

# Eagle View Newsletter

Volume XXII

*Success Oriented Achievement Realized*

Spring 2008

## ***In Praise of Patience and Perseverance***

*By Jonathan Jones, Executive Director*

**SOAR** is entering its 31<sup>st</sup> year and enjoying the maturity and success of an organization in “young adulthood”. Our son, the quintessential experiential learner, just celebrated his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday and is still embracing the challenges and opportunities of life as a college freshman. As I reflect back over the many years as a father and executive director, I realize there are many traits contributing to these present successes. The short list would include being an effective listener, staying solution focused, spotlighting strengths, remaining goal oriented and maintaining a sense of humor. Some of these traits were innate and honed over time. Others were completely alien and developed over the many years through patience and perseverance.



*SOAR students displaying patience and perseverance in the field.*

My first challenge, of course, was developing patience and perseverance. These traits are particularly essential for individuals and families dealing with the challenges of learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorder. For me personally, these characteristics should have come fairly easily. They were actually mine by “birthright” as my mother was blessed with these traits in great quantities. No doubt, this was very helpful to her (and us) as she raised four children, each one with a different mix of LD and ADD characteristics. And if I did not inherit these traits, then I had ample opportunities to develop them as the father of a wonderfully strong-willed son who has been educating his mother and I since the day he was born. We have called his perseverance many things, from stubbornness to tenacity, with each in ample supply.

I am reminded of the counsel I have given parents many times regarding patience and the seemingly sluggish development of their children. Often, our children are about one-third delayed in development of social, emotional, or academic skills when compared to their aged peers. As such, a 15-year old may have the relationship skills of a 10-year old or an 18-year old may have the focusing skills of a 12-year old. This delay produces many challenges in childhood and adolescence. However, it's not that these skills will never be fully developed, but they are acquired over a longer period of time. While this is a significant issue during childhood, it is less of an issue once the individual reaches late adolescence and early adulthood. The “skill set” demanded of a 40-year old is not much different than that of a 30-year old. One key to dealing with this delay is understanding and another is patience. These keys will have us frustrating less and encouraging more. One esteemed colleague described a parent's vision for their child as holding a crown above their head and then encouraging them to grow into it.

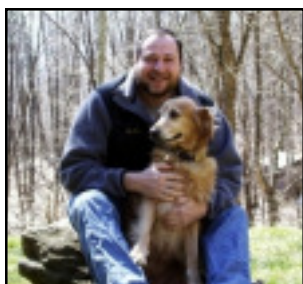
The patience and perseverance I learned along the way did have one other side effect. While my nature is to be driven and goal oriented, I also came to appreciate the value of relationships. This might have been the greatest gift of all.

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## A WORD FROM BIG JOHN...

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



The Willson clan recently experienced a transition of epic proportion. It involved boxes, heavy lifting, and a tremendous amount of clean up. That's right, we moved. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this experience was all the effort that went into fixing all those little things we just ignored for so long. The one burner on the stove that didn't work, the cracked tile in the bathroom, and the unpainted baseboard we installed last year to name just a few. As any AD/HD adult can relate, those items were on a list somewhere. I only found it as I was cleaning out the junk drawer in preparation of moving. I took such satisfaction during that last month in our house, as the to-do list was finally complete and the house required no major projects.

However, there is a wonderful metaphor I have drawn from this process. These kinds of transitions are ripe with opportunities to fix what is broken, get rid of that which is unnecessary and find golden treasures long forgotten. What if, I wondered, I used the same approach to my personal interactions with my family. Those kinds of transitions do occur during big life events: a death, divorce, or a family member graduating out of the house. So I have made the commitment to find my emotional to-do list and begin working on it now. There are some bad habits that are in need of adjustment, some strategies that should be thrown out, and some golden gems I have discarded but should utilize again and more often. My favorite thus far is this simple question: "When is a good time to do something?" The answer is "Right Now!" Feel free to join me, and then you will be able to enjoy the fruits of your hard work and effort.

## SUMMER PREVIEW

**By Laura Pate, Director of NC Programs**

Well, it's that time of year again—the time we at SOAR work all year for— summertime!! We are so excited about our upcoming summer and new course offerings!

One new course is the North Carolina Whitewater Intensive, a 10-day foray into the wild waters of Western North Carolina. The course starts with a trip down the Pigeon River in Great Smoky Mountains NP. This river is dam-controlled and offers Class II - IV rapids for plenty of excitement! Next, the course moves to the Nantahala River for a funyak trip and 4 days of kayak instruction with the Nantahala Outdoor Center. During instruction, students will learn the basics of flat-water and whitewater kayaking, including how to perform an Eskimo roll. The course wraps up with a rafting trip down the Ocoee River, site of the 1996 Olympic kayak competition. This course is sure to satisfy the most hardcore whitewater enthusiast.



Another new course this summer is our WY Rock Climbing Intensive. This course offers 10 days of rock climbing throughout the beautiful Wind River Range and Tetons of Wyoming. Students will learn the basics of rock climbing such as knot tying, belaying and rockcraft. Climbing will be split between the limestone in Wild Iris, the dolomite in Sinks Canyon and the granite of the Tetons. Students also have the chance to fine-tune their technique through daily bouldering sessions. This course concludes with a day of whitewater rafting on the Snake River and a morning of riflery led by a CMP-certified instructor.

In addition to new courses, we have plenty of standard and specialty courses that you know and love! No matter what your interest, we have a course (or two) for you. Have fun planning your next SOAR adventure and we'll see you this summer!

