



STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT THE DRUNK DRIVING PROBLEM

Part Two in a Series

"DWI — ARE WE OFF TRACK?"

by Terry M. Klein

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June 1986

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Klein also spent ten years with NHTSA in the U.S. Department of Transportation as chief evaluator in the Planning and Evaluation Division of the Office of Occupant Protection and as senior statistician in the Information Systems and Modeling Division of the Office of Alcohol Countermeasures.

Klein holds a B.S. in Mathematics and an M.S. in Statistics from the University of Maryland. He is the author of numerous articles and papers on DWI and traffic safety.

The production of this report was made possible by Beverage Retailers Against Driving Drunk (BRADD). BRADD is a comprehensive information resource focusing on current and emerging alcohol issues. Its mission is to share objective, credible research and information on alcohol issues with BRADD members and public opinion leaders. ©1986

POSITION SUMMARY

Alcohol abuse is one of the major social problems of our day. Alcohol abusers who drive are a particularly serious threat.

Beverage Retailers Against Driving Drunk support measures, both legislative and educational, that focus on identifying the problem drinker and keeping him from getting behind the wheel of an automobile.

A recent wave of proposed state legislation, however, causes us concern. The proposed legislation is off-target and detracts from focusing on the people who unquestionably cause the great majority of alcohol-related accidents and fatalities.

The proposed legislation would lower the criterion of intoxication from the current 0.10 percent blood alcohol concentration rate to 0.08 or 0.05 percent (about two drinks for the average person in a two-hour period).

On the surface, the legislation (now being reviewed in many states and supported by groups like MADD and the AMA) might appear to be a "fix" to a problem that concerns us all. But let's look deeper.

- The 0.10 percent blood alcohol concentration rate is the standard for intoxication recommended by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration based on their in-depth studies and their analysis of driving-drinking problems.

- Research (both government and independent studies) over the past 20 years shows that 70 to 75 percent of those convicted of driving while drunk have blood alcohol concentrates of at least 0.15 percent and many have levels of 0.20 percent or higher. They are way past the official "drunk" mark.

- Multiple studies have shown that in a breakdown of the statistics of alcohol-related traffic fatalities, more than half of those killed are the drunk drivers themselves. Twenty percent are passengers in the car with the drunk driver, and eleven percent are drunk pedestrians who are at fault by walking into the paths of oncoming cars.

- Half of the fatally injured drivers who are legally drunk have blood alcohol contents at or above 0.20 percent.

- Studies have shown that problem drinking drivers have other identifiable problems: a record of one or more alcohol-related arrests; previous contacts with police or social agencies; reports of marital, employment or social problems.

What does this information tell us? That the person doing most of the damage drinks far in excess of the current legal limit. He is not a "social" drinker. He drinks irresponsibly, and he tends to have other identifiable problems related to his problem drinking. Further, in most driving fatalities, it is the drunk driver killing himself and/or those riding with him.

Lowering the legal BAC to 0.05 percent should have little or no effect on these persons. The main target of such a measure would be drivers who currently drink and drive within the legal limits and who account for under ten percent of all drivers involved in fatal accidents, and many of these are due to non-alcohol related factors.

Beverage Retailers Against Driving Drunk are serious about the need to stop drunk driving. However, we want our country's energies and resources to focus on the real problem, not a perceived problem. Aside from the fact that research has yet to pinpoint a need for lowering the recommended blood alcohol concentration levels, can you imagine the staggering costs to enforce the proposed legislation? In a time of economic belt tightening, do we want to further burden our state and local agencies with enforcing legislation that just "sounds good?" Could not our money be better spent to seriously crack down on enforcement of the 0.10 percent and over blood alcohol concentrate levels that we know are causing the majority of the drunk driving accidents?

We've heard the public outcry for tough and consistent DWI laws. Let's join community efforts to implement strong and well-funded treatment and rehabilitation programs that will surely help the excessive drinker--the repeat offender.

Public education programs have done a great deal to create an environment where drunk driving is socially unacceptable.

Our young people are getting the message. Let's keep the education effort strong.

Beverage Retailers Against Driving Drunk take our responsibilities as good hosts seriously. We are working hard to promote safe attitudes and behavior among our guests and customers. Whether it's in the form of providing food and attractive non-alcoholic drink options, educating our beverage servers and sellers, or enforcing minimum drinking age laws, we are joining in this important health and safety effort.

The following report by traffic safety expert Terry Klein addresses the issue in more detail. Specific recommendations that will work to attack the drunk driving problem can be found on pages 9-11 of this booklet. We hope you will study the ideas and join in working for their implementation.

-Beverage Retailers Against Driving Drunk

DWI - ARE WE OFF TRACK?

by Terry M. Klein

Proposed drunk driving legislation, now being discussed in many states, calls for the reduction of the legal BAC (blood alcohol concentration) level from 0.10 percent to 0.05 percent.

The relative effectiveness of such a measure will depend on that group of drivers at which it is focused; that is, drivers with BAC levels between 0.06 and 0.09 percent, generally referred to as the "social drinker." To analyze the issue of lowering the BAC limit, the following question should be addressed: "What are the drinking characteristics of those persons currently apprehended for drunk driving and involved in the majority of fatal traffic accidents?" The answer to this question will shed light on which drivers constitute the greatest drunk driving threat and where new countermeasures can be effectively focused to achieve the maximum benefits.

In almost all states, it is illegal to drive with a BAC of 0.10 percent, which translates to an average person consuming about five drinks in two hours. At this level of intoxication, researchers have estimated that the risk of this person causing a traffic accident is about six times as great as that of a sober person. This factor increases to twenty-five times as great a risk at a BAC of 0.15 percent (approximately seven drinks in two hours). In contrast, to reach the proposed lowered limit of 0.05 BAC, the average person would consume about two drinks in a two-hour period.

A Lowered Level Would Affect About 10 Percent of the Problem

The general experience has been that 60 to 75 percent of convicted drunk drivers are considered to be problem drinkers, with BACs at the time of arrest of at least 0.15 percent, many at 0.20 percent or higher. At these excess levels of intoxication, the risk of causing an accident increases very fast.

In 1984, accidents involving legally drunk drivers (BAC of at least 0.10 percent) resulted in about 40 percent of all traffic fatalities. Accidents involving persons who drank but were not legally drunk accounted for only 10 percent of all traffic fatalities. The remaining 50 percent of the fatalities occurred in accidents involving drivers who had not been drinking.¹

It seems evident that the greatest safety benefits could be derived from reducing drunk driving by problem drinkers, who constitute the greatest part of the problem and who repeatedly drive at high BAC levels of 0.10 and above. It has been estimated that half of the fatally injured drivers who are legally drunk have a BAC at or above 0.20 percent,² an indicator of extreme excess drinking. Most researchers in the alcohol area consider attaining this BAC level alone to indicate problem drinking. Lowering the legal BAC to 0.05 percent should have little or no effect on these persons who generally drink far in excess of the current 0.10 percent BAC.

The main target of such a measure would be drivers who currently drink and drive within the legal limit and who account for about ten percent of all drivers involved in fatal accidents. (It should also be noted that alcohol involvement is not necessarily the cause of accidents. The same factors that cause non-alcohol-related accidents are most certainly present here, too.)

Countermeasures aimed at what are today considered responsible drivers can only serve to divert resources away from the larger part of the problem and potentially could have negative effects. The increased burden of "more legally drunk drivers" could stretch the current enforcement and judicial resources beyond their means. In addition, application of the harsh mandatory sanctions upon drivers who do not appear even mildly drunk at a BAC of 0.05 percent could become a source of alienation to the enforcement and judicial communities.

Results of Current Countermeasures

The question arises of how the current programs have fared in terms of reducing drunk driving, especially by problem drinkers? While this question cannot be fully addressed in the current study, some indications of their progress can be found in analyses of accident data.

Recent analyses of changes in alcohol involvement in fatal crashes have indicated that current programs are much more effective in deterring drunk driving by social drinkers than problem drinkers. While consistent reductions in alcohol

involvement have been observed since 1982, the greatest changes occurred at times of low problem drinking-driving. For example, daytime alcohol involvement decreased more than nighttime alcohol involvement. A paper based on these accident analyses and recently presented at the International Congress and Exposition of the Society of Automotive Engineers noted this pattern of change:

"Problem drinker drivers and most high BACs are frequently found in crashes between midnight and 6 am. These 'hard core' drinking drivers may not be affected by alcohol campaigns. Responsible, social drinkers, for the most part, would most likely be affected by these campaigns."³

This feeling is apparently shared by the authors of a City of Philadelphia study,⁴ who contend that a short jail sentence for first offenders will have little effect on the problem drinker: "...will scare the unfortunate social drinker who got caught in the net, but the problem drinker who goes to jail for 30 days will be drunk on the 31st day."

What Will Work? Fresh Solutions

Drunk driving is symptomatic of the larger problem of chronic alcoholism. Greater benefits could be realized by focusing new resources on programs involving prevention, and the treatment and rehabilitation of problem drinkers, rather than on making criminals out of responsible citizens by lowering the legal BAC to 0.05 percent.

Programs should focus on solutions to the problem drinker aspect of drunk driving, since this is where the greatest

benefits can accrue. Police agencies, which form the bulwark of any drunk driving deterrence program, require continuous financial resources to maintain effectiveness. One method of achieving this is the adoption of a plan like the New York State STOP-DWI Program. This legislation mandates minimum fines of \$250 to \$350 for each DWI conviction, with much of these funds returned to the counties where the arrests are made, if the county has a comprehensive plan. In 1984, \$13 million was returned to the counties to pay for increased efforts.

Forty-six percent of the total dollars budgeted on the STOP-DWI program were for the enforcement component. An evaluation of program effectiveness found significant reductions in alcohol-related crashes after the program began and concluded that:

"The Counties should continue to receive monies for their STOP-DWI efforts under the present funding arrangement. Experience during the initial years of this program demonstrates its value in reducing accidents and injuries."⁵

Such funding mechanisms provide the support for long-term continuous programs. To support the enforcement effort, there is a need for the consistent levying of effective penalties for drunk driving, such as automatic administrative license suspension and mandatory treatment/education programs. Suspending the driving privilege of drunk drivers draws their attention to the existence of a problem; mandatory treatment/education programs involve the problem drinker in a long-term

commitment to solve his/her drinking problem. These approaches can have widespread benefits beyond saving lives by reducing the disruptions in family and job that can result from problem drinking.

These recommendations and others are presented in greater detail in a 1985 BRADD report titled "Straight Talk About the Drunk Driving Problem."⁶

Background Case Studies

To get a rough idea of the magnitude of the drinking problem among drunk drivers, contacts were made⁷ with a number of agencies responsible for the screening and disposition of convicted drunk drivers. The purpose of these contacts was to ask what types of drinkers are passing through the system. While the precise definition of the terms "problem" and "social" drinker are not universally agreed upon, the latest concensus seems to be that a problem drinker is a person who, whenever he or she drinks, generally drinks too much (cannot stop at "just a few").

Albuquerque

Over a three-year period beginning in 1982, the National Council on Alcoholism in Albuquerque, New Mexico, screened over 7,000 drunk drivers who were considered to be first-time offenders. The classification of these drunk drivers was based on scores on questionnaires, diagnoses by trained interviewers, and the person's BAC at the time of arrest. This was the case with almost all of the agencies

contacted. The average BAC of these first offenders was 0.168, with many at or above 0.20 BAC or a consumption of approximately 15 drinks. Of these 7,000 persons reviewed, almost 60 percent were considered to be problem drinkers. Considering that this survey only covered first offenders, one should expect a higher proportion of problem drinking among multiple offenders.

Colorado

In Colorado the law requires that everyone arrested for drunk driving must be screened for alcohol problems; in 1985 over 25,000 persons were screened. The average BAC of these persons was found to be 0.17 percent. Over 50 percent of these persons were classified as problem drinkers, and another 30 percent were considered to be "incipient" problem drinkers (those in the early stages of problem drinking).

New York

The Pre-trial Services Corp. of the Monroe County, New York Bar Association runs a county-funded screening and assessment program. In New York all persons with at least one prior drunk driving conviction must be screened. In the over 300 interviews in 1985, over 70 percent were considered problem drinkers. The average BAC of this multiple-offender group was 0.20 percent.

Maryland

The DWI Monitoring Program of the State of Maryland is responsible for tracking the progress of over 16,000 persons arrested for drunk driving in 1985. According to assessments made by the Health Department, over 70 percent of these persons are considered problem drinkers. It seems to be the concensus of physicians working in the area of alcohol abuse that "95 percent of second-offender drunk drivers are alcoholics, and that almost every third offender certainly is."⁸

Philadelphia

A recent study of the DUI treatment program in the City of Philadelphia found that 75 percent of the 21,000 convicted drunk drivers were problem drinkers or alcoholics. The average BAC at the time of arrest was 0.19 percent.

New Jersey

The State of New Jersey Division of Alcoholism estimated that half the people evaluated in their screening program were referred for treatment for serious alcohol problems, and that most drivers convicted of drunk driving were "usually well over (0.10 percent BAC)."

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7. The National Council on Alcoholism, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division of the Colorado State Department of Health, Denver, Colorado; Pre-trial Services Corp. of the Monroe County, New York Bar Association, Rochester, New York; The Division of Parole and Probation, Drinking Drivers Monitor Program, Baltimore, Maryland.
8. This comment was made by the Director of the Division of Parole and Probation, State of Maryland Drinking Drivers Monitor Program during the interview conducted by the author. One of the Director's responsibilities is a liaison with the State Health Department physicians, who have espoused this opinion. This feeling has also been expressed by physicians attending meetings and seminars to discuss the health status of drunk drivers and alcoholics.

