

Eagle View Newsletter

Volume XXI

Success Oriented Achievement Realized

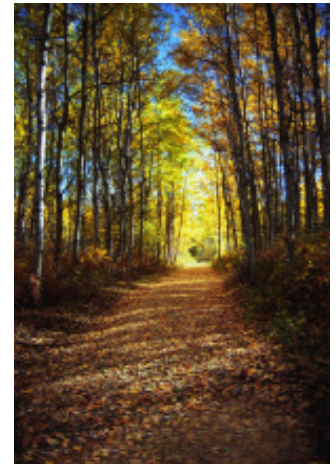
Fall 2007

Mileposts and Crossroads

By Jonathan Jones, Executive Director

Life is filled with mileposts and crossroads. Mileposts are those events or dates marking significant passages or proceedings. Some mileposts are remembered with laughter, while others are remembered with tears. Crossroads are those decisions or events resulting in momentous life changes. Good or bad, these actions resulted in a change of life direction.

Like your family, the Jones family had its share of mileposts and crossroads in 2007. Major mileposts include Jonathan David's graduation from high school and the passing of my mother – a magnificent woman who was a tireless advocate for youth and families dealing with LD and AD/HD. Our major crossroad was Jonathan David's decision to enter the United States Military Academy at West Point. We are grateful for his resolve to serve as an officer in the US Army; however, we realize he has chosen a difficult course. The early milepost along his new path – Beast Barracks, Hell Week, and the start of the Plebe academic year – have been fraught with hardship. Thus far, though, he remains true to his course.



SOAR has also experienced numerous mileposts this year. Perhaps our most significant is celebrating our 30th year of providing adventure experiences to youth with LD and AD/HD. This year also marks the 20th year Wandajean and I have worked with SOAR on a year-round basis and John Willson's 14th year of service. Next week, John Willson and I will celebrate a milepost of a different sort as we join one of our SOAR alums in Atlanta for a surprise 30th birthday party.

There are two crossroads worth noting as well. After much organizational soul-searching, SOAR chose not to join forces with a for-profit service provider. Such a partnership would have brought a measure of security to the organization. However, the collaboration would also have resulted in significantly elevated tuitions and a press to increase enrollment. In the end, SOAR determined to remain true to our non-profit roots of providing a quality experience at a reasonable cost. In a similar vein, SOAR decided to consolidate our Semester Course program to a single base in Balsam. This move will strengthen the model for student and staff alike. SOAR welcomes Logan Walters as the Director of Semester Course Programs. Logan will help usher in this new era.



What crossroads do we anticipate in the foreseeable future? SOAR continues to lay the groundwork for a Spanish language summer semester allowing students to participate in a seven week immersion experience while earning a Spanish I or Spanish II language credit. Wandajean and I have also set into motion a transition plan that will “turn the reins over” to a new management team in 2011. We are excited about the new possibilities created by such an orderly transition. You can be assured there will be more to come on both of these opportunities in the days ahead.

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A WORD FROM BIG JOHN...

Director of LD &
AD/HD Services

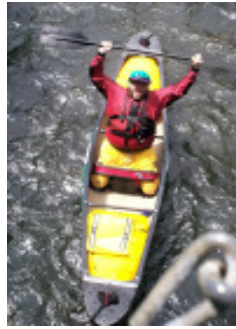
Many of you know how amazing I believe the students are that we serve here at SOAR. Perhaps the greatest gift most of these young men and women share is their unwavering need and want to be **Helpful**. Given a sense of purpose and appreciation, SOAR students will go to great lengths to be helpful and a support to others. I have seen students encourage, nurture, and support each other in dramatic ways. Here are just a few examples of SOAR students demonstrating the true meaning of helpfulness:

*Jimmy offering sage counsel and a shoulder for Ralph to cry on because he is so homesick. Ralph then having a wonderful experience because he had something very new to him, a friend.

*In Florida, Ricky was so very proud of the fact he helped load the kayaks onto the trailer, never knowing that Thomas was always behind him helping push the kayak upward. Thomas then basking in Ricky's pride, never letting him know he didn't do it all by himself.

*Sara, after many years here at SOAR, became a gifted ILS (Student Leader) on our California program, by taking the time to explain to the other students the right way to make a trail pizza, and what it means to be a SOAR Student.

I am a firm believer that once these young men and women move into that helpful frame of mind they demonstrate the very best qualities in people. The wonderful gift of support and kindness is just waiting for the next opportunity. Here at SOAR, opportunities are what we endeavor to provide, however, it is the students that bring the gifts. See you next year!



