

Exhibit No. 6Date 3/10/21Bill No. SB 312**Schooler, Gwyn**

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 4:33 PM
To: LEG Applications Email Backup; LEG Committee-Senate Public Health testimony
Subject: Public Comment for Bill SB-312: Revise licensing and regulation of residential youth treatment facilities 2021-03-10 03:00 PM - (S) Public Health, Welfare and Safety
 Successfully Submitted on 03-08-21 16:33

Details:

Bill: SB-312: Revise licensing and regulation of residential youth treatment facilities 2021-03-10 03:00 PM - (S) Public Health, Welfare and Safety

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Spare The Rod

Name: BRETT William HARPER

Email: SpareTheRod.NP@gmail.com

Phone: (503) 607-3208

City, State: PORTLAND, OR

Written Statement: Hello,

My name is Brett Harper. I'm 35 and have Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), CPTSD, anxiety, social issues like abandonment and attachment disorders, night terrors, and have had painful sciatica from pinched L5/S1 nerve roots in my lower back. I survived a program that's been in the news a lot called Agape Boarding School located in Stockton, MO. It is very unfortunate but sadly very true that in my experience advocating against abusive and neglectful troubled teen industry facilities, some of the very worst ones, in fact most of the worst ones are religious run organizations that are exempt and abuse loopholes in the current child abuse, labor, and exploitation laws of the states in which they reside or simply lack that type of oversight to begin with. Because of what I have been through and am still living with and recovering from I don't want to see any more teens have to grow up and live like this, so I started a non profit called Spare the Rod here in Oregon that investigates, exposes these places, presses politicians to act, and works with government officials to get things done. I come both as a personal survivor but also as the leader of a new non profit organization that will continue to work to expose these places nationwide and as someone who has experience speaking with hundreds of survivors over the last couple of decades.

So with that having been said please, head my warning, that without proper oversight these places, even if they mean well, can be very dangerous if not deadly.

I am here to support survivors from Montana and around the world. Thank you for your time. May what we do here help save teens from abuse and life long injuries and mental illness.

Files:

Testify via Zoom: Yes

Zoom Method: Computer

Schooler, Gwyn

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 12:30 PM
To: LEG Applications Email Backup; LEG Committee-Senate Public Health testimony
Subject: Public Comment for Bill SB-312: Revise licensing and regulation of residential youth treatment facilities 2021-03-10 03:00 PM - (S) Public Health, Welfare and Safety
Successfully Submitted on 03-08-21 12:30

Details:

Bill: SB-312: Revise licensing and regulation of residential youth treatment facilities 2021-03-10 03:00 PM - (S) Public Health, Welfare and Safety

Position: Informational Witness

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Charlotte Bernot

Email: bernocharlotte@gmail.com

Phone: (404) 444-3656

City, State: Atlanta, GA

Written Statement: In 2015-2016 I attended the Monarch School in Heron, MT. This was a labeled "therapeutic boarding school". There I had everything taken from me. I was stripped down (literally and figuratively) and humiliated. Shamed and punished by unlicensed "counselors", living in fear of what new tasks would arise as a result of their ever changing moods. At many points in the program I was banned from speaking to others. I was taken out of my classes, forced to do hours of child labor in the scorching heat or the frigid snow (there was no one maintaining the property or buildings, we did it all).

We were abused in every way possible- attack therapy, sexual harassment, psychological manipulation, commonly being torn down and gaslit; mental and emotional abuse became non-recognizable and the labor we did became almost a daily practice. I have been clinically diagnosed with PTSD and have been told I sit up in my sleep still. I have common nightmares surrounding the fear, paranoia and chaos that this program brought into my life. But I will not stay silent until something is done. The answer to chaos is not more chaos and restraint. Children and teens need empathy and education, not abuse disguised as "discipline"

I am still appalled that the owners of this once-standing school/program have not been reprimanded for their crimes and inhumane treatment. They stole our money, had child predators (teacher and counselors) observe and, in some cases, abused us, neglected our health in every way possible, and traumatized hundreds of struggling youth in the process. Yet they still live comfortably, like many others who do the same to kids in these programs. There needs to be a change and it needs to be now.

On a more personal note- I am so lucky to have access to therapy and find myself in a more peaceful place than before, but the occurrences at the Monarch School still haunt me every single day. My hope is this testimony will give insight as to what has been happening and what change needs to come.

Thank you for your time,

Charlotte Bernot

Files:

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Schooler, Gwyn

From: leg-noreply@mt.gov
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 1:47 PM
To: LEG Applications Email Backup; LEG Committee-Senate Public Health testimony
Subject: Public Comment for Bill SB-312: Revise licensing and regulation of residential youth treatment facilities 2021-03-10 03:00 PM - (S) Public Health, Welfare and Safety
Successfully Submitted on 03-08-21 13:46

Details:

Bill: SB-312: Revise licensing and regulation of residential youth treatment facilities 2021-03-10 03:00 PM - (S) Public Health, Welfare and Safety

Position: Informational Witness

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Barbara Patterson

Email: Barbforeman63@gmail.com

Phone: (217) 202-4394

City, State: Paxton il 60957

Written Statement: I'm a survivor on the Rebekah home for girls 76-79. Its a shame what happen to me is happening in 2021.. Theres no background checks done which opens to predators. No license counselors or therapists in place for children that need help. There is no medical attention. I myself I have lived with the Damage Done To Me from these homes . I've been diagnosed with severe PTSD anxiety and depression 40 years later I'm still in counseling. I live with night terrors I'm on a medication that stops Dreamed a Dream blocker. These are not regular homes their abuse is not even regular abuse there's isolation rooms where you're there for days weeks months we have stood in one spot without movement for 10 or more hours not able to speak for days weeks or months. I do not want to see any other children's going through what I went through so many years ago it is so unbelievable to me this is this is still happening. With this loophole no one can check on the safety of these children that are being abused tremendously. I myself watched a girl stabbed in the back with no medical treatment. I myself we're very ugly scars when I tried to commit suicide and not taken to a hospital for the Right medical treatment. They make it clear to us they do not believe in the law of the land or man they believe in the law of the big black book King James Version Bible. They took away my childhood I've never had toys went to movies roller skating or nothing a normal child does no TV no magazines no newspapers I was isolated and left behind a fence my schooling did not count cuz it was a c e School. I had to receive a GED .

Files:

Testify via Zoom: Yes

Zoom Method: Phone

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Ashley McCahill

Email: ashley.rosemack@gmail.com

Program Attended: Spring Creek Lodge Academy

Years Attended: 2004-2005

Personal Testimony: During my time at Spring Creek Lodge Academy in Thompson Falls, MT, I was beaten and abused both mentally and physically. I also witnessed staff beating and abusing my peers. I was there from 2004-2005 when I was 16-17. I am now 33 and still have nightmares about my time from this hell on earth place. I was brainwashed in seminars with my peers and made afraid to ever tell our parents what was really going on.

One of my peers committed suicide by hanging herself with her sweatshirt in the bathroom because she could not take the abuse any longer. A staff member shot himself in the head while I was there as well. Another kid tried to run away but was found by staff. He had hypothermia from being in the snow for a few days. Because he tried to run, he was beaten in front of many.

Sometimes, we would have to lie on our stomachs for hours upon hours with our hands and arms up in the air. We were never allowed to speak unless it was "group therapy" time. We were forced to take medications and if anyone asked what they were or refused, they were beaten.

This is the short version of my story. There are so many insane stories that I have tried to mentally block out.

Today, I write this in hopes to save other children from what my peers and I went through. There needs to be oversight on these abusive schools.

When I was 19 years old in 2007, I chose to visit Spring Creek Lodge. Although I had often had nightmares about ever returning, I asked the staff if I could come in and speak with the children. They told me to beat them if I needed to. I would never do that. I was able to have private conversations with them and let them know that there is life after Spring Creek although it does not feel that way when being the program. I also had a conversation with Shaundel Boyce, one of the staff members I knew from my time there. She admitted to me that the staff would smoke crystal meth together and laughed about it when telling me.

Please help pass SB312 and free these children from abuse that will cost them mental damage for the rest of their lives. We also need oversight and background checks on anyone who works at a facility such as this, as well as random drug tests.

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Sky Alday

Email: skylaralday@gmail.com

Program Attended: Chrysalis School MT and New Vision Wilderness Therapy

Years Attended: 2019-2020

Personal Testimony: My name is Sky. I went to New Vision Wilderness Therapy in 2019 and Chrysalis School MT from 2019-2020. This is my story...

Like many others I was rebellious and challenging for my parents. I was struggling with anxiety, depression, and other behavioral issues. I fought constantly with my parents, and I was extremely self destructive. After a particularly bad fight, the decision was made to send me to wilderness therapy for 3 months. I was 15.

