



## OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONE

-A GROUP OF TROUBLED BOYS BEGIN TO FIND COMFORT IN JESUS-

**I**N early August Peak 7 partnered with Jubilee Youth Ranch to take five boys from their Eastern Washington residential facility on an Ascent Course in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. These boys, ages 15-17, are not your typical church kids. They have already faced broken families, drugs, alcohol, promiscuity, gangs, and convictions of felonies. They have also faced the consequences, including the pain of broken relationships, addictions, jail, becoming fathers and even gang-related deaths of close friends. They are frustrated with the world and have developed hard defense mechanisms to protect themselves from further pain. One young man told us-

**"I don't really want to be good, but I want to want to be good. I see two possible futures for myself. In one, I am the baddest**

**M\*\*\* F\*\*\*\* around and everyone would be scared of me. In the other, I would get out of this and help other people like me."**

He would not admit to a single thing in his life he is proud of. Although these young men are very rough around the edges, they are loved by Jesus. Many have expressed faith in Him and are working out their faith in what would otherwise seem like impossible odds – battling against addictive behavior, strong feelings of guilt, anger and self doubt. We encouraged each of these boys to

reject the lies of Satan and embrace God's truth in their lives – that they can do all things through Christ; He created them with a purpose, that His ways revealed in His Word bring true satisfaction, while the ways of the world lead to death.

By taking them completely out of their comfort zone and spending 5 days in the wilderness with them we were able to be vulnerable and share our lives with them. This encouraged them to not only share their lives with us but also to spend time

with God and consider further the hope and truth of Jesus (in an absolutely stunning part of His creation).

I left the week with a stronger sense of Jesus in my own life and further conviction that this is a place Jesus would be investing his time – with those whose lives are far from perfect. We thank Jubilee for giving us the opportunity to work with these kids and we have high praise for their tireless efforts in advancing the kingdom in these young men who by the standards of this world are among "the least of these".

- Guide: *Robbie Rech*



Boys from Jubilee at the summit of Granite Peak



**A**S an ascent guide, these words are often uttered from my mouth:

*"Just a few more inches. Take it one step at a time."*

We ask the youth to step outside their comfort zone, learn to push past their fears, to work with others to adapt to life in the outdoors. Though each trip presents its own unique challenges, I have repeatedly seen youth deal with fear; frozen on the side of a mountain or stalled at the top of a rappel. Those moments of anxiety create opportunities to speak into each child's life, to talk about trust, to express to them the confidence which comes from walking with Christ. It takes patience and persistence to push the youth past their phobias, each step in the right direction a small victory for the youth and the group as a whole. Those little triumphs are part of what I enjoy most about work-

### HEATHER NELSON



ing at Peak 7.

Though I had previous experiences working with junior high and high school students in church settings, my enjoyment of working with youth in the outdoors started three years ago in New Zea-

land. God placed me in several ministries where I was able to interact with youth and see how much of a mission field a wilderness setting could be. After my return to the States, I knew that God wanted me to gain more experience in an outdoor setting. For that experience, I headed north to Canada and am now just one class short of a diploma in Outdoor Leadership at Columbia Bible College.

When I am not at school or work, I enjoy a large variety of activities. Those activities include knitting, teaching myself how to play musical instruments, swing dancing, reading, canoeing, and helping out with my church's college group. More than anything I love to spend time serving God by working with youth, and Peak 7 has been an amazing opportunity to do just that!

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## SEEING GOD'S HAND

- *Another safe and successful backpacking season completed.*
- *A great 15-passenger van donated to Peak 7 by the Tamarack Center.*
- *Peak 7 was chosen by staff at the Active Network to receive over \$3,000 in proceeds raised to support a local non-profit.*
- *We are \$23,000 away from meeting our matching grant for 2009.*

*✪✪*

## A GUIDES PERSPECTIVE

A LOOK AT THE GIRL'S SIDE OF PEAK 7

**A**S staff we arrive at the warehouse at 6:30 am. We pray for the girls who are about to arrive, and for the trip that is about to unfold. The group comes and the gear is packed. Mixed looks of apprehension and excitement cross the faces of the participants as they pile into the van for the 4-hour drive out to the trailhead. Since backpacking is naturally a foreign activity to most of them, humorous questions about the trip begin to emerge:

*"Where am I going to go to the bathroom?"*

From the driver's seat I can hide my smirking reaction.

When we arrive at the trailhead and the packs are strapped on, the reality of the work that comes along with backpacking starts to set in. *"How does that pack feel?"* I ask one girl looking particularly uncomfortable with the weight on her back. *"Heavy,"* she replies. This is when they begin to understand why we don't allow them to bring 10 pounds of cosmetics and excessive changes of clothing. The trail to our first destination at Tuck Lake is 6 miles long. The first 4 of these 6 miles are relatively flat and easy to hike in a timely manner. However, the last 2 miles of trail are where we as guides begin to learn why God brought these ladies out



here to be with us. With steep switchbacks at the very best parts of the trail, tears begin to flow and sometimes even lunch. But what we really begin to see is confidence issues, fear, sheer laziness, lack of discipline, and numerous other behavioral stumbling blocks that have evolved from often chaotic home lives. This is where our adventure and our service truly begin. *"How can I help this girl see herself the way God sees her?"* As we hike further away from civilization and deeper into the beauty of the mountains, we learn more and share more with each other. After summiting a high peak, rappelling 80 feet, camping in the wilderness, and covering just shy of 20 miles of trail; we hike back down to the world we left behind. But

before we return these ladies back to the tangle of their often broken and confusing lives, we sit down with them one-on-one and process through the trip on a spiritual level.

*"I've learned God won't abandon me now no matter how many times I mess up."*  
-participant

If there's one thing we've learned as guides this summer, it's that God had an agenda for each of our trips and each of our participants. He has not only brought lost sheep home through our trips, but challenges those who already know him to take their relationship deeper. I saw fear conquered by trust, lack of confidence boosted by support from others, and frustration defeated by grace. -Guide: Ashley Paul

## CLIMBING HIGH



**W**e've had a very successful start to our climbing program this summer and we have more trips on the books. We've found two perfect sites to run our programs in ideal settings and look forward to seeing God teach through this new outdoor avenue. One of the sites is a premier location for the Inland Northwest located just across the Idaho border in Post Falls. We've begun to pursue building relationships with youth organizations in the Post Falls area. Project Safe Place is one such center, who joined Peak 7 on a raft trip this past spring and decided they'd also like to use our climbing program to work with the youth in their center. On a hot afternoon in early August they dangled from ropes above the Spokane river, and learned a thing or two about trusting not only in ropes but in God as well.

*"I didn't think I could do it! But I felt safe!"*

After a day of challenging climbing and a chance to rappel off a ledge, it is our hope and prayer that these kids will take away courage to rise above their circumstances.

He will not let your foot slip -  
He who watches over you will not slumber.

-Psalm 121:3

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- *We are applying for additional permits, please pray that the Lord would open those doors.*
- *The Lord would continue to provide the finances need to continue our work.*



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