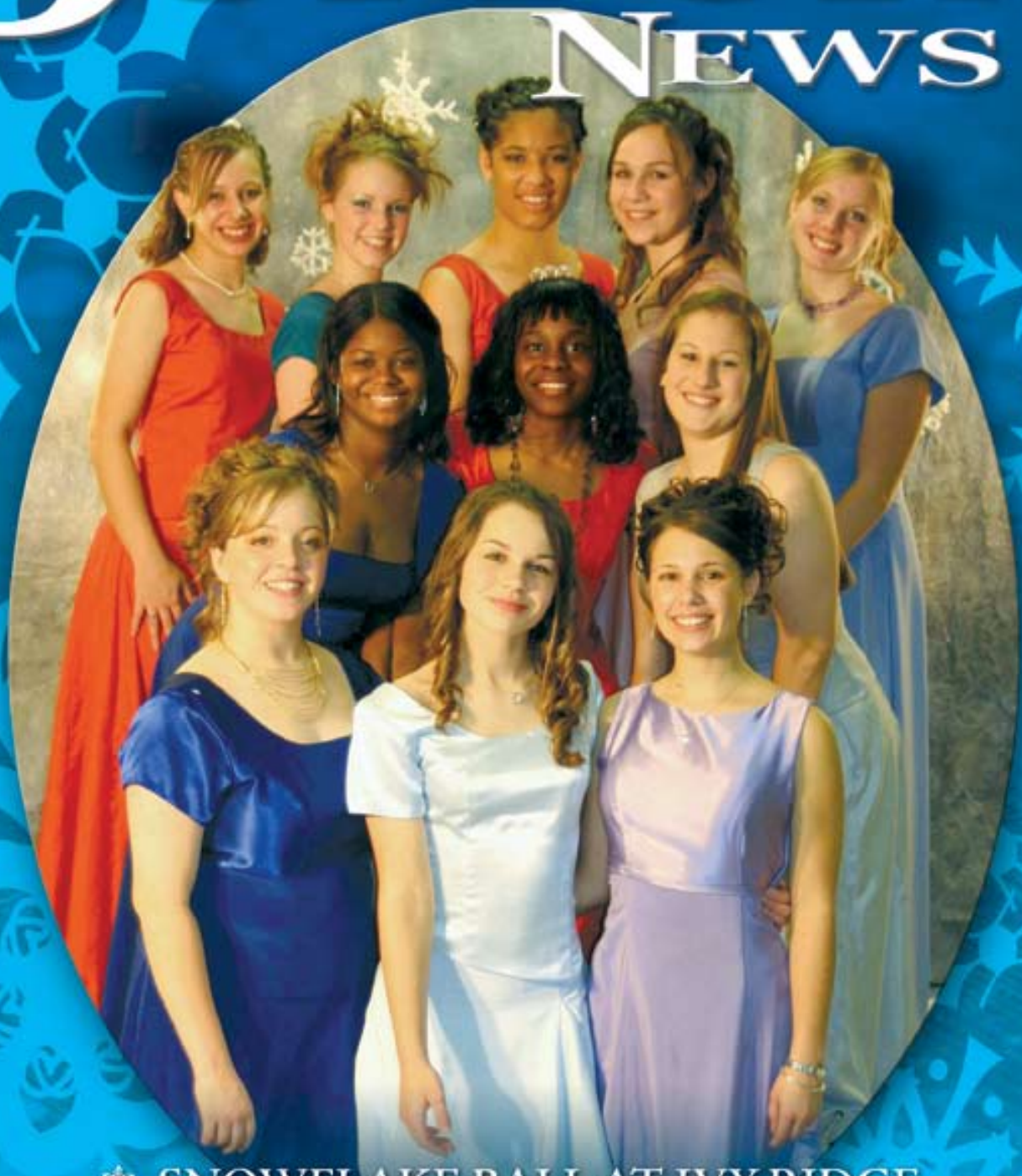


# PARENT SUPPORT NEWS

JANUARY 2006



- ❄️ SNOWFLAKE BALL AT IVY RIDGE
- ❄️ HONOR GRADUATES
- ❄️ THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO REMEMBER - GRADUATION AUGUST 2005



was meant to assist.

Through my experiences at the Academy, I have created a lot of lasting memories. So, this graduation is more than just any in that I am saying goodbye to the family I have formed for myself within this year. They say the years you spend in high school are supposed to be the best years of your life. Before I came to Midwest Academy, I had a difficult time believing that statement was true. Now, I believe it with all of my heart. I never thought that my high school years would be happy times, let alone life-changing.

Not only has my life changed, but also those lives around me. I have found that all who I

have influenced now have a piece of me within them. All of you have that exact same effect on others. Every time someone sees something we do or hears something we say, whether they realize it or not, they learn something from it. We are now entering back into the world with a different perspective - as teachers. All that we have learned will be applied in some way and we will continue on changing lives.

TODAY, I stand in front of you as an official high school graduate. Granted, I never expected to be graduating with a group of people I have barely met. I know you all are thinking about the same thing. For me, though, I am proud to be standing exactly where I am today.

About a year ago, I thought I was just going to be entering my senior year. The fact I have accomplished a year-early graduation is amazing to me. Now, I have an early start on college in preparation for my career and future as a whole.