My parents truly had my best interests at heart when they sent me to treatment; we all believed it was the correct choice. There is so much I want to say about my time in treatment, and I know I can't cover it all. What you are about to read is overwhelmingly negative; however I do value aspects of treatment.

In March 2019 I was enrolled in New Vision Wilderness Therapy group OR5 with other girls my age. I was taken into town twice in the time I spent living in the woods. One of those times a stranger commented on how lucky I was to have this opportunity, but she couldn't have been more wrong. We weren't allowed to exchange contact info or last names to prevent us from becoming too close. Touching was not allowed either. I spent what felt like the worst 3 months of my life without any physical comfort. I had therapy once a week for a couple of hours and often that time left me feeling worse than I did before. The tough love sort of therapy used caused more harm than good. We were allowed 3 minute showers once a week, which involved a naked search of our bodies to make sure we aren't hiding anything or hurting ourselves.

We would hike 5-10 miles a day while wearing 60 lbs backpacks. At night, our shoes were taken away from us and we had tent alarms so that we wouldn't run away. We were told that if we did run away that we would not make it. Our food was only what was necessary like oats. Basic freedoms like knowing the time were taken away from me.

Privacy was nonexistent. We'd count aloud when we went to the bathroom so that staff knew we hadn't run away and every conversation was supervised and regulated. If you were to do something deemed "unsafe" then you were put on arm's reach and burrito. Arms reach is when you can't be further than that from a staff member and burrito is when they take away your tent and wrap you in a tarp with a staff member sleeping on either side of you. This punishment was placed on me for 3 weeks, taking away what little freedom I had left. During this time my therapist convinced my parents that I needed more "help" and referred me to a Therapeutic Boarding School run by the same company as New Vision.

The only way I could communicate with my parents was letters through my therapist. A lot of times information about what living in the woods was like was not sent to my parents and when I would write anything negative about NVW. I was told that my parents would never believe me and the only way out was graduation. We only had one parent visit over the entire 3 months I was there and I was told that if I said anything about how bad it was that my therapist would tell my parents I was lying and then stop the visit. I spent my 16th birthday at NVW. 3 days before my graduation I was separated from the group and put on "solo". Solo is when you live apart from the group, alone on your last days there. After I was taken out of the field after my solo I was shown pictures of all my friends that I was told I would never see again and then sent on to the next treatment center, my new hell called Chrysalis School MT.

In June of 2019, two days after I had graduated from NVW I was enrolled in Chrysalis School MT. On my first day there the staff told me that I was going to be there for 12-18 months. There are phases that the students have to go through and in the first phase we have almost no freedom. The only way I could communicate with my parents was through letters that were looked over twice a week. Anything I said would be used against me getting the next phase to keep me there longer. During family therapy if I asked my parents to bring me home the session would be stopped immediately. My therapist brainwashed me into thinking that I never wanted to go home and that my parents were evil. The small relationship that I had left with my parents after wilderness was completely obliterated at Chrysalis.

Privacy was hard to come by at Chrysalis as well. If you did something deemed “unsafe” you were put onto safety and that meant you were never anywhere alone until your therapist says so. I remember having a light shined in my face every 15 minutes to make sure I was still sleeping. Meals were strict. The house only got a certain amount of food and if we didn’t have enough everyone one would get a smaller portion.

While their website said that there was no bullying, that statement is anything but true. Bullying is just something that happens at Chrysalis. I remember having my shoes being stepped on and being called slow and annoying for not hiking fast enough. I remember moving all of my stuff out of my room because I did not feel safe in it because of my bullies. I remember being slapped by the person I was closest to because of dumb gossip. I remember being stolen from by my roommate. I remember.

Another thing I endured while at Chrysalis was restraint. I had been in an argument with someone and I was forcibly pulled from the room. I recall that my shirt was pulled up to the point where you could see my bra and I felt hot tears on my face from the embarrassment of getting removed from the room in front of everyone who was laughing at me. The staff’s reasoning behind forcibly removing me from the room was that I was “making people feel uncomfortable”.

Another punishment that the staff and therapists could put us on was reflection where we were not allowed to talk or interact with anyone unless it was absolutely necessary. In my opinion this was the worst punishment because when I made a mistake I had my support system taken away from me so I was secluded from the people who kept me sane. One time my entire house was punished with reflection for something only 3 people did. I was verbally and emotionally abused while at Chrysalis, being told things like I’ll never make it home or that my parents don’t love me. I was also told that kids that get pulled from the program end up in bad places and often kill themselves. I was manipulated by staff to the point that I didn’t recognize myself anymore.

It was here that I began my long struggle with self harm. I had learned that behavior from the attention I got when I was doing negative actions vs the punishments I got when I was doing positive actions. I was always told to stay present to the point where I never thought forward to my future.

In the 10 months I spent at Chrysalis the staff there had been lying to my parents. They told my parents that I didn't want to see or talk to them and that I was doing great and enjoyed life at Chrysalis. My parents had been paying so much money thinking I was happy when in reality I was anything but.

Well, I ended up getting pulled from the program due to COVID-19. During the process of getting pulled I was told by my house manager and therapist that my leaving was a mistake and that I would fail in the real world. After leaving, staff disapproval led to me losing contact with some friends. I have so much trauma from the things I went through at Chrysalis. The year I spent in treatment has shaped me into the person I am today and that is why I am writing this. I'm sharing my story to support #breakingcodesilence and to help others who have been through what I've been through. You are strong and you can do it!

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana, Oregon

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Lucy Saunders

Email: lulusaunders@gmail.com

Program Attended: Chrysalis school Montana

Years Attended: 1.5

Personal Testimony: this isn't the worst program out there, however it definitely left me damaged if not traumatized as well as other friends I made in the program. They use forceful therapy tactics and manipulation in therapy. They make you feel horrible for just about everything you do. They take away all basic human freedom. They isolate you. After two years of isolation you leave not knowing how to act in the real world at all. It's a horrifying idea to be sent away in isolation for years on end. I remember being scrutinized for everything I did. One time I was kissing another girl and they not only forced me to come out of the closet to my entire family and school, but they had a group circle about it. They made me and the other girl talk about it in front of everyone. It was humiliating. They made it a huge deal that we kissed, when the girls choking themselves was largely overlooked. While it wasn't a religious school they pushed religion on us a lot. More than I was comfortable with.

Program Attended: Outback Wilderness Expeditions

Years Attended: 3 months

Personal Testimony: Awful, cruel , horrifying program. I'm not the only one who got giardia in the field. I was defecating my pants with Diarrhea for weeks. I had no showers, no clean underwear, no medical attention what's so ever. Once a week the doctor would come out I would tell him and he would say there was nothing he can do. I remember screaming for him to come back. The stomach pains were like no other I've felt and I've gotten sick in countless other countries and had a wide variety of sicknesses. Being forced to hike in 100+ degree weather while crapping my pants and dealing with horrible stomach pains. They did nothing for me. Another girl fucked up her knee and they gave her no care for weeks. Turned out she tore her ACL/MCL. Many other events like this occurred. They rummaged through our stuff, manipulated all of us and our parents, filtered our letters without telling us, gaslighted us daily, and much

much more. Not to mention the dangerous desert conditions. There are deadly spiders, snakes, and scorpions which we've come in close contact with countless times. If someone were bit , it would take hours to get to a hospital and they'd be dead. I'm shocked if no one died that way yet. I remember a time we ran out of water and girls were passing out from dehydration. They feed you food with very little nutritional value. I left weighing 110 pounds. I weigh 125 when I'm healthy. It traumatized me deeply and I hope it gets shut down for good. Nothing can justify kidnapping a 14 year old and putting them in such inhumane conditions. I was supposed to go home but they searched my bag and found notes I wrote to another girl. For this they ISOLATED me for two whole weeks. Those weeks broke me forever. I never have recovered, I'm always scared of the dark now, I have codependency issues, I can't stand being alone anymore for more than 5 minutes or panic attacks come back. And I'm an introvert. The fact that these programs are even legal is appalling. If you look on the Yelp reviews for the program, I'm not the only one who has experienced this and spoke out. The only positive reviews are from staff and parents. The students know the truth. We are the truth. Please shut down outback once and for all. I'm done feeling hopeless!

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Utah, Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Arty Bryan

Email: izanaegi@gmail.com

Program Attended: Summit Prep School

Years Attended: 2014-2016

Personal Testimony: I was taken here after wilderness therapy, restrained in dangerous manners multiple times, forced to camp outside with poor gear in the winter as a punishment, and expelled after i called my parents with a smuggled phone because i had been choked out by staff

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: margarita aguayo

Email: itsmaggiemoon@gmail.com

Program Attended: Spring Creek Lodge Academy

Years Attended: 2004-2006

Personal Testimony: I was tricked in to leaving California to go to Thompson falls Montana for a so called 'ceremony ' for my step dad in the service. I ended up in a cabin with 2 girls dressed in some type of uniform and 2 adults telling me I'm staying there , next taken to a cabin where Im told to get naked , cough and leaning forward as if I were trying to hide something. They told me to take a good shower and to enjoy it because my showers were going to be 5 min from now on. I walked out to clothes that werent mine and shoes with no laces. It was snowing and I kept falling everytime I went outside but they refused to give me laces. I wrote that in letters (found out on my first call when I moved up levels that staff told my mom I was lying about the laces and falling). I had a vegan diet and not being able to communicate with the kitchen staff all I was given was fruit, cold veggies and If I was lucky I got a dry salad. Imagine eating 2 apples, an orange and a banana for a meal. The staff had told my mom they had food for my diet. Eventually I just ate whatever I could but no meat, I would get sick but had to deal with it. we had to walk around with the rules around our neck to remind us everyday what not to do which is pretty much everything other then breathing. You cant even look at a tree in the distant without getting in trouble. If you got in trouble there was a room with a square seat where you face a wall in this little booth, after that you get put in a room with a hard mattress for atleast 24 hrs. You are always being watched even when you are sleeping on lower levels. I saw people in from of me getting tackled by staff, I seen a girl hitting her arm to break it at the same time staff pulling her with all her force but in my letters I was lying they said. We cooked for eachother , we did school on our own, we'd line up and get meds for who knows what. Told we had to do all the seminars to graduate. In a seminar being told to write shitty and hard details about myself so they can read it and break me down by throwing it in my face in front of other people. the seminars where really messed with my mind so much. PC2 and PC3 were the only ones I know for sure I only did once.

Before I turned 18 I was told I wouldnt be able to go home.. I even have a journal from my time there, I was scared of montana, they said neighbors shoot you if your on their property . That my exit plan was a walk down the road where the bears attack alot. I remember watching the Montana Meth commercials for some reason and they said alot of people you cant trust so If i make it to a homeless shelter I wont be safe. They had me talk to an 18 yr old that returned to let me now how scary it is out there. They made a home for the 18yr olds -24 (there was a male 18 yr old program too). We would get driven in to town one they trusted you would stay and work for free. I worked at two different hotels , a movie rental place , we sometimes would all go clean a house like a staff members property. I remember we had to go clean a big house (all of us in the 18 yr old program) some guy had just left everything. I dont understand why we had to work for free when the whole point of the program was to do seminars . we had to attend AA once a week if you wanted to or not and the pastor also had a church in town we had to attend sometimes. we were forced to do therapy and councling. Being isolated even from my own family . Knowing only the program nothing past it I dont feel like I really had the option to leave especially if i was taken from California.

I am 33 and I still think of this place everyday I cant escape that.

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Sarah Hummel

Email: sarahhummel07@gmail.com

Program Attended: Mission Mountain School

Years Attended: 1998-2000

Personal Testimony: I was taken by two strangers in the middle of the night. Told I could do this the easy way or the hard way. I was 16 and I was terrified. The first stop was Ascent. A 6 week CEDU program. I was told I would go home afterwards, so I complied. I learned quickly what would happen if I broke a "rule". I learned quickly what would happen if I didn't divulge of my inner most secrets and humiliate myself up to their standards. I was told by a male staff member that it was obvious I had been molested. I had not. This was the first of many untruths that were told to me so many times I started to believe them. The next stop was Mission Mountain School in Montana. I spent the next two years of my life in constant fear. Fear of getting in trouble. I did my best to stay under the radar, comply, survive. I saw awful things happen to many of the girls there. I saw girls get ripped to shreds in the name of "therapy". A narcissistic group of "founders" who did everything they could to break us all down, brainwash, manipulate, abuse... All forced to follow the 12 steps even if we were not addicts. I left thinking I was an alcoholic. It took years to untangle that mess in my head. At one point I confided in my therapist that I had a crush on one of the teachers. Not something I intended to act on - just confusing feelings of a 16 year old girl living in the middle of nowhere, who had already been told she was a sex addict, with limited contact with the rest of the world. I was forced to tell this teacher - which was humiliating. On top of that - this "teacher" told me how shameful it was. That he had a family, how inappropriate it was for me to feel how I did. Needless to say, this damaged my ability to connect with adult men, for many years, to share my feelings, to get close to anyone. It was truly traumatizing. I left the program brainwashed, thinking they had "saved me". It took many more years to untangle THAT mess in my head. I still have nightmares of being sent back. It's been 21 years and there is still so much to work through. I count myself lucky... I saw so many go through so much worse.

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: No

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Andrew Kolodziejski

Email: andrew.kolo719@gmail.com

Program Attended: Galena Ridge/20 Peaks Ranch

Years Attended: 2002-2004

Personal Testimony: My Experiences at 20 Peaks Ranch and Galena Ridge

I attended 20 Peaks Ranch/Galena Ridge Wilderness Program between 2002 and 2004. The program is still in operation under a different name, today it is known as Mountain Meadow Youth Ranch, and is still run by Joe and Marilyn Frields, as well as the Owner/Director Paul Clark, a former Montana State Representative. I was sent there by my parents because they were concerned by my video gaming, as well as problems I was having at school due to my Asperger's Syndrome. I was under the care of a psychologist at the time and together he, my parents and I decided that it would be in my best interest to go to an intensive wilderness treatment program.

I feel it is important to this narrative that I mention that I went voluntarily, many kids there were not given that choice, and had in some cases had been taken from their homes by hired muscle. However, at that time in my life I and my family realized that it would be best for me if I went to an intensive wilderness therapy program. What the advertising represented the program as, and what actually happened there were two very different things as I would soon find out.

Galena Ridge and 20 Peaks Ranch were two very closely affiliated therapeutic residential programs. Galena Ridge was the wilderness component of these programs, running during the Summer, and 20 Peaks Ranch the residential part which ran during the school year, with generally the same group of kids living near the town of Trout Creek, and attending Thompson Falls High School. For clarity I will refer to the program as 20 Peaks Ranch in this narrative.

I could fill an entire book relaying my experiences there, but for the purpose of this testimony I will focus on a few incidents that I hope will highlight why this industry needs to have more oversight.

Medical and Mental Health Problems Were Considered "Manipulation"

The treatment philosophy of 20 Peaks is heavily influenced by the 12 Steps and Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Even if the minor in question did not have any substance abuse issues, they would be encouraged to work a 12-step program based on another area of undesirable behavior, in my case video gaming. One of the precepts of 12 Step based programs is that addicts and alcoholics have numerous "moral failings", dishonesty and manipulative tendencies being some of those. Where this caused us problems was that the staff at 20 Peaks applied that towards their assessment of us and tended to assume that most of our actions had ulterior motives.

Because of this adversarial style of assessment, many medical issues were ignored or outright mocked. I was prescribed and taking antidepressants prior to being sent to the program and was taken off those medications while there. When I began having symptoms of depression again, I was told to stop self-pitying. Because of my depression I was lethargic and slow to wake up in the mornings. A staff member, Tom Morgan, who I recall as being particularly unpleasant would with the assistance of a couple other teens lift up my sleeping bag with me in it high above the ground and dump me out. They threatened to throw me and my sleeping bag in the creek, a story the older boys and staff members loved to tell was of them doing this to a kid who had attended the program before me. This was never done to me, but the threat was still made.

Most likely the worst incident of having my medical needs ignored was when I began having some significant gastrointestinal problems. Looking back on what the symptoms were, I likely had picked up giardia or a similar parasite. I was told that I was just seeking attention and on several occasions had my requests for bathroom breaks denied. We were also not allowed to take toilet paper on the wilderness course and generally bathed in the mountain lakes and creeks, so the substandard hygiene was a problem as well. I asked for medical attention on more than one occasion and was always told to stop seeking attention, stop manipulating, or just to drink more water.

Lack of Privacy

The majority of the therapy I went through while in the program took the form of "check-ins" or group therapy conducted by the staff with the entire group participating. There was no one on one therapy and we were often placed in uncomfortable situations by having to spill what should be intimate and personal details in front of strangers and having our beliefs and worldview broken down by both staff members and other teens. Refusal to participate would result in us receiving "consequences" such as having food withheld, being made to go on "solo", meaning

being isolated from the group, or placed on “silence”, meaning you could not speak or have any one in the group speak to you, or just plain manual labor. Additionally, the fact that the kids had many different backgrounds and treatment needs meant that the staff generally took a broad and blunt approach rather than focusing on a kid’s individual circumstances.

In addition, the staff often utilized “attack therapy” as in trying to probe our weaknesses and break us down in front of the group. They would gauge our expressions and emotional responses, and if they felt they weren’t getting enough of a reaction they would press harder. I’ve always had a poker face, mostly due to my autism, and this would cause conflict during these sessions because the facilitator felt that I was “being dishonest” because I wasn’t showing emotion and press me harder. They would even gauge minute details and physiological responses, such as a bouncing leg or hard swallow and call me out on it as if I was hiding something. Eventually, the more of these “check-ins” I experienced, I realized if I just made up a minor indiscretion and told them about it, they would lay off because I was going to receive “consequences” either way.

In addition to the violations of my medical privacy, my physical privacy was often violated as well. While on the wilderness course, we were encouraged to bathe in groups in the lakes or streams. Sometimes one or two staff members were female, and we had to bathe and get changed in front of them. Staff members also slept in the tarps with us, this applied to either male or female staff. Before beginning the school year we were measured for our uniforms and had to change in front of female staff. We also had our persons and property searched, this was also done by female staff on several occasions.

Physical Punishment

The staff would often make us do hard labor, pushups, sitting in the creek during winter and most often running as punishment for transgressions real or imagined. They were always very careful to refer to these punishments as “consequences” however. For example, we were given a “choice” whether or not to go to church or 12-Step meetings. However, the “consequences” of not attending were being made to go for a run or shoveling gravel for example.

“Solo” was also a popular “consequence”. This involved being separated physically from the rest of the group and not being allowed to interact with, speak, or even look at other people. During the school year, it would involve being kicked out of the group housing, no matter the season or

weather, and depending on how severely they wanted to punish you sleeping in a shed, auto trailer, barn, or just a tarp.

Being kicked out of the house also involved losing use of all the facilities, including the bathroom. This wasn't as bad during the school week, I would just use the locker room at school for hygiene, but during a break this would become an issue, and I would have to take bucket baths. One particularly cold Thanksgiving break we had an early snow and I had to take a bucket bath in the cold.

Withholding of food was also a way they would punish us, especially if they felt we were being "ungrateful" This would be implemented in conjunction with other punishments or just on its own. In a way, it could be worse to have to eat just rice and lentils and not be on "solo" because I would have to be in the same room as everyone else and watch them eat a better meal than me. Some especially spiteful kids would make it a point to talk about how much they were enjoying their meal to tease others who just had rice and lentils.

Attempts to Hold Me after Age 18

My 18th birthday fell during the school year, and I was still at 20 Peaks during my Senior year. I had made no secret to my parents and the program staff that I intended to leave the program upon turning 18, as it would be my right as a legal adult. I had a plan in place to meet a classmate from Thompson Falls High School in order to get a ride to a Greyhound depot, from which I would return home. In the weeks prior to my birthday, Joe and Paul made every attempt to sabotage my plans to leave, or "agenda" as they called it.

I was placed on "solo" for nearly two months before my birthday. They wanted to isolate me from the group because they felt that my "agenda" was a negative influence on the group. I had my baseball cap and shoes taken from me. The shoes were because they felt I was a flight risk, even though I made it clear that it was completely legal for me to leave at 18 and I had not otherwise attempted to leave. The baseball cap being taken was just a punishment, we were allowed few personal items in the program and keeping the baseball cap was considered a "privilege" even though I had purchased it with my own money before entering the program. Joe threatened to burn it but did not follow through.

There was an early snow that year and I was not allowed to have my shoes back. I had to make improvised footwear out of hay and grocery bags so I could move around the barn I was made to stay in. I tried to write to my parents about this situation, but all our letters were read by staff

prior to being sent so my letters asking for help were discarded. I asked a classmate who was not affiliated with the program to relay a message to my parents.

After that I was pulled out of school for almost two weeks. In addition to having a negative influence on my schoolwork, I was not able to take an ASVAB test I had signed up for. This was also frustrating for me because not only was this impacting my grades, but it was also affecting my plans to enlist after graduation. A couple days before my birthday I was summoned to the house where Joe had called a check-in. He told the group that I would be leaving the program, but not where I would be going. It was a common threat in the program to send "unsober" kids to one of the facilities in Jamaica or Mexico where they were allowed to hold us past 18. I did not know what was going on at the time either so I thought they were going to put me on a plane to one of those places. I did manage to get my hat back before leaving at least.

I was driven in the van to a hotel in Trout Creek where my Dad was staying. My parents were concerned about the treatment I had received and decided to pull me out. I did not know what was going on, I had been under the impression that I was going to be going to a different program until I saw my Dad. My parents were upset after I told them about this and said it sounded like a kidnapping. I concur with that, especially because of the scare tactics about sending me to a different program out of the country.

Closing Thoughts

I still have many mixed feelings about my stay at 20 Peaks. Like I said in the introduction, I definitely was in need of some sort of treatment at that time in my life. However, what the program was advertised as and what actually happened there were two very different things. There were some beneficial things about being there, mostly having a peer support group. I still wonder about some of them, but Joe strongly discouraged us from associating with each other after I left.

However, I personally do not feel much of the treatment I received had any therapeutic benefit. To this day I have yet to understand why we were made to jump in frigid creeks during the winter or any of the other bizarre and arbitrary punishments we were subjected to. Constantly having my character attacked has led to numerous self-esteem and self-doubt problems I have had well into my adult life. I have been diagnosed with and am being treated for C-PTSD that was caused in part by my experiences in the program.

The Montana State Constitution Declaration of Rights states that "The Dignity of the Human Being is Inviolable." During my stay at 20 Peaks my dignity was constantly violated. I respectfully ask the Montana Legislature to enact stricter oversight of these programs so that current and future residents may never have their dignity attacked the way mine was.

Did you go to a religious program?: Yes

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Isabella Sustaeta

Email: isabella5999@gmail.com

Program Attended: Summit predatory

Years Attended: 1.5

Personal Testimony: food punishment, isolation, therapist told staff and students private things, staff were sexist and let then men do anything on campus and the girl students had to clean after them or we're out punished more intensely because "girls should know better", we're silenced and punished if we tried to tell family what was going on, staff were childish and clicky and bully students they did not like, punished for "hurting a staffs feelings", they allowed many illegal relationships and if's students got caught doing anything (kissing, hand holding, hugging, etc) male received no punishment while female had to sit on top of stairs in our lodge not allowed to speak for a week or more and would be slut shammed by staff, someone was sexually assaulted and staff refused to do anything and made the girl go to class with the guy who assaulted her and refused to do anything about it till students went on strike

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Utah, Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Allison Ward

Email: allisonvward97@gmail.com

Program Attended: Clear view Horizon

Years Attended: 2017 -2018

Personal Testimony: This is about the Racial Discrimination and Torment I went through, my name is Akeila I went to Clear-view Horizon 2017 -2018. One of the most traumatizing times in my life, Racial discrimination, Hair discrimination, and just being treated very differently because I was black. I am only speaking for myself & my experiences. The treatment of certain staff members, my first couple of days there, The head of the "House Moms" & another staff at the time and an office lady had brought me into another office room questioning for 15 minutes about my hair she had asked me if I ever wash my hair

(I had extensions in my hair at the time) assuming that I don't wash my hair and I felt like the whole time I was standing there defending myself & trying to educate them at the same time.They did not try and accommodate to the time that I needed to take to braid my hair. The only I did have to care for my hair was when we were given 20 minutes sometimes less on the weekends. In the summer the founders , Granddaughter who became a "House Mom" she was black and so we started talking and I asked her if she wasn't busy if she could braid mine and the other black girls hair, and she did 2 or 3 times until, The office staff addressed in a group very very passively of that so staff is allowed to braid students hair. It was really inappropriate and it could have been handled way differently!



In the beginning I was really self conscious of wearing my natural hair so I would wrap my hair up in a head wrap and wear that around the house.

The staff would be referred to as "That thing on your head" or on Sunday's when we would go to church said requires a whole different type of care, that being said there was an issue with myself and another black girl, came in who was new and we started to braid each others hair and sharing hair products. Anyways, we ended up breaking the "No sharing Rule". Resulting in staff telling us to go upstairs take all the braids out of our hair, we're both crying at this point, we

go back down stairs & the staff puts our hair stuff/ Braiding hair in a garbage bag “sent to the barn.” There would be moments when staff often ask me inappropriate questions regarding my race. Example: It’s summer time, the conversation was about sunscreen pulled me aside as asked me if I sun burn. I’ll leave it at that.

