



## The “Why” at West Ridge Academy

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As I walk through the halls of WRA and interact with our students each day, I am often asked questions like these from our new students: “Why can’t we watch PG-13 movies,” “Why do I have to take algebra when I am going to be a musician and will never use it?,” or “Why aren’t we a co-ed program? Over the years of answering these types of questions from not only the students at the Academy but from my own children, I have come to recognize the importance of understanding the “why” behind what we do as parents.

Helping our children understand why we do what we do is critical to their understanding, acceptance and support. This requires effective communication, clear expectations and a willingness to spend time on the now—the processes at hand, not solely on the end result (especially when every 15 year old knows everything already...). This is where effectiveness outweighs efficiency. It is much easier when asked a “why” question to quickly answer “Because I said so”. While this is efficient, it is clearly not effective and yields poor results.

Allow me to share an example that took place last week in my home. Our garbage is picked up early Monday morning. We have to get the garbage cans out to the curb Sunday night or we will miss our pickup—an often occurrence. Last Sunday we were getting lunch ready and I asked my daughter to take the garbage out. She was very busy on her Facebook account and immediately responded with, “Why now, I have all night to do it!” I wanted to say, “Because I said so,” but I maintained my composure. I explained to her we were expecting a snow storm later and a busy night planned so it would be much easier to get it done now rather than later in the night. Once she understood the “why” behind my request it was much easier to get her motivated to complete the job. I only had to ask her once—a miracle. Later that night as the snow fell, she commented on how nice it was that the trash had already been taken out to the street.

At West Ridge Academy, each and every part of our program has a “why” to it. Our goal is to have a long term change of heart in our clients. This is the “why” in what we do. Once students and families understand that goal, it helps them understand the many layers of our program and how they fit together. It’s interesting how the new students or those who have not begun to change are the ones that challenge the program and ask “why” the most.

Some critics ask, “Why do we play sports at the Academy if at times we don’t win many games?” To see the “why”, come out to one of our games and ask our students. They will tell you they are learning discipline, team work and having a healthy diversion from therapy. These are characteristics of someone experiencing a change of heart.

So next time you are asking your son or daughter to do something that they might not want to do or don’t fully understand, remember the “why” behind your request. Who knows, you might even get the garbage taken out early!!!

# Therapeutic Recreational Activities

This has been a great start of the year for the Therapeutic Recreation Department and the students of WRA! So far this year we have taken our younger students on their annual winter yurt trip where they worked on being kind, helping each other and having fun. The older students just got back from their winter camp last week. During this trip the students built snow caves and slept in them. This camp is great for teaching the students about self-reliance and natural consequences.

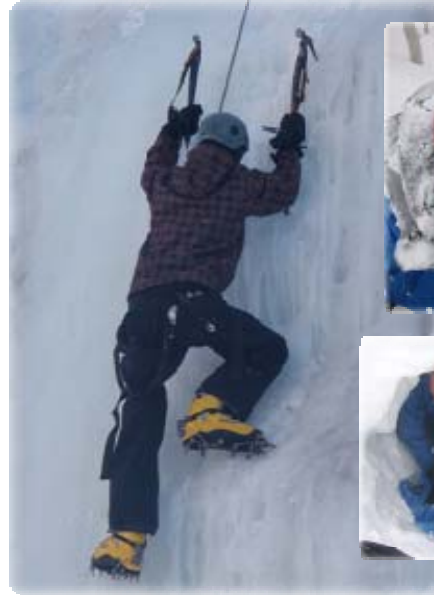
Also this year we have started our Ascent day trips. During these outings we focus on helping the students become proficient in a variety of high adventure activities. So far 32 students joined our skiing and snowboarding program and 6 students participated in ice climbing. During these outings, students learn to overcome fears and gain self-confidence.

We have 64 days of camping scheduled this year including 2 Parents Retreats, 5 Base Camps for newer students and 5 Summit Camps for students nearing graduation. July will be a very busy and exciting month for us. We will close the boys' campus and take them to Camp Hanna for two weeks. The ladies will begin their two week Camp Hanna experience once the boys return to campus.