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**TASK FORCE REPORT
ON THE
VISIONQUEST PROGRAM
IN
PENNSYLVANIA**

FEBRUARY, 1985

103060

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TASK FORCE REPORT
ON THE
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IN
PENNSYLVANIA

March, 1985

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The VisionQuest Task Force was established in September, 1984 to examine the policies and procedures of the VisionQuest Program as they relate to the physical safety of youth placed with the Agency. Over a five month period, the Task Force conducted a nationwide review of wilderness, adventure and outward bound programs that work with delinquent youth. The Task Force also examined the VisionQuest Program and reviewed all of the Agency's policies and procedures relating to the physical safety of youth.

It should be noted that there is considerable controversy surrounding the VisionQuest Program. Supporters state that the most difficult youth in Pennsylvania are accepted into the program and are successful in VisionQuest when they have failed in all other programs. Critics contend that the physical confrontations used by VisionQuest are a form of child abuse and that traditional programs provide more humane and effective treatment.

This Task Force did not consider the issue of the effectiveness of the VisionQuest Program. Rather, the Task Force considered only issues involving the physical safety of youth placed with the high risk programs in VisionQuest.

During the five months the Task Force spent in reviewing and analyzing the issue of physical safety of youth, the possibility of closing the Wagon Train and OceanQuest programs was examined. The Task Force concluded that the benefits of these programs (as perceived by its supporters who utilize the program) exceeded the potential risks that are involved and that the implementation of the

recommendations which follow would further increase the physical safety of youth placed with VisionQuest who participate in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs.

The Task Force concluded its work favorably impressed by the safety standards utilized by VisionQuest. In comparison with other wilderness, adventure and outward bound programs, VisionQuest is at least equivalent in its development of policies and procedures relating to the physical safety of youth. However, because VisionQuest utilizes high risk programs, the Task Force has made recommendations which would further enhance program safety and limit involuntary commitment in its high risk programs to those youth who are not amenable to treatment in a less traditional non-secure program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. HIGH RISK YOUTH ORIENTATION PROGRAM

VisionQuest shall establish an orientation program for high risk youth. This orientation program shall be conducted in a less stressful environment than the existing wilderness camps and shall last for at least thirty days. During this orientation program, VisionQuest shall determine if the youth is capable of adjusting to and benefiting from the treatment programs available within the agency.

Before VisionQuest accepts a youth into the program, it shall identify whether the youth to be classified is a high risk by evaluating the entire case history to determine if any of the following high risk behaviors or characteristics are present:

- (1) recent, overt suicidal attempts/gestures
- (2) serious emotional disturbance

- (3) serious mental impairment (borderline or retarded)
- (4) physical underdevelopment

II. PLACEMENT ON THE WAGON TRAIN OR IN THE OCEANQUEST PROGRAM

VisionQuest shall only place youths on the Wagon Train or in the OceanQuest Program if they meet the criteria for transfer to criminal court. These criteria with minor modifications included are:

- (1) the child was 14 or more years of age at the time of adjudication;
- (2) the child committed a delinquent act which would be considered a felony if committed by an adult;
- (3) the child is not amenable to treatment, or rehabilitation in a lesser risk non-secure program through the examination of the following factors:
 - (a) age
 - (b) mental capacity
 - (c) maturity
 - (d) the degree of criminal sophistication exhibited by the child
 - (e) previous record
 - (f) the nature and extent of any prior delinquent history, including the success or failure of any previous attempts by the Juvenile Court to rehabilitate the child
 - (g) probation or institutional reports
 - (h) any other relevant factors
- (4) the child is not committable to an institution for the mentally retarded or mentally ill;

- (5) the interests of the community require that the child be placed under legal restraint or discipline or that the offense is one which would carry a sentence of more than three years if committed by an adult.

In the event that VisionQuest determines that a youth who does not meet the above criteria needs to be placed on the Wagon Train or on the OceanQuest Program, VisionQuest shall request a hearing before the committing court to obtain the consent of the juvenile court judge, the youth, and a parent. In the event that these parents are separated, the parent having custody of the child shall be responsible for providing the necessary consent. VisionQuest shall not place these youths on the Wagon Train or in the OceanQuest Program if they cannot obtain the consent of the people listed above.

III. REQUIREMENT FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

VisionQuest shall have each youth evaluated by a psychologist before placing the youth in the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Program. The psychologist shall determine if placement in either the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Program might be psychologically harmful to the youth. VisionQuest shall only place youths in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs when the psychologist determines that such placement will not result in psychological harm to the youth.

IV. STANDARDIZATION OF ROUTES FOR THE WAGON TRAIN AND OCEANQUEST PROGRAMS

VisionQuest shall establish standardized routes for both the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs. The use of standardized routes will provide VisionQuest staff with the opportunity to become

knowledgeable about the terrain, climate, and other factors that affect program safety. Maximum precautions are needed to provide for the physical safety of youth.

V. REDUCTION IN THE DAILY MOVEMENT OF THE WAGON TRAIN

VisionQuest shall reduce the amount of time the Wagon Train moves from an entire day to half a day. This reduction in daily movement will decrease the possibility of injury to youth by reducing staff and youth fatigue. This decrease will also reduce the risks associated with moving a wagon train along a highway.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS TRAINING FOR YOUTH

VisionQuest shall develop an environmental hazards training program for youth placed with the agency. The training program will help youth to develop an understanding of the potential dangers of frost bite, river currents, terrain, weather, and animals encountered in wilderness, adventure, and outward bound programs.

VII. MINIMUM STAFF EXPERIENCE

- (1) Supervisory staff in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs shall have two years of experience in wilderness, adventure, and outward bound programs. At least one of these years shall be in the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Programs.
- (2) At least one half of the child care staff in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs shall have one year of experience in the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Programs.

VIII. ORIENTATION/TRAINING PROGRAM FOR VISIONQUEST STAFF

VisionQuest shall develop and implement a thirty-day orientation program for all staff who are assigned to wilderness or high risk programs. During this orientation program, the staff members shall not have responsibility for youth placed with the agency.

VisionQuest shall develop an on-going systematic training program for staff. This training program shall include a regular updating and recertification in CPR, multi-media first aid, emergency medical procedures, water safety, climbing instruction, canoeing and any other certification procedure that exists for wilderness, adventure and outward bound programs.

IX. DEVELOPMENT OF A PEER REVIEW PANEL FOR THE WAGON TRAIN AND OCEANQUEST PROGRAMS.

VisionQuest shall establish an External Safety Review Panel to examine on a regular basis the operations of the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs. This Safety Review Panel shall monitor and sanction the safety practices used in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs because of the increased safety risk inherent in such programs. The Panel shall report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis and at least annually.

X. QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORTS

VisionQuest shall provide the Task Force with a copy of its Monthly Quality Assurance Report and the Weekly Accident/Near Miss Audit. These reports outline all of the injuries, near injuries, and runaways in the VisionQuest Program on a monthly basis.

The Task Force shall review the monthly reports to determine if the standards proposed herein are accomplishing their goal of increasing the "physical safety" of youth placed in the VisionQuest Program.

XI. APPOINTMENT OF A SAFETY OFFICER

VisionQuest shall appoint a safety officer who shall continuously monitor by on-site visits the physical safety of youths placed in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs. The safety officer shall report to the program director in Pennsylvania but shall have authority to report to the Executive Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors if an issue involving the safety of a youth cannot be resolved with the program director in Pennsylvania. The safety officer shall prepare monthly and annual reports on the physical safety of youth in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The VisionQuest Task Force was established in September, 1984. The Task Force was created to examine VisionQuest's policies and procedures pertaining to the physical safety of children who are placed in the Program. VisionQuest as a wilderness, adventure and outward bound program has different and greater safety needs. The fact that ten youth have died in the VisionQuest program indicates that the physical safety of youth must be examined. The rapid expansion of VisionQuest Program in Pennsylvania and throughout the country further emphasizes the need to examine the issue of physical safety. There are three primary concerns expressed by people in the juvenile justice system.

The first concern involves the death of a 17 year old youth, who drowned in the Allegheny River while running away from the VisionQuest program in Venango County. A total of ten youth, six from Pennsylvania, have died while under the supervision of VisionQuest, and the Commonwealth is concerned that there may not be sufficient policies and procedures governing the physical safety of youth placed in the program.

The second concern involves the unique treatment approach which is part of the VisionQuest Program. VisionQuest is not a traditional residential program but rather is a treatment program that emphasizes wilderness experiences as a fundamental element in working with youth. The use of wilderness experiences creates many issues relating to the physical safety of youth that are not of concern in traditional residential programs. The Commonwealth was concerned that

wilderness experiences might involve significant risks to the physical safety of youth placed in the VisionQuest Program.

The third and final concern is the rapid growth of the VisionQuest program in Pennsylvania. VisionQuest began its operation in Pennsylvania at the end of 1979. In the past five years, it has grown from a small program that accepted only chronic and violent offenders to a large program with more than three hundred and fifty youth from Pennsylvania. Many of these youths are not chronic or violent offenders. The Commonwealth is concerned that the rate of growth in the VisionQuest program might have resulted in a decreased emphasis on having experienced and trained staff working with youth and, therefore, increased the risk of physical injury within the program.

Because of these concerns, the Department of Public Welfare and the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission created a Task Force to examine the issue of physical safety of youth within the VisionQuest Program. The Task Force Members include:

Chairman

Honorable R. Stanton Wettick
Administrative Judge
Family Court Division
Court of Common Pleas
Allegheny County

Members

Honorable Fred P. Anthony
Administrative Judge
Juvenile Court
Court of Common Pleas
Erie County

Willis R. Brinker
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
Mercer County

Roberta J. Kearney
Legislative Assistant to
Senator Michael D. Fisher

Margaret Jean Sosnowski, Ph. D.
Deputy Secretary
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Ronald E. Sharp
Executive Director
Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

Paul Ward
Director
Statistical Analysis Center
Center for Juvenile Justice Training
and Research

Clay Yeager
Correctional Training Director
Center for Juvenile Justice Training
and Research

CHAPTER II

The VisionQuest Program

History

VisionQuest is a private for profit corporation founded in 1973 by R. Ledger Burton. Mr. Burton and the others who incorporated VisionQuest had previously worked at the Juvenile Detention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. VisionQuest began its operation doing street work with delinquent youth in Phoenix, Arizona. Shortly thereafter, they moved the program to Tucson, Arizona, where they opened a group home for six delinquent youth in July, 1973.

During the next several years, VisionQuest expanded its programs. When the Bicentennial WagonTrain moved through Arizona in 1976, VisionQuest obtained a wagon and joined the Bicentennial Train. This experience led to the creation of the Wagon Train Program in VisionQuest.

VisionQuest developed a variety of experiential programs beyond the Wagon Train. These programs included wilderness survival treks, bicycle trips, backpacking, farming and other approaches in working with delinquent youth.

VisionQuest continued to expand its programs and became licensed in several states including Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado. In 1979, Pennsylvania became interested in VisionQuest and eventually licensed them to operate here. This process is discussed in the next chapter.

Treatment Philosophy

The treatment philosophy of the VisionQuest Program is based on several concepts, are embedded in the mysticism of the Plains Indian

philosophy. (Mr. Burton worked as a VISTA Volunteer on the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana).

The first and most important concept is that of a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. Youth placed in VisionQuest are expected to earn their rite of passage from childhood to adulthood by making a commitment of one year of their life and then keeping this commitment. Each significant step in the rite of passage is marked by formal and elaborate ceremonies which illustrate that the youth is moving from childhood to adulthood.

The second fundamental concept is that of the circularity of all things. This concept of universal harmony is taught to the youth to reduce their sense of internal and external conflict and to encourage them to see things from the point of view of others.

The third fundamental concept is that of adult responsibility for teaching youth responsible behavior. The Senior Professional Staff are called "Bishkewalakai" referring to the indian warriors who occupied the perimeter of the encampment and took responsibility for the safety of those inside. The "Bishkewalakai" are the only staff members who are permitted to initiate confrontations and to touch youth. They are responsible for setting the boundaries for behavior and are responsible for developing in youth the capacity for self-understanding and personal growth.

VisionQuest assumes that all of the youth placed in their program are out of control, are afraid of this lack of control, and are trying to find a way to obtain control of their behavior. Therefore, these youth are constantly testing the limits, looking for someone who will lay down limits for their behavior, and who will give them the guidance they need to understand themselves in order to gain

control over their feelings and behaviors.

Organizational Structure

VisionQuest is managed by a Board of Directors which is responsible for establishing policy, developing long-term goals, selecting management staff and evaluating the Agency's performance. R. Ledger Burton is the Chairman of the Board of Directors and is responsible for planning, scheduling and chairing the meetings of the corporation.

Steven R. Rogers is the Executive Director of VisionQuest. He is responsible for supervising and coordinating the work of the State Directors and their respective departments. The Office of Executive Director provides administrative, programmatic and fiscal assistance to existing programs and works towards the development of new programs.

Peter Ranalli is the State Director in Pennsylvania responsible for supervising the Chester County Residential Treatment Office; the Venango County Residential Treatment Office; the Erie County Residential Treatment Office; the Wilderness Programs; and the Wagon Train.

CHAPTER III

The VisionQuest Program in Pennsylvania

On October 4, 1979, the Honorable Fred P. Anthony, Administrative Judge of the Juvenile Court in Erie County, sent a letter to the Secretary of Public Welfare, Helen O'Bannon (Appendix A). In his letter, Judge Anthony reported that he had inspected the Wagon Train component of the VisionQuest program in Colorado. As a result of his visit, Judge Anthony asked that the Commonwealth evaluate the VisionQuest program to determine whether juvenile offenders from Pennsylvania could benefit from such a placement.

The Department of Public Welfare and the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission each sent a staff member to Tucson, Arizona to inspect the VisionQuest program on October 10, 1979. The investigators completed their evaluation on October 17th and filed reports with their respective departments. (Appendix B.)

