



PINE CONE PRESS

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT LITTLE KESWICK SCHOOL

Bringing Students' Unique Potential to Light Since 1963

WINTER 2012

LITTLE KESWICK SCHOOL HONORED BY VAISEF

Little Keswick School is proud to be honored for our commitment to the highest quality of service with the inaugural Partlow Insurance Best Practice Award, awarded to Marc Columbus at the Fall Conference. This award is given by the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Facilities, VAISEF, as recognition to those schools that meet the highest standards of best practices in the accreditation process. This award represents not only our great commitment to each student and our community, but also our dedication to being a standard bearer for specialized education facilities across the country.



A PERFECT REVIEW

In 2010, Little Keswick School received a 100% on its site review. VAISEF's site review team assessed 17 accreditation standards with 159 sub standards and 6 modules with an additional 49 sub standards. This totals to 201 individual standards that our school met to the highest degree. When asked what other schools had received a 100% site review in the past, the VAISEF accreditation committee could not recall a single school that had done so. We are proud of the standard of excellence we have set in best practices for our field of service providers.

"This school represents a team of people tied together by the school's mission and supports its students through a collaborative process."

"All of the standards reviewed were in compliance. We found nothing. That's awesome! Your attention to detail is commendable and it is very rare that a facility would have met all standards at 100% accuracy."

"We've seen a lot of schools and Little Keswick School is doing a great job; you're definitely doing something right."

"The school helps students change to become better people and has a vision to make dreams happen." 🌲

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THE STAFF & STUDENT SOFTBALL GAME: LKS' FALL CLASSIC

By RICHARD CARLSON



Each fall the community gets together on Davis Field to play a big game of softball. The rules are easy: every student gets to hit, there are no strikeouts, we eat clouds and clouds of cotton candy and we can be silly as a group. Although the skill levels vary, the fun is shared by all.



The teams are split into two sides, with each one representing an aspect of our school colors, green and white. After warm-ups we gather as a group to honor the flag and participate in the Star Spangled Banner. This year we enjoyed the trumpet musings of Sacha P. as he played a beautiful rendition. After the words 'play ball' the white team took the field while the green team batted first.

Traditions are a part of the LKS culture and with that I once again took the mound to pitch for each side. Even though my ERA is well above 10.94 over the last 6 years I enjoy the chance to multi-task by eating cotton candy and pitching at the same time.

This year's game was filled with huge hits and athletic fielding by both teams. We even had a couple of double plays to make it even more exciting. Seeing the community of students join each other in a game that can be difficult to learn is inspiring to say the least. The inspiration comes out of peers helping peers to swing the bat better or throw the ball more accurately. It comes out of opposing team members showing good sportsmanship and giving tips on base running rules. These instances reinforce why our community events are so vital to our culture, as much as they are tradition.

This game not only allows the community to have fun together but to put all the skills the guys work so hard each day into practice. 🌲



OUT OF THIS WORLD FUN HALLOWEEN AT LKS

BY JIM GAUL



This year's LKS Halloween celebration was a smashing success. The hard work of the Yellow House students, the Upper Level Council, Academic staff and the entire Residential team ensured the annual event



ran smoothly and was enjoyed by all. Particularly impressive was the Carnival created by the Yellow House students and the Upper Level Council. Props and games referencing popular science fiction shows and movies such as Dr. Who, Star Trek, and Battlestar Galactica showcased this year's theme of Space. Students dressed



up as Robots, Clone Troopers, Darth Vader, and even a Teletubbie among other things. After a full school day that included a door decorating contest, students changed into their costumes and the entire community gathered together outside for a group



picture. Students were then divided into smaller groups to circulate around campus to participate in a variety of space themed activities. In the evening the community regrouped in the depot, which had been transformed for the evening into a spooky den of spiders and floating pumpkins. It was here the students learned who had won the pumpkin carving and costume contests. After a fun filled day the students retired to their dorms where they enjoyed a Halloween themed movie and their candy, in moderation, of course. Next year's theme has already been selected and planning has begun, knowing that this year's celebration will be hard to top. 🌲



LITTLE KESWICK SCHOOL PARENTS' WEEKEND

By SCOTT HALL

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT
MALVERN, PA



Parents' Weekend at Little Keswick School (LKS) started with a real attention grabber in the form of an opening talk by the seasoned attention deficit guru, Harvard-bred psychiatrist and renowned author of 18 books including *Driven to Distraction*, Dr. Edward ("Ned") Hallowell. After Headmaster Marc Columbus' warm introduction and a brief, tastefully-presented snapshot of LKS' foundation by Laura Dickason, Dr. Hallowell spoke – sans notes – for 90 minutes commanding the attention of even the most attention deficient in the audience.