## CHRISTMAS KEYS REVIEW

Those of you who spent the winter break in the cold should stop reading this article now. Once a year, the entire SOAR team packs their bags, blows the dust off their snorkeling gear, and ventures to the beautiful Florida Keys to enjoy a sunny adventure with a wonderful group of students. This year, we had a chance to enjoy the best weather we have had in 15 years. The beautiful sunshine provided each team of students with amazing snorkel trips. Teams found coral heads to explore while sea kayaking and experienced thrills while riding a tube behind a wave runner, demonstrating smiles that spanned from ear to ear. What a wonderful trip!

We also had several students participate in our SCUBA certification program. Congratulations to our new certified divers:

### **Certified SCUBA Divers**

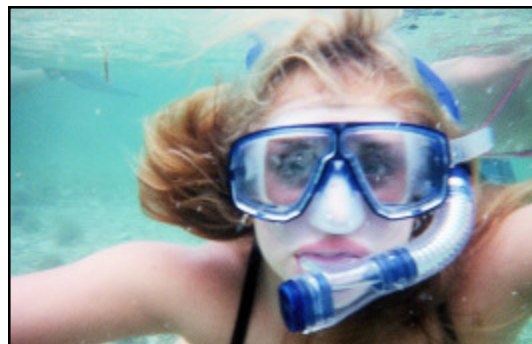
Jonah Mead Van Cort  
Nick Dillon  
Laura Sullivan

### **Open Water Certified SCUBA Divers**

Matthew Renkowitz  
Jamie Wiese

### **Open Water Naturalist Specialty Diver**

Andrew Moreadith



## SPRING SEMESTER UPDATE

By Logan Walters and Jon Bressler

### Southeast Coastal Semester:

As the rest of the country is putting on more layers of clothing, the students in our Southeast Coastal Semester have been trading in their winter coats for swim trunks. Both teams successfully navigated through the Florida Everglades and enjoyed diving and snorkeling throughout the Florida Keys. With 13 students in the Southeast, we split our students into two teams. The older students named their team the Super Troopers, and the younger team chose the Fishermen.

While both teams have many exciting stories and adventures to tell, the Super Troopers' favorite was the 71-mile Everglades paddle they completed in nine days. One of the top moments for the Fishermen was swimming with the manatees in Crystal River, Fla. They enjoyed getting up close and personal with the endangered species. Both teams had encounters with bald eagles, alligators, nurse sharks, manatees, dolphins and a countless numbers of other sea creatures.

The students are in charge of planning their next expedition. The Super Troopers have chosen to explore the Alabama coastline, hoping to find some bouldering to do on the way. They have also decided to fly to Belize for their international expedition. The Fishermen, who are close to finalizing their expedition, are planning to venture to the Georgia and South Carolina coastlines to see how hungry the fish are in the Atlantic. They will be going to Costa Rica for their fourth expedition. As both teams approach the halfway point, it's hard to comprehend just how fast their SOAR adventure is flying by!

Logan Walters

### Semester in the Southwest:

Hello to all parents and friends of the Southwestern Eagle View Ranch Semester program. After some of the heaviest snow we have seen, we are happy to catch a break! The students have been enjoying the (comparatively) warmer weather. It has been sunny and in the 30s which, to us, feels warm. So far, the group has been on one expedition, enjoying the beautiful features of the desert Southwest. Destinations included Valley of Fire State Park, Grand Canyon Caverns, Havasu Indian Reservation and Rockport State Park. Activities included: backpacking, day hiking, rock climbing, snow shoeing and cross-country skiing. Students have learned to work together as a team and to compensate for each other's challenge areas. The next trip is headed to Canyonlands, Arches, Moab and other exciting Utah destinations. All we can ask for now is flowing water and warming winds!

Jon Bressler

## OPEN HOUSE

April 26th, 2008

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.

## IZZY'S CORNER

By Catey Terry



Everyone knows cats were worshipped as gods in Ancient Egypt. It's no wonder, as we are great and noble creatures. So each new year, when I hear talk of "resolutions" and the promises SOAR staff make to themselves, I usually dismiss this notion. Why would I need to promise myself to do things like "exercise more" or "save more money?" However, this year, I decided maybe it was time to make my own list of resolutions. My humans have always been so kind to me, giving me food and warmth when I need it and are always there to scratch my neck when I wish. So, here is my list of ways to give back:

- 1) I will not walk across the office staff keyboards as they are trying to type.
- 2) I will not beg for a ~~second~~ *third* can of food in the afternoon.
- 3) I will not ask to go outside only to immediately ask to be let back in.
- 4) I will not complain when I am removed from someone's office chair. There are plenty others to sleep in.
- 5) I will continue to show my gratitude to others by a gracious snuggle, and a little bit of hair.

Note: All resolutions are subject to change as I deem necessary.

## STAFF MEMBER PROFILE

### Up Close With...Kathleen Kinser

#### Director of Marketing

Kathleen is one of the newest members of SOAR's team and is the director of marketing. She will be working with our admissions office and is in charge of SOAR's marketing strategy.

**What do you do for fun?** Spend time with my dog and watch University of Tennessee sports.

**Who do you admire most and why?** I admire my parents because they dedicated their lives to raising me and my sister.

**Why did you choose SOAR?** Its mission and organizational culture.

**People would be surprised to know....**that I love country line dancing and two-stepping.

**If you could travel to one place, where would it be?**  
Australia