On November 28, 1979, the Department of Public Welfare approved payment for out-of-state placements in VisionQuest under the following conditions:

- (1) Placements in VisionQuest will be approved for payment provided that the current licenses and approvals that VisionQuest holds in the states of Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico are not revoked.* Further, such licenses or approvals must continue to include standards and requirements which are comparable to the licensing standards of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

*As of this report, VisionQuest still has licenses in Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico.

- (2) Each county planning to use VisionQuest is required to negotiate a contract or memorandum of understanding with VisionQuest which includes a per diem rate. This contract or memorandum of understanding should be submitted as an amendment to the County's Act 148 plan.
- (3) Placements will be approved for payment provided that the requirements of the Interstate Compact are followed. This includes acceptance by the receiving state and certification by the committing court that no suitable facilities are available in the home state.*
- (4) For the present, reimbursements for the VisionQuest program will be at the 75% level. However, this rate is subject to change with the promulgation of Departmental regulations defining community-based and institutional services.

Deaths in the VisionQuest Program

On November 24, 1980, the OceanQuest program of VisionQuest experienced a profound tragedy. Five boats were crossing the Gulf of California from Sonora State in Mexico to Baja, California. A storm developed and one of the five boats became lost at sea. Eight people died in the accident, including six children and two staff members. Four of the six children were from Pennsylvania; Bernard Reefer (Beaver County); Robert Zimmerman (Butler County); Charles Lucas (Jefferson County); and James Lamb (Mifflin County).

On December 15, 1980, the Department of Public Welfare suspended approval of the OceanQuest program. A complete investigation of the

*
VisionQuest is now licensed in Pennsylvania so this certification is no longer required.

OceanQuest tragedy was conducted by the U. S. Coast Guard. The final report issued by the Coast Guard cleared VisionQuest of any negligence.

On May 2, 1984, the Department of Public Welfare reinstated approval of the OceanQuest program with the following stipulations:

- (1) The OceanQuest program will only operate on vessels inspected and licensed by the United States Coast Guard;
- (2) The captain and crew of these vessels will meet all applicable Coast Guard standards and will, where necessary, have appropriate licenses.
- (3) VisionQuest has agreed that, in addition to meeting United States Coast Guard requirements for both ship and crew, it will provide the following items:
 - (a) individual consents from both courts and parents for each youngster placed in the program;
 - (b) an itinerary for the Interstate Office;
 - (c) request for advance permission from other states when a stopover is anticipated of more than two weeks duration; and
 - (d) a complete psychological on each youngster being placed in OceanQuest indicating that the experience is not determined to be dangerous to the child. The date of this examination and the name of the examining psychologist will be forwarded to the Interstate Office, along with the itinerary mentioned in Point 3(b).

On Friday, September 10, 1982, at 10:45 A. M., a young woman named Tammy Edmiston either fell or jumped from a bridge on Route 30

outside of Latrobe, Pa. (The Coroner's inquiry was not able to determine if the youth fell or jumped.) The youth was taken to Latrobe Area Hospital where she died at 9:30 A. M. on September 11, 1982. Tammy had been placed in VisionQuest by the Lackawanna County Juvenile Court on May 2, 1982.

The Department of Public Welfare conducted an investigation and developed the following recommendations:

- (1) VisionQuest should clearly define in writing a profile of the type of youth they cannot serve and develop a process and procedures for identifying those youth who need to be removed from the program;
- (2) VisionQuest should always place a more experienced and senior staff member with the "at risk" youth;
- (3) VisionQuest should look at the daily itinerary of the Wagon Train as it diminishes the time that is available for clinically dealing with youth, especially those who have been identified as "at risk" and separated from the group;
- (4) VisionQuest needs to institute and maintain a daily chronological log of all significant events; and
- (5) VisionQuest needs to establish a more effective system of transmitting emergency communications.

It should be noted that VisionQuest has implemented the recommendations listed above. The "significant" events process that they established is the most thorough and complete in the country. The Task Force believes that this current report will also be favorably received by VisionQuest because past experience has shown that the program is willing to make changes to improve the care given to youth.

On September 15, 1984, at 3:40 A. M., three youths ran away from the Silver Lake Wilderness Camp in Venango County. Two of the youths were from Allegheny County and the other youth was from Erie County. The three youths tried to wade across the Allegheny River, and Leon Anger (Allegheny County) drowned. The youth's body was found at 3:52 P. M. on September 16, 1984, approximately one thousand feet from where the three youths had tried to cross the river. The Department of Public Welfare has investigated this incident but has not yet published a final report.

Despite the deaths of six Pennsylvania youths that have occurred in VisionQuest, the program has continued to expand in Pennsylvania. Since 1979, VisionQuest has worked with 1,078 youths. Many of these youths have failed in other more traditional programs and have been placed in VisionQuest because other programs were not willing to work with these youths.

At the present time, VisionQuest has the following programs in operation within the Commonwealth:

- (1) an Eastern Region Office in Exton, Pa;
- (2) a branch office in Franklin, Pa;
- (3) a. Camp East - Polk, Pa.
b. Silver Valley - Franklin, Pa.
c. Pathfinder - Honeybrook, Pa.
- (4) the East Coast Wagon Train;
- (5) the East Coast Rough Rider Wagon Train;
- (6) Fort Mifflin;
- (7) the Western Union Vessel;
- (8) the Venango County Residential Program;
 - a. four group homes

(9) the Erie County Residential Program;

a. two group homes

(10) the ErieQuest Home Program

CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY OF WILDERNESS, ADVENTURE
AND OUTWARD BOUND PROGRAMS

It is popularly believed that the use of outdoor settings for persons were developed during World War II from the concern of the British regarding the survival of military personnel whose ships were torpedoed (Lingle, 1984). Although only partly accurate, their development did in fact gain wide popularity and acceptance during that period. Actually, the utilization of the outdoor camp environment is credited to Kurt Hahn in 1920 with his development of the Salem School in Baden, Germany. (Holmes, et.al., 1982)

At the conclusion of World War I, Hahn had become private secretary to Prince Max of Baden, a German federal prince and heir to the Grand Duchy of Baden. Prince Max was an avid supporter of certain educational programs and ideas Hahn had developed over the years and together they founded the Baden School. Both men were particularly concerned with the moral decline among Germans that existed at the end of the war and the lack of physical fitness among the youth, most of whom had suffered malnutrition during the war. Their mission at the time was to train young people to have moral independence, an ability to choose between 'right' and 'wrong', and to improve their physical health. (Holmes, et.al., 1982)

In 1932, Hahn came out publicly against Hitler as a result of the Potempa incident, in which a young Communist was kicked to death by German storm troopers, each of whom later received Hitler's congratulations. A year later, Hahn was arrested and imprisoned but later released with the help of Ramsay MacDonald, then British Prime Minister. Exiled from Germany, he went to England and founded the

Gordonstown School in Scotland based on the same principles of the Salem School.

Hahn regarded certain principles of the Salem School as highly important and he hoped to implement them at Gordonstown:

"Action and thought would not be divided into hostile camps; steps would be taken to build the imagination of student decision and the will power of the dreamer so that wise men of action will have the vision to see the consequences of their decisions; and that no boy should be compelled into opinions; but it is criminal negligence not to impel them into experience."

During the years subsequent to the founding of Gordonstown, Hahn added seamanship to the curriculum because of his perceived need to introduce youth to danger and adventure, creating what one Hahn colleague termed 'a moral equivalent of war'. Hahn never advocated adventure as an end onto itself, but rather as a training vehicle through which youth would mature. It was vital, according to Hahn, for adventure to be tied together with the concept of reserve and service to the community. Using dramatic rescue situations and promoting unselfish action, youth would learn of compassion, a critical element Hahn thought to be missing in post-war Britian.

As Gordonstown became well established and accepted into the British educational structure, Hahn next turned his attention to promoting his ideology to other educational institutions. His primary interest was promoting the concept of regular physical training and the development of basic knowledge about map reading and mountaineering which would require stamina and determination on the part of the participants.

After the start of World War II, during the summer of 1940, the Gordonstown School was moved to Wales. Together with James Hogan, who would later become the Warden of the first Outward Bound School, Hahn attempted unsuccessfully to garner support for the County Badge scheme, the title given to his rigid outdoors program. As a final attempt to incorporate their proposal into the school and youth organizations, Hahn named Hogan the warden of a training center which would demonstrate the concept and make it more understandable. A suitable site was located in Aberdovey in Wales, a small harbor village where he bought the schooner 'Prince Louis' and other small boats that had been used in the Gordonstown sailing program.

Hahn next contacted Lawrence Holt, the head of a large shipping firm and long time supporter of Hahn's educational philosophy:

"Holt felt there was a duty to create emergencies in order to train people to react to the unexpected. Hahn believed that emergencies represented the consequences of prudence and forethought" (Holmes, et.al., 1982 p.3)

Together, Holt and Hahn created an excitement in advocating their mission. Beyond his commitment for educational concern, Holt had additional cause for utilizing this training regimen. During the Battle of the North Atlantic at the beginning of World War II, several of his sailing vessels were torpedoed and sunk by German submarines. The resultant loss of lives had devastated the shipbuilder. Holt was concerned with the fact that, although his ships were manned by highly skilled seamen, they had not been properly trained to deal with the hazards they had encountered during and after the battle. When their ships were sunk, they often were unable or unprepared to survive the ordeal of living in life boats until they were picked up.

It is at this stage that the roots of present day outward bound movement were developed. A colleague wrote of Holt:

"he deeply regretted the passing of the square rigged ships in which earlier generations of seamen had received their basic training. He believed that denied engines and complex instruments men had developed a sense of wind and weather, a reliance on their own resources - physical, nervous, and technical - an almost spiritual sense of fellowship and interdependence." (Holmes, et.al, 1982 p.3)

Thus, the first Outward Bound school was founded as a result of an historic accident which brought together the visions of Hahn, Holt, and Hogan. The three combined their talents to form an institution that has since spread throughout the world and whose theme has been adapted by a wide variety of other institutions.

Extensions of the outward bound theme first became operational in the United States in 1946 when Campbell Loughmiller was named director of the boys camp at the Salesmanship Club of Dallas (Lingle, 1984). The camp had originally been a summer home for the underprivileged, but under Loughmiller's leadership became a year round facility for emotionally troubled boys. It is generally credited as being the first non-traditional program in a wilderness setting for delinquent youth. (Loughmiller, 1979)

Loughmiller defends the use of a wilderness or outdoor setting for several reasons. The camp setting accords more fully with the youths adventurous nature and exploration in the outdoors. Small group living in this environment encourages original experimentation and provides a wide variety of direct experience with natural

surroundings. (Loughmiller, 1980)

Wilderness Camps additionally promote individual responsibility through the group process. Each youngster and collectively the group are primarily responsible for their own comfort and well-being. The group must construct its own shelter, cut its wood, repair its equipment, arrange its recreation, maintain the trails, and do all things necessary for safe and responsible living. These tasks in themselves promote a sense of self discipline and enhance social commitment.

These basic tenets of the Loughmiller wilderness camp, since its inception in 1946, continue to serve as the fundamental operating principles in programs developed after his original prototype. The Loughmiller model camp, currently over twenty in number, are serving the fields of corrections, education, and mental health. (Loughmiller, 1979)

These two concepts, Outward Bound as espoused by Kurt Hahn, and the Wilderness Camp as developed by Campbell Loughmiller, have tended to become fused and melded together in recent years. (Lingle, 1984) The popularity of Outward Bound and Wilderness Camps expanded greatly during the 1970's. Both the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) and the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice (1973) heavily endorsed the diversion concept, believing that it would not only offer a viable alternative to incarceration, but also minimize the potential criminal socialization of first time offenders. (Inciardi, 1984) As a result of massive federal funding allocated by LEAA for the prevention and reduction of crime, programs of many types emerged and expanded throughout the nation during the 1970's. Most of the federally funded

initiatives were for youth, such as Youth Service Bureaus, Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime, and Non-Residential Services.

A federal consciousness, along with accompanying dollars to develop alternatives to traditional youth institutions, pervaded the States during the 1970's. Wilderness Camps and Outward Bound programs were an extension of that mandate. Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound Programs were only recently the domain of a select few. But in recent years, educators and social service agencies have increasingly recognized the outdoors as a valuable resource for addressing significant social problems. (Teschner and Wolter, 1984) Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound Programs are widely utilized by local and state agencies, educational facilities, as well as private non-profit and for-profit organizations as an exciting and creative alternative to institutionalization for youth. (Teschner and Wolter, 1984) Current Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs are not limited to problem youth. Indeed, programs offering these experiences are now infiltrating corporate training initiatives as many are using stress/adventure challenge programs for their office staffs, executives, and others. (Lingle, 1984)

Currently, public perceptions of these programs are limited to an event such as an exciting and adventurous camping trip. Through the news media and promotional literature, most individuals do not recognize the significance beyond the idea of being on a wagon train, rappelling sides of dangerous cliffs, or white water rafting on a torrid river. Behind the cosmetic glamour of the experiences themselves, however, is the core of these programs - the psychological interaction and personal change in self concept which results from such experiences. The physical activities are simply used as a means

through which the participant gains a keener insight of one's self, the challenge of the moment and the interpersonal relationships developed through teamwork which will have some meaning in future backhome situations. (Lingle, 1984)

As occurs with all new ideas and resultant programs, the initial excitement and enthusiasm eventually gives way to hard realities as Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound Programs are currently facing an array of critical issues that must be confronted if specific programs are to survive and grow. (Teschner and Wolter, 1984) One area which requires examining is risk, health and safety. Douglas Teschner of the Institute of Experiential Studies writes:

"Safety is a function of risk; risk is an inherent condition of living. Awareness of risk is a key component of safety. Acknowledgement that risk exists is thus an essential dimension of safety policy." (Teschner, 1984 p. 22)

The Institute of Experiential Studies in Hadlyme, Connecticut, the parent organization of the Becket Academy, a private facility providing Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs for youth offers the following variables to be considered when assessing risk, and more importantly, maintaining safety: (Teschner, 1984)

- policy and procedures (quality and comprehensiveness)
- staff experience, knowledge and skills in multiple areas (including the outdoors, health and safety, counseling, teaching, child care, leadership)
- staff training
- program leadership
- advanced planning (program structure and plan)
- local knowledge of trip

- nutrition
- the nature of the trip (water based vs. land based)
- the nature of the individual students (normal vs. emotionally disturbed; boys vs. girls; age etc.)
- the nature of the group as a whole (including interactions among the various individuals)
- the number of students and student-staff ratio
- supervision (model, extent, quality)
- equipment and clothing (condition and availability)
- support services
- weather conditions (seasonal trends, present conditions forecasts)
- radio (ability to use it given local topography and reception)

The Institute, which serves as a consortium of Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound Programs further cautions against seeking a formula which might equate overall program safety with these numerous variables. In place of seeking a formula, it is suggested that the key is having program managers with the ability to recognize, analyze and modify the variables so as to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. (Teschner, 1984) The Task Force examined each of the above items as they relate to the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs. The recommendations of the Task Force address these issues.

