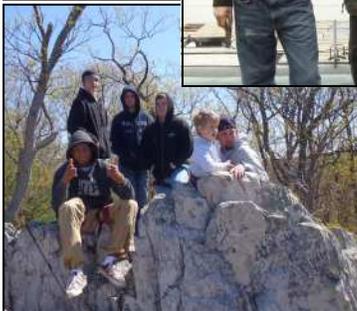


## Soaring to New Heights!

# Flight Program



Volume 1- Issue 4 - March / April 2010



With spring finally here, it is a great pleasure again to update everyone with what's been happening with the Flight Program. It certainly has been a busy and fulfilling few months! In addition to information in the articles submitted by our participants, we've also volunteered with the Humane Society, visited Washington D.C., gone horseback-riding through Gettysburg National Park, and taken the boys to their first drive-in movie... very nostalgic! As always, we've been out in the communities visiting colleges, completing job applications, helping with homework, and simply being there in both the good times and during the struggles.

It is with great pride and admiration that I inform you that every single member of the inaugural group of Flight participants is off probation and completely out of the juvenile justice system and is either employed full-time in the field of

their choosing or attending college full-time.

We are proudly represented at McDonald's, Netflix, Walmart, Modell's Sporting Goods, The Carriage House Restaurant, Phase 2 Kutz Barber Shop and Salon, Giant Grocery Stores, