



**Volunteers
of America®**

MINNESOTA

Bar None Residential Treatment Services

Newsletter

Building Hope for Youth and Families

Summer/Fall Edition 2008

Accentuating the Positives with “Accenture”

On June 20, 2008 a group of volunteers from Accenture, a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, participated in a volunteer project at Bar None. Each year Accenture holds an annual event where all 5,000+ employees come together for company updates in the morning, spend the afternoon volunteering, then get together for a company picnic in downtown Minneapolis later that day. There were 1,000+ employees volunteering at various sites on June 20 and Bar None was fortunate to have benefited from this outpouring of volunteerism.

Accenture employees worked side by side with Volunteers of America–Minnesota

corporate site staff, Bar None staff and Bar None residents to assist with landscaping outside the facility “Lodge” building and at the lakefront visiting area where residents and their families can often be found spending time together on a summer day.

Not only did Accenture supply volunteer labor for this project, but the company also generously donated funding for the materials needed to complete these tasks.

Rakes, shovels, and flower pots in hand, these volunteers, staff and residents enjoyed a beautiful June day while completing a project that is truly appreciated by Bar None. Thank you, Accenture!



Accenture volunteers worked closely together with organization staff and youth.

Sunrise goes to Camp Winatchi!



Every year, various units at Bar None go to Camp Winatchi to participate in outdoor camping, swimming, canoeing, cooking over the campfire, fishing, and learning about the great outdoors. Camp Winatchi is located in Northern Minnesota, near Big Fork in Itasca County. The Sunrise Unit in particular has been consistent with incorporating this unique programming opportunity into their activities for the last several years.

This year, the Sunrise Unit residents enjoyed four days up at Camp Winatchi. Each resident was provided with their own tent and they had to learn to assemble it with counselor guidance. Camp was a time for a lot of fun activities and play, although a structured schedule was also in place each day. When asked about highlights of their trip, Jeremy stated that he enjoyed “going on a nature walk.” Robert reported that he really liked “canoeing with peers and staff” and “the funniest thing was I got stuck in the lake.” Zachary had fun swimming, while Travis enjoyed fishing the most. Tylor was excited to tell everyone that he “got to catch a lot of fish.” Robert had fun “pushing others in the water, playing catch, and singing songs.”

Continued on Page 4

Bar None Residential Treatment Services | 22426 St. Francis Boulevard, Anoka, MN 55303 | ph. 763.753.2500

Office Hours | 8:30a.m.–4:30p.m. Monday–Friday | Located on 700 expansive acres among lakes, woods and walking paths.

Bar None Newsletter is published twice a year | Summer/Fall Edition | Winter/Spring Edition

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Programming Components

Comprehensive Therapeutic Services

- Clinical staff monitor resident Treatment Plans
- On-site Mental Health Clinic
- On-site Occupational Therapy Clinic
- Individual and Family Therapy (in-home and metro office locations) 1–3 hours per week
- Group therapy on units 5–7 hours per week
- Psychological Assessment and Testing
- Medication Management
- Psychiatric Evaluation
- Weekly NA/AA groups

Aftercare Services

- Planning begins at intake and continues through placement
- Clinical staff provide intensive parent/caregiver support
- Individual follow-up for 6 months post-discharge

Education

- Range of school settings including St. Francis Junior High and High School and Crossroads Vocational School
- Classes concentrate on Basic Standards Testing and preparation for graduation

Work/Vocational

- Work Readiness Program on-site: landscaping, carpentry, painting, janitorial and food service
- Manufacturing and landscaping classes available through Crossroads School
- May acquire jobs in the community
- Restitution/community service options

Spirituality, Diversity and Mentoring

- Weekly religious services and programs
- Weekly Talking Circle (Native American) and Sankofa (African American) groups
- Mentoring opportunities available

From the Director | Looking Forward | “About what we do”

Recently some representatives from Mortenson Construction toured our program to learn what we do at Bar None. They were in the process of researching which nonprofit facility to select as their United Way campaign beneficiary this year. The question became, how do we really give them a feel for what we do when we say we are a treatment facility for adolescents?