The Association for Experiential Education, located in Boulder, at the University of Colorado, represents organizations, agencies and educational facilities which utilize Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound Programs for their clientele. In 1980, after years of membership debate, the Association undertook the task of developing

Program Standards and Guidelines. In 1984, the results were published as Accepted Peer Practices in Adventure Programming, a document whose purpose is to provide a reference guide to the common practices of adventure programs and to help provide quality outdoor adventure programming which is safe for participants. (Association for Experiential Education, 1984)

Evident in the Association's accepted peer practices is the lack of specific criteria defining any particular Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound Program or practice as being a higher risk than any other. Instead of characterizing sailing, for example, as being a 'high risk' activity, the Association offers specific areas which should be addressed in such a program, (i.e., instructor/partipant ratio; required safety equipment and practices; specific leadership qualifications each listing more detailed examples depending upon conditions and locale.) (Association for Experiential Education, 1984)

The Association for Experiential Education Accepted Peer Practices represents the first attempt to coalesce practices of Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs into a uniform body of information for use by practitioners. As with documents published by the Institute of Experiential Studies, the Association recognizes that safety practices are far more complicated than strict adherence to a set of standards or regulations. Admittedly standards do, however, provide something concrete on which to hold when designing safety policy amidst the reality of Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programming and its continual change. (Teschner, 1984)

Ultimately, a review of existing literature underscores the importance of staff training and experiences in minimizing the risk of Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programming.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY OF WILDERNESS, ADVENTURE, AND OUTWARD
BOUND PROGRAMS IN PENNSYLVANIA

The use of the outdoors environment as a resource for, and alternative to, traditional institutionalization in Pennsylvania, was first designed by the Youth Development Center at Loysville in 1968. The concept was initially conceived by staff of the facility who had knowledge of the program then operating at the Outward Bound School in North Carolina.

After sending six staff members to the North Carolina program to acquire necessary training and project design information, the Youth Development Center at Loysville established its first camp. Located at Tuscarora State Park in Perry County, the initial design was spartan, primarily encompassing camping and nature hiking as its only components. Within a few years, federal funds through Title XX were sought and secured for expansion of the project. It then moved to Blue Knob State Park located north of Bedford. This camp and surrounding environment was utilized for five years until funding expired. The program grew, however, during those years to include elements of hiking, obstacle course, compass reading, and climbing/rapelling.

The outdoor program at Loysville remained on hiatus for several years until 1979 when it was again reinstated. Currently, the program is operating at the State Game lands located in western Perry County where a base camp has been established. The program is available to cottage groups each August and offers hiking, camping, an obstacle course, compass reading, and climbing/rapelling. Each cottage group is afforded five days in the outdoor setting enabling fifteen youth to reside at the camp at a particular time.

After successful establishment and operation of this initial outdoors prototype for delinquent youth in Pennsylvania, personnel from the Youth Forestry Camp #3 in James Creek next developed the Encounter IV Program. Utilizing the components from the Outward Bound Programs, Encounter IV offered a twenty-eight day experience for youth committed to the facility. Two outgrowths of Encounter IV were Project SELF and the Group and Individual Growth program. Both still in successful operation, Project SELF is a structured fifty-six day outward bound experience incorporating a strong counselling component. The Group and Individual Growth Program is a standard twenty-eight day outward bound format offering earlier listed activities. Both are currently under the auspices of Youth Forestry Camp #3 and committing courts may refer youth directly to either of the outdoor programs.

In the mid 1970's, the first private venture into outdoor experiences for delinquents was made operational by the Appalachian School of Experience based in Carlisle. Again, the program was structured on the standard twenty-eight day outward bound format and accompanying activities. Because of funding and referral difficulties, the program closed in 1983.

Recently, the North Central Secure Treatment Unit in Danville has undertaken the initiative to develop outdoor programming for its youth. Still in its infancy stages, Danville has identified staff to lead the program who are in the process of acquiring the necessary skills, training, and certifications. It is anticipated that the program will become a bonafide component of the treatment program by the summer of 1985.

Information regarding the development and utilization of the outdoors for Pennsylvania's delinquent youth has been sparse, and

unfortunately, not completely documented. It appears, however, that aside from programs offered by VisionQuest, the only Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound experiences available are the programs offered at Youth Forestry Camp #3. Soon, another will be available as part of security treatment at the North Central Secure Treatment Unit in Danville. However, as opposed to VisionQuest and the programs operated at Forestry Camp #3, utilization of the outdoors for youth at Danville will be available only to those committed to the secure facility.

CHAPTER VI

DATA COLLECTION ON WILDERNESS, ADVENTURE, AND OUTWARD
BOUND PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

At the initial VisionQuest Task Force meeting held on October 2, 1984, it was obvious that a great deal of information regarding VisionQuest and similar programs would have to be collected so that the Task Force could compare and contrast similarities and differences among the various programs in existence.

The following is a listing of the methods utilized to collect both general and specific information regarding Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs.

1. Using a listing of one hundred and five (105) Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound agencies supplied by the Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth & Families, Task Force staff conducted an initial telephone survey to identify those programs similar to VisionQuest (See Appendix C). The survey resulted in the identification of twenty-six (26) programs that were most similar to VisionQuest; however, it should be noted that none of the agencies surveyed conducted Wagon Train or OceanQuest programs. (For a listing of the Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound agencies contacted see Appendix D.) The survey items included, but were not limited to, name of the agency, length of time the agency has been in operation, types of Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound activities provided, criteria for client participation, client profile, program capacity,

staff to youth ratio, average length of stay in days in the program, number and description of deaths, and number and description of injuries. (See Appendix E for an in-depth view of the survey data.)

2. Upon conclusion of the initial survey three of the most similar programs in terms of size, and/or length of stay, and/or client profile, and/or program activities were requested to forward all possible written material concerning their respective programs. The three comparison programs were the Becket Academy, East Haddam, Ct., Outdoor Bound, Inc., Morgantown, NC., and Pressley Ridge Wilderness Camp, Farmington, PA.
3. A telephone survey utilizing the same survey instrument was conducted in regard to selected private and public institutions in the Commonwealth. This information was collected to enable the Task Force members to compare "traditional" and "non-traditional" programs such as VisionQuest. (See Appendix F.)
4. During the course of conducting the survey on Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs, Task Force staff discovered that there were two nationally recognized operations that published standards, provided training, and conducted peer review evaluations of Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs. These two organizations, the American Camping Association, and the Association for Experiential Education, were contacted and requested to forward relevant information concerning operational standards for Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs.

The American Camping Association recommends review of two books written by Campbell Loughmiller: "Wilderness Road" published in 1980, and "Kids in Trouble: An Adventure in Education" published in 1979. Mr. Loughmiller is considered a pioneer in establishing the therapeutic camping concept for troubled youth in the late 1930's.

The Association for Experiential Education forwarded a copy of their manual titled "Accepted Peer Practices in Adventure Programming" published in August, 1984. This manual was the culmination of eight years of effort to establish standards for Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs.

5. A follow-up survey was conducted on the twenty-six programs contacted initially to collect additional information regarding staff qualifications, staff salaries, and staff work schedules. A copy of the follow-up survey instrument can be found in Appendix G.

6. A site visit was made to the Pressley Ridge Wilderness School on October 24, 1984. This visit was utilized to obtain information regarding similarities and differences between this program and VisionQuest.

SURVEY OUTCOMES

As indicated previously, Task Force staff attempted to contact one hundred and five (105) Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound agencies from a listing provided by the Pa. Office of Children, Youth & Families. Of the one hundred and five (105) agencies, the Task Force staff were able to contact, 26 agencies which (a) provide direct Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound experiences; (b) are still in existence; or (c) had current addresses. Of the twenty six (26) agencies that were surveyed, three (3) agencies did not provide services to adjudicated delinquent youth, i.e. the North Carolina Outward Bound School, Project SPRITE, and the National Institute for the Deaf. In addition to the Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs, eighteen (18) selected private and public institutional programs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that provide services to adjudicated youth were surveyed utilizing the same instrument. These programs were selected to ensure: (a) that there was an appropriate mixture of private and public, secure, and non-secure programs included in the survey of "traditional" programs; and (b) that the major providers of institutional services to adjudicated delinquent youth in the Commonwealth were included in the survey.

This section of the report will focus upon the results of Survey I in regard to comparisons between VisionQuest and other Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs and comparisons between Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs and the more "traditional" institutional programs in the Commonwealth.

DEATHS

The first comparison will focus on the variable of program deaths. Of the twenty-six (26) Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs surveyed, six reported program deaths. There were a total of eighteen (18) deaths reported by these six agencies. Ten of the eighteen deaths occurred in the VisionQuest program. Fourteen of the eighteen total deaths reported were by drowning and eight of the fourteen drowning deaths occurred in the VisionQuest program. Following are graphic presentations of selected information regarding those Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs reporting program deaths and the reported reasons for the deaths.

EXTRACT FROM SURVEY I - DEATHS IN WILDERNESS,
ADVENTURE, AND OUTWARD BOUND PROGRAMS

AGENCY	YEARS	DEATHS	STAY	CAPACITY	STAFF TO YOUTH
VISIONQUEST	11	10	414	600	1 to 1.5
ECKERD FOUNDATION	16	2	384	UNK.	1 to 2.5
SALESMANSHIP CLUB	35	2	300	48	1 to 6.0
VOYAGER O.B. SCHOOL	20	2	17	40	1 to 4.0
UNDERWAY PROGRAM	26	1	30	250	1 to 2.5
WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE	7	1	11	50	1 to 4.0

The complete column headings are Name of Agency, Number of Years Agency Has Been In Operation, Number of Reported Deaths, Average Length of Stay in Days, Program Capacity, and Ratio of Staff to Youth in the Program.

EXTRACT FROM SURVEY I - REASONS FOR REPORTED DEATHS IN WILDERNESS,
ADVENTURE, AND OUTWARD BOUND PROGRAMS

NAME OF AGENCY	NUMBER OF DEATHS	REASONS FOR DEATHS
VISIONQUEST	10	7-OCEANQUEST PROGRAM DROWNING 1-WAGON TRAIN - FELL FROM BRIDGE 1-NEW MEXICO CAMP HEART FAILURE 1-WILDERNESS CAMP DROWNING (AWOL)
ECKERD FOUNDATION	2	1-DROWNING 1-EXPOSURE
SALESMANSHIP CLUB	2	2-DROWNING (SAME INCIDENT)
VOYAGER O.B. SCHOOL	2	2-DROWNING
UNDERWAY PROGRAM	1	1-DROWNING
WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE	<u>1</u>	<u>1-SUICIDE</u>
	18	18

In reference to the survey conducted on sixteen selected private and public programs in the Commonwealth, six of the facilities reported at least one program death. There were a total of nine deaths reported by these six facilities. Of the nine deaths, three were the result of suicide and two deaths were the result of vehicular accidents after the youth had absconded from the respective facilities. Following are graphic presentations of selected information regarding those private and public facilities reporting program deaths and the reported reasons for deaths.

EXTRACT SURVEY I - DEATHS IN SELECTED PRIVATE/PUBLIC IN PENNSYLVANIA

AGENCY	YEARS	DEATHS	STAY	CAPACITY	STAFF TO YOUTH
YDC NEW CASTLE (STATE-OPEN & SECURE)	16	3	270	218	VARIES
GLEN MILLS SCHOOL (PRIVATE-OPEN)	152	2	240	515	1 to 2
YDC BENSLEM (STATE-OPEN SIDE)	16	1	270	96	1 to 2
YDC LOYSVILLE (STATE-OPEN)	20	1	225	72	1 to 7
YFC #2 (STATE-OPEN)	28	1	180	52	1 to 2
WEAVERSVILLE (PRIVATE-SECURE)	9	1	270	22	1 to 1

The complete column headings for this graph are the same as those utilized for Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs.

EXTRACT FROM SURVEY I

REASONS FOR REPORTED DEATHS IN SELECTED PENNSYLVANIA
PRIVATE/PUBLIC PROGRAMS

NAME OF AGENCY	NUMBER OF DEATHS	REASONS FOR DEATHS
YDC NEW CASTLE	3	2-SUICIDES 1-SEIZURE
GLEN MILLS SCHOOL	2	1-PERITONITIS 1-FIRE
YDC BENSLEM	1	1-AWOL, HIT BY TRUCK
YDC LOYSVILLE	1	1-AWOL, CAR CRASH
YFC #2	1	1-BRAIN TUMOR
WEAVERSVILLE ITU	<u>1</u>	<u>1-SUICIDE</u>
	9	9

INJURIES

An attempt was made to compare the frequency and the types of injuries suffered by clients in regard to VisionQuest and other Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs; however, none of the agencies surveyed, with the exception of VisionQuest, were able to provide accurate information concerning this variable. Although it is not feasible at this point to compare VisionQuest with other programs in reference to injuries; it should be noted that several VisionQuest clients have been seriously injured.

