

Eagle View Newsletter

Volume XXV

Success Oriented Achievement Realized

Spring 2010

Reflections

By Jonathan Jones, Executive Director

The mother of fourteen-time Olympic goal medalist Michael Phelps was the banquet speaker at the National Learning Disabilities conference in February. Needless to say, she was as energizing as Michael is electric in a swimming pool. She delighted the group with her stories of Michael's triumphs and challenges, both in and out of the pool. As many of you know, she is a school principal in the Baltimore, MD area. Her message to teachers in the audience was brutally simple- what students need most from caregivers is our recognition of their uniqueness and a sincere interest in their success. It is that simple....and that difficult. With all of the pressures, day in and day out, who has time to REALLY get to know each of our students? Each of us realized we must make the time!

Mrs. Phelps' presentation stirred me to reflect on some of the simple truths I have gained over the years regarding children. The harder I pondered, the more I realized those "truths" can be boiled down to three. I will share one in each of the last three columns I pen as SOAR's Executive Director.

The first revolves around the idea of "love languages". Author Gary Chapman proposes the existence of five love languages - *Acts of Service, Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, and Physical Touch*. A simple and free on-line assessment (<http://www.5lovelanguages.com/>) helps uncover the love languages of each family member. When my family embarked on the "love language adventure" I thought I had each family member "pegged". I could not have been more wrong! We started discussing how our love languages "spoke" to each other. Along the way, I realized I was communicating love based on my love languages and not on those of the receiver. My #1 is "words of affirmation" and my son's #1 is "quality time". This posed a huge problem for a very busy dad out to save the world one child at a time.

Unfortunately, and fortunately, the solution was quite simple. I needed to slow down just a little and ensure daily / weekly quality one-on-one time with my own son. Oh my, the adventures and misadventures will never be forgotten! Sometimes, it was a simple afternoon walk through the woods, tubing down a snowy hillside, enjoying a movie together or Tuesday "guy's nite" at Pizza Hut. I still smile at some of the life lessons learned at Pizza Hut! Other times, the "quality time" was a little grander. We completed our SCUBA certification together. We climbed 30-foot Jamaican waterfalls together. We sat on deserted Costa Rican beaches in the dead of night waiting for sea turtles to nest. On his 18th birthday, we even went skydiving together.

Our greatest misadventure occurred in the Spring of 2005 when we participated in rodeo school together. He chose bull riding and I chose bareback bronc riding. Was that a mistake! He excelled at the bull riding, but at 48 I was a little too old to be riding broncs. After a trip to the hospital, I realized I needed something a little tamer and joined the bull fighter class. To this day, I have enjoyed nothing more than being the rodeo clown / bull fighter while my son rode bulls the next two summers at the Dubois, Wyoming rodeo. And I have Gary Chapman to thank for all of these adventures.

So, what's my point? First, make time to learn the love language of each family member. Secondly, honor the love languages once they are discovered. Your life and that of your child / children will forever be blessed for the effort! The adventures and misadventures will never be forgotten- ever! That's the point. Enjoy the adventure!!

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A Word from Big John...

**Director of LD &
AD/HD Services**

Siblings



Many of you know I have 2 wonderful children. My son is so much like me that I consistently get to relive moments from my childhood. My daughter, not unexpectedly, is a great deal like her mother. What makes this more interesting is the fact that both my son and I are diagnosed with AD/HD. I also have a younger brother who now has two children of his own. One of them is like him (rationed, reasonable, and doesn't require a great deal of intervention). The other takes after his uncle, and has the strength of will of 7 donkeys and 3 elephants. I know it's difficult to be the sibling of one of us, my brother Josh has told me so. Therefore, I wanted to spend a few minutes and talk about siblings.

I have a few pieces of counsel I have picked up along the way. One of my favorites comes from my friend Rick Lavoie, "There is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequal's." Simply said, insure you avoid using a one size fits all mentality to things like consequences or rewards when you have one affected child and others that aren't. Make sure you have a chance to celebrate everyone's gifts and focus on the areas of strength each of your children have.

One other strategy which I employ often when I hear "That's not fair" from a child regarding my intervention as compared to other children is this simple statement: "What I do and say with you is nobody else's business. Knowing that, what I do and say with other kids is not any of your business." Children generally respond well when you create the understanding that this simple agreement provides them with the privacy they want to enjoy.

