receiving the continued support of the Academy.

Girls go to school year-round with trips and short breaks in between their school sessions. As they near the upper levels of the program, they are also able to apply for and obtain jobs and attend college courses. Equestrian therapy is also an option and girls participate in community service projects. The girls participate in many recreational activities as well.



After we met with the staff, two girls came in to sit and talk with us about the program. We asked the girls to take us on a tour of the facility, which they gladly did. We were impressed with their openness to share as they walked us around the campus.

We left the admissions office and walked into the main front door of the lodge. I felt as though we'd walked into a large garden as we entered the house. There were plush house plants enveloping the entry, which then opened up into a large lounge called the "Great Room". From the Great Room we traveled down a hallway to the Phase I rooms. I stopped a few minutes in one of them as I noticed a girl packing up her things to move. I learned that she had just successfully completed Phase I and was moving to Phase II in another part of the house. She was excited and eager to get moved. As we left this area, we walked through the lounge and into the large kitchen/ dining area. There were large tables where the girls eat family style as one big family. During their stay, the girls have opportunities to do things as a group (activities, meals, recreation, volunteering) as well as plan their own activities and volunteer opportunities as they gain more independence and responsibility. We stayed and watched a Phase II group sitting at their table going over community discussions and planning before we headed toward the academic building.

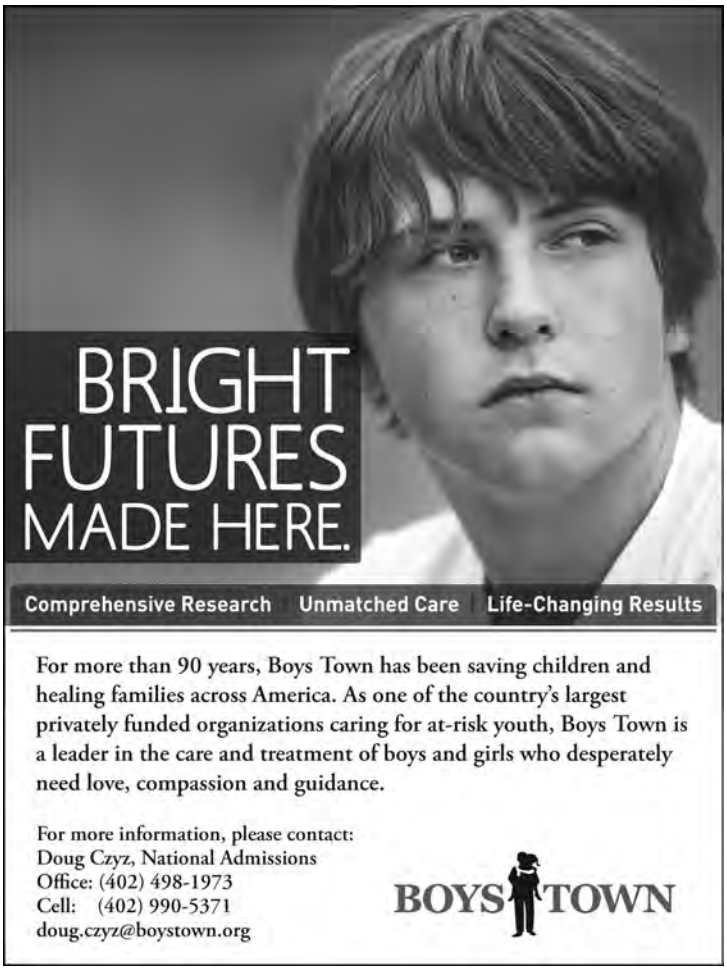
Because school was out for activity, the school house was locked and I could view it from the large wall of windows. The school is a large one-room school house setting where all the students attend class together. The large open room consisted of tables and chairs, and computers lined the outer walls. We next toured the cabin for Phase II students. Rooms are tidy but definitely left to the girls to keep cleaned. Each area was personalized with knickknacks from home and appropriate pictures and motivational posters. After we left this cabin, we walked out and met the horses with the girls.

I was impressed with the way the girls candidly talked about themselves and some of the things they struggle with, not only issues that led to their placement in a therapeutic school, but also the issues they still struggle with although they were in upper levels of the program. I hadn't asked the girls the typical consultant questions, but they felt comfortable enough with me and their program, and confident enough in themselves, that they openly shared with us.

Our last stop on campus was Phase III & IV. At this phase of Action/Maintenance in the model of change, the students practice their skills in more realistic settings as they go on home visits, attend the local high school if appropriate, volunteer at a place of their choice, or play high school sports. They have more independence, and may possibly earn the privilege of having a cell phone, holding a job, attending a local high school and/or attending college courses. Basically, the students at this point are in the transition phase of the Academy and depending on their age, may be working toward returning home, or to a traditional boarding school or joining the Pathways program. If the student is 18 and has graduated the program, she may have the opportunity to be in Pathways where she is working on transitioning into full independence.

After touring the campus with the girls, we returned to the Admissions Department and said our goodbyes. We had had a good visit and although many girls were off campus on activity, we were able to get a good picture of the program. We were impressed with the academic component as well as with the girls we met.

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, Woodbury Reports Newsletter, and Strugglingteens.com. Kristie graduated with a BS in Psychology in 2011. Member: APA, IECA, Affiliate Member NATSAP. 208-267-5550, kristie@woodbury.com.



year, to help motivate the boys to succeed. From trips around the US, to trips abroad, students get to earn credits studying in the real world. Every week is packed with additional opportunities for off campus sports and activities and boys stay motivated to participate. Just a short list of this year's trips for students includes a trip to Utah, London, Yellowstone National Park, and the Oregon Coast.

I noticed as we walked through the dorms that many of the boys had religious symbols and bibles. This diversity was impressive. Students have the opportunity to worship as they choose. There are many religions and boys learn respect each other's views.



The other critical component at Cherry Gulch is the academic component. As we walked through the school, Dr. Sapp introduced us to the teachers, all certified and two of which are Masters Level. We also met several boys who came up and introduced themselves freely. They were interested in interacting with us, excited to show us their classrooms.

The school is separate from the living areas so it feels more like a typical school program, and there is a separate building specifically for music classes. Students can earn credits in all the core classes, can take foreign language, and can join academic clubs, like the mathletes and robotics.

We ate lunch with the boys who welcomed us and eagerly asked us about who we were and shared about themselves. Two boys were actively into competitive bike racing and were the top racers in the community. Another was interested in photography and technology. After lunch, more parents and families started to arrive and boys busily finished their after lunch chores to be with their families.

I felt as if we could have hung around all day but alas it was time for us to head to our next appointment. I am very impressed with the staff and facilities at Cherry Gulch, as well as with the program itself on so many levels. Of course there are so many more dynamics to this program than I can cover in one short visit report, but if Cherry Gulch sounds like it might help someone you know, call them, schedule a visit and thoroughly check them out.

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