SUMMER REVIEW

By Laura Pate, Director of NC Programs

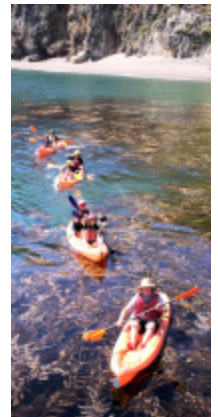
Every fall as we look back on our summer at SOAR, I'm amazed at how quickly it went by. It seems like only yesterday we were putting the final touches on itineraries, gear, and base camps in preparation of student arrival. This year we served ~570 students from all over the US and the world, including 5 international students from 5 different countries. One theme bound the students and programs together: FUN! I doubt I've ever experienced a SOAR summer where I heard more laughter or saw more smiling faces than I did this year. One of the biggest reasons, was the commitment our students had toward working together and respecting one another. A second reason was the high caliber of staff whose primary focus was to insure the safety and well being of every camper. Finally, the activity choices and areas we used provided the backdrop for students to push their limits in fun and exciting ways.

One new area we utilized was Nantahala National Forest, NC. Its majestic terrain and exciting trail systems challenged our older students to push their limits while backpacking. We also incorporated a day of climbing at a new site called Picken's Nose (boy, do our students love that name!).

At Eagle View Ranch in WY, the addition of SOAR-owned canoes allowed for more water exploration and adventure. A Frisbee Golf course built on site provided hours of fun as students pursued the elusive "hole-in-one." And 3 SOAR teams made us proud by placing first in the Dude Ranch Calf Roping competition at the Dubois Rodeo!

Our remote courses had stunning success this summer. From catching a 10-plus foot shark to certifying 14 new SCUBA divers, Florida proved hard work can be fun and exciting. Our California courses were more popular than ever! One can see why when you have a chance to surf, kayak, horseback ride, and rock climb in such a beautiful setting.

If you have a favorite SOAR moment from summer, or any ideas for improving our programs, we'd love to hear about it! Visit us at www.soarnc.org to email your thoughts, memories and suggestions. Keep in touch and have a great, SOARing fall!



A POEM FROM A STUDENT:

SOAR:

SOARing high, SOARing to shine
Flying away from mistakes
carrying lessons gained.
SOARing to new places with others
that are different so we are all alike.
Miles we have traveled to a place
where we can surpass our expectations.
SOARing together, SOARing as one
We come for acceptance from each
other for many of us have been
turned away in our lives outside
SOARing as one with voices as one
I SOAR, We SOAR in unity
SOARing high and bright

STUDENT PROFILE



Axley Smith, 12 years old from Nashville, TN found his place at SOAR this summer. When his parents came to pick him up from a very successful NC Horsepacking II course, he didn't want to leave his new friends and Kim and Nat, his counselors. In fact, he ended up staying for two more courses *and* still wanted to stay for more!

What are some of your hobbies? I enjoy making smores, camping, fishing, knitting, horsepacking, swimming, highropes course,

rockclimbing, whitewater rafting, helping my church, community service for people and animals, and making all kinds of art
What is your favorite outdoor activity? Too hard to decide! Either the high ropes course or rock climbing

Who are some of your heros? Kim, Nat, Angie and Big John
What's your favorite SOAR experience? I cannot decide for I love it all!

FALL SEMESTER UPDATE

By Logan Walters and Jon Bressler

Appalachian Trail Semester:

As the leaves begin to fall, the Appalachian trail team with the team name "Room to Improve" have kept themselves very busy. From jumping off waterfalls in Gorges State Park to orienteering in Panthertown, Room to Improve has been building the skills necessary to set them up for success on the Appalachian Trail. The team's first ten-day expedition began at the very southern tip of the Appalachian Trail, Springer Mountain. They hiked north, and ended at the starting point for their third expedition. The team has set the goal of hiking all seventy-six miles of the AT in Georgia, getting as close to the Smoky Mountains as possible. Room to Improve will take a break from backpacking for the second expedition, in order to fit in some spelunking, climbing, and a mini open water canoeing expedition. With only eight weeks left, the team finds it hard to believe time is flying by so quickly. As the students make their mile jog to the parkway every morning, they discuss the possibility of keeping the same healthy routine when they get back to their regular lives. While the future may be unknown, it is known that these students are pushing themselves to work hard to accomplish their program goals.

