



The TELOS Times

Telos is an accredited agency of the California Association of Child and Family Services

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website: www.telosyouth.com fax: 530-642-8814 email: johndhiatt@telosyouth.com
Editor: John D. Hiatt, M.A., Executive Director



Residents Mike (Lassen), Ritchie (Sutter), and Josh (Napa) day hike the surreal landscape of Gower's Gulch while on a week long exploration of Death Valley's back country last February.

Telos Treated to Top-gun Air Show in Death Valley

It was the last morning of Telos' annual week-long stay in the unfrequented back country of Death Valley. It had dewed heavily during the night, and drying tents and sleeping bags colorfully decorated the sage brush surrounding our camp. Top-gun fighter pilots from nearby Nellis Air Force Base had been dog-fighting in the far off distance since day break. All of a sudden, a yell went up alerting us all to a silently approaching jet fighter. It roared just a few hundred feet over our camp and then did a shear climb, before returning, lower yet, and performing a steep circumnavigation turn about our camp, not more than a 100 feet above the ground, so close in fact, that the residents felt the warm blasts of jet exhaust and smelled the jet fuel lingering in the air. In response, jazzed residents and staff alike yelled and waved their beanies and hats high as a salute to the pilot. He then returned moments later, silently, not fifty feet above the ground, then fired his afterburners upon reaching the outer margin of our camp and executed a maximum performance climb right above the residents, dipped one wing smartly in a return salute, and then jetted back to his duties. While brief, the interaction left residents awestruck and honored at having commanded the attention of their own Top-gun air show.

But the story doesn't end there. Weeks later the residents were treated to an IMAX film called 'Jet Fighter.' It was a story about Top-gun fighter pilots like the ones we had seen in Death Valley, and aerial pictures taken from the jets' cockpits were shown. The night previous to our personal air show, residents had night-climbed a nearby peak known as Lake Mountain. In the movie, Lake Mountain was clearly shown, and so was the location of our camp, though we were not present there when the scene was filmed. Apparently, by luck, our camp was on a common route from Nellis AFB to the Death Valley training area, and that's probably why our camp, decorated as it had been with colorful equipment out drying, had been noticed.

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Report Cards Awesome!

The first quarter grade reports are in. Not a single resident received an 'F,' and none averaged below a 2.00 GPA. Such feats by residents, who have not had a history of school success, show what can happen when educational efforts are coordinated between the schools' teachers and the Telos tutors! The credit goes to staff Ana Rothschild, who for the third year now, is overseeing the Telos' tutoring program.

Oscar (Ventura) beamed proudly when he saw his report card and remarked "This is the first time I can remember that I didn't receive at least one 'F'!"

A proud "hi five" goes to Ana, the staff who helped her, and all our residents for attending to their studies!



Residents celebrate a late night climb of Lake Mountain on the last night of Telos' week-long stay in Death Valley.



Mike (Lassen) snowshoes to camp near Desolation Wilderness while on Telos' annual snow camp adventure last March.

Residents Snow Camp in Igloo and Snow Caves

In a year's time, Telos residents can expect to camp in a myriad of wilderness environments: Mountain, river, coastline, desert, and in the snow!

Last winter's deep snow pack in the Sierra Mountains made for a great snow adventure. Residents snowshoed into a favorite ridge camp above Loon Lake near Desolation Wilderness, dug snow caves, built an igloo, and then camped in them. Fortunately, the days were sunny warm, but the clear, cold night made up for the fortuitous weather. However, no one reported that they slept cold; the snow was only 32°, which was far warmer than the cold night air, and also, the boys slept atop insulating pads and layered themselves as they had been taught.

The ridge also served as a popular sledding hill and provided much old fashioned fun, once the hard work of digging was done.



Jesse (Napa), wearing his poncho to keep himself dry, digs out the snow cave he and his team mates camped in that night.



Snow campers show off the snow igloo that was built and camped in last March.

How Come There's Never a Bed Open at Telos?