For more detailed information concerning injuries in reference to all programs surveyed, see Appendix H.

LENGTH OF STAY - CAPACITY - STAFFING RATIO

The survey data was analyzed in an attempt to determine if the variables of length of stay, program size, and/or staff to youth ratio have an effect on the rate of program deaths. These variables were compared both individually and in combination in regard to all of the Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs versus the variable of program death. Based upon the data collected via the survey, it does not appear that there is a direct correlation between these three variables, either individually or in combination, and program death rate.

INTAKE CRITERIA

To ascertain whether Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs were providing services to similar clients, a review was made of the criteria utilized by these agencies to exclude certain youth from program participation. As noted previously, all but three of

these programs provide services to adjudicated delinquents.

The review of the intake criteria indicated that VisionQuest does have similar criteria excluding youth from placement compared to both Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound and "selected private Pennsylvania" programs. VisionQuest exclusions include physical handicap, premeditated violent crime, mental retardation, severe drug addiction, suicidal tendencies, and youth who will not make a commitment to the program. (For more detailed information concerning intake criteria, see Appendix I.)

SURVEY II OUTCOMES

After reviewing the results of Survey I, Task Force Members identified additional information that they needed to complete the comparison of VisionQuest with other Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs. This additional information included staff working schedules, minimum employment requirements in regard to direct service staff, starting salaries for direct service staff, minimum requirements in regard to direct service supervisory staff and starting salaries in regard to same. (See Appendix J)

A review of the survey results provided the following information:

1. Those programs similar to VisionQuest in regard to program capacity and length of stay utilized a five day on/two day off twenty-four hour shift pattern which is the same schedule used by VisionQuest. The only exception noted was the Pressley Ridge Wilderness School which utilizes a four day on/three day off twenty-four hour shift schedule.
2. In regard to entry level direct service staff, thirteen programs reported more employment requirements, six programs reported similar requirements, and four programs reported fewer requirements compared to VisionQuest. Those agencies reporting more requirements than VisionQuest required people to be certified in and/or as Emergency Medical Technicians, First Aid, CPR, White Water Instructor, Climbing Instructor, American Canoeing, Water Safety, and other activity specific certifications. In addition, some agencies required specific experience in counseling, wilderness activities,

and/or education. One agency, Voyager Outward Bound School, will waive some of their requirements, but require new staff to complete a five to six month apprenticeship program. (Please note that no one program includes all of these requirements.) For more detailed information, see Appendix J again.

- (3) The starting salaries of direct service staff in Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs range from \$9,200.00 to to \$24,960.00 annually. The starting salary for VisionQuest service staff is \$11,000 annually. Eleven programs pay more, one pays the same, eight pay less, and three use volunteers.
- (4) In regard to the requirements for direct service supervisors, eighteen programs report more, two programs report the same, two programs report less, and one program did not specify. The primary difference between those programs reporting more requirements for supervisors than VisionQuest was the variable of experience. Where VisionQuest requires one year of experience, most programs require at least two years of experience.
- (4) Task Force staff were unable to compare salaries for supervisors as VisionQuest reported that their starting salaries vary.

COMPARISON OF WRITTEN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RE: WILDERNESS, ADVENTURE AND OUTWARD BOUND PROGRAMS

In an effort to determine how VisionQuest compared to other Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs in regard to written policies and procedures concerning all program aspects in general and safety in particular, Task Force members requested that four agencies forward all written material concerning program operations. The four agencies included VisionQuest, the North Carolina Outward Bound School, the Becket Academy, the Pressley Ridge Wilderness School, and the Association for Experiential Education.

The Association for Experiential Education material consisted of standards titled "Accepted Peer Practices in Adventure Programming" which were published in August, 1984. The Association for Experiential Education information proved to be an excellent source regarding state of the art standards for Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs. Task Force Members utilized the Association for Experiential Education format to review the written material concerning program operations forwarded by the other three agencies (See Appendix K.) The material forwarded by Pressley Ridge Wilderness School and VisionQuest was without a doubt the most comprehensive. The other two agencies stated they would not share all of their program documentation.

The comparison of the material received indicated that VisionQuest written policies, procedures, and other program documentation was excellent. There appeared to be only two exceptions to this finding: (1) the Pressley Ridge Wilderness School has an

excellent staff orientation program; and (2) in regard to the Association for Experiential Education standards, VisionQuest does not utilize an external safety review panel for all program components. It should be noted that VisionQuest appears to have the most sophisticated internal safety review process,

SITE VISIT TO PRESSLEY RIDGE WILDERNESS SCHOOL

In order to accomplish a hands on comparison between VisionQuest and another Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs, two representatives from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and one from the Office of Children, Youth and Families conducted a one-day site visit to Pressley Ridge Wilderness School on October 24, 1984. It should be noted that one Juvenile Court Judges' Commission staff had previously spent three days on the wagon train and the other Juvenile Court Judges' Commission staff had completed a site visit to OceanQuest prior to the time the Task Force was created. In addition, both JCJC staff had spent two days at the Silver Lake Wilderness Camp.

The Pressley Ridge Wilderness School, which is situated on 1,200 mountain acres near Ohiopyle, Pennsylvania, became operational in 1974. Campbell Loughmiller was hired as a program consultant both before and after the program became operational and his influence is apparent in regard to program philosophy and operations.

The school provides services to boys between the ages of 8-15 that have been committed by a court as a result of an adjudication of dependency or delinquency. At the time of the site visit, the primary sources of client referrals were from Allegheny and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania and the State of West Virginia. The program

has a maximum capacity of sixty (60) clients with a maximum of ten youth placed in each of six somewhat homogeneous groups.

The youth live in and maintain a semi-permanent camp site, i.e. tents in the summer and spartan cabins in the winter. The individual and his group construct shelters, cut firewood, repair equipment, arrange their own recreation, maintain the trail system, and within limits, are responsible for a great deal of the day-to-day and long-range planning that effects both the individual and the group.

The program relies on the uniqueness of the environment and the small group process to facilitate behavioral change. In short, the program emphasizes a real living situation in which each group member is a contributory partner and participant.

The primary differences observed between the VisionQuest and Pressley Ridge Wilderness School programs are:

- (1) Pressley Ridge clients appear to be somewhat younger, and, in general, smaller in physical stature. However, in most if not all cases Pressley Ridge Wilderness School is not the first placement experienced by the clients. In addition, thirteen of the fifty students in placement during the site visit had been labeled "emotional disturbed."
- (2) Pressley Ridge Wilderness program directors have made a decision to utilize only low risk activities. The only activity that they consider somewhat high risk is in regard to periodic flat water canoe trips. (See Appendix L)
- (3) Pressley Ridge Wilderness School provides a four to eight week orientation program for new staff. The length of the orientation is dependent upon the readiness of the individual staff member to assume full time duties. During

the orientation period new staff are not permitted to be directly responsible for clients. The orientation program is composed of both hands on and theory based experiences.

- (4) It appears that there is a difference in the degree to which the two programs depend upon the physical environment and/or activities to act as a behavioral and/or attitudinal change agent. Although both programs rely on group process and the environment to effect change; it appears that Pressley Ridge Wilderness School relies more on the group process, whereas VisionQuest relies more on the physical environment and/or activity.

CHAPTER VII

SAFETY ISSUES IN REGARDS TO WILDERNESS,
ADVENTURE AND OUTWARD BOUND PROGRAMS

The concern for client safety is, of course, not confined to Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs in general nor to VisionQuest specifically. Any program that places an individual into a "new" or "unique" environment faces the challenge of assimilating clients into these situations with a minimum of physical and psychological risk. It would appear that the challenge is magnified when clients, especially youthful court committed individuals, are involved in Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs.

In a recent article, Douglass P. Teschner, Wilderness Director of Becket Academy, stated that ". . . funding agencies, social workers, and parents -- as well as program personnel and students -- must acknowledge the inherent presence of risk both in the context of the program and as it regards the specific behaviors of an individual child." (Teschner, 1984, p.22) Teschner goes on to state that "recognition that working with various problematic individuals (especially troubled youth) augments the risk is a fundamental point worthy of far more attention than it has previously received." (Teschner, 1984, p. 22).

If you accept the premise that there is a greater physical risk to clients who participate in Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs than to those who participated in more "traditional" programs, there would appear to be two bottom line options: (1) discontinue the utilization of Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs or of specific activities that demonstrate high rates of program deaths and/or injuries; or (2) devise methods to reduce the

level of risk to clients.

In respect to the first option, one must first ask the questions:

(1) are there objective indications that clients benefit from Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs?; and (2) what are the costs versus benefit ratios compared to more "traditional" programs?

There is an excellent article entitled "Wilderness Experience Programs: Reforming Delinquents or Beating Around the Bush?" in the Fall, 1984 issue of the Juvenile & Family Court Journal which reviews eleven studies that have been conducted regarding the effectiveness of Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs. Although the authors focus upon the limitation of these studies, eight of eleven studies indicate that Wilderness, Adventure and Outward Bound programs demonstrate positive program effectiveness. (See Appendix M.)

In regard to monetary costs, a comparison of per diem costs as a function of the average length of stay in private, public, and security placements in the Commonwealth versus those same costs in regard to VisionQuest demonstrates that the VisionQuest program is less costly on a per day basis when compared with state operated facilities.

PROGRAM	AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY	COST
1. YFC #2	180 DAYS	X \$88.00/PER DAY
2. NCSTU	270 DAYS	X \$148.00/PER DAY
3. YDC LOYSVILLE	225 DAYS	X \$130.00/PER DAY
4. GEORGE JR. REPUBLIC	365 DAYS	X \$ 58.85/PER DAY
5. GLEN MILLS SCH.	240 DAYS	X \$ 64.73/PER DAY
6. VISIONQUEST	270 DAYS	X \$ 89.00/PER DAY

In regard to the second option, i.e. finding ways to reduce risk levels, it would appear that there are three primary variables that would impact directly upon safety: (1) program activities, i.e. high risk versus low risk; (2) staff characteristics, i.e. skill, training, competence, attitudes, etc.; and (3) client characteristics, i.e. skill, training, competence, attitudes, etc. In essence, these three factors individually and in combination must be taken into consideration when attempting to identify ways to reduce risk level(s).

In addition to the preceding factors, there appears to be two other elements that are vital in regard to any attempt to increase safety. The standards manual published by the Association for Experiential Education contains a section of General Safety Practices which cautions that "safety is not merely following correct practices; it is also an attitude which must be carried into every part of the program. Unless this attitude pervades the entire program, it will be impossible to operate a safe, high-quality adventure program." (Association for Experiential Education, 1984, p. 124) In essence, both staff and youth must internalize the norm that safety is of

primary importance. The second element is the essential need to initiate and/or maintain both an internal and external review of safety. The standards published by the Association for Experiential Education contain an excellent section in regard to safety review practices. (See Appendix N).

During the course of preparing the summary and recommendations of this report, Task Force Members utilized the information contained in this chapter to develop the recommendations presented in Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER VIII

VisionQuest Task Force Recommendations

Having examined Wilderness, Adventure, and Outward Bound programs throughout the Nation, and having examined the current operations of VisionQuest, the Task Force recommends that the following policies and procedures be adopted and documented in writing by VisionQuest. Implementation of these recommendations will increase the "physical safety" of youth in the VisionQuest Program to the extent that it is possible to provide for such "physical safety."

I. HIGH RISK YOUTH ORIENTATION PROGRAM

VisionQuest shall establish an orientation program for high risk youth. This orientation program shall be conducted in a less stressful environment than the existing wilderness camps and shall last for at least thirty days. During this orientation program, VisionQuest shall determine if the youth is capable of adjusting to and benefiting from the treatment programs available within the agency.

Before VisionQuest accepts a youth into the program, it shall identify whether the youth to be classified is a high risk by evaluating the entire case history to determine if any of the following high risk behaviors or characteristics are present:

- (1) recent, overt suicidal attempts/gestures
- (2) serious emotional disturbance
- (3) serious mental impairment (borderline or retarded)
- (4) physical underdevelopment

II. PLACEMENT ON THE WAGON TRAIN OR IN THE OCEANQUEST PROGRAM

VisionQuest shall only place youths on the Wagon Train or in the OceanQuest Program if they meet the criteria for transfer to criminal court. These criteria with minor modifications included are:

- (1) the child was 14 or more years of age at the time of adjudication;
- (2) the child committed a delinquent act which would be considered a felony if committed by an adult;
- (3) the child is not amenable to treatment, or rehabilitation in a lesser risk non-secure program through the examination of the following factors:
 - (a) age
 - (b) mental capacity
 - (c) maturity
 - (d) the degree of criminal sophistication exhibited by the child
 - (e) previous record
 - (f) the nature and extent of any prior delinquent history, including the success or failure of any previous attempts by the Juvenile Court to rehabilitate the child
 - (g) probation or institutional reports
 - (h) any other relevant factors
- (4) the child is not committable to an institution for the mentally retarded or mentally ill;
- (5) the interests of the community require that the child be

placed under legal restraint or discipline or that the offense is one which would carry a sentence of more than three years if committed by an adult.

In the event that VisionQuest determines that a youth who does not meet the above criteria needs to be placed on the Wagon Train or on the OceanQuest Program, VisionQuest shall request a hearing before the committing court to obtain the consent of the juvenile court judge, the youth, and a parent. In the event that these parents are separated, the parent having custody of the child shall be responsible for providing the necessary consent. VisionQuest shall not place these youths on the Wagon Train or in the OceanQuest Program if they cannot obtain the consent of the people listed above.

III. REQUIREMENT FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

VisionQuest shall have each youth evaluated by a psychologist before placing the youth in the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Program. The psychologist shall determine if placement in either the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Program might be psychologically harmful to the youth. VisionQuest shall only place youths in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs when the psychologist determines that such placement will not result in psychological harm to the youth.