Logan Walters



Yellowstone Semester:

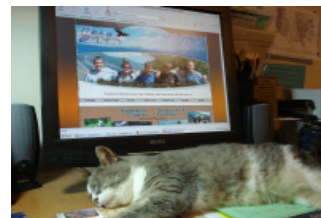
The Yellowstone Semester is off to a fantastic start. We began with outstanding weather ranging in the 70s during the day and 40s in the evenings. Students were on base camp for just four days prior to departing for Yellowstone and Teton National Park for their first multi-day backpacking trip and several days of park exploration through day hikes. The group then headed off to Boysen State Park for a multi-day canoeing trip. The lake is 14 miles long and is home to over 14 species of fish. It is not uncommon for students to catch trout in excess of 28 inches. A new addition of our very own canoes was a key factor in making the trip better than ever. We have a group of students ranging in ages of 14-17 years and it is co-ed. This group has the pleasure of having a ratio of 7 students to 3 staff. The weather has started to change, and it has turned a lot cooler recently. As the aspens turned a brilliant yellow, we actually saw some snow! Students are now preparing for the colder weather, and gearing up for the new and exciting adventure opportunities that come with the snow.

Looking forward to more wonderful days of growth and new adventures.

Jon Bressler

IZZY'S CORNER

By Wandajeon Jones and Catey Terry



You know, I've been around this office for some time now, and I've met a lot of people. It is my hope that in the time I've spent with each one of them, I have been able to teach them something about themselves or about life. Here are some things I have learned that I hope you will find useful:

1) Be persistent and patient to achieve your goals. For instance, if I sit by the front door and meow long enough, someone will let me out. I've found sometimes it's important to refuse to be ignored- if you truly *need* something speak up. However, if you just *want* something, persistence doesn't always help. For example, if I try to get someone to feed me a second can of food. No matter how loud I meow, I don't get another can. This has taught me an important lesson: only make noise about what is truly important, and don't worry about the stuff that isn't.

2) Set priorities for yourself and be consistent. I have found a routine that works well for me, so why change it? First priority of the morning: get fed. I don't care who feeds me, as long as it is the first person to arrive in the morning. Second priority: find a warm place to nap. Laps are my favorite, my bed my second favorite place. Third priority: affection. A good back rub helps relax me for my nap. A show of affection is good any time.

3) Nurture your independent spirit. As much as I enjoy people, I need my own personal time to recharge my energy. You too may find that personal reflection can help you realize things you never knew about yourself.

4) Embrace curiosity. Ever hear the term "Curiosity killed the cat"? Well, I don't care much for that saying, but I admit curiosity has taught me a lot. One cold morning, I saw a strange box on our porch. Upon further investigation, I realized it was a warm bed! So you see, if it wasn't for my curiosity, it would have been a long, colder winter.

I hope you find these lessons helpful. Now, you may find it silly taking advice from a cat, but remember there is a lot to learn in this world from all of nature!

STAFF MEMBER PROFILE

Up Close With...Diann Rogers

We are happy to have had Diann Rogers as our Executive Secretary for over a year now. Among other things, she helps distribute emails and mail to our students, and provides the first point of contact for families calling SOAR.



What are your hobbies? My favorite hobbies include camping, traveling, reading, and baking!

Who do you admire most and why? My heroes include my mom, because she has overcome so many obstacles in her life, and Jesus Christ.

What do you like about SOAR? I enjoy the fact that SOAR is so diverse. The staff are so friendly and supportive.

People would be surprised to know... That I am extremely shy.
If you could travel to one place, where would it be? I would love to visit Greece. It has such an amazing history and is so unique and enchanting.



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SPRING ADVENTURE WEEKENDS 2008

**Concentration, Communication &
Cooperation**
April 18 - 20
(Horseback Riding or High/Low Ropes)

Spring Family Weekend
May 9 - 11
(Whitewater Rafting)

Social Skills & Team Building
May 30 - June 1
(Whitewater Rafting or Rock Climbing)

CHRISTMAS KEYS ADVENTURE

Join us for some fun in the sun on our Christmas Keys Adventure! This exciting six-day tropical adventure in the beautiful Florida Keys includes a variety of activities such as: fishing, ocean kayaking, tubing, snorkeling, swimming and much more! Students will have the opportunity to visit historic Key West, and will participate in a New Year's eve celebration

Dates: December 27 - January 1

For more information please contact our Admissions Office at 828-456-3435 or admissions@soarnc.org



AND THE WINNERS ARE...



Each summer students are asked to participate in our Photo Contest by submitting photos from their SOAR summer courses. Thanks to all of this year's participants for some great photos! A big ***congratulations*** to **Izak Goldfarb**, of Scottsdale, Arizona, for his picture taken during his Wyoming Academic Discovery course this summer. He will receive a free SOAR weekend. Also, be sure to check out the gallery on our website for more exciting pictures from the summer!

Also, congratulations to **John Bowlby**, of Nashville, TN, the winner of our **Christmas Keys Adventure Drawing**. Thanks to everyone who completed your summer evaluation forms.

We appreciate your invaluable feedback as it is critical to the success of our programs!

Visit our Website at www.soarnc.org