For as long as I can remember, I have dreamt of becoming a singer. Before I came to Midwest Academy, I knew what I wanted for my life, yet I was not making any goals to get to that point. One of my main struggles was my lack of confidence. Throughout the past year, I have grown within myself and gained that confidence. Not only that, but also the knowledge in how to assist others. I have always loved helping people, whether it be lending a hand or being there to listen and care. With my many experiences at Midwest, I know that I

As much as I have changed and grown, I know that the path in front of me is not going to be an easy one to tread. The world has not changed, yet we can still make a difference. The most important thing for all of us to do is to stay real. With temptations laid out in front of us, life is full of curve balls. In our program, we learned how to tell when they were coming and now is the time to swing. We have the power over our own lives - remember that always.

Throughout my life, friends have come and gone but my best friend remains myself. I know that as long as I keep that in my heart, I will forever succeed. For too long, I allowed myself to become

distracted with life around me. Knowing how that did not work for me before, I am using it as my learning experience for the future. I expected that I would learn things from others and others would learn from me, but I never thought about learning from myself.

I know for me, part of the learning was opening myself up to new opportunities. In the past, I allowed myself to go down the former difficult path. I was so caught up in what everyone else was doing and thinking that I lost track of what I wanted. I began to distance myself from my family and instead, hurting myself physically and mentally. I became so dependent on what people thought of me that I would

conform to fit what I believed those thoughts were. It got to the point where I was living about five separate lives. Learning about me assisted me in seeing that I am worth more than that.

I want to take this time to acknowledge myself. It is not very often that I take out the time to speak it out loud, yet I know all of the things that I have accomplished. Status one is a pretty tough place to be in a program and I was able to make it all the way through to graduation! We all have that enormous accomplishment to remember for the rest of our lives and a story to pass on to all generations. Each of our stories are all unique and each has a place in our own



hearts as well as the hearts of those we are close to. I have those people to thank for the support they have offered.

Every time I try to thank a certain two people and tell them how much they mean to me, I get choked up. I know that I would not be standing here today, if it was not for my parents. The support that has been given to me has been more than valued and every moment I have spent with them I have cherished as never before. I also have the rest of my family here, at home, and looking down on me from above rooting for me with open arms. I cannot imagine what it would have been like without them in my family. I also want to include my Midwest Academy family. For over a year, I was offered and offered back what I saw as unconditional support. It is amazing how much potential a group of teenagers have.

We are now about to enter into the beginning of a new journey. We all have different, yet similar, plans for our futures. With that I want to encourage you all to keep the memories, the lessons, and the people of your program in your heart, always. Keep your support close to you; but above all - never stop loving yourself. We have gotten this far, so why turn back now?



**Laura B.**  
graduated Midwest Academy  
Honor Grad August 2005  
She presented this speech to the  
graduating class.

# HELPING VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA - MAJESTIC RANCH'S SPIRIT OF SERVICE

WHEN we heard about the devastation of Hurricane Katrina we brain stormed — **How Could We Help?** We realized Eagle Point Academy was in the affected

area. It had been hit by the hurricane. So I called Eagle Point; Randy C. and Olivia were so warm and welcoming. They said the school and students were doing okay, but many employees and their families had lost everything. They told me about employees with small children and teens that had lost their homes...parents who didn't have the special formula they needed to feed their baby...families who could benefit from having basic supplies.

So the plan was born: each of our five teams of students would put together a care package to send to a specific family—families with a family member who worked at Eagle Point. We started by telling our students about the hurricane. We showed them photographs from magazines and told them true stories of the victims. Later, our students saw a television special about the first few days after the hurricane hit. The students were asking how they could help, even before we told them we would be able to.

Supplies were donated by the owners, director, and staff of Majestic Ranch Academy, and each team of students made a blanket to go in the package. We had so many supplies – water,

hygiene products, first aid supplies, and the blanket – that each team sent two packages for each family. Tom M., another Family Rep, obtained radio and newspaper spots to advertise our project. Tom opened his garage on Saturday morning for the people of the community to make donations. Students collected and packaged the clothes and toys that were donated, and made drawings, letters, and poems to

include in the boxes. We sent a total of twenty-five boxes of donations to Eagle Point, to be distributed to staff, people in the nearby community, or anyone who could benefit from the supplies. Our students at MRA were so giving. Many wanted to give from the few belongings they have here. They thought of items at home that they didn't need anymore, and wanted to send. They had honest concern for the welfare of the people whose lives were so devastated. We thank Eagle Point Academy for letting us send supplies to them. We hope many people benefited from the efforts of students, staff, and community members of MRA.

**Tori J.**  
Family Rep. - Majestic Ranch Academy

MAJESTIC Ranch did a good thing to help the people who were affected by Hurricane Katrina. We were able to donate boxes full of clothes, food, diapers, money, hygiene products, and lots of other things. We felt bad because a lot of people lost their homes and belongings. We tried to think how we would feel if we had lost all of our belongings: sad, miserable, and hungry! I am very happy that we did this project. It made us feel good to help those in need.