IV. STANDARDIZATION OF ROUTES FOR THE WAGON TRAIN AND OCEANQUEST PROGRAMS

VisionQuest shall establish standardized routes for both the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs. The use of standardized routes will provide VisionQuest staff with the opportunity to become knowledgeable about the terrain, climate, and other factors that

effect program safety. Maximum precautions are needed to provide for the physical safety of youth.

V. REDUCTION IN THE DAILY MOVEMENT OF THE WAGON TRAIN

VisionQuest shall reduce the amount of time the Wagon Train moves from an entire day to half a day. This reduction in daily movement will decrease the possibility of injury to youth by reducing staff and youth fatigue. This decrease will also reduce the risks associated with moving a wagon train along a highway.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS TRAINING FOR YOUTH

VisionQuest shall develop an environmental hazards training program for youth placed with the agency. The training program will help youth to develop an understanding of the potential dangers of frost bite, river currents, terrain, weather, and animals encountered in wilderness, adventure, and outward bound programs.

VII. MINIMUM STAFF EXPERIENCE

- (1) Supervisory staff in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs shall have two years of experience in wilderness, adventure, and outward bound programs. At least one of these years shall be in the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Programs.
- (2) At least one half of the child care staff in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs shall have one year of experience in the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Programs.

VIII. ORIENTATION/TRAINING PROGRAM FOR VISIONQUEST STAFF

VisionQuest shall develop and implement a thirty-day orientation

program for all staff who are assigned to wilderness or high risk programs. During this orientation program, the staff members shall not have responsibility for youth placed with the agency.

VisionQuest shall develop an on-going systematic training program for staff. This training program shall include a regular updating and recertification in CPR, multi-media first aid, emergency medical procedures, water safety, climbing instruction, canoeing and any other certification procedure that exists for wilderness, adventure and outward bound programs.

IX. DEVELOPMENT OF A PEER REVIEW PANEL FOR THE WAGON TRAIN AND OCEANQUEST PROGRAMS.

VisionQuest shall establish an External Safety Review Panel to examine on a regular basis the operations of the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs. This Safety Review Panel shall monitor and sanction the safety practices used in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs because of the increased safety risk inherent in such programs. The Panel shall report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis and at least annually.

X. QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORTS

VisionQuest shall provide the Task Force with a copy of its Monthly Quality Assurance Report and the Weekly Accident/Near Miss Audit. These reports outline all of the injuries, near injuries, and runaways in the VisionQuest Program on a monthly basis.

The Task Force shall review the monthly reports to determine if the standards proposed herein are accomplishing their goal of increasing the "physical safety" of youth placed in the VisionQuest Program.

XI. APPOINTMENT OF A SAFETY OFFICER

VisionQuest shall appoint a safety officer who shall continuously monitor by on site visits the physical safety of youths placed in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs. The safety officer shall report to the program director in Pennsylvania but shall have authority to report to the Executive Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors if an issue involving the safety of a youth cannot be resolved with the program director in Pennsylvania. The safety officer shall prepare monthly and annual reports on the physical safety of youth in the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY

The VisionQuest Task Force was created by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the Department of Public Welfare to examine the policies and procedures used by the VisionQuest Program to ensure the physical safety of youths placed with the agency. The Task Force examined wilderness, adventure and outward bound programs throughout the Nation and in this process found that VisionQuest was at least equal to the other wilderness, adventure, and outward bound programs in regard to most of the variables studied.

The Task Force gathered an enormous amount of information on wilderness, adventure, and outward bound programs, much of which is contained in this report. The existing data does not provide empirical evidence that wilderness, adventure and outward bound programs are more successful than traditional programs in reducing recidivism or increasing social adjustment for youths. However, the Task Force recognized that VisionQuest has taken the most difficult youths in the Commonwealth and, in some instances, VisionQuest was the only program that would attempt to work with such youths.

The Task Force wanted to be sure that it did not reduce VisionQuest's commitment to work with the most difficult youths in the Commonwealth. However, the Task Force did want to do all that was possible to ensure the physical safety of youths placed in the program.

The Task Force examined the current operations of VisionQuest and found several areas in which the agency can improve its policies and practices to ensure the physical safety of children. These changes

form the basis for the recommendations made in Chapter VIII.

The Task Force recognized that the Wagon Train and OceanQuest Programs introduce an increased risk to the physical safety of youth. The environment is not under the control of the agency and, therefore, can create unknown risks to physical safety. To be sure that only those youths who have been unsuccessful in more traditional treatment programs are placed in the Wagon Train or OceanQuest program, the Task Force decided to use the criteria for transfer to Criminal Court as the criteria for placement in either the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Program. The Task Force reasoned that if a youth could be bound over to the Criminal Court, the youth should be given the opportunity to participate in the Wagon Train or OceanQuest Programs. All other youths would have to secure the permission of the court and their parents before they could participate in either of these programs.

Although the placement criteria are the most fundamental elements of the Standards, the other recommendations will also increase the physical safety of youths placed in the VisionQuest programs. The standards taken as a whole are the most complete the Task Force could develop to ensure the physical safety of youths while not destroying a program that will accept the most difficult and demanding youths within the Commonwealth.

APPENDIX A.

JUVENILE COURT JUDGES' COMMISSION



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
 HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
 P.O. Box 1234
 Federal Square Station 17108
 Phone: 717-787-6910

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Hon. Robert L. Wolfe
 Forest-Warren Counties

October 4, 1979

Ms. Helen O'Bannon
 Secretary of Welfare
 Welfare Building
 Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Secretary O'Bannon:

A little over a week ago I spent three days on the Wagon Train in Colorado evaluating its operation and the progress of five Erie County delinquents who had been committed there in early May. I thought you may be interested in my observations.

Wagon Train truly reflects the hard, difficult struggle of the pioneers in crossing the Rockies and the deserts in Arizona and New Mexico. It is simple living where everyone's total energy is consumed daily in rising at 5:00 A. M., taking down the tepees, cleaning and preparing the mules, horses, and wagons, policing the camp site, and then moving across rugged terrain for seventeen miles or more. Rain, shine, or snow, the Wagon Train moves on relentlessly, for there are thousands of miles to go on this journey.

Although there were 60 staff to direct 90 juveniles, it was clearly the responsibility of the juveniles to pull together all the components of the train and make it work. The teamwork of those boys and girls of all races, white, black, Chicano, and Indian, was impressive. The animals alone were a massive undertaking. They seem to provide not only a responsibility, but something to form an attachment with. One of the first requests made by the Erie County youths upon my meeting them was to see the respective animals that they had earned. One simply is not given an animal, but rather it must be earned by demonstration of hard work and a willingness to care for it. There was obvious pride in each of their animals, not only in the fact that it was earned, but how they had trained it. In the evening hours, after the long trek, there was limited free time, but I watched a number of my boys give up this time to train their animals with a patience that was never seen prior to this placement.

Page Two

The day ends at 8:30 P. M., except for three hour night watches that all must rotate. Everyone is tired and sleep comes easy despite the fact that the tepee is crowded and you sleep in very close quarters. There were some 8 tepees for all the delinquents on the train. The meals were plentiful, if rather plain. Only natural foods are served, and candy and sweets are prohibited.

Everyone of my fellows complained of the hard work, but there was underlying this a real sense of achievement in what they had accomplished. They knew they had done something only adults can do and that is they had covered over 1,500 miles in 4½ months by horse, mule, and wagon.

The relationship between staff and residents reflected genuine caring. There was respect, although the vocabulary was frequently in four letter words. Communication was direct and honest. Everyone understood this and seemed to set the tone for a community atmosphere. Together they have struggled and survived against the elements, including runaway mules and horses, overturned wagons, break-downs, and fights.

The most controversial aspect of the program is the "confrontation" which at times involves limited physical force. Once a youth physically attacks another or creates a disturbance, staff immediately deals with the issue and stays with that person for whatever length of time it takes to get honest, in-depth answers as to what is bothering him. I witnessed a number of these and was impressed with the skill and professional approach of the staff, but more significant was the revelation that came from the boys about themselves. This approach required the juvenile to deal with himself in a more realistic way and to make him accountable and reflective concerning his actions.

The highlight of my experience was the transformation I saw in the young men from Erie. One of these boys had spent almost 2/3 of his time at New Castle Security Unit in isolation. They were all hard-core, dead-ended delinquents prior to entry into the program. They were dramatically different now. Their language remains coarse and they were still obviously street kids, but they talked freely to me of how they had failed themselves., rather than why they were being unjustly treated by others. They had definite plans for the future.

It is clear, however, that they will need help in making the transition back into the community. Several staff from the Wagon Train will be with them for the next two months, supervising them daily, and working with their families in what is called the Street Program. Family work is recognized as a critical component of the VisionQuest Program, and throughout the placement of our juveniles, staff has made various trips to Erie to visit with the families.

Page Three

Only time will prove the final outcome of these five young men, however, I can positively state that the program has substantially matured them and has given them a confidence they didn't possess before entering it. They have been made fully accountable and responsible for the first time.. No one program is a panacea. The Wagon Train component of VisionQuest is, however, an excellent alternative for the Court, and I highly recommend it.

I have been informed that upon complete licensing and agreement to reimburse this program that they would commence a Wagon Train from Tucson, Arizona to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, starting on March 1, 1980, made up primarily of Pennsylvania youths and would develop residential components for the program in this State.

Sincerely,

FRED P. ANTHONY

FPA/pf

cc: Ms. Donna Jeffers
Commissioner of Children & Youth

Dr. Ronald E. Sharp, Director
Juvenile Court Judges' Commission

APPENDIX B.

REPORT ON VISIONQUEST

This report represents the report of the staff of the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission subsequent to a visit to VisionQuest. The visit to VisionQuest began on October 10, 1979 and concluded on October 17, 1979.

Introduction

First and foremost, it is essential to make note of the fact that VisionQuest is not just a Wagon Train. VisionQuest is a continuum of programs which attempt to provide a variety of alternatives to bring about change in juveniles. The representatives of the VisionQuest program indicated their belief that if an agency can provide enough alternatives, any kid will be able to find one in which they can succeed.

This report is primarily a description of VisionQuest. Although comments are mixed in the descriptive section, every effort is made to insure that the reader is fully aware of what is description and what is comment.

The report will conclude with general comments and evaluative statements and recommendations for the use of VisionQuest.

VisionQuest

History

VisionQuest was incorporated in 1973. The persons who incorporated VisionQuest had previously worked together at the Juvenile Detention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. They formed VisionQuest to do street work in Phoenix, Arizona, but shortly thereafter moved to doing street work in Tucson, Arizona.

Since viable alternatives were not available for the youth whom they were working with in Tucson, they moved to a group home system as well as a street system.

In 1976 when the Bicentennial Wagon Train passed through Arizona, it gave the directors of the organization the idea of placing a wagon on that train. They contacted the appropriate officials and were given permission to add a wagon to the train.

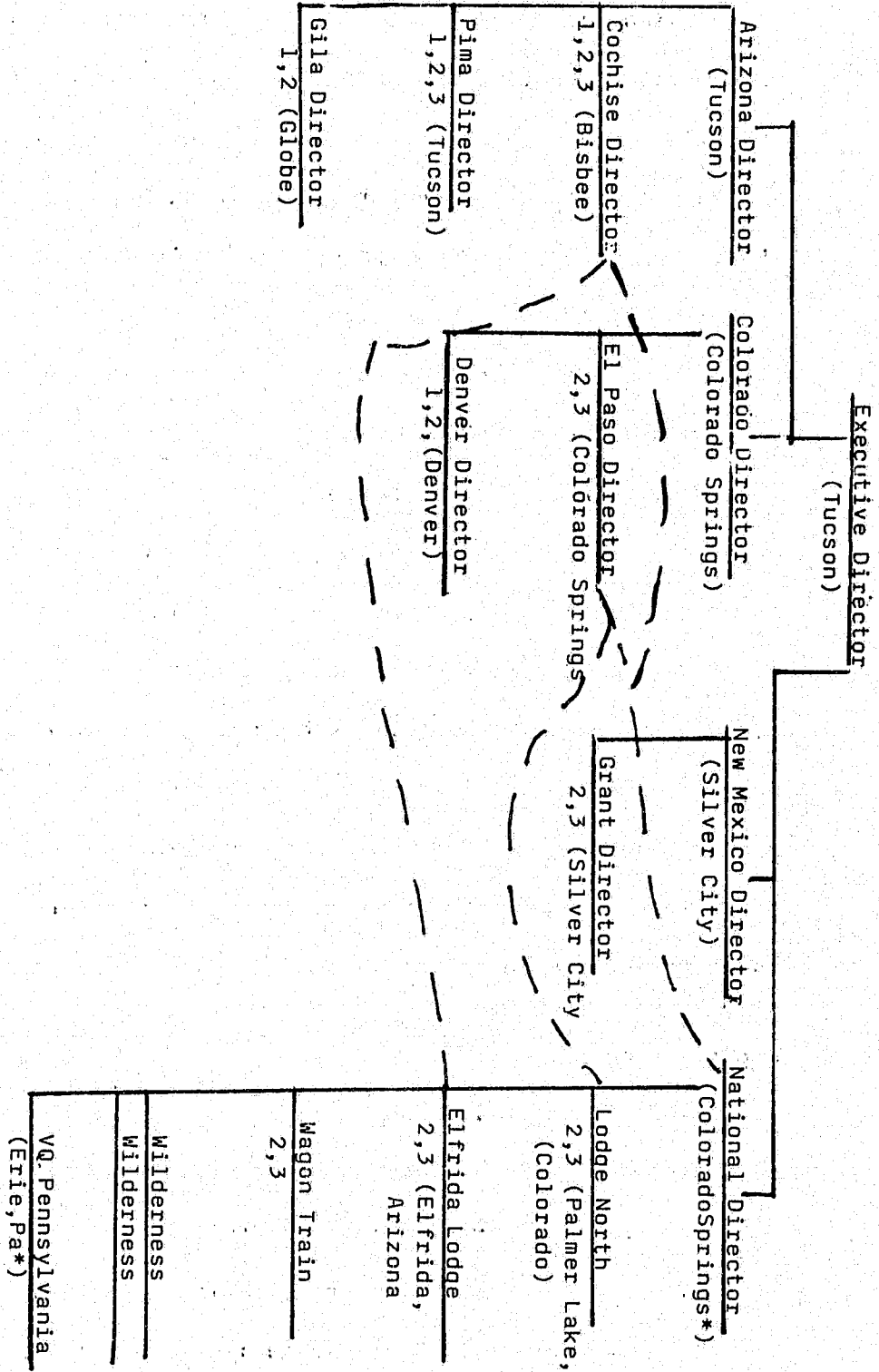
Their wagon on that train became something of a travelling group home and they were so impressed with the changes that this experience brought about in the juveniles, they determined to try it again.

