in each of the cabins, providing supervision, and males and females are located at different parts of the 157 acre campus. They have recently built a large new shower house and laundry facility, a lovely yurt classroom as well as another school building for classes, workshops, internet access and Skype calls for family therapy. A smaller yurt provides space for therapists' offices and individual therapy. In addition to the various recreational opportunities on and off campus, there is also a basketball court.

Over the years since I first began using this program, Santiam Crossing has continued to expand and improve their program components, including a connection with nature, supervised activities and nurturing peer groups in conjunction with therapy and effective academic support. This unique rustic wilderness therapeutic school has definitely provided my students with the opportunity to get back on track academically, and internalize what they have learned in their previous wilderness intervention. It has enhanced family therapy and has helped the students develop the skills and confidence needed to help them transition to their next step.

FULSHEAR RANCH ACADEMY

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Visit by: Larry Stednitz, PhD, March 22, 2012

In late March, I was excited to travel to Texas, one of my favorite places. The last time I had made a pleasure trip to Texas must have been ten years or so. I landed as the sun was fading. I took my trusted GPS system and picked up a car. Not being mechanically inclined I asked the rental agency to set my GPS, which they gladly did, and I was on my way to Fulshear Ranch Academy where I was to meet several key staff.

I turned on the GPS and followed the directions -I THOUGHT! Ten miles down the road, my GPS lady said the dreaded words, "recalculating, recalculating". So, I followed my GPS and turned around. No worry, I had at least 45 minutes to get to the restaurant. By this time, the blinding sun pierced through the windshield making it all more difficult and complicated. My GPS continued to recalculate my trip and I followed her directions. After an hour or

so, I started calling Irene, the admissions director. Believe me; she was wondering if I was ever going to make it!

Finally, I realized the lady at the rental car agency had also set the GPS to go from Fulshear back to the airport! You guessed it, my GPS lady tried her best and I ate up nearly two and a half hours getting out of the Houston freeway system. By this time, Irene met me at my hotel with dinner, I was totally frazzled, and the Fulshear leadership team had gone home to bed.

Things got a whole lot better after a good night's sleep. I was anxious to get to the campus. I was there years ago and I knew what to expect, a very serene environment. Fulshear is located on 64 acres of land, allowing one to feel like they are on a much larger ranch. The campus includes corrals, pastures for the horses, a main lodge and three houses for the students. A pool looked inviting. Overall, the campus is truly an environment where girls can feel good and at the same time have a peaceful struggle with their issues.

I sat in a group meeting shortly after my arrival. Each and every girl was uniquely different. I was surprised at how astute the girls were. They were sensitive to the struggles of their fellow students and when confronting or making suggestions, they were sensitive to the others feelings. Gentle but firm might be a better description. The group lasted well over an hour and a half, and I felt that each

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