As you know, SOAR was founded specifically to serve youth diagnosed with learning disabilities and AD/HD. It is interesting to note that the only students we will serve outside the global spectrum of Learning Disabilities are siblings. It is so difficult for parents to find ways to help their children understand the special needs of the child diagnosed with a LD, AD/HD, Aspergers, or other like challenges. Many parents have discovered an experience with us can help develop that awareness and create strategies to help the sibling better get along with their brother or sister.

Summer Preview

By Laura Pate

We have had quite the winter here at SOAR- including record cold and a few storms that left over a foot of snow covering our base camp! Needless to say, we are more than ready for summer to start and for kids to begin arriving.



*The campus of Brehm
Preparatory School.*

This summer we have a new and exciting program to offer – SOAR at Brehm! This program is a traditional, residential program hosted at Brehm Preparatory School in Carbondale, Illinois. Carbondale is located in the southernmost part of Illinois, also known as "Little Egypt" due to the area's similarity to the delta region of the Nile in Egypt. The area boasts of beautiful Shawnee National Forest, the lakes of Crab Orchard Wildlife Refuge, and the rock cliffs of Giant City State Park. SOAR will be conducting two 21-day sessions that offer activities such as art & drama, woodworking, computers & graphics, sports, model rocketry, nature study, canoeing, fishing etc. The course will also include weekend excursions to cities like Chicago, St. Louis, and Louisville where we will explore museums, zoos, shops, and theme parks.

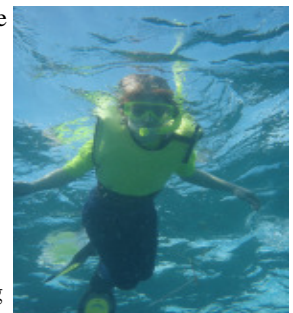
We were thrilled by the success of our Postgraduate Adventure Specialty Course that was offered last summer. In fact, the program was so successful that we have decided to offer two sessions in the summer of 2010! This program is designed for individuals aged 18-25 who would like to continue participating in the type of activities and adventures that SOAR has to offer. We have shortened the length to 18 days so that participants who are interested in mixing their summer with vacation and work can still get the best of both worlds. The group will begin their course with a week in the mountains of North Carolina, enjoying activities such as rockclimbing, high ropes course, hiking, and community service. Then, it's off to the Outer Banks of NC to spend a week of fun in the sun at a beach house. Participants can choose from sea kayaking, deep-sea fishing, sight seeing, & more. The course ends after another a week in western NC with a whitewater phase on the Tuckasegee, the Nantahala, and the Ocoee rivers.

In addition to these options, SOAR will continue to offer it's fare of exciting outdoor adventure options in North Carolina, Wyoming, California, and Florida, as well as our international course in Costa Rica. Wherever you choose to attend, we're thrilled to have you join us!

Christmas Keys Review

"Christmas in the Keys '09, what a great time!" With the best staff and students around, it would have been hard not to have fun. I know that besides sand in my shoes and a tan, I also brought home amazing memories that will last a lifetime. The twenty students in the standard course and the 4 in SCUBA each came with their individual personalities that meshed to make a wonderful and dynamic group. They brought back the memories and the confidence to hold their heads a little higher on the way home.

While the first day or two started out a little cool and breezy, it only made us more appreciative of the amazingly beautiful days to follow. The groups enjoyed jet skiing and tubing with the master boat captain, Joe Geier. We enjoyed epic kayaking trips, explored pristine beaches where key deer practically walked to us, snorkeled Looe Key Marine Sanctuary where we observed a plethora of fish species living on a live coral reef, and tried to catch some of those species of fish off the bridge next to camp. One student even caught a bonnethead shark! When you add to that exploring and shopping in Key West, playing in the pool, seeing alligators and iguanas in the wild and a New Year's celebration cook out, you get an experience that will last a lifetime. Thanks to everyone who participated, staff and students, and congratulations to the SCUBA students who got Padi OpenWater dive certified!



Spring Semester Update

By Logan Walters

The 17 students enrolled in the Academy at SOAR have had a tremendous start. The snowy winter and challenging weather conditions have provided many great opportunities to learn the lessons of flexibility, perseverance, strategic planning and teamwork. The addition of the new heated cabin at Balsam base and the anticipation of the next heated cabin (currently under construction) have kept the team in higher spirits on base. With two Academy students graduating from high school this semester, and many of our students finishing their fourth semester, we have many accomplishments we look forward to celebrating.