We enjoy spending time with each student in the outdoors. We strongly believe that wilderness has something to teach all of us. By taking the youth into natural places they have an opportunity to remove themselves from the pressures of modern society and reevaluate their direction in life. They have an opportunity to experience a simpler form of life. As Henry David Thoreau wrote, "I went into the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

We are looking forward to a year of many great adventures. We hope you will follow our adventures as we post pictures and videos on our Facebook page, "The West Ridge Academy".

John Webb-Recreational Director



## Spring Gala

Our annual Spring Gala will be held on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in the Moyes Athletic Center on the boys' campus. We're privileged to have Alex Boye' as our entertainment. Café Rio will be providing the cuisine for the evening and Orange Leaf Yogurt for dessert. We are anticipating filling the room to capacity and having 300 guests in attendance. The room will be decorated in a Texas/ Old Mexico theme with an Alamo stage backdrop for Mr. Boye'. Dress is casual. Also, we will be presenting the Legacy of Hope Award and hearing from a variety of entertaining speakers. The gala has become one of our favorite fundraisers as it gives friends, community leaders and potential donors an up close and personal look at our campus, staff and youth. All of the proceeds will provide scholarships for families who have limited resources in accessing treatment for their child.



The youth will be involved in every aspect of the gala starting with setup, welcoming guests in the parking lot, escorting to their tables, serving dinner, beverages and dessert, and finally cleaning up after everyone else has gone home. We will be privileged to hear from a few of our graduates and their family members. Their stories and journeys are amazing and incredible to listen to. It will be an evening of great food, fun and friendship. Tables are selling for \$1000 each with room for 10 individuals. It is not too late to join us—but tables are going fast. We hope to see you there.

Jim McMaster—Director of Events & Promotions

## Boy's Basketball

The boy's basketball season ended the first week in March. Their final record for the season was 18 and 6. What a tremendous accomplishment! The boys played well and practiced hard to get ready for the state tournament and wanted to do their best. The first game was played against Liahona. A great team that finished second overall. Our boys played hard and didn't let down against an outmatched opponent. The second game was against Duchesne and it too didn't go our way. Their team outplayed ours and won.

I am proud of our boys as is our entire coaching staff. They worked hard, played hard and learned a lot of lessons which they will draw upon in life.



We'd like to congratulate Dema B. and Luke E. on receiving all-region awards. Way to go guys!

Jamie Keefer—Athletic Director

## Girl's Basketball

By now many of you know our girl's basketball team recently lost to Christian Heritage by a score of 108-3. This game continues to receive national attention from ESPN, USA Today, Fox News, CNN, Yahoo and the front page of our own Deseret News. There have been hundreds of articles written, thousands of blog posts and plenty of discussion surrounding both teams, sportsmanship and fair play. Our students particularly enjoyed receiving many letters of support from our community.

At the rematch, Inside Edition and several local news stations covered the event. Nike Factory Outlet West Jordan, a community supporter of our athletic mission, provided halftime excitement by giving out a gift certificate for the free-throw contest winner and tossed tee shirts into the crowd. They also gave each of our players a new pair of Nike shoes and gift bag. WOW! Nike's Head Coach encouraged our girls to be courageous when they get tired and give an extra effort which they all possess but underutilized. The rematch score showed signs of this effort as our girls scored 7 and only lost by 55 this time.

The real story isn't about the score or the opponent rather the personal progress and lessons learned by each of the girls. Every year we start with a brand new team. None of our girls have played organized basketball before creating an extreme disadvantage against teams which have grown up together playing in summer camps and tournaments. Our athletic program places focus on developing and discovering talents, participating at full potential—doing their best regardless of their circumstances, overcoming challenges and coming together in a common cause. We'd like to be a competitive team but it's not always about the wins and losses. If they can learn to not give up in a game down by a hundred points—to give their best and their all; therein lies a true lesson to carry over into their personal lives.

We all can learn something from any given situation whether it be good or bad. Through all of this, our girls have held their heads high and maintained a great attitude. One player commented, "I have nothing to be embarrassed about because I did my best. This is my claim to fame. I'm part of a team that set a new high school record." At least she hasn't lost her sense of humor. Great job girls!