I can't tell you how many times people ask me, "So what do you guys do at Bar None?" I can easily talk for an hour detailing the work we do in helping our young men make positive changes in their lives. However, if it's not someone that has ever worked in a residential setting, I'm pretty sure they aren't really getting the real feel of what we do.

When you think about it, I can only really say what we do from a programming perspective and what we are attempting to do for the youth in our programs. Only our outcomes and the residents we work with can say what the end result of this work really is. It was this line of thinking that made me decide to ask some of our residents to tell the Mortenson representatives what we do at Bar None.

I asked the Clinical Coordinators to nominate some youth from their units that would be willing to tell their story. Instead of me telling people what we do, I asked the two young men to speak about what being at Bar None has done for them. Very little preparation occurred before the meeting. The only thing I asked of them was that they tell the truth, that they don't share anything they didn't want to share and that they don't answer any questions that made them uncomfortable.

We started the meeting with me giving an overview of our services. That met with a positive response and a few questions were generated. I was satisfied with my performance. However, I was obviously only the opening act and the real stars were about to appear.

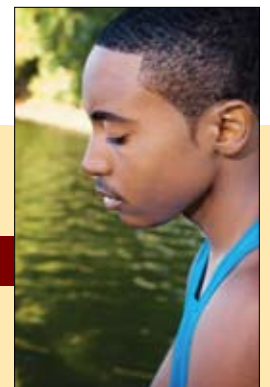
When our two young men told their stories, the attention level and number of questions from our guests increased dramatically. You could feel a genuine air of understanding and interest permeate the room.

Three positive things resulted from this meeting. First off, Mortenson Construction decided to complete their project here. Secondly, they really "got it." They had a perfect understanding about what we do at Bar None. And lastly, but most importantly, our two young men were very proud of themselves and the work they had done. It was a leadership opportunity for them. Sharing their story and seeing the response from the group not only made them feel good about themselves, but is probably something they will never forget.

Improving Lives, One Youth at a time. *Terry D. Thompson, Director*



**Doing the hard work of
learning new ways to
relate to the world.**



Success Story

The staff at Bar None Residential Treatment Services have the unique opportunity to impact the lives of many youth during their work at the organization. Although sometimes their influence is quickly apparent, other times staff may be left wondering when and if the lessons they tried to provide were heard by the residents.

Below is a letter from Charles, a former resident of Bar None. Charles wrote to Bar None for this edition of the newsletter to share his experience as a resident with our readers.

Hello, my name is Charles and this is my success story from Bar None.

I initially started off at the locked unit Lakeview where I came into a lot of challenging situations that could have happened to me on the outside- like people trying to fight me on my birthday, not getting along with the staff, arguments with teachers at school and other annoying things. That's all a part of treatment. I overcame my obstacles with help from staff and residents.



Charles, a former resident of Bar None.

I would say the residents' names but I can't, I think I can give initials so at least they know who I'm talking about when they read this: AC, ZR, KC, DD, FM, CD, CK, MB, LG, AB and you can never forget TW. The staff that helped me out a lot is Mr. Bindley, Mr. T, Mr. Span, Mr. Cody, Mr. Corey, Mr. J, Mr. Alan, Ms. Ashley, Ms. Hollie, Ms. Minske, Ms. Krueger, Ms. Harie, Ms. Jana and we had a lot of fun together

even though this is a locked unit for treatment. There were a lot of perks of being there, like being put into real life situations, learning from others' mistakes, playing sports and being challenged.

Then I went to Stepping Stone (an open, unlocked unit) for the last month and a half of my stay at Bar None where I received help from the staff and residents. Again, residents: CH, BB, CL, JH, EM, CG, TK, LP, NM, JL and JV. Staff: Ms. Tiffany, Ms. Rosanna, Mr. Z, Mr. Brown, Mr. Z, Mr. Nick, Ms. Karrie, Ms. Andrea, Mr. Ross, and Mr. Ryan. Throughout my stay at Stepping Stone we got to have more freedom and more fun, but we all still had to work on treatment.