**Megan B.**  
enrolled Majestic Ranch Academy

WHEN Tori, our family rep, came into class about a month ago and told us about the problems the people were facing in New Orleans, my first thought was, "Oh, no! Now we are gonna have to do a project to help everyone down in Louisiana." But then I thought, "How cool will this be! I get to pack some things in a box to be sent to them." I also got to help make a blanket. I love to write poems, so I got to write a poem to someone that I don't know. I live at MRA and I have been here for 1 year! Something I have been focusing on a lot lately is myself,

worrying about my family issues and my own issues at the Ranch. What this service project taught me is that the world doesn't revolve around Kelsie E. and all of her problems. I also learned that once in a



while I need to take time to stop and smell the roses. We don't get a lot here, but what we do get, I take advantage of. I never took



time to stop and appreciate the fact that I have a bed, a pillow, and something to keep me warm. There are people who don't even have that! There are mothers out there who were separated from their children. There is a possibility they may never see them again, and I'm here worrying about losing my socks!

The day Tori came into class and told us about all of the chaos, I cried. So many innocent people were caught in the middle of something that they don't deserve. I believe that everything happens for a reason, either the outcome will be good or it is meant for a good cause.

This experience will benefit me and how I appreciate things in life. Hopefully, people will learn to appreciate everything life has to offer.

**Kelsie E.**  
enrolled Majestic Ranch Academy

WHEN we were putting together packages for the Katrina victims it made me feel supportive and helpful, but at the same time I was really sad, because I knew that people were suffering because of lack of food and water, and contamination. When I realized that I could help in a small way it made me happy.

**Clayton R.**  
enrolled Majestic Ranch Academy

HERE at Majestic Ranch we were very concerned about the Hurricane Katrina victims. We made blankets and put

them into a care package for four families. We went to one of our family representative's house and held up signs and did a donation drop-off. I was frightened when I heard about the hurricane hitting and destroying the city of New Orleans. The people were in a bad situation

because most of the drinking water was ruined. Most of the stores were being looted and a lot of people were dead or missing. I hope nothing like this ever happens again.

**Joel M.**  
enrolled Majestic Ranch Academy

MY team did a lot of service for the Hurricane Katrina Relief. People gave us clothes, writing supplies, baby supplies, blankets, toys, rugs, and other things. We organized the items and put them neatly into boxes. While some of us were waiting to help, we wrote letters and drew pictures to put into the boxes. Service is a great thing. It not only makes the receiving person happy, it also makes the giver happy.

**Hanna R.**  
enrolled Majestic Ranch Academy

I felt bad for the people in the Katrina event because they were losing people that they loved very much. I felt sad because they now have no homes, food and water. Those people are strong and had to care for each other. They have to stay strong to make it through this crisis. I think it would be hard to see your own siblings get hurt and sick. I hope the people there are getting their lives put back together.

**Mitch P.**  
enrolled Majestic Ranch Academy

*THE BEST WAY TO FIND YOURSELF IS TO LOSE YOURSELF IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS*

WE were able to help the hurricane victims by sending boxes full of supplies such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, hairbrushes, shampoo and soap. We drew pictures and put colorful stickers on them to show our support. I felt bad about the tragedies taking place with the people in the hurricane area and wish I could get more people to help them. It's unfortunate how many people don't want



to help. I am glad that Majestic Ranch wants to help and that I am able to help!

**Kathryn S.**  
enrolled Majestic Ranch Academy

# STAY FOCUSED

GRADUATING the program was probably the biggest accomplishment in my life so far. Not only because I was finally at home after twenty-one months in the program, but also because for once



in my life I had finished something I started and I did it just for me.

I have been home a year now, and life certainly isn't perfect, however compared to life before the program, there is an extreme difference. After graduating, I finished my high school credits, and I am now in my first year of college.

Going back to school and being around some old friends was not easy. I have learned that I do not have to force others to see the change in me, because true change will shine out on its own. Everyday I think about how blessed I am to have been a participant in, and a graduate of Carolina Springs Academy.

I learned how to be committed to myself, my family, and importantly my values, and that commitment is what gets me through the tough days when I feel like giving in. I remember that I have worked too hard and too long to simply turn my back on myself. If I had chosen not to graduate, I know that my commitment would not be as strong. I

am also thankful that my parents stood by me, and did not give in, even though they wanted me home as bad as I wanted to be home. There have been and will still be some mistakes along the way, only now I have the tools to deal with what may happen in my life, and not only just deal with it, but take each day as a lesson learned.

I have shared with you just a little piece of the big extraordinary adventure that was my time spent at Carolina Springs Academy. I

will always remember and cherish that adventure as something sacred and keep it close to my heart. I thank God for allowing the program to be an enormous stepping stone toward fulfilling the purpose in my life.