Other examples include girls in the house using the N word, Racial slurs etc and whenever I’d report the issues to a the staff or even higher up and students would just get a slap on the wrist, apologize or it would be completely dismissed & brushed underneath the rug.

I was 18 when I arrived there I could have left anytime, I was really contemplating taking the walk, and I was talking with my therapist about the decision I was set on and he responded with “well if you walk when you know you’ll get shot, and remember your in Montana.” I know what that meant, I think back to it today and I’m like I can’t believe he used an scare tactic on me in order to stay, I just felt like shit, Don’t go out there and try to walk even though your a LEGAL ADULT, you’ll get shot, because I am a black women. I’ve met some pretty great people, but all in all it’s truly has traumatized to my core. My question to these programs is WHY OPEN A FACILITY FOR GIRLS WHO COME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE AND DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS BUT NEVER SET YOUR BIAS OPINIONS ASIDE AT YOUR JOB. Most importantly it makes me worry for current/ future young black girls, young women of color, who’s basic hair care needs aren’t being met, and not being treated as equally due to their own biases and overall treated like we don’t matter. I apologize this was very long.

Thank you for giving me a chance to speak out and tell my story. 

Did you go to a religious program?: Yes

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: No

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: J Brett

Email: julian.rose@me.com

Program Attended: Monarch School

Years Attended: 2007-2008

Personal Testimony: I was sent to Monarch after attending a wilderness program in the summer of 2007. We were subjected to hard labor, emotional abuse, psychological torture, and brainwashing, among other forms of abuse. Please reach out to me if you would like a detailed testimony, as that is too long for a web submission.

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Lily Kennedy

Email: lilykennedy45@gmail.com

Program Attended: Clearview horizon

Years Attended: 14 months (1 year and 2 months)

Personal Testimony: I went to clearview when I had just turned 14. I was fresh out of rehab and had been tricked into attending against my knowledge. While there I was put under strenuous amounts of physical labor and even had to have knee surgery due to a completely detached meniscus that was shredded in my knee. The amount of emotional and physical turmoil I experienced there was insane. I had already been extremely traumatized prior to going and it only made it worse. No one should have to endure this at any age, especially children. I was kept there for 14 months. Also it was troubling to have random people pulled off the road to come and look after us. No one had solid credibility other than a few therapists.

Did you go to a religious program?: Yes

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Alyssa Heidorn

Email: alyssa.heidorn97@yahoo.com

Program Attended: Clearview

Years Attended: Around 2012 or 2013 I believe.

Personal Testimony: I'd love to recount every little thing that happened while at Clearview. But that would take way too much time. Here's a shortened version. It was the worst time of my life. I had never actually attempted suicide until I got to Clearview. I genuinely felt there was no other way out. And that was my third program! They neglected to send me to a psych right away when I tried to jump off a bridge and expressed I wanted to die. Instead of handling things appropriately, not only was I locked in a hot SUV for hours while they deliberated what to do with me, I was then put in a tent on the porch where I spent my days and nights on black cloud(seclusion). I also realized at one point while there, they were editing my emails. I remember putting certain things in emails and when I reread them once they were sent to my family, they had been altered significantly to protect the program. At the time I was there, we also had hills and energy hours which we have come to find out is not okay. I was also tackled by fellow girls when I ran away the last time and was bruised and scraped up. Looking back, I'd say Clearview was the darkest point in my life. It broke me down and just made me worse. To this day, I am still picking up the pieces and healing.

Did you go to a religious program?: Yes

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Utah, Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Cami Adair

Email: camikayadair@gmail.com

Program Attended: Spring Creek Lodge

Years Attended: Sept 1997 to Feb 1999

Personal Testimony: For years I refused to believe that the program was abusive. I didn't want to feel like a victim. I didn't want to be a whiner.

I'm 39 now, and I struggle with any situation where I'm observed by people who are in authority over me. Having a "normal" job where I physically go to work and have a boss assessing me is stressful to the extreme - I would rather live in utter poverty than put myself in that situation. I do think this goes back to the punitive nature of the program and the extreme stress I was under there as I tried to please people who had complete control over me.

They controlled where I was, and even controlled how I physically held my body (telling me whether to cross or uncross my arms, where and how I could sit, when I could stand, when I could pass through a doorway, etc). they controlled what I ate (I was often punished for being a vegetarian with burned veggie burgers or a cold block of tofu for dinner, and I had to eat 80% of it to avoid getting a consequence. Maybe that doesn't sound terrible to you, but go ahead, go to the store, buy yourself a block of tofu, and eat 80% of it. No condiments. then do it again tomorrow night. Then tell me how it is.

They controlled where I looked (we had to get in push up position when the boys were nearby so we didn't look at them).

They controlled when I bathed, when and where I slept, how I talked, and whether I was able to speak to my peers.

There was no pleasing them. They were keeping me in the program because they got money from my being there.

I will do almost anything to avoid the helplessness I felt there, including avoiding situations where anyone else has power over me - which includes most jobs.

I also live in a van. I feel much safer having a "house" that I can drive away at any moment. Living in a house or apartment and being tied to a landlord or lease or mortgage feels suffocating to me.

Would I have been like this if not for the program? There's no way of knowing, but when I explore the origins of these issues, it all leads back to the program.

I finally sought out a therapist to help me sort through these issues (I also avoided therapy for years because the program, which was supposed to help me, but hurt me instead) and my therapist recently suggested that my symptoms are consistent with CPTSD.

What would my life have been like if not for the program.

Below, it asks whether I went to a religious program, and I had to tick "no" because it wasn't technically supposed to be religious, but many, many of the staff were LDS (or mormon) including nearly all of our female staff, the co-director Chaffin Pullan (who terrorized us) and others.

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Julia Bowhay

Email: jbowhay1@gmail.com

Program Attended: Turning Winds Academic Institute

Years Attended: 2020-2020

Personal Testimony: I'm a type 1 diabetic and i got medically mistreated and I ended up Going to the hospital many times and they didn't care and I got covid bc of unsafe precautions

Did you go to a religious program?: Yes

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Lauren McClary

Email: lauren_mcclary@hotmail.com

Program Attended: Pinehaven Christian Children's Ranch

Years Attended: 2006-2008

Personal Testimony: I attended Pinehaven Christian Children's Ranch from August 2006, to October 2009. My house parents were Gary and Susan Henderson. Most of my abuse was as a result of their treatment of me, or their inaction to other's treatment of me. My story is long and I'm a very loquacious person, so I've come up with a list of the things that I can think of that I've separated into happened to me personally or things I've witnessed. most of the things that happened to me, I also witnessed happened to others. I've listed it here and noted the names of any (non student) individuals I can remember being involved.

Pulled up stair by ponytail and then kicked back down to the bottom again. Multiple times . (by Dave Moe). I sometimes have a hard time wearing my hair in a ponytail. I avoided wearing it like that whenever I could and eventually allowed my house mom to have my hair cut short to prevent this feeling. I had previously kept it so long I could sit on it.

Forced exercise as punishment (without sufficient breast support) (by Susan Henderson and Maxine Kent)

Physically restrained by other students/having to restrain other students (instructions from Susan Henderson)

Unallowed to communicate/interact with others (isolation) (grounded by Susan Henderson, Maxine Kent, grounding rules supported by other adults on the ranch including teachers (Katje Camp and Shara Puckett) and all house parents (including Kris and TJ Revez, Gary Henderson, Ned Kent, etc.)

Forced to eat foods against family's religion (Gary and Susan Henderson)

Told that parents were going to hell because of religious beliefs, causing mental anguish (Susan Henderson)

Forced to run alongside a vehicle to/from school, or other locations on the ranch (any and all house parents)

Unable to communicate with family in privacy (enforced by Gary and Susan Henderson)

Mail in/out was read and censored by house parents (Gary and Susan Henderson)

Physically spanked with a ping pong paddle (Susan Henderson)

Publicly Humiliated on a regular basis (Mostly Susan/Gary Henderson, but any houseparent would humiliate you as a way to keep one in line)

Pressure points used on me *for fun* by Ned Kent. I was standing in a corner waiting to be told what to do next. (Ned Kent)

Bedrooms had doors and holes for door handles, but they were not allowed to be closed (Enforced by Susan Henderson). I can't sleep with a door open. Even in my own apartment, where I live alone.

Bathroom doors only allowed to be closed on Sunday mornings while girls were getting ready in the morning if the girls were getting ready for church, so as to not wake up the other girls who were sleeping in (I'm still not sure if that bathroom door being closed was actually allowed or just something that the girls did.)

