

Island View RTC Syracuse, UT

Island View Academics Extend to the Outdoors

Contact:

Chad Sanders

Teacher

866-952-7930

csanders@ivrtc.com

www.islandview-rtc.com

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Island View RTC currently offers an educational experience that expands beyond the typical brick and mortar school room setting.

Since summer of 2007, a cross-curricular approach has been underway to build a curriculum for our residents that take advantage of the natural environment that surrounds us here in Utah. Last week, we successfully completed the spring 2009 Outdoor Classroom Camping Trip in Zion National Park for the girls. It was our largest Outdoor Classroom group to date with 11 residents being accepted for the excursion. We had good weather and good times. The days were packed and the kids and staff were appreciatively worn out at the end of each day.

The experience however is more than camping. The goal is to leverage the natural surroundings into core academic lessons. This was the first time we included math in the nature curriculum and the integration went amazingly well. Jon Mehl, Math Teacher helped bring to life geometry concepts for the kids including bridge lengths using surveying applications and estimating heights using ratio triangles.

Nate Pack, Art Teacher again did a masterful job including Andy Goldsworthy inspired nature art and landscape paintings.

There are some landscape paintings on display in the school hallway that we invite other students and staff to stop by, check out, and offer critique to the student and staff creators. We appreciated having Jenny Selent, LMFT and Girls Team Therapist along on the trip and the students made several comments about how nice it was to see "their therapist" in this setting. (Jenny's painting is also on display and is open to critique and feedback). This type of role-modeling is crucial to the big picture goals of these trips as an extension of general Island View goals and one of our key, founding core concepts or "food groups" as Dr. Balmer always called them. We were also fortunate to have Stacey Rosenberg along as her usual Recreation Rock Star self, keeping us safe and providing fun, therapeutic recreation activities as well. Special thanks to the nursing and kitchen staff whose help was invaluable in getting us prepared for the trip. We look forward to the boys' Outdoor Classroom Trip which is scheduled for April 25-28. We hope to get our new Executive Director, Don Vardell out with us next time.

Island View RTC *is a program of Aspen Education Group, the nation's leading provider of therapeutic education programs for struggling or underachieving young people. Aspen's services range from short-term intervention programs to residential treatment, and include a variety of therapeutic settings such as boarding schools, outdoor behavioral health programs and special needs summer camps, allowing professionals and families the opportunity to choose the best setting to meet a student's unique academic and emotional needs. Aspen is a division of CRC Health Group, the nation's largest chemical dependency and related behavioral health organization. For over two decades, CRC Health has been achieving successful outcomes for individuals and families. For more information, visit www.aspeneducation.com.*