The Southwest team has explored everywhere from the Grand Canyon, Lost Dutchman State Park, and the Petrified Forest National Park and then flew to Texas to experience Guadalupe National Park, Balmorhea State Park, and Big Bend National Park. The team has just completed their first of two fourteen day trips to California, advancing their climbing abilities at Joshua Tree National Park and then spending some time at the Channel Islands National Park. The team's final expedition will be to SOAR's Eagle View Ranch in Wyoming. Every member of the South West team, with the exception of 2 new students, has completed a previous SOAR semester, and has used their experiences to produce a very strong team dynamic.



The Southwest team surfing in California.

The Southeast Coastal team named themselves the "Tickle Sticks" and have completed their first two expeditions to the Florida Keys and the Everglades. While swimming with the manatee's and learning how to dive in the Keys will be life long memories, the team also will not soon forget navigating their way through over eighty miles of complex mangrove/swampy waterways and the beautiful sunsets and star filled skies of the everglades. The team is currently in Belize, enjoying the tropical environment- and away from all the snow in North Carolina! They are looking forward to their final two expeditions to the Suwannee River and the North Carolina Outer Banks. This team has focused on creating as much positive energy as possible and has maintained a very enjoyable team culture.

The Academy at SOAR is operating under our third year as a certified non public North Carolina school. As we celebrate the accomplishments of our current students, we are happy to report that our high school graduate from 2009 is finding success in college. I encourage interested supporters to follow along with our Academy students by reading their blogs posted at the following address.

<http://2010soarsemester.blogspot.com/>

Bring a Friend to Camp... and both will earn a \$100 SOAR Credit!

Bring a friend to camp, that has never been to SOAR, and each of you will receive a \$100 SOAR credit. This credit can be applied toward SOAR merchandise, or can be applied toward tuition for our 2010 Christmas in the Keys adventure or any 2011 Summer program!

Invite several friends, and receive a \$100 credit for each friend that attends!

2 Friends = \$200 Credit

5 Friends = \$500 Credit

They **must** provide your name at the time they register to qualify for this promotion. Invited campers can only be "used" once for the earned promotional credit. Bring-a-friend does not apply to immediate family members or SOAR alumni.



Staff Member Profile

Up Close With....
Richard Peters



1) What is your job at SOAR?

I am the Director of Community Based Programs during the school year. This means that I get to help youth in the local community who would not normally be able to have the SOAR experience. We work on life skills and get to do some really cool adventure activities. Also, I am the Course Director of The Florida Keys program during the summer.

2) What are some of your hobbies? Hiking, fishing, reading, snorkeling, caving, climbing, building, kayaking, disc golf, listening to music, being outside in general (which has been hard this winter) and I know it sounds cheesy but I love helping people.

3) What person or people do you admire most and why?

I admire people who match their words with their actions. People who have integrity and can be trusted.

4) What do you like about SOAR? Well if it's not obvious from looking at my hobbies, I love what we do! What other job is there where I get to do all the things I love and also get to make a positive difference in children's lives?

5) People would be surprised to know.... I'm scared of spiders. Watching that movie Arachnophobia when I was a kid really messed me up. I spent a week sleeping on the kitchen floor surrounded by a ring of insecticide.

6) If you could travel to one place, where would it be?

The Great Barrier Reef!

Izzy's Corner

By Kylie Cyr



WOW! What a snowy winter we have had this year in the mountains! I can't remember the last time I've seen so much snow. I love to see the smiles on everyone's face that the snow brings. I can hear our Semester kids in the distance laughing and playing in the snow every minute they can- they even built the biggest snowman I have ever seen! I must say, I have been around for a while (20 years to tell you the truth) and I think I can feel spring in the air, which means the new campers will be here just around the corner. My greatest joy is seeing all of the new and old campers having the time of their lives here at SOAR and hearing their laughter echo throughout base camp. Well, that and when they give me a good scratch on the neck. And now before you arrive, I must get all the rest I can, so I think I'll go back to my catnap for now. I hope to see you all here very soon!

Open House

April 24th, 2010

10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Balsam, NC

SOAR is hosting an Open House at our Balsam Base for families looking for more information about our programs.

Come see our facilities and meet the staff! Drinks and snacks will be provided. Please RSVP if you plan to attend by calling (828) 456-3435 or emailing admissions@soarnc.org. Don't miss out on this great opportunity!



For more information about SOAR, our programs, and for current availability of our courses, please visit our website:

www.soarnc.org

A Special Thanks to all of our Contributors

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