Multiple instances of having to be watched while using toilet or having to be monitored while showering. Having to have a potty buddy. (Susan Henderson, Maxine Kent, Kris Revez)

Given one roll of toilet paper for a month. Per girl. (Susan/Gary Henderson at the instruction of Maxine Kent). I use way more toilet paper than necessary because I can.

Living in constant fear (All adults associated with the ranch [except Jon Larsson. He was a kind soul who was caught in a bad situation, but did what he could to make our lives better], also other students, as we were encouraged to tell on each other)

Education disrupted for discipline on a regular basis. (When on highest level of punishment, called 'Bullpen'. One would be pulled out of school and have to go and shovel manure at the milk barn. This also included running alongside the pickup truck up and down the mountain to/from the house/barn/other locations while on bullpen, even if not actually engaging in the bullpen chore itself. This was participated in by every single adult associated with the ranch.) When I arrived home, I was approx. 5 years behind in math because of the poor education that was provided with subpar learning materials.

Not allowed to interact with the other gender (most kids on the ranch were grounded from the opposite sex- enforced by all adults on the ranch).

Constantly made to feel like I didn't matter, or like I didn't have any worth unless I was pleasing the adults around me. Crippling social anxiety around others, leading to frequent isolation as an adult, because my fear of people I'm unfamiliar with and don't know if I can trust means that I often would refuse to go to events and social interactions and has now led to people thinking that I don't want to interact, but really, I'm just terrified of what others will think and if they'll find me worthy to interact with. I've at least identified this part and am working on it, but #2020/2021.

Witnessed:

13-year-old boy picked up by throat by Ned Kent and lifted up 6 inches off the floor.

Pressure points used on a regular basis on children by Ned Kent.

Children used in construction of houses and other buildings on the ranch.

Witnessed and assisted in restraining other students. (as instructed by house parents, Susan/Gary Henderson)

Isolation from others (not allowed to communicate with other students, only with house parents if you raise your hand and are called on, etc.) (this was a regular part of grounding, so this was done by all the adults on the ranch)

Some students having to shower with shower curtain open. (Susan Henderson)

Did you go to a religious program?: Yes

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Olivia Taylor-Rivers

Email: oliviataaylor910@gmail.com

Program Attended: Clearview Horizon Academy

Years Attended: 2013-2014

Personal Testimony: Clearview horizon, more specifically Mickey Manning, traumatized me in my formative years. I went to Clearview willingly after battles with my mental health and hospitalization. The website advertised group therapy, horse therapy, etc. What was given to me at Clearview was psuedoscience, literal exercises taken from a cult, anc constant physical and psychological abuse. I deal with the thought of Clearview every day, and it makes getting g help difficult since the “therapy” I actually received at Clearview was actually abuse. It is hard to trust any mental health professional, I have not recovered from the things I was sent to Clearview for. In fact they actually got worse and I also developed drug problems after leaving clearview.

Did you go to a religious program?: Yes

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Patrick Berndt

Email: patrickb-00@hotmail.com

Program Attended: Monarch Academy, Summit Preparatory School

Years Attended: 2017-18

Personal Testimony: Not quite sure what to say over text. Feel free to email me or something. Basically was gooned twice like a lot of kids. (hand cuffed in my sleep).

Worst things I experienced at Monarch was

-someone got raped in a boiler closet.

-had to stop my roommates from cutting/flush their glass etc down the toilet because staff wouldn't look hard enough for contraband stuff.

-Lifted a kid off a chin-up bar because he had hung himself with a belt. It was only coincidence I found him because I wasn't where I was supposed to be at the time either. I never really told anybody I was the one who found him. He survived though which is good.

-Had to fight a fellow student because they were going to hurt themselves (or me) with a sharp tool for horse maintenance or something. Later also found out they were stashing bailor twine to make a noose with.

-In total witnessed 4 or 5 suicide attempts of people close to me which is a lot in a 7 month period.

-Other common stuff like parents not getting my letters etc.

-I had a kidney infection that was ignored by staff. They wouldn't let me go to the hospital for about a week. I had a fever of 105 for 3 days and eventually blacked out and collapsed on my way to the bathroom. Doctor said that I was hours from kidney failure or doing irreversible damage. My parents did not know until after I got out.

I could go on there is so much stuff I was in a mode of survival my entire time there. Never was affected by any of this stuff until after I left. (they closed down)

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana, Idaho

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Savannah Phillips

Email: oohsav@gmail.com

Program Attended: Monarch School

Years Attended: 2015-2016

Personal Testimony: Most personally, a math teacher who was hired at my school sexually harassed me, both verbally and physically. I was not his only victim but I was the first to speak up to my therapist about it, and he ended up being fired. We had harsh and unusual punishments for "breaking agreements," including sitting on a wooden bench in the lodge alone for extended periods of time as well as "work assignments" that pushed our limits physically. I felt like a work horse, just doing what I was told and being reprimanded if I didn't comply. I was shamed by the founder of the school on multiple occasions and other staff members would make sure to bring the boom down if they felt you weren't up to speed on anything. A very toxic environment where we were forced to snitch on each other in order to get ahead ourselves and move up the ranks of the program. Phone calls and mail opened and read before sending or receiving, I had gotten my calls cut short a number of times for getting "too emotional" and spilling the details of our lives that the school didn't want leaked. I FELT LIKE A PAWN IN A GAME.

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Mollie Hayes

Email: molliehayes@icloud.com

Program Attended: Spring Creek Lodge academy

Years Attended: 2001-2002

Personal Testimony: The treatment was more like torture and it has taken me years to fully understand the amount of harm they did. I was emotionally, psychologically, and medically abused for 10 months. I watched my peers also be physically abused, restrained and put in seclusion. I also heard about many sexual misconduct situations. These places and the people who run them need to be stopped from harming anyone else.

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: No

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Nicole Coffin

Email: nicolelcoffin@gmail.com

Program Attended: Spring creek lodge

Years Attended: 1999 to 2001

Personal Testimony: June 16 I was driving home to Canada when my grandma took a wrong turn and we showed up at a beautiful camp looking facility. A male youth was signing for me to runaway but I didn't understand what was happening yet .

We pulled up to a trailer and a staff came into my grandma's rv saying I needed to come in while they found a place for my grandma to turn around. As I was being escorted into the trailer I saw my abusive mom and her husband. I started to freak out. They slammed me into the ground and restrained me until I was calm. That when I realized I was there to stay. My mom didn't talked to me before she left me there.

They stripped searched me and took my whole identity. They told me my image was wrong and I had to dress proper. They threw me in a family of 24 other girls on silence. I cried for months.

My 3rd day in the program I was put in my first seminar. I didn't know the rules of the program and immediately was put on the spot. I had to stand on a chair and get yelled at in front of everyone why I was there and how I was horrible. While everyone screamed agreed.

I had to wait another month to do the next seminar which was no more successful

Levels are based on seminar success which kept holding me back

I realized my issues weren't big enough to ever graduate the seminars and had to start to elaborate my stories and work the program.

I started counting at 746 days till my 18th birthday that was the longest they could keep me.

The months all kind of blur together. The brainwashing of motivational tapes.

The random challenges they would do to break us. Gravel pit. Just moving boulders for no reason for days. The physical and emotional pain ignored by staff. Being forced to wear a dress because I refused to wear dresses pre program.

Being consequence by peers so they could advance there program

Forced medication

Forced fed

Seclusion was huge.

I was deported and sent back to Canada after Sept 11th when I went on a home visit and the boarder found out my student visa was fake.

I was level 5 and 2 months from going home.

I am diagnosed with ptsd from attending spring creek lodge.

I just recently started dealing with my trauma after 20 years, once realizing it was affecting my family.

So although my testimony is short I assure you as I continue to undig the trauma I'm worried about the things I will remember.