**Erika R.**  
Graduated Carolina Springs Academy  
December 2003

**FYI:** The Parent Support News is available online each month beginning January 2006. Please check out next month's issue and enjoy the printed issue every other month. The internet is a great way to share with friends and family. Visit [www.parentsupportservices.com/mag](http://www.parentsupportservices.com/mag)

# THANKFUL

*I'm thankful for the letters home that tell me I'm a beast,*

*They mean I'm in my child's thoughts, to say the very least.*

*When every single point is gone, dropped to new status low,*

*I'm glad there's still an upward path on which my kid can go.*

*I'm happy that the food stinks and has an awful taste, that means my child is tasting it and has good food to waste.*

*I'm grateful for computer school where nothing's ever learned, for school is where I never thought my kid would be returned.*

*I'm thankful for those khaki pants and geeky clip-on ties, they mean my child is fully clothed, not naked neck to thigh.*

*And for the empty table place that used to make me weep,*

*I'm so very, very thankful and here's the thought I keep:*

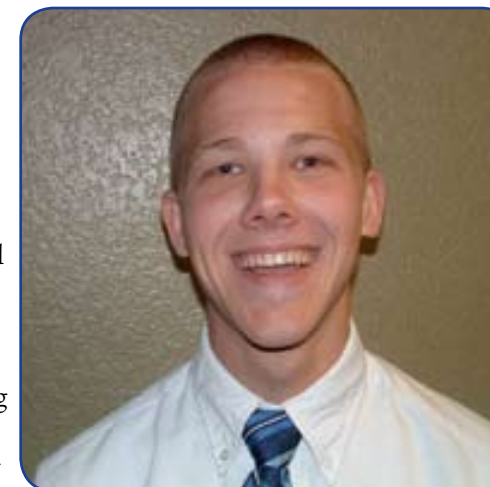
*As long as there's complaining and pleas to leave today,*

*I know my child is getting help and has good cause to stay*

**Patricia R.**  
daughter Sarah R.  
enrolled Darrington Academy

# FALL DOWN. GET UP!

I recently returned from my second home pass. It still amazes me how so much has changed in the last seventeen months. It has been long and very hard. Before I came to the Academy, I had no self worth, respect for others, or a purpose for my life. I was very angry, verbally abusive, and into the whole drugs and party scene. I was doing poorly in school and heading nowhere in life. At first when I came to the Academy, it was all about getting back at my parents. I would send them very cruel and manipulative letters because I felt like I was being punished.



In reality my parents love me more than anything in the world. The unconditional love they had for me was present every day at home before I left, but just not in the form that I wanted then. Before it was, "You can't hang out with those kids." or "You have to check in with us." To me now these words my parents spoke to me were out of love because they wanted the best for me, the only problem was I didn't want it for myself. I now appreciate my parents more than anything and our communication has improved so much.

This journey is preparing me for the next to come. I know that I am always going to have my struggles in life, but its how I deal with them that counts. Never giving up is one of the most important things to live by. I only fail if I fall and don't get back up. I have learned to love myself and words alone wouldn't be enough to describe it. I have learned to be my own leader and not to follow the crowd and to be a contributor to society. One of the biggest things I learned was to follow my dreams and not settle for less than I know that I am capable of. Looking back I am very thankful for the other students who have helped impact my life. Also the staff that sticks by us with every step we take. I thank God for giving me this second chance to live. One of my dreams is to one day be a staff member at Horizon Academy so I can give to others what has been given to me.

**Matt S.**  
enrolled Horizon Academy

# ATTITUDE SWITCH

When I first came to Horizon Academy I displayed a lot of resistance because I'd held so much resentment against my mom and my stepdad.

I had moved out of their house three years prior to coming to Horizon Academy and I lived either by myself or with my sister. I was gang affiliated, using and dealing drugs, and having sex. I thought my life was perfect. I had no plan for my life. I did good in school so I told myself that I was going to be okay even though I knew that it wasn't the life I wanted to live. I lied to myself constantly. I didn't feel I could face my mom and tell her what I had been through because I was so ashamed of myself. However my parents knew and I was escorted to Horizon Academy.

I came to this school very hurt and angry. I took it out on the staff and other students. It finally clicked for me, that this was an opportunity to get my life back on track and quickly changed my outlook and attitude. Within a matter of months I was able to finish high school.

The students and staff have been a great support and through them I learned a lot about myself. Most of the students are in this school for similar the same reasons so it was easy to relate and deal with my issues and share about the things that



I had felt about myself, and all the things that I had felt ashamed of. It wasn't anything that I expected because in return I got a lot of love and was therefore able to break out of my shell and give back.

I feel the seminars, however, are the biggest gifts the school provides. Through the Seminars I learned tools that I will use for the rest of my life. Through the Seminars I found myself

after years of feeling so lost and worthless. I am a beautiful, strong and intelligent young woman. I found a purpose for life finally. This new self love and confidence led me to build the relationship that I had always wanted with my parents and siblings, which is probably the greatest gift I could ever ask for. The best part is knowing that I did it by myself, for myself with the assistance from the school. Now that I'm getting back on track, I can finally get what I want out of life.

**Angelica H.**  
enrolled Horizon Academy

# A CALL FOR ACTION

I have been working the last few months in the Parent\Child (PC) elements of the seminar program. I am sensing something which

is very dangerous. This sense concerns "Hope" that things will work out rather than creating things to work out. I get this sense through the lack of work I see parents injecting into their program. The seminars are there to give you tools and direction but these must be practiced on a



daily basis to truly make them work. Sitting back doing very little other than ATTENDING the seminars is HOPE. Hope is the possibility of something being different, it is not the reality. Reality is created by taking massive action, producing results. In the program, we ask your teens for action in the seminars, between the seminars and during their daily living. If we do not see the action, we stand firm with them that this will not create a new reality.

Parents for you to create a new reality for yourself and your family you must take the same type of massive action and stand firm that results must show up in your daily life. Change does not happen when you are comfortable. You must make new choices and continue to practice these choices. The time your teen is away

is the time for you to take your life on in a way which challenges all you think and believe. This even means

looking at your stated values and seeing if they are evident in your life. The year or so your teen is gone is the time for you to focus on you and your program. Yes, you will interact with your teen, the program, and other family members. However, the focus is on your accountability and creation of a new way of being. Nothing is wrong with the old way of being; it just has not created all the results you desire in life.

I see and get reports of too many parents just wanting to sit through or worst argue through a seminar. We involved with Parent Support Services have no vested interest in you believing what we teach. In fact we do not say we "know it and have the answer." It is up to you to engage and determine the validity of the concepts. However, if you merely observe or argue for what you think you know now, you block the possibility of a new opening. There are other paths for you to follow, but I know the seminars offer a great way to challenge yourself. Do not sit and hope something will happen in life if you do not engage.

The parent's part of the program is the seminars. These are highly recommended to ensure a successful experience after graduation. In order to attend any PCs you must be a Discovery graduate.

One area I see as weak is the willingness of the parents to give and receive feedback from one another. My experience of recent PCI and PCII is most parents do not know what

feedback really is or how to use it effectively. It is not about giving advice, being mean, nor blaming. It is an experience of someone in the present moment. It is a gift to assist someone. It can be uncomfortable but remember NOTHING CHANGES WHEN YOU ARE COMFORTABLE.

If you shift your behavior patterns, those who engage with you MUST shift. The old pattern is not working so they will have to do something new. This will take time and requires

*"In essence, if we want to direct our lives, we must take control of our consistent actions. It's not what we do once in a while that shapes our lives, but what we do consistently."*  
- Anthony Robbins -

consistency on your part, but a shift will happen. The Keys Families are the place to apply and learn to deal with people and thus your bio-family in new and effective ways. If you are merely sitting through Keys, you are missing the real power. The material in the weekend is valuable but REAL value of Keys is the work in-between time. The value is created by applying the material i.e. doing the work in the workbook and then working with your family regarding the internal dynamics. I see too many parents just attending Keys and not really doing the work.

I challenge all parents to engage in ALL the seminars. This is a FAMILY program not just one for your teens. The more you jump in now, the greater the possibility of success once your family is reunited.

David G.  
Senior Trainer

# THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

I came to my program knowing something was not working in my family, knowing something on our journey was creating the very results I feared. Because of my instinctive gut feeling of imminent danger, I knew something needed to change. Some of the puzzle was known, yet being denied. There was a yearning to search for a better way of being, and there was a need to interrupt our current path. What was that piece that was missing? What was the information I needed to transform our family and lock the door on the past non-working behaviors, and open the door to a new and healthier way of being a family?



How could this situation turn around? There were so many questions racing through my mind the night my son was escorted to Spring Creek Lodge. I knew on some level that it was not just about my son and his choice. I instinctively knew that my actions were in need of a major overhaul, but I did not have a clear understanding of what in the world was driving my behavior. I had no idea of the comprehensiveness and healing properties that this program offered and I was soon to discover what transformational learning was all about.

In my Discovery, I learned who I was not. In my Focus, I learned who I was. I am a Powerful, Worthy, and Joyful woman of God. Although I did seminars and the homework, and was taking a look at things from a different level of openness, I was only doing the mechanics of the program. I started the Keys and was adopted into a wonderful Keys

Family. We were very sociable, and spent a lot of time talking about our kids in the program on our conference calls. Although it was good to share those feeling with others on a similar journey, I just wasn't getting out of the calls what I felt I needed. Before I attended my second Keys I discussed this with my Key's buddy who felt the same way. Our second Keys was once again a fabulous seminar, and we shifted from talking about our kids to talking about our homework on our conference calls. We were still doing mechanics. Along came the third Key, and I decided to step outside my comfort zone and take on the Mom role. There are no accidents.

I went to the Mom and Pop orientation and discovered new information, and

understood for the first time what the Keys family was all about. Now one may ask how could I not have gotten the fact that the Keys family is your safe practicing ground until my third Keys (which would be a very good question). I can only say that I most definitely needed that Effective Communication seminar, and in particular the listening portion. Amazingly, new possibilities opened up for me once I got it. That is not to say I immediately stopped my fall back behavior. I still believed that there was a right way to be the Mom, and if I did everything perfect, it would all work out.....wrong!. It was not about the mechanics, or doing it a certain way. I felt we were still struggling as a Keys Family and I asked for a coach, but I got more than I asked for. I got feedback from David G. He asked a few simple questions. It was not about the homework, the agenda, or the fact that my family was not posting on the BBS, it

continued on page 15  
Lynda M.  
son Keaton M.  
enrolled Spring Creek Lodge Academy

## UPCOMING SEMINAR DATES

REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR ALL SEMINARS.

PLEASE VISIT YOUR SCHOOL'S WEB SITE FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION.

DO NOT MAKE AIRLINE RESERVATIONS UNTIL CONFIRMED BY YOUR SCHOOL

Do not show up at the training expecting to be allowed to enter without registering.

LAST DAY OF THE SEMINAR ENDS AT 7:00 P.M..  
PLEASE SCHEDULE FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS ACCORDINGLY.

