



## **We ARE...**

- **A program for youth who are beginning to make poor decisions and would benefit from learning about tools they can use to make better choices and create positive change in their life.**
- **A drop-out prevention/court diversion program for Broward, Monroe and Dade County residents.**
- **A service to qualified boys and girls 13-17 years old and their families who meet one of the following criteria:**
  - a. have runaway from parents or legal guardians;**
  - b. are consistently truant from school; or**
  - c. are ungovernable.**

## **We are NOT...**

- **A last resort**
- **For court-ordered youth**
- **A boot camp**
- **A service for children with severe psychological, physical or developmental impairments**

**PARENTS** are integral to our program. Parental support and interaction have a direct connection to the success of the student. Through parent education meetings, homework assignments, family behavioral contracts, and frequent family sessions (home visits) both parents and student develop more effective communication skills.

### **Parents are required to:**

- Provide transportation to and from the program site in Key Largo for the interview, course start and course end as well as to Final Gathering on the last day of follow-up.
- Attend three parent education meetings scheduled at the beginning, middle and end of the 20-day Wilderness Expedition.

- Write at least 3 letters to their son/daughter while on course.
- Participate in goal setting on the first and last day of the Wilderness Expedition.
- Participate in all home visits during the follow-up phase.
- Be flexible and willing to take on this major time commitment.

**Acceptance** to our school is dependent upon the following:

- Student and family willingness and commitment to make changes in their lives;
- A completed application, medical history and physical examination
- A family interview conducted at our office in Key Largo
- Clearance by a physician or therapist, if requested by us; and
- The student meeting at least one of the three eligibility criteria.

## **ABOUT THE PROGRAM...**

The program includes two distinct phases:

- **Wilderness Expedition**
- **Community-Based Follow-up**

## **THE WILDERNESS EXPEDITION**

is a demanding 20-day canoeing course conducted in Everglades National Park, The Ocklawaha River, or the Peace River. During this time, as per our contract with the Monroe County Board of Education, students receive instruction in Life Management Skills. Each student will earn a letter grade that will appear on his/her permanent academic transcript. High school students will earn a .5 credit for this class. The components of Life Management Skills include anger management, communication, decision making, goal setting, and conflict resolution skills.

**The Wilderness Expedition includes five challenging components:**

\* **Training** is a period of intense instruction and learning. A team of highly trained instructors works closely with students to teach them all the necessary wilderness skills. Additionally, students are introduced to peer counseling via daily lessons, meetings, and one-on-one check-ins with instructors.

\* **Main** is the next level where students are given greater responsibilities and the opportunity to make group decisions. Students are given the opportunity to make choices and expected to follow through with consequences, both positive and negative. Students need to demonstrate progress in their ability to problem solve and work as a team so that the group can earn more responsibility and be successful.

\* **Solo** is a 48-hour contemplative experience when students camp alone (though they are in close proximity to staff and checked frequently). During solo, students reflect on personal goals, set goals for the remainder of course, and begin to focus on their return to home and school.

**Final** is when students are expected to function with less assistance from their instructors and are given freedom to make mistakes and learn from them. The utilization of leadership and effective communication skills is of primary importance. Students are encouraged to focus on “transferring”

their Outward Bound experience to help them address their issues at home and at school.

\* **The service learning project** happens on days 18 and 19 of the Wilderness Expedition. Students participate as a group in various service activities giving them an opportunity to directly benefit their community.

**THE FOLLOW-UP** phase begins when students return from the Wilderness Expedition and lasts from 20 days to 6 months. Students and family members must complete a transition plan and participate in a minimum of four home and/or school visits conducted by the Outward Bound Instructional Staff, Education Coordinator and Program Coordinator. Students may also complete a community service project of their choice. The goal of follow-up is to assist students in applying skills learned from the Wilderness Expedition and finding the appropriate community resources for the entire family to be more successful at home and school.

**Staff** at Outward Bound are highly skilled at safely leading groups of adolescents on wilderness expeditions. Instructors provide expertise in creating opportunities for students to develop problem-solving skills to overcome challenges in order to foster feelings of personal success. They are not, however, trained therapists. Their job is not to fix the students, but rather give them tools they need to become the best version of themselves.

**For Further Information Contact:**

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