



RITE OF PASSAGE

Silver State Academy

Newsletter

Summer 2008

Improving the lives of youth

RITE OF PASSAGE STUDENTS HELP RAISE OVER \$7.5 MILLION FOR CANCER RESEARCH



Staff and students celebrate at the finish line.

Ride” (AMBBR). The event, now in its 17th year, is a 72-mile circumnavigation of Lake Tahoe and a fundraiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. This year’s event raised more than \$7.5 million to support the organization’s mission of finding a cure for leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin’s disease and myeloma, as well as improving the quality of life for patients and families.

More than ten Rite of Passage students and staff climbed over 2,600 vertical feet alongside teams from 69 different cities all in the name of cancer research. Some teams covered the distance in four or five hours, while others clocked in at 11 or 12 hours. Many of the riders were motivated by personal stories, wearing the names of people they wished to remember and honor on the backs of their jerseys. This motivated and reminded everyone that finishing AMBBR was not just a feat of physical endurance, but an emotional one as well.

Those ROP students who did not make the strenuous trek around the lake supported the event by manning the largest aid station along the route. *(Continued on page 2)*



There’s no arguing why it’s called America’s Most Beautiful Bike Ride.

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With every community service activity or project comes the explicit or implicit goal of improving the lives of individuals in our community. Volunteer work is not only an integral component of Rite of Passage’s programming, it is a longstanding tradition. For 25 years, staff and students have volunteered throughout the community in support of local interest groups and have helped spread awareness and raise funds for worthwhile causes. Last year alone, Silver State Academy, along with the Nevada and California Qualifying Houses logged close to 5,000 hours of community service. As students embrace meaningful projects to help others in need, their sense of accomplishment and doing what is right becomes a driving force in making permanent change. Of the many opportunities that arise for students to serve their communities, one in particular has the added bonus of having Lake Tahoe as a backdrop.

With its pristine blue waters, spectacular snow-capped mountains and breathtaking scenery, it’s no wonder more than 3,300 bicyclists from around the country converge on Lake Tahoe each year for “America’s Most Beautiful Bike



Here’s Looking at Ewe

Jackie W. represents Silver State Academy as a member of UNCE-Lyon County 4-H in Yerington at the 69th annual Jr. Livestock show.



From the Desk of...

Mr. Peter Woods

*Qualifying House
Program Manager*

The longest standing component of our programming at Rite of Passage is the Qualifying House system in Nevada and California where students begin to integrate into the community, learn a work ethic and learn how to cope with real life expectations. One way students accomplish this is through community service and volunteer work. Community service is and always has been an integral part of Rite of Passage's programming and is a tradition at the Qualifying Houses. For almost 25 years, our students have been a visible presence in the community and have volunteered at hundreds of events. These efforts were recently lauded by US Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who issued a commendation to the Qualifying Houses for their tireless work throughout the community. In addition to this honor, The Partnership of Community Resources in Douglas County presented the Qualifying Houses with a community service award at a banquet held in their honor.

The Partnership of Community Resources is comprised of a network of citizens, businesses, and agencies for cooperation, planning and interaction to maximize resources and address the changing needs of the community through substance abuse prevention and wellness promotion. They have long partnered with Rite of Passage at numerous events aimed at raising awareness, promoting advocacy and educating the public on the issues affecting the community. Melinda Matus, Special Projects Coordinator for the organization, told ROP that the Q-Houses were selected for the Community Service Award because students are "eager to be involved and they inspire the community to give back and to be healthy." She also noted that students not only help to set up and clean up at events, they are full participants doing everything from sharing their real-life experiences at community forums aimed at preventing drug use to running in the 5 and 10k races at Carson Valley Days.



ROP students are always eager to lend a hand – even after a 10k run.

Thank you for your continued support of Rite of Passage. If you or your organization are interested in partnering with our students, please contact Ms. Vickie Sims, the Q-House Treatment Manager, at vsims@riteofpassage.com

Peter Woods

THE YOUNG EAGLES ARE FLYING HIGH

A student shares his first-hand account of a recent adventure...

The Young Eagles Organization was founded in 1992 and has had a huge impact on youth between the ages of 8 and 17. While teaching kids about the beauty of flying and the wonders of the sky, they have worked with hundreds of students from different schools and programs including Rite Of Passage. On March 20, 2008, 13 Rite of Passage students drove to Carson City with the opportunity to experience something that most of them never thought they would do in their life, fly.