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Natalii Infnitii

Email: msnatkay@gmail.com

Program Attended: Spring Creek Lodge Academy

Years Attended: 2004

Personal Testimony: MY DAD WAS DECEIVED INTO HAVING ME TRAFFICKED TO SPRING CREEK LODGE ACADEMY AT AGE 17 IN 2004. I NEEDED AND WANTED HELP. I WAS RUNNING AWAY TRYING TO ESCAPE THE PAIN AND ABUSE IN MY CHILDHOOD. I REMEMBER A MOMENT AT SCL IN SO CALLED "GROUP THERAPY" (AKA ATTACK THERAPY), I WAS FORCED TO SPEEK OPENLY ABOUT ABUSE IN MY EARLY CHILDHOOD. THIS SO CALLED THERAPIST (WHO OBVIOUSLY WASN'T) RESPONSE WAS TO INTERRUPT ME: "STOP TALKING...YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO GET THERAPY BECAUSE YOU HAVE PROBLEMS. SIT DOWN." WHAT THE ACTUAL HELL WAS WAS GOING ON THERE IF I WASN'T IN THERAPY?! I INTERNALIZED ALL OF MY PROBLEMS FROM THEN ON. I NEVER FOUND THE HELP I NEEDED AT SCL, I WAS ABUSED FOR BEING ABUSED & DEEPLY DEPRESSED. I HAVE FOUGHT THROUGH LIFE INTERNALIZING GRIEF THEY CAUSED ME.. UTTER LONELINESS. A BIG REASON MY DAD HAD ME TRAFFICKED TO THIS SO CALLED "ACADEMY" WAS SO I COULD FINISH HIGH SCHOOL...WELL SURPRISE! IT WASN'T EVEN ACCREDITED & MY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA DOESN'T EXIST! I WAS FORCED TO DO A PAP-SMEAR AGAINST MY WILL & THE DOCTOR WHO DID IT WASN'T A OBGYN. I WAS FORCED TO PARTICIPATE EVERYTHING AGAINST MY WILL, BUT I DID IT TO PLACATE SO I WASN'T ABUSED EVEN FURTHER, & GUESS WHAT?! I WAS CONSIDERED AN OVER ACHIEVER..THST I UNTIL I WAS DROPPED FROM UPPER LEVELS BACK TO 1ST ABOUT 3 WEEKS FROM MY RELEASE DATE BECAUSE I HELPED A FRIEND OF MINE GET HELP FROM MY DAD WHEN SHE TOOK HER EXIT PLAN TO BE ABANDONED BY EVERYONE & "WALK". SHE WAS PICKED UP HITCH HIKING BY A RANDOM HILL BILLY WHOM SHE CLAIMED TRIED TO GET HER TO SLEEP WITH HIM AT A HOTEL HE TOOK HER TO. I HAVE HER MY DADS NUMBER BECAUSE I KNEW HE WOULD FINANCIALLY HELP HER & HE DID, BUT I GOT IN TROUBLE & PUT IN WORKSHEETS BECAUSE HER MOM CALLED THE SCHOOL & TOLD ON ME. I DON'T REGRET FOR ONE MOMENT BEING DROPPED FOR HAVING

COMPASSION & TRYING TO SAVE MY FRIENDS LIFE. BEST DECISION I MADE THERE. OH, & JUST TO HYPE MYSELF UP A BIT, I WAS ABLE TO GET AWAY WITH HAVING A NIPPLE RING & NOT GETTING CAUGHT THE WHOLE TIME. I ALWAYS SMILED BECAUSE I KNEW I WAS FOOLING THEM MORE THAN THEY WERE FOOLING ME. I KNEW THE PULLAN'S WERE PEDOPHILE PREDATORS WHEN I WAS THERE. I ALWAYS FELT THEY WERE PREDATORS BY THE WAY THEY GLOATED WITH THEIR MESSIAH COMPLEX, GOING AROUND HUGGING THE KIDS & FEELING OUT WHO THEY COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF & WHO WOULD PUT UP A FIGHT. THEY KNEW BETTER THAN TO TRY ME. MY DAD WAS TRICKED INTO SPENDING APPROXIMATELY \$20k IN LESS THAN 5 MONTHS TO HAVE ME LOCKED UP & ABUSED BY DRUG ADDICTED HILL BILLY PEDOPHILES, & I WANT THEM STRIPPED OF THEIR FORTUNE. I WANT REPARATIONS.

I WAS RECENTLY CONTACTED BY A FORMER STAFF MEMBER (WHOS NAME I WON'T DISCLOSE HERE BUT I CAN PROVIDE HER CONTACT INFORMATION). SHE WORKED THERE 6 YEARS & OPENLY ADMITTED TO ME THAT THEY HIRED HER AT AGE 16 & TOLD HER TO LIE ABOUT HER AGE & SAY SHE WAS 18 TO WORK THERE. SHE HAD SPENT 2 YEARS PRIOR LOCKED UP AS A "TROUBLED TEEN" & BRAINWASHED IN ANOTHER PROGRAM PRIOR TO WORKING ST SCL. SHE ENDED UP GETTING MARRIED, HAVING CHILDREN, & SPENDING THE NEXT 6 YEARS BEING BLINDSIDED BY HER HUSBAND AT THE TIME SUPPLYING METH TO STAFF AT SCL. THAT'S RIGHT! STAFF MEMBERS WERE USING METH TO WORK LONGER HOURS AROUND THE CLOCK FOR BIGGER PAYCHECKS. LITERALLY LIKE A NAZI CAMP.

What these so called "adults" put us through was torture. These monsters are addicted to abusing power and to the fortunes they've made on false advertisement and child abuse. These pathetic excuses for leadership deserve to be locked up for the rest of their pathetic lives & stripped of their fortune they made off child abuse.

Did you go to a religious program?: Yes

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Lacy Howerton

Email: lhowerton84@gmail.com

Program Attended: Spring creek lodge academy

Years Attended: 2001-2003

Personal Testimony: I attended when I was 16 till I was 18. I was silenced the entire time I was there. I was not allowed to ask questions about my punishment. It was either do it or you will lose points or go to the hobbit. It felt like the harder I tried, the more I'd get put down. The more punishments I got meant the longer I was forced to stay. I was alone with no one to talk to. I learned quickly to conform or you would suffer severe punishment. I would never wish this upon anyone. The best way I can describe it is torture.

Did you go to a religious program?: No

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Montana

Disclaimer: I agree

Sent via form submission from [Breaking Code Silence](#)

Name: Micaela Armstrong

Email: micdawn98@gmail.com

Program Attended: Teen Challenge

Years Attended: 2013-2016

Personal Testimony: At 15 I was sent to Teen Challenge. I was told I was going to a christian girls school which sounded so innocent. However upon arrival I was immediately separated from my grandmother and taken to a room where I was forced to do a strip search, squat and cough, drug test and more. They made me remove my jewelry, makeup, and took my clothes. I was put in a black pencil skirt, red collared shirt, and sandals. These are clothes we had to wear daily for months while being on what was called "sister". Our stuff was searched and sorted by what "fit program regulations" and they decided what we could keep. On sister we were to speak to no-one, not even staff members. We could only speak to our sister who was a student that had been in the program a certain amount of time and deemed "cooperative" with the program. We could only speak to them to ask them necessary questions like to use the restroom in which they would ask the staff for you. We were given a handbook that we would write word for word. We were never allowed out of sight or out of 6 foot distance from our sister, not even to use the restroom. As your time went on we were given ranks. If you had not been there 6 months you could not speak, look at, or come within 6 feet of another student who had not been there 6 months as well. These ranks were identified through a bracelet you wore. Life there was hell. We had 2 sets of chores (house and room) that we did twice a day. We did meals, chores, bible study, school, church, and PE and that was it. Every food we ate was dictated for us and the amount we had to eat. We had to eat all the food on our plate no matter what, even if you had to throw up, once you were done throwing up you would have to finish it. We were not allowed to use the restroom one hour after eating unless it was an emergency and in that case another student stood outside of the bathroom door and you were required to count while you were in there. We had 7 minutes to shower, that included undressing, showering in ice cold water, drying off, getting dressed, and being out of the shower room. We were allotted one time a week to shave with an electric razor. We had no access to our personal items including our shoes (they were locked in a custodial closet) except for shoe call where we lined up and went in to get them and return them, and even no access to feminine products during our

periods. When you were on your period you had to go to med call and sign out a pad or tampon, use it, request a bag, change, and return your dirty pad or tampon where the staff would dispose of it. We had no access to the outside world and only had one 30 minute phone call with our parents which was on speaker phone with a staff member present and monitored. We saw our parents once every 2 months for a few hours on premises at dedicated hours over a weekend. Everything we said, ate, did, wore, and when we had access to our stuff was dictated for us. We had to learn, memorize, and read scripture daily. We were punished for little things like not making our bed perfectly, leaving out our toothbrush and more. Our punishments ranged. Some of these were laps of lunges that would result in difficulty to sit from our legs being sore, getting parent visits revoked, added time to the 15 month program, and even as extreme as wearing a construction vest and having to write everything we needed to say and never allowed to speak a word. We had no connection to real life, abused, controlled, and more. We were exploited by being forced to tell our parents our "life story" which was everything we ever did, presentations at churches where we had to tell a room full of strangers our deepest pain, and mistakes so the program got money. We were trapped in a horrible place with no way out feeling helpless. This is what was supposed to "fix a troubled teen" but all it did was leave us feeling helpless, broken and bruised, and alone. 4 years later and the trauma is still there. It never will go away. We are left with a permanent scar.

