

**FIRST SOUTHERN UTAH REGIONAL NATSAP CONFERENCE**

The first conference to be held in Southern Utah is scheduled for September 16<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn in St. George. The conference is co-chaired by Brent Hall of Discovery Academy and Ben Harris of SunHawk Academy. This conference was scheduled earlier in 2005, but the weather had different ideas in mind. After a great deal of flooding, the mayor asked that we postpone the conference. The area has recovered and we are now a "go". The conference will begin with a keynote address from Jeff Smith, Logan River, and the NATSAP Utah Regional President. Twelve breakout sessions will be held throughout the day with a break for a conference-sponsored lunch.

**ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL NATSAP CONFERENCE CON'T.**

Despite the busy time of summer vacation for many would-be-attendees, we still had a respectable showing of 192 registered participants at the conference. All in all, it was a great conference in the "non-marketing" atmosphere, which is the NATSAP tradition. As hosts for the conference we learned a lot about what worked well and what we would do differently next time. We would be happy to share our learning with any who are blessed with the task of putting on a professional conference. Don't hesitate to give us a call.

To those who attended, and for those who were not able to attend but were there in spirit - thanks for

your support! We learned again, that it is truly the participants, both NATSAP members and others as well, who make a conference successful. With sincerity and gratitude we send our thanks!

Please join us in looking ahead with positive anticipation towards the next Utah Regional NATSAP Conference.



**ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL NATSAP CONFERENCE**  
*Michael E. Berrett, PhD, Conference Chair*  
*Center for Change*

Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005 was a beautiful day, and a fitting day for the Utah Regional NATSAP Conference. The conference was chaired by staff from Center for Change, and hosted by Utah Boys Ranch / Westridge Academy.

The facilities, campus, logistics, and food were excellent, capped by a panoramic view of the Wasatch Mountains with snowfields in view. The hosting was a definite highlight, and the keynote addresses denoted well the theme of the conference: "Best Practices."

IECA Board Member and Education Consultant, Tim Lee, gave a "no-nonsense," straightforward, and thought provoking presentation on ethics and its role in the relationships between education consultants and treatment programs.

Drs. Ellen Behrens and Tracine Smoot created a relevant and specific presentation for NATSAP programs on "Evidence-based Practice in Adolescent Residential Care. Participants who already do evidenced-based care, learned more tools to improve what they are already doing. Those who don't practice evidence-based treatment, were inspired to do so, and given some practical starting points.

In addition to the keynote addresses, there were 21 quality presentations offered that day in concurrent sessions. Participants had much to choose from, and there were offerings for all: administrators, educators, clinicians, and direct-care staff. Attendees found everything, from the importance of "Therapeutic Mojo" to dealing with "I hate you - don't leave me." The presenters and presentations were "top notch."

**NATSAP Mailing Schedule**  
**October – December, 2005**

Watch your mail for these important events. Your prompt response to each mailing is greatly appreciated!

- October 1 - Nominations for  
October 14 NATSAP Board of Directors
- October 18 - NATSAP Board  
October 31 of Directors Election
- November 1 2006 NATSAP  
"Foundations for Tomorrow" Registration
- December 1 Annual Renewal  
"Packet"  
*Deadline for inclusion in 2006 Directory: January 31, 2006*

**Very Important!**  
Please contact the NATSAP office with any changes in information about your program so we can keep the NATSAP Website current.  
Thank you!

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**NATSAP 2006 NATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
**"Foundations for Tomorrow"**  
**Feb. 2-4, 2006**  
**Sand Key Resort Clearwater, FL**

# NATSAP NEWS

The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs



**MONTANA LEGISLATORS PASS HOUSE BILL 628**  
*Penny James, Explorations*

Programs across the state of Montana recently united to pass ground-breaking legislation pertinent to therapeutic schools and programs statewide. In a nearly 6 month campaign, programs of different models, size, and perspective joined forces to educate Montana legislators about the components of House Bill 628. Program owners and employees, lobbyists, students and parents joined forces to teach Montana legislators about therapeutic programs and the life-changing impact such programs have on the students who attend, their families, the staff members that serve those families and the communities in which these facilities exist. Montana stood as one of the last spots in the nation where licensure, registration, and other regulatory components were not integrated into the state level government for all the different facilities statewide.



Representative Paul Clark, Governor Brian Schweitzer, Senator Jim Elliott, and Mary Alexine Chrysalis.

HB 628, sponsored by Representative Paul Clark and Senator Jim Elliott and supported by programs, was signed into law on April 19, 2005. Representative Clark and Senator Elliott hail from Sanders County in Montana – an area 'rich' with programs that serve troubled youth. Representative Clark, in fact, is the owner of a small outdoor program for youth at risk. The fruition of this bill becoming law was not without considerable efforts on the behalf of program and school personnel statewide.