I was one of those students, and as we pulled up to the airport, I didn't really know what to think. I had never flown before so I was actually kind of nervous. It was apparent I wasn't the only one.

Fortunately one of our teachers, Mike Reynolds, is a qualified pilot and was able to ease our tensions by educating us on the truth about flying and the safety precautions taken before each flight. In addition to explaining the safety features each plane is equipped with, he and other volunteer pilots taught us how the planes were operated. I felt a lot more comfortable and safe after things were explained to me a little more.

After the planes were presented and toured by the students, it was finally time to fly. Most students were paired up with a partner and escorted out to the plane they were going to be flying in. Everyone took turns stepping into

their planes and lifting off into the sunny sky. A fellow student athlete, Santiago C. described it as "a sense of freedom" while Eric L. said it was nothing less than "an adrenaline rush."

Just being up in the air was reward enough, and unbeknownst to us, the students at SSA were waiting for our "fly over" with another surprise. They had gathered on the football field in formation spelling out "ROP." It was really amazing to see how small everyone looked from the air and like Anthony P. said, it was a "really cool experience."

After everyone landed safely, it was time to call it a day. Everyone received certificates affirming their achievement in flying as well as pictures with the pilot who flew the plane. All in all it was an amazing experience not only for the students who participated, but the staff and pilots as well. Juan S. said he would remember it as "one of the best feelings (he'd) ever had" and something he never would have experienced had he not been at ROP.



Keegan C. is a student at the Qualifying Houses and is also the Student Body President. After high school, he plans on attending college on a basketball scholarship and pursuing a degree in graphic design. Keegan has interned in ROP's corporate business office and in addition to his work as a contributing writer and editor on the newsletters, he has assisted with the graphic design for ROP's new "RAMS manual."

Most Beautiful Bike Ride continued from page 1

Mile marker 54 was a hub of activity as riders stopped to change flat tires, fill water bottles and rest tired legs. Many commented on how smoothly ROP's aid station operated and voiced their appreciation for the support they received. By this point in the tour, fatigue was setting in for many. ROP provided much needed encouragement to some of the road-weary cyclists promising them that if they could climb just five more miles, it would be downhill all the way to the finish line.

Engaging ROP's students in such purposeful duties in the community provides an opportunity to promote reconciliation and the rebuilding of relationships. Whether riding in the event or providing support at the aid station, students took one thing away from AMBBR — that by working together to support a cause, no goal is unattainable.

Student Athlete Ryan C. who was at the aid station summed up something every student noticed: "This is a very emotional event... for every rider that passed through our station. The reasons for going the distance and finishing America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride were personal. When the physical aspect started slowing people down, the personal aspect pushed them to the finish line." Witnessing this first hand, students recognized it as a metaphor for their own lives and learned that they too can benefit from serving others.

What's next for ROP's cycling team? They will take to the road again on July 14 for one of America's premier cycling events, the Death Ride — a course covering 129 miles and climbing 15,000+ feet over five of the steepest mountain passes in the Sierras.

Community & Customer News

Silver State Academy students experience a Broadway Blast



Encore! The Reno Dance Company held an exclusive performance for SSA students to thank them for all of their work supporting the arts in the local community.

The Yerington Theater for the Arts played host to students from Silver State Academy for “Broadway Blast”, a special contemporary dance stage presentation featuring selections from Broadway musicals over the last five decades. The 90-minute live stage presentation had the students’ full attention for the entire show.

This was the latest special event partnership for Silver State Academy and the local arts, as there have been a couple of

cooperative ventures over the course of the last year. A few months ago, students from SSA were asked to help create the painted scene backdrops for a ballet presentation at the local theater. The students worked many hours to prepare the scene panels used to stage the ballet. When finished, the dance company was very impressed with the students’ art work. As a reward, they provided an opportunity for several RAMS to attend their presentation of Swan Lake, but also promised to make a contemporary theater presentation available to more students at a later date.

Consequently, when the Reno Dance Company brought “Broadway Blast” to the Dini Theater in Yerington, our students were invited to a special presentation exclusively for them. The staff members from the dance company, as well as those from the Yerington Theater for the Arts, were extremely complimentary about the students’ behavior. In fact, it was later learned that the presentation for our students was the last one the company would present, and quite frankly, the cast was a little tired. But the dance company leaders reported the cast came alive when they saw how enthusiastic our students were and how much they appreciated the performance.