Did you go to a religious program?: Yes

Did you experience Restraint and/or Seclusion: Yes

Did you attend a program in any of these states?: Out of the US

Disclaimer: I agree

March 6, 2021

Chairman David Howard
Montana Senate
PO Box 10
Park City, MT 59063-0100

Dear Chairman Howard,

My name is Jenna Bulis, and I am a founder of Breaking Code Silence and a survivor of institutional abuse. I am advocating for support of SB 312 and urge you to vote in favor of this legislation. It is imperative that Montana advocates for the health and safety of children by requiring basic licensing standards for any organization providing youth residential services. Unfortunately, Montana has allowed numerous bad actors to operate without oversight which has created thousands of survivors from Montana's youth residential programs and private boarding schools. This is unacceptable and needs to be addressed through legislative reform.

At 15 years old of age, I was legally kidnapped by hired escorts and taken to Spring Creek Lodge Academy in Thompson Falls, Montana. I witnessed children placed in isolation for extended timeframes, unnecessary restraint with physical abuse and sexual abuse. I experienced improper medication management, grooming by staff, denial of medical services, emotional abuse, and psychological abuse. I am outraged that my former program director and therapist were able to reopen facilities within Montana after the closure of Spring Creek Lodge. How many survivors need to come forward before protecting children is placed higher than a fraudulent, abusive industry? How many lives destroyed will it take?

The "troubled teen industry" foundation was created on fraudulent treatment modalities that have since been deemed ineffective and harmful. Furthermore, the lack of licensing requirements for staff creates a culture of abuse. We are in the middle of a mental health crisis and need evidence-based treatment for our vulnerable youth. The bad actors that continue to abuse children and destroy families need to be identified and facilities closed. Every child has the constitutional right to life and protection from abuse.

This industry has operated in grey area for years, we need to require the same protections to all youth within Montana, through proper licensing and oversight. I ask that you support SB312 for the hundreds of youths currently enrolled in Montana facilities and the future generation of parents and children that seek services.

Sincerely,

Jenna Bulis
Senior Legislative Policy Advisor
breakingcodesilence.net

Schooler, Gwyn

From: Diane Sands <senatorsands@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 9:06 PM
To: Schooler, Gwyn
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Testimony for SB312

Gwyn, Please make a copy of this testimony for all members of the Public Health committee for Wednesday's hearing on SB312.

Thanks,

Senator Diane Sands

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Lauren McClary <lauren_mcclary@hotmail.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 9, 2021 at 6:45 PM
Subject: Testimony for SB312
To: senatorsands@gmail.com <senatorsands@gmail.com>

Hello, Senator Sands,

My name is Lauren McClary and I was a resident of Pinehaven Christian Children's Ranch from 2006-2008. I was late to submit my testimony for SB312 to remove the religious exemption for licensing requirements, and a friend passed your info on and suggested I send it to you directly. Below is the testimony that I drafted earlier today, if you have any questions or need any additional information, I would be happy to help. Thank you for working to help the children that might be sent to these kinds of places in the future.

My testimony:

*

My name is Lauren McClary. I'm 29 years old, and I attended Pinehaven Christian Children's Ranch from August 2006 to October 2008, ages 14-16. My house parents were Gary and Susan Henderson, but my abuse and mistreatment came at the hands of many adults, the worst, in my memory, being Ned and Maxine Kent and my aforementioned house parents. I have blocked out many memories from this time and I've listed out below the abuses/mistreatments and perpetrators that I can remember. I would be happy to elaborate on many of these stories, but I want to be respectful of other survivor's time to share, so please reach out if you'd like more information.

Pulled up flight of stairs by ponytail and then kicked back down to the bottom again. Multiple times. (by Dave Moe). I sometimes have a hard time wearing my hair in a ponytail. I avoided wearing it like that whenever I could and eventually allowed my house mom to have my hair cut short to prevent this feeling. I had previously kept it so long I could sit on it.

Forced exercise as punishment (without sufficient breast support) (by Susan Henderson and Maxine Kent)

Physically restrained by other students/having to restrain other students (instructions from Susan Henderson)

Not allowed to communicate/interact with others (isolation) (grounded by Susan Henderson, Maxine Kent, grounding rules supported by other adults on the ranch including teachers (Katje Camp and Shara Puckett) and all house parents (including Kris and TJ Revez, Gary Henderson, Ned Kent, etc.)

Forced to stand in a corner when grounded for long periods of time, sometimes hours, if there weren't chores to be done. (supported by all of the house parents on the ranch. This was also done in other places, such as the school, or when in town at the church run by the owners of the ranch.

Forced to eat foods against family's religion (Gary and Susan Henderson)

Told that parents were going to hell because of religious beliefs, causing mental anguish (Susan Henderson)

Forced to run alongside a vehicle to/from school, or other locations on the ranch (any and all house parents)

Unable to communicate with family in privacy (enforced by Gary and Susan Henderson)

Mail in/out was read and censored by house parents (Gary and Susan Henderson)

Physically spanked with a ping pong paddle (Susan Henderson)

Publicly Humiliated on a regular basis (Mostly Susan/Gary Henderson, but any houseparent would humiliate you as a way to keep one in line)

Pressure points used on me *for fun* by Ned Kent. I was standing in a corner waiting to be told what to do next. (Ned Kent)

Bedrooms had doors and holes for door handles, but they were not allowed to be closed (Enforced by Susan Henderson). I can't sleep with a door open. Even in my own apartment, where I live alone.

Bathroom doors only allowed to be closed on Sunday mornings while girls were getting ready in the morning if the girls were getting ready for church, so as to not wake up the other girls who were sleeping in (I'm still not sure if that bathroom door being closed was actually allowed or just something that the girls did.)

Multiple instances of having to be watched while using toilet or having to be monitored while showering.

Having to have a potty buddy. (Susan Henderson, Maxine Kent, Kris Revez)

Given one roll of toilet paper for a month. Per girl. (Susan/Gary Henderson at the instruction of Maxine Kent). I use way more toilet paper than necessary because I can.

Living in constant fear (All adults associated with the ranch [except Jon Larsson. He was a kind soul who was caught in a bad situation, but did what he could to make our lives better], also other students, as we were encouraged to tell on each other)

Education disrupted for discipline on a regular basis. (When on highest level of punishment, called 'Bullpen'. One would be pulled out of school and have to go and shovel manure at the milk barn. This also included running alongside the pickup truck up and down the mountain to/from the house/barn/other locations while on bullpen, even if not actually engaging in the bullpen chore itself. This was participated in by every single adult associated with the ranch.) When I arrived home, I was approx. 5 years behind in math because of the poor education that was provided with subpar learning materials.

Not allowed to interact with the other gender (most kids on the ranch were grounded from the opposite sex- enforced by all adults on the ranch).

Constantly made to feel like I didn't matter, or like I didn't have any worth unless I was pleasing the adults around me. Crippling social anxiety around others, leading to frequent isolation as an adult, because my fear of people I'm unfamiliar with and don't know if I can trust means that I often would refuse to go to events and social interactions and has now led to people thinking that I don't want to interact, but really, I'm just terrified of what others will think and if they'll find me worthy to interact with. I've at least identified this part and am working on it.

Witnessed:

13-year-old picked up by throat by Ned Kent and lifted up 6 inches off the floor.

Pressure points used on a regular basis on children by Ned Kent.

Children used in construction of houses and other buildings on the ranch.

Witnessed and assisted in restraining other students. (as instructed by house parents, Susan/Gary Henderson)

Isolation from others (not allowed to communicate with other students, only with house parents if you raise your hand and are called on, etc.) (this was a regular part of grounding, so this was done by all the adults on the ranch)

Some students having to shower with shower curtain open. (Susan Henderson)

These are just the pieces that I remember and experienced or witnessed myself. I heard many other stories of abuse from house parents and fellow students at the time, including one story of a house dad who, when trying to find out who had done a specific thing wrong, locked all the boys in his house in the boys wing and telling them to decide who had done the wrong thing, essentially creating a fight club where the weakest boy would be the one 'found' guilty whether he had done it or not. I heard other stories about this house dad who would stand on of the boys in the corner for 8 or more hours at a time, laughing when the boy fell asleep standing up and would fall into the corner and hit his head. I have heard stories of a girl who was physically forced to scoop manure with her bare hands, and also stories of almost military style interrogation of kids who had run away. I heard stories of children being left in a cattle shoot that cattle were about to run down because they were distracted and having to be pulled to safety by other students because a house dad was tired of the child not paying attention and had opened the shoot.

Please protect the children in the State of Montana and close this loophole. Thank you for taking the time to listen to parts of my story.

*

Thank you for your Time,

Lauren McClary

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:go.microsoft.com) for Windows 10