It only took me 7 months to finish both the programs I was in. My favorite part of my stay there is you get help from people your age, instead of always looking to authority to punish you. Your peers challenge you instead...and we got to play sports and I love sports, I'm

Continued on Page 4

Treatment Program Units

Stepping Stone | Males, ages 12-18

Department of Human Services licensed (SED), Severely Emotionally Disturbed program Serious emotional and behavioral problems. Highly individualized treatment programming

Lakeview | Males, ages 12-19

Court-ordered, adjudicated delinquent, Secure unit, highly structured, Intensive therapeutic programming

Sunrise | Males, ages 12-18

Cognitively delayed, exhibiting severe emotional and behavioral problems Intensive, individualized therapeutic programming, Highly supervised

Evergreen | Males, ages 12-18

Cognitively delayed, exhibiting significant behavior problems and higher level of delinquent sophistication Intensive, individualized therapeutic programming, Highly supervised

Stabilization Programs

Short-Term Stabilization | Males, ages 12-18

Youth in crisis or transition, Safe and supportive environment

Long-Term Stabilization | Males ages 12-18

Two to six month average placement, Stabilization of behavior and life skill development

Evaluation Program

- Males, ages 12-18
- Six week program (42 day stay)
- Secure/non-secure settings available
- Medical screening
- Behavior assessment
- Psychological testing-optional Rule 25
- Psychiatric services
- Bio/social/family assessment
- Discharge diagnosis
- Placement recommendations

Program Philosophy

Bar None is a residential facility 45 minutes from the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area that provides a continuum of treatment and stabilization services for male youth ages 12-18 with emotional and behavioral problems.

We assist our residents in gaining the skills necessary to improve their quality of life, the lives of those around them and to succeed as adults.

Aftercare Advocates

One of the services provided by Bar None Residential Treatment Services is the Aftercare Group that is available for residents nearing or recently discharged. This group is overseen by mental health professionals in our organization and works specifically on topics that are important for our youth as they transition out and back into their own homes and communities.

On March 6th the Aftercare Group took a field trip to the State Capitol. The goal of the trip was to talk with a state senator and advocate for a bill about creating opportunities for young adults who are aging out of the foster care system without any services or supports.

The Aftercare Group members were extremely respectful and well spoken with Senator Foley who took some time to talk with our youth. Our residents gave some personal testimonies about how this bill would be beneficial and also took advantage of this time to talk about some of their frustrations and hopes about the communities in which they live.

The trip ended with a tour of the State Capitol and a discussion filled drive back to the organization. It was wonderful to observe the excitement and energy that the group got from their experience at the State Capital, because not only did the goal of supporting a bill get accomplished, but the group left energized to write their senators, feeling empowered to help make a change in society.

Sunrise goes to Camp Winatchi! (Continued from Page 1)

During the day, residents went on nature walks and encountered many different bugs and animals along the way, as well as the scenery. Most of the cooking was done over the campfire and Jeremy stated that he liked “cooking and making sure everyone got fed.” At night, there were roasted marshmallows and s’mores and the telling of mild ghost stories. Peter stated that his highlight of the trip was “listening to ghost stories and having a fishing pole fight.” Humberto stated that he enjoyed “sleeping outside where it is nice and cool.” Overall, the residents had many positive things to say about their camping trip. The Sunrise unit looks forward to next year when they can go back to Camp Winatchi and enjoy the great outdoors!



Cooking in the great outdoors.

Success Story (Continued from Page 3)

probably coming back for the tournaments. Thanks for all the help everyone, I hope to see all of you guys and girls again.

If you're all wondering, yes I'm doing good, having fun and doing what I'm supposed to do. Trying to get a job and going to school every day. The thing I can say to help everyone else to do well in the program is help yourself first then worry about others later. Don't try and make friends there because it won't help you get

through the program and you'll probably not see them again. Yes you can be cool with each other, but don't let your friendships get in your way of freedom. That's what I did and it changed my life fast...and just as efficiently as people that have been there for 9 months or longer. Always believe in yourself, I did and I got out in 7 months and that's better than average, so it can be done. All you got to do is put your mind to it!

Charles is currently 16 years old and living at home very successfully.