Julie Lund—Girl's Coach



### Upcoming Events

Spring Gala- Apr 15

Boys of Steel Golf Tourney- June 17

Scarecrow Festival- Oct 20-22

## Guide to Bonding and Trust with Adopted Children

Teenagers struggle to define themselves as individuals. For almost everyone, adolescence is a time of yearning, uncertainty and discovery. Adopted teens have a particularly tough time when important questions about who they are and where they came from go unanswered. Imagine going through your day wondering, “Why do I make that funny facial expression when I’m concentrating?” or “How come I’m so tall for my age? Did I inherit that from someone?” Imagine having no answers.

Dr. Jacob Gibson, one of our Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and an adoptive parent states, “Teens who don’t know much about their biological family feel frustrated. They experience a deep sense of loss, grief and rejection. Many times, they experience loss of their culture, history, siblings and other things associated with a family that the rest of the world takes for granted.”



Emotional issues are even more compounded for children who were placed for adoption later in life. They feel they have been ‘given up,’ ‘given away,’ or ‘not wanted’ by their parents. They think that maybe there’s something wrong with them. Those thoughts naturally lead to low self esteem and sensitivity to rejection. In addition, kids who knew a life with their biological family, even though it may have been chaotic or even harmful, have trouble adjusting to their adoptive family. It is a mistake for the new family to expect them to sever all ties and leave their past life behind. Some families insist on this to the point of not allowing any talk or acknowledgement of their old family. Dr. Gibson further adds, “These losses leave a hole in the child’s heart and soul, that many times they cannot fill. But they may try to through various behaviors that get them in trouble.

One recommendation is giving children the space they need to work through their issues. Try to understand your child in his/her current phase of life. A young child who wants physical affection early on may prefer words of affirmation later in life. It’s important to recognize that while a teen’s sense of self and preferences shift, an adoptee’s sense of self shifts even more as he or she contends with the additional issues of adoption. Stop expecting more of your child than they are able to give. Expecting too much can create a perceived threat for the adoptee which creates negative behavior such as pushing others away as they try to manage the threat.

Some issues of adoption are too big for kids and their families to overcome easily. At West Ridge, parents find a supportive, structured environment, including therapy for teens and their adoptive families. There is a weekly adoption support group helping adopted children identify with one another and process issues. Non-adopted kids never have to wonder where they came from or who they look like, nor ask themselves, “Why me or why not me?” when other siblings are not placed for adoption. It’s vital these kinds of questions be discussed by adoptees with others who understand them. Through support groups, individual and family therapy, adopted teens can overcome emotional struggles and learn to build healthy relationships. Some problems may take effort beyond the years children live at home to resolve. Though there are no guarantees to how children will turn out when dealing with tough issues, it’s important to remember that after the trial of our kids’ struggles, sweet rewards may come.

Jacob Gibson-PhD & LMFT

These foundations and donors deserve our heartfelt thanks for their generous donations during the first quarter of 2011. Because of them we have been able to implement the following programs and projects:

Adoption	Cafeteria Tables	Boys Kitchen Equipment	Character Development
Baseball	Clinical Software	Hanna /Ropes Course	Literacy Program
Athletics	Hanna Pavillion	Musical Instruments	Spiritual Advisors
Music	School Renovation	Work Place Safety	Sub 4 Santa
Scholarship	School General		

Advance Fiber Optics Inc.	Airgas	Alan & Elizabeth Wayman
Allen J. Proctor	Amy Bellock	Anderson Hatch Foundation
Andrew Valdez	Angus H. & Ruth Belliston	Belliston Family Foundation
Bernell L. Christensen	Best Western Realty	Bigge Crane & Rigging
Bowcut Enterprises, LLC	Bryan Holladay	Bryanie & Beverly Swilley
Byrne Foundation	Byron Turner	Catherine Butterfield
Charles A. & Raya M. Jones	Cindy Carter	Crystal Golden
Damon Aguirre	Daniel M Livingston	Dannon
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Derek Hanks	Donna Neill	Doug Hyink
Dr. Kent & Sandra Floerke	Eldon V. Haacke	Eric Bird
Evan Byers	F.W. Millsaps	Federick N. Green
Freedom Steel, LLC	G.H. Miller	G.W. and Ida Lee Anderson
Gary & Jean Fillerup	Gary R. Free	Gary W. Green
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Hans Nievaard	Harold & Elaine Turley Foundation	Harold E. Christensen
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Utah State Employees Fund	Utah Step Saver	Utility Billing West
Walter B. Rudolph	Wayne & Barrie Giles	West Jordan Walmart #3232