This was a totally new experience for many of our students. Most had never seen a live stage performance before, and they truly enjoyed it. And not only was it a great experience for our students, but it was also a great experience for the community. The local arts council was very pleased to offer this opportunity to our students and hopes in the future there will be other ways to expand our students’ cultural experiences.

RAMS GIVE BACK

The Rite of Passage RAMS are working hard to give back to the community. Case Manager Nate Landa set up a community service project where a number of RAMS go to the South Lyon Medical Center Long-term Care Unit to spend time with some of the residents.



The residents are excellent role models and enjoy getting to know the RAMS. Lois and Gerald Madden recently celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary.

“The boys are just doing an outstanding job of working with the residents,” said Vanessa Emm, who works at the facility..

The goal of the project is to allow the students to give back to the community and help get the residents involved in the daily activities. Activities have included art projects and serving meals.

“It has been a great learning experience for the students,” said Mr.

Landa. They have really helped getting others involved and bringing smiles to faces of the residents.”

“They are so appreciative and really are fun to work with.”

Students currently have the opportunity to volunteer anywhere from two to three days a week, and a number of RAMS have had the opportunity to participate. The program has already proven to be a great success and the current plan is to continue to work with the residents while expanding the number of students involved.



A student helps a resident with an art project.

“It was a great experience,” stated student Joshua M. from Clark County. “They are so appreciative and really are fun to work with. I have really enjoyed the opportunity.”



Ram-Page



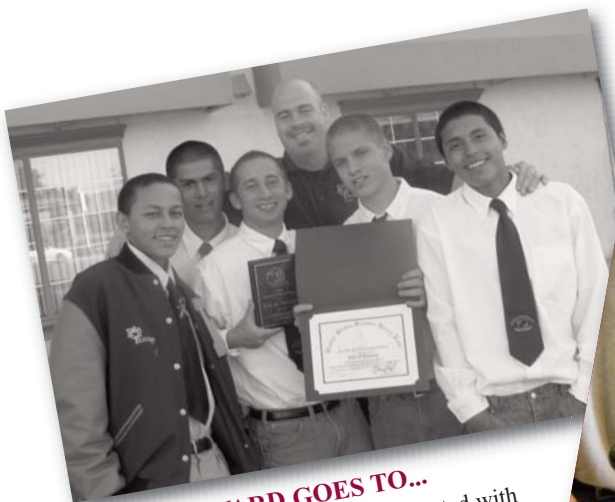
CATCH THEM IF YOU CAN SSA's track and field team had another record-breaking year.



LOOK WHAT DROPPED IN
ROP's cycling team was surprised when a helicopter appeared and landed just feet away from where they were having lunch.



NO HORSEING AROUND Students enjoy an afternoon horseback ride at Silver State Academy.



AND THE AWARD GOES TO...
Qualifying House students were presented with a Commendation from U.S. Senator Harry Reid and an award for community service from the Partnership for Community Resources.



THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE
Students are eager to take part in SSA's newest vocational training program--machine tool trades.



OFF THE BEATEN PATH As part of a RAMS outing to award outstanding student achievement and progress, Silver State sent out 10 Ram students with 10 staff on Quads for a 31 mile trek to Weber Dam. Prior to the outing, students were instructed on safety, responsibility and respect for the environment.



FLY ME TO THE... Teacher (and pilot) Mr. Mike Reynolds goes to new heights in his classroom and shows students that the sky is the limit. (see page 2 for full story).



READY FOR ANYTHING Mr. Reynold's class at the Carson City airport before taking to the skies. For some, it would be their first time in an airplane.



IT'S ALL DOWNHILL FROM HERE The cycling team isn't worried about getting "too-tired" at the next big race.



ON THE CUTTING EDGE Students learn about biology first-hand during a dissection lab.



HORSE WHISPERER... Equine-assisted therapy helps both the student and the horse as they learn to trust one another and work together.

COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMMING

Years of research suggest that at-risk youth and their families have multiple needs and interrelated problem behaviors that are not likely to be successfully addressed by a single-response or stand-alone initiative. In an effort to respond to and address the needs of at-risk youth, Rite of Passage's community-based programs focus on comprehensive service delivery that addresses multiple needs through a broad-based continuum of care. Currently, Rite of Passage serves over 500 male and female youth in non-residential, community-based programs throughout the country.

Community-based programs link youth and families to a variety of services within their own neighborhoods or in areas much closer to home. They may enable low-risk offenders to avoid associations with high-risk delinquent youth, and they may also help offenders avoid the stigma of institutionalization. Furthermore, these programs are often cost-effective solutions for servicing delinquent youth (Austin, Johnson and Weitzer, 2005).



THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION IN COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS



The interventions and strategies Rite of Passage offers in its community-based programs are based on the most current research on reducing recidivism. Specifically, the company adheres to the "principles of effective intervention" as identified by scholars in corrections through hundreds of studies; these principles can be summarized as: risk, need, treatment, and fidelity (Latessa, 2006). Recent research in the field of corrections has indicated that, as with residential correctional facilities, community non-residential programs are most effective when they follow these principles (Lowenkamp, Pealer, Smith, and Latessa, 2006).

How does Rite of Passage put these principles in practice in its community-based programs? Used in conjunction with motivational interviewing, the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT), an objective risk-needs

assessment, identifies the low to moderate offenders who benefit most from community-based services. The results of the assessment also target the criminogenic needs and dynamic risk factors of these youth, which provides a focus for cognitive behavioral therapeutic approaches for treatment. To address fidelity, Rite of Passage continually evaluates the effectiveness of all these various components through Key Performance Indicators, extensive program data that monitors program outcomes and effectiveness and enables the program to do less of what doesn't work and more of what does.

A VARIETY OF COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Rite of Passage's community non-residential programs currently provide transition and aftercare services for youth exiting residential placement in addition to providing alternatives to detention or secure placement for low-risk offenders. This menu of services includes, but is not limited to the following:

Parole Tracking and Mentoring. Rite of Passage provides client monitoring services that include community-based case management and support to ensure parole compliance for youth. Clients receive mentoring, tracking, family counseling and crisis counseling designed for a successful transition into the community. These services can be "backed in" to the residential facilities to provide treatment programs -- such as Aggression Replacement Training (ART), Active Parenting, or cognitive behavioral therapy -- and to enable youth to become employed or enrolled in education before exiting the secure placement. Further support is given to the youth by urinalysis testing and counseling services if the tests come back positive for substances.

Female Responsive Transition and Aftercare

Rite of Passage also provides female responsive transition and aftercare services for young women. Staff provide assistance and guidance for locating jobs and housing to achieve economic independence. In addition, staff help the young women who may be assuming parenting responsibilities along with other challenges related to family reunification. Many youth are also linked to appropriate mental health professionals within their communities.



Evening Reporting Centers. The reporting programs provide an "event-based" curriculum

that includes dynamic programming, speakers and activities. Cognitive behavioral therapy helps students transition back into the community and into the world of work or educational institutions and promotes a healthy life style through skill building. Staff also partner with community resources to provide a continuum of care that addresses all of the youth's needs. To promote healthy families, the program assists parents in increasing their abilities to establish a healthy family structure, provide for the appropriate supervision of their children, and show the needed emotional support to their children.

Intensive Case Management. This service addresses youth with multiple needs including mental health conditions, drug and alcohol use and behavioral challenges. Staff experienced in youth parole, transitional services and counseling provide support and advocacy for the youth and his/her family and become age-appropriate role models. Staff deliver services during two to three weekly client contacts, which take place within a youth's home, school or place of employment.



Rite of Passage strives to provide a hopeful and positive approach to community non-residential services that focus on improving family functioning and empowering the youth to live successfully in the community. We believe that even though a youth's behavior has had a negative impact on his/her own life, the family and the community, we can provide the youth with the tools necessary to succeed.

Works Cited

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Staff Spotlight

ANDREW HICKMAN - SITE TRAINER



“Somebody has to believe. Believe in these kids. Believe in what we do.”

MENSA is the largest, oldest and most famous high IQ society in the world and in order to become a member, you must score at the 98th percentile or higher on a standardized, supervised intelligence test. SSA’s Site Trainer, Andrew Hickman, always wondered if he had what it took to be a member of this elite and select group. When he took the test to find out, he scored in the top 2% nationally and was granted admission to Mensa.