Dr. Hallowell had us eating out of his hand as he opened his talk with a vivid look into the adversity in his own childhood, which included dyslexia, ADHD and a less-than-desirable family life, a history that would lead one to believe he shouldn't be the successful professional he is today. His talk, entitled "Delivered from Distraction," listed and expounded upon five ingredients he believes are musts in healthy childhood development – connecting, playing, practicing, progress and recognition. The essence of his message was this: attitude, not climbing the pyramid, is what counts. The presentation seemed to impress everyone, if the line of those waiting to speak with him afterwards was any indication.

As an educational consultant, I had the privilege of attending this special parents'

weekend at the invitation of my clients, parents from China who have a son attending LKS. This afforded me the opportunity to tag along to all the meetings.

Little Keswick School has been around for a long time by any standards, but especially when compared with other therapeutic boarding schools. The school was founded in 1963 by Robert and Elizabeth Wilson who had a vision for helping young boys who struggle with learning, emotional and behavioral issues. The Wilson's, now retired, still reside on the LKS campus, a testimony to the long, successful track record of the school.

Upon our arrival for the weekend, we were greeted in the office by Marc Columbus (Headmaster), Terry Columbus (head of admissions), Claudia Hildebrand (office head) and Barter, LKS' therapy dog and everyone's best friend. We received our briefing before heading off for the opening group session in which we would hear from Dr. Hallowell.

A brief word about Terry and Claudia. Between the two of them, communications with parents in the weeks leading up to this event were impeccable. Everyone knew exactly the who, what, where, how and whys of the weekend. There was enough lead time before the weekend for parents to ask their questions electronically, and I understand there were many. My observation is that

LKS understands the important role of good communication with parents.

After Dr. Hallowell's talk, an all-fresh, simple lunch of sandwiches and salads was served buffet style as boys trickled in from their morning activities. After a brief reunion between parents and children, the boys continued on with their afternoon school activities as parents began their private sessions - specific to their child only - with various department representatives.

My family's first stop was the academic center. Teacher Craig Dodson, a cool, ex-Nashville country singer with teaching experience at two therapeutic boarding schools, led a private meeting with my family regarding their son. He was flanked by two other teachers who gave supplemental reports. The meeting was structured and comprehensive covering grades, school in general, dorm life, behavior and social life and included a time for Q&A. The parents walked away encouraged and informed.

Our next stop was a meeting with the art therapist, Patricia Moore. She spent unhurried time showing parents' their son's art work and explaining how therapy is done through the mode of art.

Between meetings we were able to observe a number of students playing basketball and other ball games on the outdoor all-purpose court. Some of the parents and teachers were participating as well. All the boys looked happy and seemed to be having a great time.

Our last meeting during the school day was with my clients' therapist, Dr. Marty Thomson, who is also the Clinical Director for the school. Dr. Thomson spent considerable time with the parents discussing their son's therapeutic progress in his first two and a half months at the school. Dr. Thomson was adept at breaking down the issues into bite size pieces for the parents. He was encouraging regarding progress and tactful regarding continued struggles.

The day was topped off in the evening with The LKS Foundation for Special Education

hosting a very elegant, parents-only, silent auction reception at an off-site location. Parents and school staff mingled over drinks and hors d'oeuvres while placing bids on various items donated by the surrounding community and alumni parents. Proceeds of the foundation are used to support education for special-needs students at LKS and in the community.



The second and final day of the program included a parent support workshop in the morning run by Drs. Marty Thomson and Kate Brabender. In the afternoon parents were able to watch their sons play in a school-wide intramural soccer game. The game was the conclusion to the weekend.

Being present at Parent's Weekend was a great opportunity to get an inside look at this special school. I will conclude with a few observations:

Specialization - LKS is one of only a handful of private, therapeutic, all year round, all boys' schools in the country that focuses on a younger boy - 9 to 15 years old at admission.