HB 628 proposes a new prototype of regulation and launches Montana into a process not seen by any other state in the nation. The fundamental shift in this law versus other regulatory bodies nationwide is the establishment of a state board (Board of Private Alternative Adolescent Residential or Outdoor

Programs) which will implement a registration process for programs and will further study current regulations, industry standards, and the quality of alternative adolescent residential and outdoor care in the state. The state board will then report to the legislature in 2007 regarding potential licensure requirements.

The state board will be comprised of five members and each will be appointed by Governor Brian Schweitzer. Board members will consist of three representatives from programs and two members of the general public. The composition of this board will insure input from those in the field and will provide the necessary 'check and balances' with outside contribution.

This board will fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labor and Industry – another break from the customary oversight seen in other states. Outside parties, including the state Department of Public Health and Human Services, stood in opposition to the bill favored by programs and stated a position that those who work in programs might not be able to provide the objectivity needed to insure quality of care.

Montana is, in many ways, a perfect place for such ground-breaking legislation. It is a Montana tradition to support licensing and regulations which are monitored by those engaged in the field. Montana programs are diverse in nature and many talented and nationally respected practitioners and professionals call Montana their home.

*Article Continued on Page 2 ----->*

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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IN THIS ISSUE...

MONTANA LEGISLATORS PASS HOUSE BILL 628.....COVER & PG. 2

UTAH REGULATORY CHANGES.....PGS. 2 & 3

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS.....PG. 3

SOUTHERN UTAH CONFERENCE INFO...BACK COVER

UTAH REGIONAL CONFERENCE - A SUCCESS! .....BACK COVER

NATSAP PRESIDENT'S CORNER....INSERT

Highlight your membership by adding the NATSAP logo to your website



**MONTANA LEGISLATORS PASS HOUSE BILL 628 CON'T.**

There are twelve NATSAP member programs in Montana with three Montanans serving as current directors on the NATSAP Board. Some Montana facilities already fall under differing accreditation standards which require regular inspections to ensure high standards of care. Lastly, alternative residential and outdoor youth care facilities often contribute to Montana in other ways: they are environmentally friendly, non-extractive, and are most often located in rural areas which bolster the local economy.

*Penny James-Riddell, Explorations*     *John Mercer, Mission Mountain*     *Patrick McKenna, Monarch School*



Since HB 628 was signed into law, the Association of Montana Alternative Adolescent Private Programs (MAAPP), Inc. was formed by program and school personnel in the state. The mission of MAAPP is to "...enhance the standard of care, credibility, economic viability and stature of private alternative adolescent programs and schools within the state of Montana through education, advocacy, information and support for its members." MAAPP Board members include NATSAP members John Mercer, Mission Mountain School, President; Penny James, Explorations, Secretary; and Linda Carpenter, Star Meadows at Hope Ranch, Treasurer. Also on the Board are Representative Paul Clark, and Jacqueline Rutzke, Spring Creek Lodge Academy. The Association of MAAPP has developed goals and objectives, ratified by its members, which include acting as a resource for the industry and an advocate to the state Board of Private Alternative Adolescent Residential or Outdoor Programs. Montana programs continue to demonstrate their commitment to collaboration, consensus, and education of those both within and outside the industry through the efforts of MAAPP.

**MONTANA LEGISLATORS PASS HOUSE BILL 628 CON'T.**

Montana has a reputation of doing things in a distinct and innovative fashion. That is because Montana itself is unique – both culturally and geographically. Therapeutic programs and schools across Montana contribute to the one-of-a-kind character of the state by serving youth from across the nation with Montana’s rich resources. Hundreds of struggling youth benefit from Montana’s character which is perfectly suited for self-exploration. The passage of HB 628 provides the opportunity for programs to continue to be creative and pioneering while ensuring a voice in regulations that will impact their students’ well-being, safety and quality of care during time spent in a state known as “The Last Best Place”.

**NATSAP INSTRUMENTAL IN UTAH REGULATORY CHANGES**  
*Kimball DeLaMare, Island View RTC*

The summer of 2004 was a dicey time if you were in the residential treatment business in Utah. Angry citizens reacting to a tragic death stemming from the aggressive actions of a troubled youth in a program were combining resources with another group of citizens dead set on enacting legislation to keep a sex offender program out of their community. Certain legislators unfamiliar with our industry were discussing

proposals that could severely limit a program’s ability to function while penalizing “good providers” in the interest of safeguarding the public from any who may run more risky enterprises.

Within the State Office of Licensing there were concerns as to how to interpret regulatory guidelines as programs evolved to better meet client needs. Behavioral

definitions related to what constitutes a “time out”, or other such interventions were open to a variety of interpretations, creating some confusion and risk for providers and consumers. Although Utah is a noted leader in terms of regulatory oversight, standards were in need of revision, including additional categorical definitions and procedural clarification.