### DISCOVERY

- CHICAGO ..... Feb. 10
- LOS ANGELES..... March 24
- ATLANTA..... Feb. 3
- DALLAS..... Feb. 17
- BAY AREA..... April 7

### FOCUS

- CHICAGO ..... March 23
- LOS ANGELES..... March 2
- ATLANTA..... March 16
- DALLAS..... March 30
- BAY AREA..... March 2

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

- NEWARK ..... March 4
- CHICAGO ..... March 11
- LOS ANGELES..... Feb. 25
- ATLANTA..... March 4
- DALLAS..... Feb. 4
- BAY AREA..... April 22

# MY GUIDING LIGHT THROUGH THE DARKNESS

PARENTS and guardians, well wishers, and fellow students, good afternoon. Today is a day for joy and celebration, for it is our graduation day. A graduation not only for our school, but for our new life. This is a rebirth, a second chance at life because we were mishandling our old life.

I got myself sent to Tranquility Bay for misusing my old life. I was ungrateful for everything my parents gave me. I was doing drugs and hurting everyone around me so much that my parents felt they could no longer control me, nor could I control myself.

Now I have the pleasure of honestly saying that this program has been the most productive experience of my life. I came to the program with all sorts of negative feelings and thoughts. In the most meaningful sense of the word, I was clueless. I knew absolutely nothing about myself emotionally. It took me all



of 18 months to learn about myself, and believe me I am still learning.

When I arrived at TB, I decided to work just to leave. I didn't want to stay there any longer than I had to, but after seeing my parents at PC-1 and hearing what they had to tell me, my attitude gradually became buoyant. I began to make progress. I started working for me and nobody else. I graduated high school for me because I knew I would

need it in the future. I also made the decision to stay after my 18th birthday because I felt I needed this continuous change to prove to myself that I can do whatever I put my mind to without: drugs, negative feelings, or any form or shape of disrespect.

Over the ensuing months after PC-1 and PC-2, I did put myself to the test. On my first home pass, the growth of my integrity shocked even me. I learned for the first time how it truly felt to choose the right path when no one was watching. That knowledge gave me renewed hope and strength that I will survive. These are some of the many tools I gathered at TB to assist me on my journey through life.

I would like to thank my parents for giving up everything they did for me, their only child, to send me to the program and supporting me every inch



# CHANGES - STEP BY STEP



“TRANQUILITY BAY”; when I heard the name, I asked myself, “A place for troubled teens?” The name came across as an oxymoron. From my experience, the name “Tranquility Bay” is a great fit. You begin the process of healing, learning, and growing. You learn to breathe again and start focusing on yourself, discovering a new you, and having extra keys to get you through these challenging times.

The director, staff, seminars, family reps, support groups, and other parents were there

There will be many more challenges that I have yet to face. With the tools I have learned, they will guide me in my life. The past year and a half has proven to me that I can take on challenges I never thought were possible. My success may be baby steps, a few steps backward great leaps forward, or just stepping left. I can look back with the realization of where I have been and looking forward to where I can go. It takes my breath away.

JoAnn O.  
son Joseph O.  
graduated Tranquility Bay &  
Honor Grad December 2005

of the way. I am grateful for all the support throughout my program which assisted me in adjusting my action steps to achieve this goal. I'm sure I speak for all of you when I say we have learned something; whether it took 12 or 36 months, the fact is lessons were learned. I think the biggest lesson I learned though, is that life is full of lessons, and the learning does not stop here. Fellow graduates, I urge you to use the tools you gathered as a lamp unto your feet and a guide to your future. May you remain steadfast and immovable in your values and always remind yourselves that you are the future. Congratulations class of 2005, we made it!

Joseph O.  
graduated Tranquility Bay  
Honor Grad December 2005  
He presented this speech to the  
graduating class.

for me. Wherever I turned there was a helping hand, a shoulder to cry on, and a warm hug. I have learned it is okay to ask for and give help. Giving and getting help has provided me with a feeling of self worth, satisfaction, and just being loved. There will be successes and failures in the future, but it's how you handle them from this point on. I've learned that I am not alone on this journey in my life.

There are lessons on the art of skillful communication which can show visions of an abundant future with a whole and healthy family. I have wonderful relationships and rock solid values. I have become addicted to my quest of continuing to learn. I have done self evaluations, journaling, and have become accountable for my actions.

# SLOW DOWN

Slow down  
what goes round  
comes round  
dry your eyes  
clear your mind

You just got to take it

One day at a time

Years from now

What Will you say?

“I tried my best”

or

“I threw it all away”?

life has no guarantees

please look at it with clear eyes;

pay the price

Don't let this pass you by!

Daniel G.  
enrolled Darrington Academy

# BEARS FOR KIDS - HEALING THROUGH SERVICE



A few weekends ago I decided to take a little bit of time out of my life to crochet a bear. At the time I was not sure where exactly the bear was going to go once I finished it, but I was sure that it would go to a worthy cause.

I have never really been one to crochet having made only one other project. I found I needed much help learning how to make the bear. A girl from another group readily offered to assist me, and the project turned out to be fairly easy. I used my creativity and put a cute little

WITH the Holidays just around the corner, what is better than the spirit of giving? A few weeks ago my Family Representative asked me if I would be in charge of a service project for her. She wanted us to crochet teddy bears for children in the DOVE house. She asked me if I would help teach other girls how to make them. Without hesitation I said, "Yes!"