Working with Bar None: From Residential Counselor to Mental Health Intern By Erin Pounder, Mental Health Intern

Working at Bar None has been an excellent growing experience. I knew I wanted to work with adolescents and was eager to start working. I was assigned to the Evergreen Unit as an entry level Residential Counselor and began working in late June of 2007. Because I am a full-time graduate school student in Marriage and Family Therapy, I only worked part-time at Bar None. I live in Saint Paul, so my 45-

minute commute each way provided me with a lot of time for reflection.

When I started working with the residents in the Evergreen Unit, I quickly realized that if I approached them with an attitude that I knew “their story,” I would not get anywhere in developing a relationship. Instead, I took my time getting to know each resident, why they were in place-

ment, where they grew up, and what they were struggling with. It is not an easy task to connect with 12 adolescent boys living in residential treatment, partly because there is limited one-to-one time to spend with each resident, and partly because they don't necessarily want to open up to yet another new staff person. I was in no rush, I was happy with the process of getting to know them.

Continued on Page 8

Recognition Banquet

On April 3rd 2008, employees of Bar None Residential Treatment Services and its sister program, the Avanti Center for Girls, took an evening to celebrate and recognize accomplishments achieved over the last year. A banquet committee comprised of various administrators planned an evening of dining and an awards ceremony at the Refuge Golf Course in Andover, MN. This year we had one of the largest turnouts, with approximately 97 employees and significant others in attendance.

The evening started out with a short invocation by Greg Hanson, Spirituality Coordinator for the program. Terry Thompson, Director, took some time to recognize and thank the significant others attending for the support they give our employees throughout the year. After an elegant meal, the ceremony began in its usual fashion with some humorous moments, and some time was taken as well for sincere thanks and gratitude recognizing employees and their work over the last year.

One of the themes this year was to focus on great milestones reached by various employees. Our Director, Terry Thompson, was recognized for his **20 years of service with Volunteers of America–Minnesota** at Bar None. Of course most of the recognition was in jest, befitting his personality, but on the serious side time was taken to honor the direction and leadership he has given the agency, making it one of the premier programs for youth in the state.

Other special years of service awards were:

- 10 years:** Roger Christensen
Paula Minske
Michelle Rosenau
- 5 years:** Sarah Florman
Linda Rouen
- 3 years:** Lea Asmussen
Dave Helm
Cody Martin
Jody Mork
Howard McCoy

Finally, each year our employees take the time to nominate co-workers who they feel have represented the spirit of the agency in their work. The mission of Bar None Residential Treatment Services is to provide opportunities that will make a significant, lasting impact in the lives of our program participants, and to elicit community support for our program participants. This year there were many nominees of special recognition, in addition to various formal awards for outstanding work recognizing the specific efforts of agency staff. The prestigious **2007 Employee of the Year Award** was given to Dawn Hirsch, RN of the Nursing Department for her exemplary performance during the past year.

We take great pride in our employees, from the most recently hired staff to the veterans of our facility and we were pleased to recognize their hard work at this banquet. "We are committed to working together, each part a sum of the whole, all contributors to the final outcome and that outcome is success."

Teen Center Renovations

Our agency is continuously working to improve the facilities here at Bar-None, with a goal to provide an inviting and comfortable atmosphere for our clients and their families. The most recent example of this is the newly renovated Teen Center at the Lodge (originally the "Canteen").

The Teen Center is designed to be an area where residents can engage in recreational activities with their living units, as well as a place where visiting families can spend time together. In the past the space was underutilized, and this summer a renovation project took place to bring new life to this old space. The new renovation has improved the overall look of the area, as well as increased the number and quality of activities available. A billiards theme was chosen for the decor, and a contest was held to decide on a new name for the space. Congratulations to Brandon from Stepping Stone for the winning entry of "Teen Center!"

Thanks in large part to donations from Grand Casino Mille Lacs, Bobcat Company, and various individual contributors, we were able to provide a variety of new equipment for the space, including dart boards, board games, pool, ping pong, fooseball and air hockey tables and an indoor basketball game. New donations are encouraged as we are never done improving!



Cesare enjoying the renovated Teen Center.