Independent of each other, several NATSAP programs began to be involved. From early discussions an ad hoc group hosted first by Provo Canyon School, and subsequently, by the Heritage School banded together to examine issues, develop proposed enhancements to existing standards, and ultimately meet with Licensing Officials to present their findings. From those workgroups the Office of Licensing, directed by Ken Stettler, was able to advise key legislators, meet with



**NATSAP INSTRUMENTAL IN UTAH REGULATORY CHANGES CON'T.**

**the Attorney General’s office, and ultimately craft legislation that passed into law in the Spring of 2005 and is now developing standards in conjunction with NATSAP and other providers in Utah.**

So what came of all these efforts?

- NATSAP programs including the Oakley School, Cedar Ridge and Discovery Academy along with Robin Stephens of Aspen Education Group and three other programs have just completed the final drafts of the new Therapeutic Boarding School standards which will allow greater flexibility in step down programming.
- Increased requirements for owner and supervisor competency to safeguard against untrained entrepreneurs attempting to establish substandard programs.
- The option for local communities to employ licensing specialists trained and overseen by the state office, to assure local communities of personal oversight if desired. Although this provision could be problematic, depending upon how a locality decides to participate, it appears there are sufficient safeguards to restrict reactive or politicized actions on the part of a community.
- A consensus as to how to deal with eighteen year olds who want to remain in settings that typically serve minors without needing formal, individual variance for each and every case. It appears that programs will first submit specific procedures as to housing, assurance of rights, programming, and other concerns related to the continued stay of eighteen year olds and these will be audited annually once approved.
- Adoption of behavioral management definitions and policies as provided to the state by NATSAP. These procedural guidelines were initially authored by Jared Balmer of Island View who also sits on the national advisory board of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Facilities (JCAHO). These guidelines were subsequently approved by NATSAP membership after board review. They will greatly aid in the prevention of abusive and punitive practices that compromise treatment and prejudice the public.
- The installation of Jeff Smith of Logan River Academy on the Licensing Review Board as an industry representative. Jeff is also heading up the Utah Region of NATSAP which is the first local region to formally organize.

**NATSAP INSTRUMENTAL IN UTAH REGULATORY CHANGES CON'T.**

Although there is more to come we are excited by the collaborative relationships NATSAP has been able to develop with the state. We look forward to further enhancements of state policies and guidelines to protect the public while delivering effective care.

*Note: Kimball DeLaMare, past president of NATSAP was instrumental in coordinating NATSAP efforts related to the proceeding article. He notes that a majority of the Utah members of NATSAP were involved in this remarkable process.*

**NEWS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**  
*Will White, Committee Chair*  
*Summit Achievement*

The committee has been busy since the first of the year reviewing a multitude of applications for membership. At the end of 2004, NATSAP had 128 members. Of that number, 118 members renewed their membership for 2005. Sixteen applications had been reviewed and accepted for membership in late 2004, so by the time January 31<sup>st</sup> arrived, we had increased our membership to 134. These new members were welcomed during our 2005 Annual Meeting in Tucson.

Since that time we have reviewed an additional 10 applications and are pleased to welcome the following programs into NATSAP, bringing our membership to 150.

- Copper Hills Youth Center
- Coral Reef Academy
- Daybreak Behavioral Resources
- F.L. Chamberlain School
- La Europa
- Optimum Performance Institute
- Three Rivers Montana
- Transitions Galveston Island
- Waterman Academy
- Willow Creek School

The membership committee includes the following individuals: Amy Jeppesen of La Europa Academy, Steve Nielsen of Willow Creek School, Sid Parham of the Family Foundation School, Eric Scheiderman of Bridges Academy, Will Laughlin of Auldern Academy and Jan Ellison, formerly of LaAmistad. We appreciate the time and energy this committee puts into reviewing new member applications as well as making recommendations to the NATSAP Board. We would like to thank them and their programs for supporting the NATSAP mission.

**UPCOMING CONFERENCES**

**NATSAP’s 1st Annual Southern Utah Regional Conference**

Friday, Sept. 16, 2005

St. George Holiday Inn  
St. George, Utah

**NATSAP’s 2nd Annual Northeast Regional Conference**

Friday, Sept. 30, 2005

The Colony Hotel  
Kennebunkport, Maine

**NATSAP Vision Statement**

Our vision is a nation of healthy children. We are the voice inspiring, nurturing, and validating the courageous work of our schools and programs

**NATSAP Mission Statement**

The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs serves as an advocate and resource for innovative organizations which devote themselves to society’s need for the effective care and education of struggling young people and their families.