Longevity - LKS was founded approximately 48 years ago. The founders still live on campus. It seems that many of the current staff are very seasoned professionals.

Track record and Quality - Based upon my own experience and the experiences of many of my colleagues in referring clients to the school, the school has fine-tuned its program throughout the years into a well-oiled machine that excels at helping young boys with special needs. My time at parents' weekend affirmed my opinion of Little Keswick School's excellence. 🌲

SOLES 4 SOULS

By CHRIS M.

If anyone thought of ways to volunteer, one would think of helping someone with homework, tutoring, or something BIG like going to an area of the world stricken by natural disasters and famine. And of course taking time out of your own schedule to help people is great, but there is a way to not only get you, but others involved too. You can start a drive to help people who are less fortunate, like a food drive, or you could do what I did, start a shoe drive.

The Little Keswick community teaches students to get involved in helping people, and promoting volunteerism. With the LITE (Live Inspire Teach Explore) program for residents in the Yellow House, we are encouraged to give our own time to better our community. I chose to do something bigger, on the global scale, to help the people of the world who don't have shoes.

There are over 300 million children in the world today without shoes, which is almost the population of the United States. And over 100,000 of those children die every year due to foot-related diseases and infections. The organization that is facilitating the shoe drive, Soles 4 Souls is an organization that helps people start shoe drives and distributes the shoes



collected by the donators. They operate in over 125 countries giving shoes to people who need them.

Earlier this year, my dorm counselor, Dylan Grey, was talking about making this program for the students in the Yellow House. I was not excited about such program. But I thought and thought about it, and decided to go with the shoe drive.

At LKS alone, we have received over \$110 in donations for shoes, that's almost 40 shoes, donated by students alone, and an estimated 80 shoes donated by staff. The reason why I did the shoe drive is because I feel that shoes get overlooked when people are thinking of ways to donate. And many people take shoes for granted. They don't think about the millions of people who don't have shoes. That's why I chose to do the shoe drive. To give shoes to the ones who either don't have them or can't afford to get new ones. 🌲

TOYS FOR TOTS

Dr. Kindler delivering toy trains, cars and a robot to the Salvation Army to be given to the children for Christmas. John Sherman, administrator and major fundraiser is accepting the gifts. All of the wooden toys were made in woodshop and decorated in art by the students at Little Keswick School. 🌲



MY VOLUNTEERING JOB AT LANKENAU HOSPITAL

By DAVID H.

This summer I got a job volunteering at a hospital in my area. It was my parents' idea. They told me that they wanted to get me to do something constructive with my free time. They said they wanted me to volunteer at Lankenau hospital. I wasn't too sure at first, but I think it worked out for the best. While there, I wheeled patients to their cars after recovery, took patients to different places around the hospital, and did a lot of sterilizing. One time, I even noticed a patient still had their IV in while I took them to their car. I took them back inside to the nurse. I learned some responsibility, made new friends, did something constructive with my life, and learned that stretchers aren't made very well. All in all, I've had a lot of fun volunteering and now do it when I'm home on my breaks. And now I have something to put on my résumé! 🌲



AN UPDATE ON FORMER LKS STUDENTS

WHERE ARE WE NOW?



David G.

David G. from California recently graduated at the top of his class as honor guard from the Marines and is now stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. Huntley B. from North Carolina is enjoying Christ School, has joined the Boy Scout Troop, is playing soccer, and gives a special thanks to James his teacher at LKS for preparing him academically. Ben G. is doing well at Blue Ridge, his teachers' report he is excelling academically, socially, and developmentally. Owen K. from Maryland is doing well in his new school, making friends and playing football, and his team recently played in Baltimore for the State Championship. Ryan M. from North Carolina is doing great at Vanguard, making A's and B's. Frank F. from Illinois is starting his 2nd year at Forman, and has joined the varsity football team. Austin T. from Texas is settling in at Vanguard after a busy summer of fishing and attending a SOAR camp in the FL Keys. 🌲

DATES TO REMEMBER

- February 17 - 26, 2012 Winter Vacation
- April 6 - 15, 2012 Spring Vacation

Little Keswick School's Pine Cone Press

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