What Treatment Means to Me

The Stepping Stone unit at Bar None works with adolescent males exhibiting serious emotional and behavioral problems through the use of highly individualized treatment programming. Recently some current Stepping Stone youth sat down with residential counselors and spoke about what treatment means to them and how they are doing in treatment. Here is some of what they had to say: (Some names have been changed for confidentiality reasons).

Steven

Treatment, to me, means dealing with my issues—especially the ones I don't think I need to work on or talk about, so I can prove to my probation officer, family, and the staff here that I can be successful and am ready to come back home and follow my expectations in the community and at home. To earn trust and feel better about my life and the choices I make, and not have to worry about things I've done.

I think I've come a long way and even when I get discharged, I know that I have a lot to do. I know what I need to work on and staff do too. I just have to show I want to change and get out. I know I'm close to being ready.

I didn't realize how important family and friends were until I came here and now when I go on visits to see family. I miss my friends and family and I just wanna get out and live a normal life and not have to worry about getting in trouble.

Tim

What treatment means to me is...I think that it is a place to learn what is wrong and what is right on the outside.

Jeremiah

What treatment means to me is to help you with your problems and make you get by without making it worse on you, that's what I think.

Josh

What treatment means to me is that I was sent here because of emotional outbursts and defiance towards everyone who would confront me on a behavior. I needed help to control my emotions and learn that the way I was living and the way I used to treat people was very wrong. It also gives me a chance to feel what the people I have victimized felt when I was victimizing them. But it's also on yourself—you can do something with it or waste it, either way you're here for a good minute so you might as well poke at what their handing you. But in the end all you have and need is you and you're only afraid of you, you're only mad at yourself. In the end all you have is you and if you spend your life hiding from yourself, you will never last.

Chaz

Treatment means victory, to me it means working for what I want. Sometimes I give up and just say "forget it." But then I think about going home and being with my mom—then that knocks me back in place and I'm back on track. Treatment has helped me in so many ways I can't explain. It has shown me that I don't have to gang bang and that I can be anything I want to be. But I know just a little bit longer here and I will be out and at home with my mom. One way or another I will get home. My progress will not go to waste.

These young gentlemen have made strides in their treatment process. They are all at different levels in the program, but have realized in some way that treatment is important to being reconnected to their families. They continue to work hard and are making efforts to being successful when they go home. We are proud of their accomplishments and hard work.

Work Readiness Program Expands

The Work Readiness program was created to offer residents the opportunity to learn working skills that can be applied to employment after leaving the organization. Through their involvement in this program, we are able to teach residents responsible work habits and how to work together as a team. Being employed through the Work Readiness Program also provides an opportunity for residents to earn wages to be used for their benefit (paying off restitution, recreation, shopping, budgeting education, etc.).

At this time we are very pleased to announce the expansion of the Work Readiness Program. Previously coordinated on a part-time basis by Willy Haliburton, we have been able to expand the Coordinator position to a full-time role that will be shared in part with our sister organization, the Avanti Center for Girls in Blaine, MN. This challenge has been accepted by Shawn Woods, who assumed the role of full-time WRP Coordinator in early August.

Shawn has most recently been employed at Bar None as a Residential Counselor since Fall 2007. He possesses a variety of teaching and skilled trade abilities from employment prior to his work at Bar None that made him an excellent fit for the Coordinator position. We welcome Shawn to his new role and look forward to his work in the future.

As Shawn has assumed WRP Coordinator duties, Willy Haliburton has been enthusiastically welcomed to a full-time position within the Maintenance Department. We thank you, Willy, for all of your efforts during your time as part-time coordinator and are pleased to have you as a full-time addition to our Maintenance team!

Expressions—Resident Corner

Residents at Bar None are encouraged to expand and grow in all facets of their lives. In addition to learning new behaviors, they work on expanding their interests and learning ways to express themselves. The Resident Corner contest asks residents to submit expressions of their creativity through various mediums.

Michial from the Lakeview unit performed a truly creative Yo-Yo exhibition for judges. His talent and creativity was evident! Congratulations to Michial for this winning submission.



Practice makes perfect! Michial impressed judges with a yo-yo exhibition.

