

## VIVE!

David Herz, President and Founder

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Visit by Dore E. Frances, M.A.  
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This was my second visit to Vive. Seven years ago Vive! had one employee. Today Vive! employs dozens of professionals. Since my last visit they have moved into more accommodating office spaces for their local staff.

I spent much of the day with Dave Herz. While visiting their new offices I was able to sneak in a brief hello with Terry Tierney, CEO.

Leslie Potter, Director of Training and I had breakfast and I rounded out the day having dinner with Dave Herz and Michael Behmer, Director of Product and Services.

Founded in July 2001 as Confident Living, Inc., in Boulder, Colorado, by David Herz, Vive has now opened additional offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco, California.

Chicago, Boston, New York, Atlanta and Texas don't have an actual physical office, they are virtual and up and running.

In addition, Vive has begun offering transition and aftercare services to families located anywhere in the continental US and Hawaii through its Journey On program, which uses traveling mentors and parent coaches to deliver services. Vive is one of the programs that have continued to be on the cutting edge of the current evolution of aftercare.

Their mentors and parent coaches wrap support around the whole family from the beginning of services until the very end. Vive works with young people between the ages of 10 and 25. Vive! works with both adolescents and young adults who need some kind of local intervention before residential placement becomes necessary, or who have completed an intensive residential program or wilderness program and need help with the transition back into normal daily living. Although there is no minimum or maximum length of time specified, the average length is about 4 to 8 months. Most parents *begin* to see positive changes within 2 - 4 months. I have actually had clients use VIVE for a year or more with great success. The duration of a family's engagement with Vive! is ultimately that family's decision and is generally based upon progress toward the goals specified in the family's Individual Family Plan (IFP). This decision is best made in consultation with the treatment team, which typically includes the family's educational consultant, therapist, and Vive! staff.

And families don't go to Vive, Vive comes to them.

Every family is a system with its own unique set of spoken and unspoken rules, agreements, habits, communication styles, and inter-connections.

Each participant lives at home or—when a young adult is transitioning to independence—in an apartment, with the main contact with the program coming from regular visits with a mentor and a family coach (both trained therapists). Work with the parents is also an integral part of the program. The three main areas of the program are to provide a transition or aftercare support, to provide early intervention, and to teach the basics of independent living. The staff emphasizes that their focus is to exert influence rather than authority.

The approach with each family and participant is individualized, working on what each needs to learn to become responsible. Their emphasis is holistic, therapeutic, and action oriented.

Staff members are available any time the participant needs help. The minimum contacts are eight hours a month with mentoring activities, and four hours a month working with the parents. Of course, much more time is spent at first with a young person who has moved into the area from elsewhere to attend college. Vive! does not do crisis intervention since most of their participants have completed an intensive residential program or wilderness program and are ready for transition back to mainstream living. For the rest, which are usually the teens, they work with families who do not yet need residential placement.

In addition to supporting the participant in learning responsible independent living, Vive! works with the whole family to help resolve family issues such as teaching parents how to set boundaries, working through enmeshment challenges and helping parents learn how to be supportive of their child. The program is very well aware of what kind of young people they can help, and those they need to refer elsewhere. The admission process consists of a family meeting with the mentor and the parent coach to have the program and expectations explained, then the mentor and young person split off to spend time together.

The Vive! program matches the struggling teen or young adult with a Vive! mentor who serves as that teen's friend, advocate, guide, and life coach, helping the teen navigate challenging decisions and relationships as they arise in real life.

Vive! mentoring can take place at a café, on a hike, or at a snowboard park, where the Vive! mentor and adolescent can comfortably talk through practical decisions and strategies for a better life. Vive! also matches parents with their own dedicated resource—an experienced parent coach. Many families will then discuss the options among themselves prior to making a final decision. When the family fits the Vive! client profile and their decision to engage Vive! is based on a real desire to change, then the family is accepted and staff set up a routine with specific expectations based on the needs of the young person and the family.

The program basically works with the participant in the participant's own community environment, whether it is an adolescent living at home, or young adults just starting out in their own apartments and going to college or joining the workforce. This is very challenging work for practitioners to do, however their mentors and parent coaches tell me they find the results well worth it.

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