This has been an incredibly stable year for Telos. The last open bed was June 9th,

when Jesse (Napa) graduated home. However, there will be at least one graduation at Christmastime, with the potential for a couple of more to occur. Since the average stay at Telos is one year (the range is 9 to 15 months), 2006 should see lots more openings as this stable group graduates into lower levels of care. Telos tries to graduate residents at semester breaks, or at the end of summer, just before the new school year begins, so those are good times to send packets. Please keep in mind that Telos accepts boys ages 15 and under, though doesn't age out older residents as long as they remain good role models to the younger boys. Too, please note that many Telos residents have participated in youth tackle football in the local community over the years, and prospective players need to be age 14 or younger as of November 30, 2006 in order to play next summer. (Play begins in late July.) Our philosophy is that children grow healthiest when caring adults are actively involved in their lives— camping, coaching sports, counseling in the Circle of Courage Program, undertaking community service, and providing tutoring—and our intimate environment (eight residents) is conducive to just such involvement by our stable, dedicated staff, most of whom have been with our agency two to 15 years.

Residents Supply 100's of Hours of Community Service



The work done, Avery (Humboldt) catches air as he sleds down the ridge near Telos' winter camp.

Under the capable direction of staff Milo Laguna, Telos residents have accomplished hundreds of man hours of community service this year. Service thus far includes helping the Habitat for Humanity in both their construction projects and at their retail store, two creek restoration projects, several community clean-ups, and in fundraising for the El Dorado Jr. Cougars, the youth football and cheer organization in which many Telos resident have been involved over the years. Like all of us, youths in placement have a

need to give back to their community too, and Milo's efforts have made their contributions possible. Thanks Milo, for a job well done!

Oscar (Ventura) and Bobby (San Joaquin) look down on Highland Lake, the group's cross country destination that day of the 50 Mile backpack trek.

Telos Treks 50 Miles Through Desolation Wilderness

In early August, Telos residents spent a week trekking 50 miles through the grandeur of California's Desolation Wilderness. At times, like in the picture to the right, Lake Tahoe was visible from the peaks that Telos climbed, in this case Tells Peak. Due to the very late spring, August found wildflowers in full bloom, and the high country surprisingly unpopulated.



The fishing was good too, which is rare late in the summer. At one camp, this writer had discovered years ago that the Brook Trout ran in the narrows between two lakes just before dark, just as they did in Maine when he was a boy. This year did not disappoint, and for 45 sunset minutes, residents were treated to fast and furious fishing that included catches of a 15" and a 17" Brook Trout. Wilderness Guide Ana Rothschild, a Maine-iac herself, filleted the trout, rolled them in the crumbs made from left over crackers, fried them in oil, and served residents the finest pan fried trout they had ever experienced!

Fully one third of the 50 miles was hiked across country, rather than on marked trails. Each night the hikers camped near water. The hot summer temperatures made the cold water tolerable enough for refreshing swims, which occurred everyday; on some days, multiple times. On the second to the last day, Telos climbed Pyramid Peak, elevation 9996, which is the tallest peak in Desolation Wilderness, and which is visible from Sacramento. Thus, residents will be able to look toward that mountain the rest of their lives, and say "I climbed that!" All told, Telos residents climbed three peaks, two while carrying full packs.

Wilderness staff included Emergency Medical Technicians, swift-water trained rescuers, and a Red Cross Life Guard. Fortunately, staff used their superior knowledge to avoid needing their superior skills; the most serious injuries suffered were blisters!

Check Our Website

The Telos website offers a lot of information about Telos. While time constraints keep updates irregular, there still is a lot of information available, copies of recent Newsletters, and slide shows of Telos wilderness activities. We invite your comments. The website is available at www.telosyouth.com. Comments can be made to johnhdiatt@telosyouth.com.

Oscar (Ventura), Chris (Mendocino), and Mike (Lassen) enjoy a waterfall above a refreshing pool at a secret spot in Desolation Wilderness.



Some Serious Talk About the State's Oversight of Group Homes

Group homes, such as Telos, are governed by the California Legislature through the Department of Social Services. Over the last few years, major California newspapers have been critical of the state's foster care and group home system. Like most criticism however, the newspapers haven't suggested improvements, only pointed out flaws, but the result has been that legislators have distanced themselves from the system they created and control. As a result, groups homes, their employees, and the children they serve languish as politicians of both stripes only invoke their concern about "the children" at election time, and then immediately ignore their needs afterwards as they seek to utilize every resource available to maintain and expand their own constituencies, which do not include children who can't vote and don't contribute to re-election campaign coffers. As a result, homes such as Telos have received no additional funding since 2001, and only a total of 6% since 1989! You can easily appreciate that living on a fixed income, in an environment where expenses free float, is a recipe for disaster! That disaster is close.