Along with the Wagon Train, they have consistently expanded the types of service which they provide as needs have been identified.

Organization

Table #1 of this report is a table of organization prepared by the staff of the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and is not an official table of organization for VisionQuest. This table represents our effort to reduce their organization to a tabular form which is useful to us in viewing their organization. It is important to note that this is not their official table of organization and also that they are a fluid organization currently experiencing new developments

TABLE #1
VisionQuest



- 1. HomeQuest
- 2. Learning Center
- 3. Residential Program

*May not be a final location

and this table of organization reflects only how we felt their organization looked at the time of our visit.

It is also important to note that lines of authority in this organization are not the same as those we are typically dealing with; it was explained to us that the organization is "circular" not "linear" and that the nature of the organization, as well as the treatment plan, is essentially based on the philosophy of the American Indians.

VisionQuest is a profit-making corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Arizona and the State of Colorado. A recent audit of VisionQuest has been completed by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (apparently the equivalent agency to Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare) and newspaper reports of what that audit found are available from the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission's office; basically, they found no problem with VisionQuest.

VisionQuest is a co-ed program and boys and girls participate in all of the various areas in which program is offered.

VisionQuest is accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Hospitals as a psychiatric facility and is accredited by the Child Welfare League of America.

Staff

As in many other areas, VisionQuest takes a different view of staff and how they are selected than do most organizations. There is not a list of qualifications as we might normally expect for staff but individuals are employed for the purpose of developing a mixed staff with a variety of experiences and a variety of qualifications. Once in the system, personnel are moved about up and along the career

ladder according to their performance in the program and not necessarily according to any type of academic or other qualifications they may present.

Staff are expected, however, to have had some experience with juveniles previously and we found that to be the case with staff we interviewed. The program does employ MSW's, Ph.D's, and M.D's in appropriate areas.

Women and minorities were well represented in the staff of the organization and hold a variety of positions throughout the organization.

The attitude of staff interviewed was very good; we found an exceptional consistency among staff, a full awareness of what VisionQuest was trying to do, and of the VisionQuest philosophy. Staff were very supportive of each other; it appeared that it would be very difficult for kids to manipulate staff since they operated from a framework that was so clear and because they felt a comradarie which bound them together. One of the comments made by a youth in the program was that staff in VisionQuest are never seen to fight with each other; the youth indicated that he was sure there were disagreements from time to time, but that these disagreements seemed to be handled behind closed doors and in a way which made him feel staff was always able to present a united front to the kids; he indicated that this had not been so in other placements he had experienced and that he has frequently seen staff argue in other programs, but never in VisionQuest.

Costs

The per diem charge for VisionQuest Programs for Pennsylvania

youth is currently \$70.00 a day; that does not include the cost of transportation to the facility which VisionQuest expects the committing county to absorb; the youth will be returned to his county by VisionQuest. The per diem also does not include medical costs. Parents are expected to also contribute to the support of the youth by supplying him with clothing and school supplies.

Philosophy

The basic philosophy of VisionQuest is drawn from the philosophy of the Plains Indians. The philosophy is based primarily on the circle, rights of passage, and the concept of honor. The medicine wheel of the Plains Indian is the symbol for the program.

One item of philosophy especially adapted from the Plains Indians to the program is that not only is time important to youth but so is distance. Distance is used as a concrete form of measuring progress. This means that one of the basic reasons for programs like the Wagon Train is that they not only take time to complete but also they take distance and, therefore, the youth can measure the changes in himself and the experiences he is having not only in terms of days passed but also in terms of miles completed; since distance is more concrete, it has more meaning. For example, in traveling with the Train, we noted that a watch was totally useless; it really never made any difference what the hands of a watch said. Events occurred as miles accumulated i.e., we ate not when we were hungry and not when the hands of a clock said it was time, but when we had reached the assigned place for that to occur. Further, the day ended not at 5:00 o'clock or not when we were tired, but when the campsite had been reached, the animals taken care of, and the camp set up.

The medicine wheel of the Plains Indian has been adapted for use in the VisionQuest program; it has four points. The point facing north deals with the plan, the point facing east deals with time and distance, the point facing south deals with touching, and the point facing west is self-understanding.

Touching and physical contact are an essential part of the philosophy of VisionQuest. It is the philosophy of VisionQuest that youth should not be touched indiscriminately, but that the touch should have meaning and should be arrived at through a period of defining limits with each other. Youth may not be physically touched in an assaultive or violent way. When the youth loses control and there is a threat of violence, he is restrained by staff who holds his feet and arms down until such time as the youth can control himself/herself.

Intake

Intake occurs through an interview conducted by the VisionQuest staff at the location of the kid. The interviews are extensive and last as long as the VisionQuest staff feel it is necessary in order for them to make a decision as to how well the juvenile will adapt to their program.

In order for a juvenile to be accepted into the program, he/she is expected to make five commitments; these are: (1) to remain with the program at least a year; (2) not to go AWOL; (3) to abstain from the use of drugs and alcohol; (4) to complete two survivals during problems; and (5) to work on his/her family problems. A memorandum of understanding is signed by the juvenile.

Parents too, are required to make some commitment to the program and they, too, must sign several statements; one of the most notable

of these statements is the one of their desire for the final outcome. Parents are not allowed to hide behind the program and must declare in writing up front what their intentions are. Their choices are: (1) to have the child return home at the conclusion of the experience and for the parents themselves to receive counselling; (2) for the child not to return home but for the parents to receive counselling; and (3) for the child not to return home and for the parents to not receive counselling.

Treatment

A case plan is developed for each juvenile admitted to the program. This case plan is prepared within three weeks and is preceded by an intake plan which is prepared within 72 hours. Case plans are followed by quarterly reviews and both are shared with the committing courts.

The case plan or plan for service as VisionQuest refers to it identifies needs which are numbered and subsequent reports on the progress refer to the need number. For each need there is a statement of contribution factor, short term goal, long term goal, anticipated outcome, how the goal will be measured, and which person will be responsible for that particular goal.

The case plan also identifies goals that should be completed prior to discharge and what the direction of the discharge plan will be including the reason for that direction.

Youth initially do not make many of the decisions in the development of the case plan; VisionQuest indicated that it is their philosophy that if the juvenile were capable of making such decisions, he would not be at VisionQuest; instead, they see his/her control of

their life as a goal to be realized step by step with full participation and control being developed over time.

It was noted, however, that youth throughout the program had an understanding of their plan and an investment in it; it was noted in talking with youth who had completed the Wagon Train that they were markedly realistic in their planning. These youth were able to express goals which seemed to be based on a realistic assessment of the period of time that would have to be involved. This is not normally found to be the case in other programs which we have seen.

Each youth in the program has a counselor to whom he can speak regarding problems.

Each juvenile accepted into the program receives both a psychiatric and a psychological interview. The psychiatrist continues his involvement in the case with the intensity and frequency of his involvement determined on a case-by-case basis. Some youth are seen regularly by the psychiatrist and some are seen only quarterly when their plans are about to be reviewed. Discussions were held with the psychiatrist for the Colorado Program and the psychiatrist for the Arizona Program; it is an understatement to say they were unusual psychiatrists who, while not involved in the original formulation of the VisionQuest philosophy, have bought into it extensively. One psychiatrist indicated his opinion that it was the first real form of community psychiatry he had ever seen.

One of the basic treatments other than the experiences planned for the youth (although these may be planned) which occur in VisionQuest, is the confrontation/physical. Confrontations are normally initiated either by a youth acting out or on a planned basis by a person designated to initiate the confrontation. Confrontations

would appear to a casual observer to be shouting matches with a staff shouting at the kid while both are surrounded by other staff. The kid shouts back and the issues dealt with are not the apparent precipitating issues but the real underlying issues causing the kid's behavior. This is a very complicated approach based on the idea of helping the kid relate his behavior to the actual feelings that are causing it and to enable the youth to release angry feelings which are being expressed inappropriately and in other directed areas. Staff at VisionQuest have become rather sophisticated in their ability to anticipate these confrontations. Occasionally, a youth will engage in a confrontation shortly after a contact with the family. Although it may be the contact with the family which has aroused angry feelings in the kid, the kid will begin acting out in other ways. The staff confrontation is designed to put him in touch with his feelings and the real causes and allow him to express them without hurting himself or others. If, during a confrontation, a youth becomes violent, staff simply restrain him/her by holding his/her arms and legs on the ground.

There was a notable difference in the attitudes of youth in the early stages of the program and those in the latter stages of the program regarding confrontations. New kids were very threatened by the confrontations and it was noted that when certain kids were engaged in a confrontation, others became upset and frightened. Youth at a later stage in the program took confrontations more in stride and almost seemed to not notice them; others explained confrontations to us while we watched.

Confrontations did not seem to get the not involved kids stirred up; when staff are busy in a confrontation with one kid, the other kids seemed to go about their business pretty well and although eleven confrontations were witnessed in our eight days there, in no case did any kid take advantage of the fact that staff were so intensively involved elsewhere in order to engage in some misbehavior himself/herself.

Families are seen as an important, in fact, essential part of the treatment. It is noted by VisionQuest staff that the families are the key to treatment since the youth will either be returning to them after his/her experience with VisionQuest or he/she will have to deal with the feelings that he/she cannot return to them; in either event, there are powerful feelings that need to be dealt with and large changes that need to be made. To this end, while a youth is in VisionQuest, his family receives counselling from VisionQuest staff except if parents refuse and do not want the kid returned. When a youth returns from VisionQuest, he experiences a period of three to six months in aftercare during which time progress is monitored by VisionQuest staff who are also available for counselling him/her and their family as they work on redefining their relationships and re-establishing their contact with each other.

Bishkewalakai

Bishkewalakai are a group of staff who form the core of VisionQuest confrontation/physical staff. Only these persons may initiate a confrontation with youth. To be a Bishkewalakai, a staff member must have shown for a period of at least 12 months that they are capable of handling confrontations and physicals appropriately;

appropriately in this context means that the staff has been able to show that they are aware of the fact that angry acting out on the part of the juvenile is not a personal assault on the staff member and is not even a result of immediately recognizable stimuli but is related to feelings about problem areas which have been aroused in the youth and that he is directing his anger at whatever is nearby.

Bishkewalakai are identified by symbolic buttons that they wear on the side of their left knee attached to their jeans or pants. The Bishkewalakai meet periodically. To become a Bishkewalakai, one must be chosen by the consensus of the other Bishkewalakai.

The term Bishkewalakai is from the Plains Indians; Bishkewalakai were perimeter guards in the Plains Indian tribes and have become perimeter guards in the VisionQuest Program in that they alone stand on the perimeter of physical contact and the initiation of confrontations.

It should be noted, however, that positive types of physical contact are not limited to Bishkewalakai and that youth are frequently hugged, patted on the back, and shown positive physical affection.

Consequences

VisionQuest does not believe in punishment, but does believe in consequences. Consequences are the result of behavior and are logically related to it, e.g., if you accidentally break a window you may have to buy the glass, clean up the mess, and replace the glass; if you maliciously or carelessly break a window, you may have to do the above plus some additional window related work.

Consequences may be positive also and it was observed that staff take care to make positive comments a great deal of the time and to notice and praise accomplishments.

VisionQuest Programs

Introduction

As noted previously, VisionQuest is not just a wagon train and is not just one program; VisionQuest is a series of programs that have been designed to provide as many alternatives as possible to troubled youth. It was further indicated that new programs will be and are developed as needs become apparent and that a new program will be invented for one youth if that is necessary to give the youth a way to succeed. The different types of programs already developed are identified below.

Lodges

Lodges are residential facilities which are staging areas and are not intended to be long-term placements for the youth. Youths spend their time before wagon trains and after wagon trains or other wilderness experiences at lodges, normally. It is at the lodges that they learn the essentials of dealing with the animals and other problems they will encounter on the wagon trains. There presently are two lodges in the VisionQuest Program. These are located in Elfrida, Arizona on grounds that were previously a dude ranch and at Palmer Lake, Colorado, on the grounds of what was formerly Frontier Boys Village. Most Pennsylvania youth committed to VisionQuest will be placed in the lodge at Elfrida, Arizona; Elfrida is a desert outpost situated two hours drive from Tucson, Arizona. The drive to Elfrida is a long one, through fairly desolate country. Once at the lodge, one is in a comfortable setting which includes a swimming pool and all the facilities necessary for housing youth.

The North Lodge at Palmer Lake, Colorado, is a facility of log

cabin buildings which are quite attractive and house varying number of youth with a total capacity of the North Lodge being 15.

VisionQuest staff consistently reaffirmed the notion that the lodges are facilities larger than those in which they normally intend to house juveniles and that a juvenile's stay in a lodge is a short period of time (usually less than three months) during which assessments can be made and decisions arrived at.

Farms

VisionQuest operates several farms which are group home type operations housing 8 to 12 youth. It is not intended that these types of programs will be utilized for Pennsylvania youth except in those situations where for some particular reason it may be desirable to do so.

