

Who we are:

We are the Flight Program. We are a group of young men who made poor choices when we were younger and ended up getting sent to placement at the Diakon Wilderness Center. Most of us have been in and out of the system, placements, and detention centers. That was the past.

Today is the future. Today we are voluntarily participating in the Flight Program and we're taking new and challenging steps in our lives to change and become successful. We rely on one another for support. We attempt to do what is right, not what is easy. We now look towards the future and our goals instead of living "in the moment." We want the best



At the waterfall.

that this world has to offer and we're now ready to go after it—the honorable way. We are separating from our old friends—they don't know what to think of us anymore. Our families don't know us anymore... they're impressed. Our old teachers, probation officers, and everyone else in our communities that we struggled to understand will soon see that we're going to make it.

We now have positive dreams and goals. We believe in helping others along the path to success: *as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another*. We are discovering and using the tools and resources in our communities to achieve our goals. We are breaking free from our comfort zones and Soaring to New Heights.

We sacrifice our weekends to be with our brothers. We let go of the old Friday night parties; now we spend that time helping each other and the community. We're not afraid to cry in front of each other. We're not afraid to ask for help. We dropped that front. Fridays and Saturdays are now about positive people, places, and things. We're on the move—in and out of state, going to new events, eating new foods, meeting new people, hiking new trails, and always... telling our story.

Meet James:

At 19 years old, James was unemployed, in-debt, failing in college, and "not caring about life, in all honesty." Coming from almost a life-long involvement in Children and Youth Services and later Juvenile Probation, James was an angry teenager whose intervention through the Diakon Wilderness Center's Weekend Alternative Program and its counselors lead to him making some life-altering, positive changes. James was able to receive a scholarship for school through DWC and set goals for his new life. Without support though, he struggled. Since joining the Flight Program, James has rediscovered his focus and motivation. He has a new job, has been addressing and overcoming his anger issues, and is once again active in his church. James has strong political interests and is currently taking steps in legislative efforts to prevent and protect children from child abuse and is also a liaison officer with his college's student government. James is once again getting good grades and hopes to obtain his degree in sociology, then attend Law School in hopes of one day becoming a family court judge.

When asked about his greatest accomplishments in Flight, without hesitation he responded: The Grand Canyon! Similar to many obstacles and challenges he faces in life, James stated he "didn't believe in myself at all, but at the end of the day when we'd arrive in camp it would be so surreal and amazing... having that sense of accomplishment and success. I did it!"



Soaring to New Heights!

Flight Program

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An Epic Achievement and an Unforgettable Experience!...



John, atop the Canyon.



The group at the Canyon rim.

Thanks to your help and support, the Flight Program embarked on an amazing and memorable 9 day trip to Arizona and Utah. This trip offered many new and exciting opportunities for these young men, such as flying in an airplane. We were able to hike, camp, and explore Zion National Park, Lone Rock at Lake Powell, Wupatki National Monument, the Thunder River and Deer Creek trails of the Grand Canyon (one of the most difficult routes into the canyon), Slide Rock State Park, and Sedona. Highlights included camping under the stars each night, swimming in a waterfall at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, and cliff diving. We all pushed ourselves to our physical, mental, and emotional limits at one point or another during the challenging hike to the bottom and back in the Grand Canyon and relied on one another for support, encouragement, and occasionally just a good laugh. With the help of daily journaling, discussions, and yoga, this time away from civilization allowed us to focus on our lives, our future, and simply to grow closer in our positive fraternity with one another. This experience will be a highlight of many of our lives for years to come and was made possible only through our fundraising efforts and your support.

(More Grand Canyon photos inside...)

Many Hands. One Heart.™
DIAKON WILDERNESS CENTER
A LUTHERAN FAMILY & COMMUNITY MINISTRY

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Excellence and Leadership in all that we do.



Tom's award.

We would like to recognize some of the recent achievements of a few of our participants, as well as their contributions to our communities. Congratulations Tom for your acceptance into the Phi Theta Kappa, the International Honor Society of the two-year college. Chris has recently received an acceptance letter from Central Pennsylvania College. James was a speaker at an Adoption Awareness Open House in Franklin County and has become active in the student government on his college campus. Both Brandon and Steven recently gained employment at jobs that are in the fields of their passion. John continues to attend college and have his ever-present positive attitude and outlook on life. We look forward to introducing you to our new participants and updating you on their achievements over the upcoming months.

In addition to our busy schedules of school, work, family, and meeting with fellow Flight members and counselors, we still have found time to volunteer whenever possible. Flight has been returning to the Diakon Wilderness Center to encourage and interact with the students who are currently attending its various programs. From Steven spending Sunday afternoons cutting hair for the students in the Foundations Program to Tom taking time to go on a



Chris at college.

hike and play basketball with them, we're always reminded of how far we have come in such a short time and strive to never forget to give thanks and lend a hand to those who helped us along the way. Tom and Rob have been busy gathering supplies for an upcoming missions trip to Haiti to minister, feed, and provide medical assistance to orphans. Additionally, Flight proudly volunteered at My Brothers' Table, helping feed over 50 homeless individuals and their families in conjunction with the Salvation Army and Carlisle Brethren in Christ Church. As the holiday season approaches, we excited for even more opportunities to serve.

The Flight Program is currently accepting applications. For more information, contact Rob Kivlan at Diakon Wilderness Center.
Phone: (717) 903-5102.
Email: kivlanr@diakon.org.

Check out our participant-created webpage for more pictures and updates:
www.myspace.com/flightboys2009

"Interested in donating to Flight? Simply visit this page on the web:
<https://www.diakon.org/DonationForm.asp>, and select "Flight Program."

Thanks for your support!

A big thank you to everyone who welcomed us back from our trip and dropped in to join us of our first Annual Autumn Get-together at the Lodge. With plenty of chicken corn soup on hand and jack-o-lanterns to be created, we enjoyed your company and look forward to next year!



Diakon pumpkin.



Pumpkin carving at the Lodge.

More photos from our trip to the Grand Canyon...



BK looking across the canyon.



Leap of faith.



Zion National Park.