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Cherry Gulch Student Council and Positive Leadership
“Positively...Cherry Gulch Student Council”

I just wanted to share a short inspiring story about our student council. This was only the third group of students that have been involved with Student Council here at Cherry Gulch. Elected for a three month term, the current group of officers had been motivated to be involved since the inception of the council but challenging behaviors and clinical complexities took first priority. Since their enrollments these young men have made huge progress here at Cherry Gulch, now demonstrating a readiness to be student leaders. During the students first meeting with the management team I had expected them to ask for ice cream socials and pizza parties but I was pleasantly surprised by the maturity of our students. They were thoughtful in their approach to requesting more funds for the council and intelligent in their ideas to raise the money.

To begin, the council wanted to start a “Green” program, the central idea being that all students would be rewarded for recycling and conserving soap and paper products. Specifically the council sought to motivate and educate the entire student body on the importance of conserving household goods. Beyond the environmental reward, the council would profit from monies saved on future product orders. The boys also asked for more money for the council if, as a group, they could maintain a high GPA.

They then went on to discuss how they wanted to spend the money that they earned. First the boys sought to purchase a flag pole and to strategically place it on a hill top we call Declaration point. They discussed how a lot of the students at Cherry Gulch are patriotic and take pride in their school and they envisioned a Cherry Gulch flag prominently flown where they can all see it and for the entire community to see our flag. Additionally they wanted each student to add a personal touch to the flag as a way of unifying our school. This was very touching from a group of boys that had come so far during their stay at Cherry Gulch.

This is the same group of boys who gathered close to 900 tokens from themselves and their peers to help fund the new multipurpose court. This effort to improve the school holds obvious meaning as they have also requested to have each student put their hand print in the court as a way of leaving a legacy behind and continuing to foster that sense of community.

Moments like this are so rewarding and it is an honor to have had a small part in their progress and to be confident that they will continue to positively contribute to their community, wherever that may be. Many of our students hope to work at Cherry Gulch when they are older and have asked if they could use the Positive Parenting with a Plan program at home with their children if and when they become fathers. We generally get several phone calls a week from our alumni and are delighted to keep this bond. Cherry Gulch plans to host an alumni reunion this summer.

Cherry Gulch is a ranch-style, therapeutic boarding school designed specifically for 10 -14 year old boys. Cherry Gulch's supportive, encouraging and respect-based approach is designed to build students up—rather than tear them down. Cherry Gulch is passionate about providing early intervention and prevention to help boys reach their full potential and become well-rounded, pro-social young men. We are dedicated to providing outstanding therapeutic and academic services to students and their families. This is accomplished in the context of a safe environment working toward “Building Brighter Tomorrows for the Boys of Today.”