This comes as no surprise to anyone that has worked with Mr. Hickman, as there doesn’t seem to be a job that he can’t do. Since starting with ROP in 1998, he has worked as a Medic, a Group Leader, a Shift Supervisor, a Unit Manager and now the Site Trainer. He has also served as the Head Coach for both the baseball and cross country teams, and as part of SSA’s broadcast team, he

brings the live action of sporting events into the homes of friends, families and associates who cannot attend games. Needless to say, Mr. Hickman is a very busy man.

On top of everything he does for the students at SSA, Andrew still finds time for his own education. He is currently a candidate for his bachelor’s degree in management with a minor in psychology at California Coast University and has plans to pursue a master’s degree.

When asked why he devotes so much of himself to his job, Mr. Hickman says: “I truly believe that these kids need a role model. Anyone can stand back and bark orders and tell them what to do. A true leader will show them that it can be done, then lead them into doing it correctly. My goal is to have others adopt this philosophy and apply it at ROP.”



Employees of the Month

JANUARY



Albert Rodgers, III – Group Leader Mr. Rodgers was hired in July, 2005. He was born in Inglewood, CA, graduated from Long Beach Jordan High School and attended Santa Ana College in Orange County. Mr. Rodgers left Santa Anna to play professional baseball with the St. Louis Cardinals. He has traveled the country and overseas, as far away as Tokyo, Japan to play baseball. Professionally, Mr. Rodgers continues to strive for excellence. While playing a critical role in program development, he has also become instrumental in designing and developing successful exit plans for his students.

FEBRUARY



Michael Desper – Maintenance Michael Desper started with ROP in January 2008 doing maintenance. He was born in Los Angeles, CA, attended Charter Oak High School in Covina, and enrolled at Cerritos College where he obtained his associate’s degree in orthotics and prosthetics. He has a second associate’s degree in Plant Engineering, and is only nine units away from obtaining his bachelor’s degree. Mr. Desper enjoys the people he works with at SSA and the teamwork exhibited by all employees. He has been married to his wife, Janine for 12 years and enjoys time with his friends and family. One little known fact about Mr. Desper - he has the biggest feet on campus, 17-5E!

MARCH



Justin Banks – Group Leader Justin Banks was hired in December 2006. He was born in Orange County, CA and later moved to Nevada where he graduated from Douglas High School. After high school, he returned to California to attend the Academy of Arts in San Francisco. Mr. Desper and his wife, Amanda, are the proud parents of Olivia who is 3 1/2 and their recent arrival—a baby boy, Nolan. Justin’s dedication to his job and the students he works with is evident, as he recently moved to Pismo Beach, CA with his family and continues to commute back and forth to SSA.

APRIL



Shawntay Beck – Group Leader Ms. Beck began her career with Rite of Passage as a Coach Counselor and Case Management Assistant in June, 2002. Ms. Beck is a professional, highly regarded role model and mentor to both our students and staff. She has made many friends since joining ROP and enjoys working with the students. Ms. Beck grew up locally and graduated from Yerington High School. She enjoys giving back to her community and spending time with her son and daughter.



Rite of Passage

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The Community Speaks Out



"On behalf of the Douglas County Senior Center, I would like to thank you for your efforts in assisting us and your participation in our annual (fundraising) event."

Senior Citizens are the largest population in Douglas County and the fastest growing. The Meals on Wheels program has grown nearly two and a half times its size since 2000. Proceeds from this fundraiser help us to meet the challenges of an ever expanding senior population. Important programs, like Meals on Wheels, could not be made as available without volunteers such as you, your staff and students."

Warren Bottino

Manager of Senior Services & Transportation
Douglas County Senior Services



"The William S. Boyd School of Law Juvenile Justice Clinic would like to extend our most sincere gratitude for allowing us access to Rite of Passage on April 12, 2008. The tour and explanation of the services and programs offered at ROP helped us gain a better understanding of your facility, which will help us to better serve our clients."

We now feel as though we have a better grasp on the services offered at ROP so we can better advocate for placement at your facility, based on our individual client's needs."

Dr. Ina Dorman

Professor of Social Work

Megan Chaney

Professor of Law

Amie Fender

Kate Smith

Sara Mulroy

Advanced Clinic Students