Illustrative of the problem, a local paper recently ran a help wanted ad for a county operated animal shelter. Starting entry level pay was stated as \$11.18 per hour. The state legislature's authorized pay rate for a group home hour is \$7.83. Thus it can accurately be said that government is willing to pay those who assist abandoned and neglected animals about 50% more than those who assist abandoned and neglected children!

How can you help? At election times—from now on—remember the needs of the "village children," those in foster and group homes, and the people that take care of them. Since the kids don't have a voice, give them yours! Then demand that your favorite politicians tend to their needs between elections; let them know that your remaining their constituent depends upon how well they take care of the village children. TIA!



Ana Rothschild Named 2004 Staff of the Year

Ana hails from Maine, has only been at Telos three years, but has already made her mark! Hired as a line staff, Ana quickly demon-

Ana Rothschild, the 2004 Staff of the Year, expertly negotiates a canoe through the Klamath River's Coon Creek Falls while on a Telos wilderness adventure.

strated that she was capable of taking on many other challenges as well. Today she oversees

Telos' successful

tutoring program, is a capable and effective wilderness guide to Telos residents, is an Emergency Medical Technician, and is a trained Swift-Water Rescuer. Schooled at Harvard, in her spare time, Ana edits books for writers, and states that when she is ready to settle down, she plans on being an English teacher. Ana's boyfriend, James Ketcham, is no stranger to Telos either. James is a CDF firefighter, but during the slow season, being an excellent adventurer, often helps make wilderness adventures possible for Telos residents.

We are honored that Ana chose to put some years into Telos, and are proud of how her efforts have benefited the boys Telos serves. She is a worthy addition to Telos' wonderful lineage of Staffs of the Year. Congratulations Ana!



Telos staff and residents wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Feedback...

...in a recent phone call from Cody

(Placer), a long ago resident, now an adult: "Of all the places I went to (in my youth), I miss Telos the most!"

...from graduating resident Chris (Mendocino): "I am very glad I came to this placement because I never got the experience in the wilderness (before), and I never had anyone care for me as much as Telos does."

...from a probation officer on a court report: "This is very concise with attainable goals. I wish all care

providers would provide such good info. Job well done!" ...from graduate Vince (Sacramento), visiting one evening as an adult: "Of everything I remember about Telos, I remember the wilderness adventures the most."

Congratulations to...

*** staff Ana Rothschild for stopping smoking and collecting the Telos Stop Smoking Challenge award of \$100.

***Mike (Lassen) for his upcoming graduation home.

***Ritchie (Sutter) for running a pass he intercepted back for a touchdown while playing tackle football for the El Dorado Jr. Cougars jr. varsity team.

***Oscar (Ventura) for being selected as an All Star—this his first playing season—for the El Dorado Jr. Cougars jr. varsity team.

***Robert (Ventura) for developing into a first string defensive lineman who made numerous Quarterback sacks this season, his first playing for the El Dorado Jr. Cougars varsity team.

Avery (Humboldt) for serving as a first string defensive noseguard for the Union Mine High School freshman team.

*** Ritchie (Sutter), Chuckie (Shasta), and Avery (Humboldt) for earning at least 3.0 GPAs last report card, thus receiving \$15 Telos Grade Challenge awards.

***Josh (Napa), Mike (Lassen), Bobby (San Joaquin), Oscar and Robert (Ventura) for earning at least 2.0 GPAs last report card, thus receiving \$7.50 Telos Grade Challenge awards.

***Avery (Humboldt), Ritchie (Sutter), Mike (Lassen), Josh (Napa), Bobby (San Joaquin), and Oscar (Ventura) for earning their Green Peak Award in the wilderness program.

***Avery (Humboldt), Ritchie (Sutter), Mike (Lassen), Josh (Napa), and Bobby (San Joaquin) for earning their Blue Peak Award in the wilderness program.

***Staff Jeannie Turner for completing the Telos Staff Certification Program thereby becoming a Certified Child Counselor.

***Ritchie (Sutter) for being nominated for the El Dorado Jr. Cougars All Star Academic Achievement Award.

Our Mission...

...is to provide well organized and structured homes in which residents can live safely, in pleasant surroundings, as friends, while receiving professional services aimed at encouraging their healthy growth: Physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.

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Telos Youth Outposts, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, charitable corporation which provides residential care and psychological treatment to males ages 11-17 who are abused, neglected, delinquent, or who have a failed adoption. Private placements are also welcome. Coupled to the Telos treatment program is a challenging wilderness adventure program.