When I began thinking about it, I thought "who will even want to do this? I don't know where these are going or how to go about starting the project". But as soon as I got up in my room, I took out my yarn and started crocheting. Little by little other girls became interested in making the bears and the service project grew. There was yarn as well as cotton stuffing donated to support the project.

Sure, it was stressful having to teach so many girls how to make them, but just the thought that these bears will bring a smile to a child's face makes it all worthwhile. Even though I will not be there to see their faces light up, I have the pure satisfaction of knowing I touched someone out there, even if it is only for a moment.

Every time I see a new bear being handed in, I can't help but remind myself how amazing it feels to give back unconditionally, not wanting anything in return. That is the true spirit of giving.

**Katie M.**  
enrolled Cross Creek Programs



flower on the chest of my bear. I had high hopes that the little bear will go to a young girl who is in dire need of a loving



hug.

After completing the bear, I learned that it was going to be donated to the police force. It will be placed in squad cars for young children who end up in the middle of household disputes and other such events that young boys and girls fall victim to.

I believe it is a wonderful cause and I have plans to make more bears to have donated in the future.

**NOTE:** The DOVE House is a non-profit organization serving child victims of sexual abuse and their non-offending family members through family like setting while investigations are being conducted.

**Natasha S.**  
enrolled Cross Creek Programs



# SUPPORT AFTER GRADUATION

MY name is Tony L., and I graduated from Cross Creek in March of 2005. I am currently a student at Towson University in Baltimore, Maryland, working on a double major in Criminal Justice and Psychology.

Upon graduating Cross Creek, graduating the home contract, and going to school, I was successful, sober, and happy for the first time in years. However, I felt myself sometimes forgetting the lessons I had learned in Cross Creek. I went to college feeling like I was on top of the world, but little did I know the challenges that awaited me.

Almost everywhere I went, I was challenged with alcohol, drugs, and other illegal activity. At first, I tried to fight it and speak out against it, but I realized how futile it was for me. I remembered something I had learned during my stay at CCP; be the change you want to see in others. So I joined a designated driving program. One of my jobs was to help peers back to their dorms and make sure they were safe. I had found a healthy place in college, had good friends, and was doing great in school. I also joined the local church and was in the choir with a new friend that was working and totally supportive of me.

He and I, along with the rest of the "group" of people that attended the college kid nights were inseparable. He was a great friend to me, supportive, and a great influence on me. We would go to his football games and he would go to my volleyball games.

A few months later however, we let a girl get between us. I ended up dating her which put our friendship into disarray. It began to get awkward between both of us, and we both had a falling out with each other. We stopped hanging out, and

although I missed him, I had too much pride to call him, and apologize, or even try to get together. That was my biggest mistake.

One day I received a phone call that he had died in a horrible accident. There aren't words that can describe how the group felt that day, and I can't



even begin to explain how I felt. I let something so simple and dumb as my pride ruin something that I could never get back. Brian P. and Ron G., two of my greatest influences in life from CCP, had always taught me that friendship is more important than any girlfriend, or argument; I had not listened to them.

With the rush of finals, and the stress of school, I didn't deal with the loss of my friend, but more or less ignored it. But one day at church, I was with the group and thought of something. I looked to my right to tell my best friend and only saw an empty seat. It was then I realized the caliber of the mistake that I had made. I got in touch with Ron G. on the verge of an emotional breakdown and he helped me to rationally understand the situation. I made a mistake, and I needed to learn from it, and move on.

It is Christmas time now, and our church is decorated with all this

cheery décor. As I left the church after a meeting a few nights ago, I felt an incredible sadness. I do not cry, I hate crying, but as I looked at the spots we sat at, I couldn't help but cry. I started thinking about how his family must feel, and how much I missed my old friend. I finally recovered myself. I walked back

to my dorm where I and a few friends had a remembrance session of our friend. After that, I vowed to live my life one day at a time with no regrets.

School was cancelled today due to a foot of snow. We all went to my room and watched a movie with hot chocolate, after a day of sledding and snowball fights. For the first time in a long time, I felt a sense of belonging, a sense of family. Today I realized that life moves on, and I can't stay in the past regretting past decisions. My dear friend

wouldn't have wanted me to mope around, but to keep on living. For the first time since his death, I walked around with a smile on my face. Life is way too short to be sad and angry.

I am a courageous, powerful, determined, honest, and lovable young man; I know that I can be whatever I want to be in life.

I know that these times are hard for parents, with children in the program, and I realized how hard it was to miss a loved one. Just please, have faith. The program works, and your children are all where they need to be.

I am so grateful for the program and for the lessons it taught me. I am especially grateful for the support from Cross Creek's staff, support offered even after

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**Tony L.**  
Graduated Cross Creek Programs  
March 2005

# DANCING AMID THE SNOWFLAKES



gymnasium. The banquet tables were carefully set, a dance card at each place, as a line of beautiful young women dressed in formal gowns, and a matching line of handsome young men dressed in tuxedos, entered the gymnasium.