Occupational Therapy (OT): a small part of the big treatment process.

For most of the kids who attend occupational therapy (OT), it's one hour/week out of their life. They usually come in, sit down and say, "What do we have to do today?" The Occupational Therapist gives them a list of the things they should work on such as problem-solving, following directions, coordination, strength/endurance, reading, writing, or math, etc....and then together we ended up agreeing to do something more "fun".

The residents usually come up with something they want to do like cooking, playing a game, working on the computer, or just swinging.

They are usually completely unaware of how during their chosen activity, the therapist starts to work with them on things from the above "less fun" list like cognition (e.g., problem solving), following directions, peer and adult relationships, attention to task behaviors, ability to delay gratification, expressing feelings to others in appropriate manner, selecting and engaging in leisure activities, self-regulation, assertiveness, etc.

A simple game of bean bag toss suddenly becomes the perfect opportunity to work on addition, short term memory, following directions, attention span/distractibility, visual motor skills, grading force, coordination, turn-taking, eye contact, time management and self-awareness, not to mention the fact that the child is engaging in an age appropriate leisure skill they can do out in the community.

I personally have played this game many times with residents, and have never had the same experience twice. At the end of each session, I make it a point to have the child identify how he/she was feeling before the session, how they feel after the session, and to determine what changed along the way. It doesn't take long before I start hearing, "What do we get to do today?" It's the small things that create change, one interaction or activity at a time.

Call Casey Snow, MA OTR/L at 763-753-2500 ext. 335 to request more info or to make a referral. Life Balance Inc. provides services to Bar None/Avanti, but is also open to the public.

A Successful School Year

The residents at Bar None attend Crossroads School and Vocational Center in St. Francis, MN. Crossroads is a small, structured educational setting outside the organization providing regular education and Level 1, 2, or 3 services for students and is a public school operated by Independent School District #15. Each year, the school conducts an awards night to honor the achievements and successes of the students.

This year's awards night was held on May 8th, 2008. The evening began with a catered fried chicken meal (a true favorite of the residents). Through that social mealtime the residents were able to mingle with each other as well as school personnel, demonstrating appropriate social interaction and skills. Following dinner, the awards presentation began with a slide show of the residents in different activities in school throughout the year. The residents really were entertained watching themselves on the slide show and reliving memories of the past school year with other students, staff and family members who were in attendance.

The residents were very excited about the awards and recognition they received and this was clearly shown when they returned to the units later that evening. This event in particular focuses on the strengths of the students and each individual is recognized in some fashion.

Continued on Page 8

For more information contact us at: 763-753-2500

A Successful School Year (Continued from Page 7)

They wanted to show counselors their awards and were proud to inform their families when they came to visit or by telling them about it on the telephone if they had not been able to attend the ceremony itself. It was a fun celebration that left the residents in great spirits.

For many of our residents, past experiences with school environments have not been favorable. Making positive connections with the school, even if for only one night, improves their attitudes about education in general and can have a significant impact on their academic success in the future.

8 Bar None

Working with Bar None: From Residential Counselor to Mental Health Intern By Erin Pounder, Mental Health Intern (Continued from Page 4)

During the time I worked as a Residential Counselor before transitioning to the Mental Health Clinic, there were several residents that really impacted my perception of an adolescent resident in treatment. I learned the painful reality that many of the boys come from--faced with gang violence, family discord, academic difficulty, court-involvement, and the list goes on. There was no shortage of struggle in any one resident's life, nor was there a lack of power and personal strength to face these difficulties. While it is true that many of the residents have made poor decisions, it would be a great loss to let poor decisions define who they are.

Now, working in the Mental Health Clinic located on site, I continue to work with some of the residents from other units at Bar None. My experience as a Residential Counselor, working directly with adolescents struggling to adjust to life at Bar None, will follow me throughout my career. With each new client, I am reminded to be patient and enjoy the process of getting to know the individual, to see each client as a unique person with a unique situation. While I recognize the very difficult reality that many of the adolescents at Bar None have experienced, I feel very blessed to have an opportunity to help them overcome their struggles and recognize the power they have to meet their personal goals.

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