Group Homes

The group homes of VisionQuest are not group homes in the sense that we define them in Pennsylvania. They are homes in regular neighborhoods in a community normally housing about eight youth. They are unmarked and a person driving through the neighborhood would have no means of recognizing them; the difference between them and group homes in Pennsylvania is that the youth within the group home are much more controlled and do not interact with the community as freely and individually. While they do frequently interact with the community and do use community recreational facilities, it is not at their individual initiative. Further, youth in these facilities receive all their specialized services including mental health services from employees of VisionQuest. Youth in group homes normally attend the VisionQuest learning centers which are described below. However, it

is possible for youth to live in one of their group homes and attend a public school. VisionQuest staff indicated that it is perfectly alright with them for us to refer to their group homes as residential treatment centers if that is closer to our definition. Therefore, you may hear VisionQuest staff refer to them as residential treatment centers or group homes when you talk to them. They intend to have residential treatment centers in Pennsylvania.

HomeQuest

HomeQuest is a street program in which youth live at home and receive outreach services from VisionQuest staff. HomeQuest also normally has a community facility where the youth can gather for group meetings and recreation as well as at which parents may gather for parent education.

Learning Centers

Learning Centers are actually alternative schools. Most of the youth in the VisionQuest programs in Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico attend the VisionQuest Learning Centers. These Learning Centers operate on a special education model much like the schools in our juvenile facilities. The states in which VisionQuest currently is operating do not have intermediate units and they will be assessing the needs of Pennsylvania youth for educational services as they begin to work here more intently.

Wilderness Survivals

As mentioned previously, the wagon train (which will be discussed in detail below) is not the only wilderness experience available through VisionQuest. VisionQuest wilderness experiences include the

Roughriders, horseback riders who make extensive trips throughout the countryside; bike hikes which include travelling by bicycle for extended periods of time, mule pack trips through the wilderness; backpack trips; survivals - experiences akin to Outward Bound, but as described to us, more rigorous including more extensive periods of isolation. It should be noted that during the periods of isolation, youth are checked with periodically by staff and their isolation occurs within an assigned area.

To prepare for wilderness experiences, youth must pass the SPAT; this is a terminology for a Survival Physical Ability Test.

Wagon Train

The Wagon Train travels between Tucson, Arizona and Denver, Colorado or during the winter around the state of Arizona; a new Wagon Train will leave on March 1, 1980 for Harrisburg, Pa., scheduled to arrive in September or October, and mark the beginning of a program here. While on the Wagon Train, all youth are assigned to a tipi family which is normally composed of 11 youth and a staff member. The youth and their staff sleep in tipis that are erected every evening and torn down every morning.

The day on the Wagon Train typically starts at 5:30 A. M. with the individuals assigned to night watch awakening the staff who then wake their youth. Animals are fed, watered, cared for, and other assigned chores are completed before breakfast. After breakfast, the camp begins to prepare for moving on which includes an effort to ensure that all signs of the camp ever having been there are destroyed. VisionQuest is rightfully proud of the fact that when they leave an encampment, an untrained eye will find it difficult to detect

where they had stopped. During the day, the Wagon Train moves on to the next encampment which is normally 15 to 17 miles away. The youth all either ride on wagons, ride horses or mules, or walk along with the Wagon Train just as pioneers of much earlier days did. In order to ride a horse or mule, the youth must earn the right to the horse or mule and that right also includes the responsibilities and obligations of caring for that animal and the gear that goes with it. It was apparent during our visit that many of the youth have developed close relationships with their animals and one of the worst consequences that can occur is the loss of an animal and its reassignment to someone else.

All the work necessary for the successful moving of the Wagon Train is completed by staff and the youth. This includes everything from shoeing horses to greasing wheels. There is an employee who is experienced and considered expert in horse care and riding and shows the youth the appropriate way to do it as they travel along and whenever there is a period of time free, gives instructions on how to improve riding skills and care of equipment.

There is a Registered Nurse who travels with the Wagon Train; there are also certified teachers who travel with the Wagon Train. School is conducted in a school bus which follows the Wagon Train and at any one time one-third of the youth are in school. There are educational plans and objectives developed for each of the youth on the Wagon Train and throughout the VisionQuest system; each month progress on the goals is evaluated. Figure I is a typical outline. The VisionQuest Learning Centers are approved as private schools in the states in which they presently operate. In Arizona, their Learning Centers belong to the Independent Schools Athletic League

FIGURE I

Individualized Educational Program
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES/MONTHLY PROGRESS

Student's Name _____ Report Period _____

Teacher(s) _____ Program/Services _____

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES (Add short and concise narrative evaluation below - include progress in <u>all</u> academic areas and behavior)	Begin & End Dates	<u>Achieved</u> <u>Continued</u> <u>Modified</u> <u>Dropped</u>
<u>Reading</u> : Master forty new vocabulary words from the Distar survival vocabulary. Demonstrate mastery through 85% accuracy on weekly spelling and usage quizzes.	6/1-6/30	A
<u>Language Skills</u> : Record daily personal journal entries in log book form describing the activities and route of the Wagon Train. Present weekly oral summaries to the class.	6/1-6/30	A
<u>Social Studies</u> : Acquire knowledge of the history and culture of the Navajo tribe through readings in Southwestern Indian Tribes, class discussion and a visit to the Navajo reservation.	6/1-6/30	A
Acquire knowledge of the geography and history of the Grand Canyon region through readings in Sunset Travel Guide to Arizona and Arizona: A Short History, and field trips to the canyon and surrounding areas.	6/1-6/30	A
<u>Science</u> : Complete a research project on one desert inhabitant (vegetable or animal). The project will include a two-page written report, a five minute oral presentation and a supplementary reading list.	6/1-6/30	A
<u>Math</u> : Ray will review the principles of simple operations with basic math functions.	6/1-6/30	A
<u>Behavior</u> : Ray will actively participate in classroom discussion in an appropriate and serious manner. He will increase in his ability to self-direct his activities in order to minimize frustration.	6/1-6/30	C

and participate in scholastic sports.

Upon reaching a new campsite, the tipis and wagons are arranged in the circular fashion much as they would have been in an earlier day. This circle forms the perimeter of the camp and youth must be accompanied by a staff member or obtain permission of staff before leaving the perimeter. Once the youth are assigned to the tipi for the night's sleep, they also can only leave the tipi with staff permission and both when returning to the tipi and returning to the perimeter after having had permission to leave, the youth must return to the staff member who gave such permission and register their return.

Amazingly, the youth normally go to bed at seven or seven-thirty and do so without a whimper of protest. In fact, the only problem that occurred regarding bedtime during our visit was that some of the youth wanted permission to go to bed earlier than that and had to wait until the entire tipi was ready to go to bed.

A day on the Wagon Train is full and very demanding; it is also very frustrating and provides everyone with many opportunities for learning new ways of dealing with anger and frustration. It was incredible to see the changes that this life style has brought upon a number of the youth in a very short period of time. Records of previous placements of youth on the Wagon Train were reviewed and it was hard to believe that the kids described in the records were the ones we traveled with. VisionQuest will not allow a state to buy only the Wagon Train experience; it is necessary to buy the entire package.

SeaQuest

Beginning in January, 1980, VisionQuest will offer a new program

entitled SeaQuest, which will operate from three whale boats which will depart from southern California and travel to the Panama Canal and return to southern California with several stops in Mexico. Staff for that program have already been employed and are currently undergoing training.

VQPA

VisionQuest has a program office in each of the states in which it operates and a program director for each state. There is also a national director who operates their lodges, wilderness experiences, and new programs such as VisionQuest Pennsylvania (VQPA) until it achieves a level of operation at which it can justify its own state director. VQPA presently has an office operating in Erie and intends to open an office in Media in the very near future; and possibly an office in Pittsburgh. For the time being, VQPA can be reached at 1324 W. 40th St, Erie, Pa., 16508, or by telephone at 814-868-3376. Again, remember, you cannot use the Wagon Train only, but must use the entire program.

Conclusion

Comments

The effectiveness of the VisionQuest can only be determined over a period of time during which they deal with young people. During this visit to VisionQuest, we were able to look at what they do to see how well that matches what they say they do and we were able to talk to many young people regarding the experiences and the feelings they have about VisionQuest. We were also able to make some decisions about the youth based on those we interviewed at the North Lodge who had been through the initial period and through one Wagon Train as

compared to the feelings and attitudes of new youth at the Elfrida Lodge who had not yet had much experience with VisionQuest. The following conclusions were drawn:

- (1) VisionQuest does what it says it does;
- (2) The treatment planning and reporting at VisionQuest is among the very best we have found anywhere;
- (3) The attitude of staff toward youth was very positive;
- (4) The physical facilities of VisionQuest are attractive and appropriate for the work they do although some of the group homes need attention;
- (5) The food served to the youth is prepared under the supervision of a dietician who prepares the menu; it is typical of program food;
- (6) VisionQuest has demonstrated that it is committed to developing programs which provide a variety of alternatives for youth;
- (7) VisionQuest programs, except for HomeQuest, are not community based services in the way they are defined in Pennsylvania; considering those youth who have been committed to VisionQuest from Pennsylvania to-date would otherwise have been committed to a security unit, it may be wise to consider VisionQuest a community-based facility when used in lieu of security.
- (8) VisionQuest conducts extensive interviews with youth referred to them and accepts only those youth they feel can benefit from their program;

- (9) VisionQuest is appropriate for use by the Juvenile Courts of Pennsylvania. One word of caution should be expressed; this is a concern that became apparent regarding the availability of emergency medical help for persons on the Wagon Train. During our visit, a serious accident occurred involving a staff member; it took over two hours to get an ambulance to the site and another hour to transport the staff to a hospital. In discussion with VisionQuest staff, we were advised that this was typical in that part of the country and because of the isolation and distances involved, there would be no way to speed the process up; we were not able to determine the accuracy of that statement. However, it is important that should you wish to use the program that you should be aware of this potential problem. (In a subsequent conversation with Bob Burton, Director, on October 22, 1979, he stated that because of this concern, radio telephones will be added to the Wagon Train and the possibility of helicopter ambulance will be investigated).
- (10) Regarding allegations of cruelty, no instance of cruelty was witnessed; extensive talks with youth uncovered no hint of cruelty. In fact, although most male staff - especially on the Wagon Train - were rather rugged looking, macho types, what we saw in their relationship with youth was kindness, sensitivity, tenderness, and affection. Several youth reported that although they have their problems with staff from time to time, they believe for the first time anywhere, they are with staff who are really for them and upon whom they can rely.

- (11) A critical part of the VisionQuest program is honor and keeping one's commitments. This applies not only to kids, but also to staff and the kids who had been around awhile made it clear that they are convinced when a commitment is made to them, it will be kept regardless of how inconvenient it may be for staff or for the organization.
- (12) The length of stay is not an issue with the kids; none of the youths interviewed objected to having to stay at least a year. It is possible for a youth to be discharged before his year is up but that was not a goal to anyone interviewed. One young man from Pennsylvania indicated that he had already spent more total time than that in several other programs he had placements with. Another young man from Pennsylvania said he hoped he would be allowed to stay longer.

Recommendations

- (1) It is recommended that the use of VisionQuest by the Juvenile Court of Pennsylvania be encouraged for those cases in which it is appropriate as per Recommendation #2.
- (2) It is recommended that the type of youth committed to VisionQuest be aggressive, angry, tough youth and/or youth who have been through unsuccessful placements and/or youth with a long record. Staff of VisionQuest indicated that they are not particularly interested in receiving referrals on individuals who have made a strong commitment to drugs or alcohol; those who are retarded - but this refers not to any

particular IQ score or diagnosis, but rather to VisionQuest's assessment based on their interview process; any youth who is premeditated violent; or, any youth with such a severe physical handicap that they would not be able to participate in the full range of activities, slight handicaps can be considered and the final determination made after an interview.

In our discussion with the psychiatrist for the program in the State of Arizona, he indicated his confidence that the staff of the program had developed sufficient sophistication that they will be able to deal with mental health problems and referrals if that type of youth were invited. VisionQuest is recommended for consideration as a placement for the following type delinquent boys or girls at this time.

- (a) aggressive, angry, tough; or
- (b) with previous unsuccessful placements; or
- (c) with a long record; or
- (d) with mental health problems when that involves acting out. VisionQuest is not recommended at this time for passive or withdrawn youth, unless the only other alternative is secure placement. This is because we need more experience with this approach on that type of youth; the VisionQuest approach is based on tapping sources of anger and getting the feelings acted out in controlled situations. For those youth who direct anger inward rather than outward, arousing the feelings may do more harm than good, but secure placement will certainly do them more harm than good so if that is the only alternative, the better risk is with VisionQuest. Using VisionQuest on a limited basis for this

type youth will also enable us to determine effectiveness with them.

- (3) VisionQuest is a unique program; it is truly difficult to categorize them; it is a program that should be reimburseable at a level that encourages its use;
- (4) VisionQuest is far from Pennsylvania, geographically and conceptually; long term decisions about its use cannot be based on one trip. It is recommended when youth from Pennsylvania are being taken to facilities outside of this state in significant numbers, monitoring expeditions be dispatched for site visits at least quarterly. While this will be expensive, it is less so than the possible consequences of not closely monitoring a program until we understand it well. This will also enable us to understand changes as this program more fully develops.
- (5) It is recommended that the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission be represented in all monitoring expeditions to VisionQuest sites.
- (6) It is recommended that the current practice of having referrals to VisionQuest processed through Court Liaison Officers be discontinued. There is no rationale for such a practice and Court Liaison staff have no more knowledge of VisionQuest and what it does than do courts.
- (7) It is recommended that the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission designate a staff member as liaison with the youth in VisionQuest to play an advocacy role on their behalf when they feel the terms of their agreement with VisionQuest have been violated or that they have been abused. All youth