Places for Struggling Teens™

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"It is more important to get it right, than to get it first."

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Southern Utah Regional NATSAP Conference Review



Lava Heights Academy, Toquerville, UT
October 26, 2012

By: Lon Woodbury

I always enjoy these small conferences. This one, my estimate was from 50-60 people in the room at the opening, was a perfect size - large enough to have a wide variety of talents, and small enough to be able to meet almost everybody (see an upcoming essay I have planned on the implications to this by Dunbar's Number).

The facilities were perfect. It was held at Lava Heights Academy of Performing Arts in Toquerville, Utah. Lava Heights is a new start-up just constructed by the Centers for Adolescent Recover & Education (C.A.R.E.) and is expecting their first students the week of October 29th. We had the run of the place and a good chance to tour the grounds and buildings before the conference started, without interfering with normal school activities.

Brian Pace, the CEO of C.A.R.E. schools welcomed the group over breakfast and explained the schedule. There were eight breakout sessions of 90 minutes each and the three I attended were outstanding, so I presume all the others were of equal quality.



The first one I attended that morning was "Ethical Considerations When Working with Adolescents" presented by Steven De Mille, MS, MHC, LAPC of Red Cliff Ascent and Stuart Squires, LCSW of Diamond Ranch. After presenting some of the legal requirements of reporting abuse, the major part of the session was an animated discussion by the group sharing knowledge and experience of many of the finer points of what is meant by mandated responsibility to report.

There were three early afternoon sessions to choose from and I attended the one titled "Integrating Brain Science into Residential Treatment" by Stephan C. Barrick, LPC, of Falcon Ridge Ranch. Stephan explained the development of this discipline through a PowerPoint presentation with some examples of brain wave patterns along with a description of what was going on with the subject at the time. He also explained how he was using it in working with the girls at the Ranch, and praised his wife for going along with his expensive "hobby" of buying the required equipment and software for exploring the fascinating potentials of this new emerging technology. The highlight for me toward the end of the presentation was when he asked for volunteers to be hooked up to the electrodes and since everybody was sitting on their hands, I volunteered for attaching the electrodes to my scalp and watch my brain waves splashed all over the screen. This

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