The young ladies had their hair

THE young men peered nervously at the apprehensive young ladies as dance instructors Ms. Suzie and Mr. Alton began teaching the first moves needed to successfully learn the Cha-Cha in mid-October. They never expected to learn



ball room dancing nor did they think they would be holding out their hands to invite ladies to dance formally by leading through traditional dance steps. Just six short weeks later, on Saturday, December 3, 2005, Academy at Ivy Ridge rang in the Christmas season with a grand Snowflake Ball.

Dance lessons culminated the week of the ball, and the gymnasium was decorated Friday and Saturday. Thousands of tiny white lights and crystal snowflakes twinkled and glowed all around the

all beautifully prepared with the help of the local BOCES cosmetology class and portrait pictures were taken by Ms. Heidi. The first song began, and every chair emptied as the eager young people displayed their ballroom dancing skills. Jack Kelley's Little Big Band provided three hours of music for the ball room dancing following an exquisite prime rib dinner catered by The Lodge. No one could help smiling as we watched the joyful faces of over 120 Advanced- through High Honor-Status students participating in the dancing as well as dozens of parents, staff and local dignitaries.

The evening continued with the laughter of the bunny hop and finished with the theme song of the evening, "The reason is you." Many happy tears were shed by departing parents at the end of the dance. The glow of those lights and sweet



smiles live on in our hearts as a gentle reminder of a special evening. Thanks to the dedication and vision of the dance committee and the students themselves, the Snowflake Ball at Academy at Ivy Ridge proved to be a resounding success.

**Tom N.**  
Public Relations Coordinator at Academy at Ivy Ridge



## STONE BY STONE

*Stone by Stone*

*I have a wall so thick it will not fall.  
I can't reach out,  
you can't reach in,  
results from insecurity  
each time my tender heart was hurt,  
the scars within grew worse.  
Keep trying to get through  
I want so much to show myself  
and love from you will really help  
till stone by stone it starts to fall  
and that beautiful child will come out  
and shine.  
and that wall so thick will come down  
stone by stone.*



**Amanda W.**  
enrolled Darrington Academy

## SUPPORT...

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graduation. I guess you can say that this experience has humbled me a lot, which was probably something I needed greatly. Just please, don't give up on us program kids. No matter what we say, deep down we love you and are thankful for the chance to change our lives. I am proud of the man I have become and without CCP, I wouldn't be as successful as I am today. For the Kids still in programs, hang in there and give it a chance. The hard work I did in there has helped me so much in the real world. I know how hard it can be, to be a low status or even a high status, and knowing you still had months left. But just work it and time will fly!

**Tony L.**  
Graduated Cross Creek Programs  
March 2005

# JOURNEY CONTINUES

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was about integrity and commitment. I needed help to understand how to relate it back to my values, and give feedback to my family in an open and honest manner, and get past the fears that drove me around issues, and over issues.

I NEEDED TO GO THROUGH THE ISSUE - TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER.

It was a breakthrough moment for me. I believe this was the turning point for me. I started to internalize the program. What I feared, I could now begin to let go of - oh yes it still shows up but I get to stop, look, choose, vote, do it, step left. These were no longer words, they were now action. What changed? I changed. I no longer just go along to be accepted, I am no longer swayed by the need to be liked, by fear of doing it wrong, or fear of confronting issues.

I've learned that it was not my Key's Family's lack of clarity, but it was my lack of focus and knowing when things are outside my personal boundaries, and when to confront in a loving way, and not just sit back in my comfort zone. It was easy for me to support and acknowledge, but oh so difficult to confront. Guess what the topic of our last conference call was? Yes - confronting, using feedback, the accountability model, and knowing your intent. My intent is to support, acknowledge and confront my Keys family in a loving and encouraging way. This is where I get to practice, practice, practice and get comfortable with the tools I've been given in preparation for the day my son comes home. What I do in my Keys family will be my reflection of what shows up in my own life and in my family. This is my internalization phase. I have been so blessed to come to this point on my

journey. It's not easy, but excellence lasts long after the fear, the cost, and the struggles are forgotten. My prayer is that everyone on the journey crosses that room in their own unique and authentic way. My Keys Family is my life boat as a cross the rocky waters

that lay ahead. My goal is to stay the course until there is smooth sailing - or not.

I will work like I don't need the money, and I will dance like there is no one watching

and I will love like I've never been hurt (not my own words, but they are my own feelings). I plan to be as prepared as I possibly can, and I challenge each and every parent to do the same. We are no longer the parents, grandparents and siblings that our program teen left behind. We are being transformed, and it is magnificent! I understand why they are called Keys Families, they help us unlock the door to new possibilities for ways of being a whole and healthy family.

With a deep appreciation and love for the Seismic Experience North Keys Family - you rock my boat!

**Lynda M.**  
son Keaton M.  
enrolled Spring Creek Lodge Academy

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### Submitting Articles:

Please email articles to editor@parentsupportservices.com, please include your name, your student's name if applicable, and the school he/she attends. When submitting articles, please submit a photo as well. You can email a high resolution photo or mail the photo and it will be returned. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me. ~Jennifer~



If you desire information on any of the Schools mentioned in PARENT SUPPORT NEWS, please contact us at any of the numbers listed below. We would be happy to answer your questions and send you informational and enrollment materials.

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