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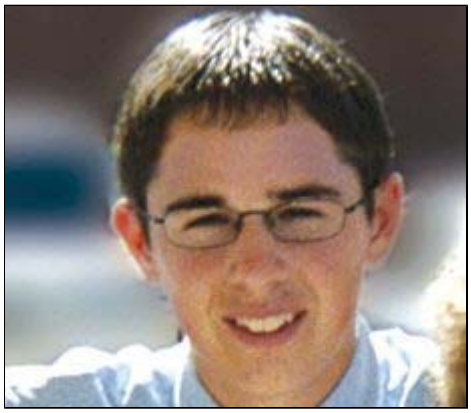
Troubled teen helped through stay at Cross Creek

By: Jan Rynearson , Features Editor



The Fenton home of Phillip and Linda Canup and their son, Christopher, who tu
June, is peaceful.

But it was not always like this. In fact, it had been the reverse for several years, c
shouting, holes punched in walls - chaos.

The Canups agreed to tell their story in order to help others, those parents and te
don't know where to turn.

"It was pretty much of a nightmare for quite awhile, until we decided to put Chri
into the program," said Phil.

The program is Cross Creek Residential Treatment for Troubled Teens in the sm
Laverkin, Utah.

It's a specialty boarding school that works on academics and personal developme
therapy-based. The students range from age 12 to 17½. They are struggling with substance abuse, accountability issues, depress
major emotional issue.

"The seminars Linda and I attended and the program Chris went through have given us tools to deal with issues," said Phil. "Th
not perfect, but we are communicating. We don't want to be enablers."

The Canups traveled to Chicago to attend seven seminars; they also went to Cross Creek to visit Chris twice during his stay.

"I'm really pleased with his attitude since he returned home and the way he responds to us. I was amazed at how much we learn
seminars, the program was incredible. Chris has gained self confidence and integrity, which he didn't have before."

The family went to a counselor for about a year and had no results. "When he was asked, 'what do we do now, where do we go?
offered them no suggestions or hope. "We actually had to find something on the Internet, we googled 'teens in trouble' and wen
there," said Phil.

"We tried to get help elsewhere, but the only light we saw was on the Internet," said Linda.

"I was at Cross Creek for the 18-month program," said Chris. "Program is a vague description, it's basically therapeutic rehab w
counseling."

He said trouble at home started because he was doing his own thing, trying to take on adult responsibilities without being one.

"I wanted to show my parents I could do anything I wanted. I felt they were trying to treat me like a little kid, so I rebelled," he

"Things got bad in seventh grade when Chris was 13," said his mother. "He actually flunked seventh and eighth grade, but was
through, I got phone calls from the school about his inappropriate behavior. In eighth grade he was put in a Priority I program a
(Andrew G. Schmidt Middle School). In ninth grade he went to Lake Fenton High School, because that was where the Priority
were taught. He finished his freshman year there."

When the Canups agreed to send their son to Cross Creek, they knew it was going to be expensive. They spent his college fund
to pay for the 18-month stay.

"Legal escorts were sent to pick him up, two burly-looking men," said his mother. "I had packed clothes and personal care item
as I knew they would be arriving sometime in the middle of the night."

It was at 4 a. m. on Sept. 1, 2004 that they came to Fenton, woke him up and took him to the airport.

"I was sleeping, actually hung-over, when they came in my bedroom to wake me up," said Chris. "They were huge guys, I had n
what was happening. It was just about five minutes and I was out of the house."

Chris said he first smoked pot at the age of 7, when his friend took some from an older brother. When he was 10 to 11 the use o
escalated, as many of his friends were doing them.

"When I got to Cross Creek I had to accept it, it was in the middle of nowhere, it's a lock-down facility and there was no way to
said Chris. "When I walked in the students were eating breakfast. There were about 150 boys in the program. There are also abo
girls, but they are in a separate building."

When he arrived, he was frisked, told to take off his clothing and take a shower with lice treatment, which is standard procedure
given khaki shorts and an orange shirt, his uniform until he earned the right to wear a blue button-down shirt and tie. This was a
one has two weeks of progress. Orange-shirted students don't have many privileges.

"I learned from other kids who were messing around with the bodyguards," said Chris. "These guards were all at least 6 feet tal
heavy-set. A guard named Sam was about 6 feet 6 inches tall and weighed about 450 pounds. No one wanted to mess around w

Chris had to read a book with all the rules. Some of these included staying in a perfectly straight line everywhere they went. "W
told everything, bedtime was 9:30 p.m. and we got up at 6 a.m. every day," said Chris.

He finished the 10th grade and part of the 11th grade during his stay. Cross Creek is accredited and each student is assigned sta
scheduling.

"You do a lot of independent study and you are tested constantly and have to receive 80 percent or better or get penalized until
right," said Chris. "We also had intense therapy. Although we could write, I didn't get to talk to my parents for 2½ months."

After being at Cross Creek just a few days, Chris found out that his girlfriend back home was pregnant. Knowing that he was go
become a father proved to be an incentive to spur him on to finish the program as soon as possible.

"The students go through a series of levels from 1 to 6 at Cross Creek in order to graduate," said Linda. "From September to Ap
kept going back and forth from level 1 to 2, but after that he began going forward quite rapidly. At Christmas he had earned a fi
home pass, but was not allowed to see his son at that time."

At Cross Creek, Chris became involved in cross-country and continues to run.

In February, he graduated with a class of 14, the biggest class ever. On his birthday, his family representative therapist called hi
to wish him a happy birthday and see how he was doing.

During the last week of August, the Canups will be visiting relatives in Nevada and Chris will visit some of his old friends and
Cross Creek.

"I am a better person, a better son to my parents because I'm living in their house," said Chris. "I'm keeping in shape, have been
some house painting and am looking for a part-time job. I will finish my senior year at Fenton High School this year."

He spends a lot of time with his young son and wants to keep a clear head and be a good father. After high school graduation, h
start school at U of M-Flint on a part-time basis while working.

"I'm happy to be out of Cross Creek and going in a different direction," said Chris.

"It is wonderful to have Chris home and to have him so respectful and polite," said Linda. "There are other similar facilities for
trouble, but we chose Cross Creek because of its credentials."

The Canups will all be participating in the first Teen Intervention Nationwide 5k Intervention Walk on Aug. 5, starting at 8:30 a
Kensington Park, 2240 W. Buno Road, Milford. It will begin at the West Boat Launch.

"I don't know how it happened, but I ended up being Michigan chairperson," she said. "The walk is to help at-risk teens and the
It will also help pay to keep kids in rehab programs after their parents run out of money. We were lucky to be able to keep Chri
program."

The money Chris earns (he will be running) will be kept in a separate fund for his college. Whatever Phil and Linda can realize walking will go directly into the Teen Intervention Fund.

There is a Teen Intervention support group in Brighton and another in Grand Rapids.

For more information on sponsoring or walking in the event, one can go to www.intervene4ateen.com. or call Linda at 750-989

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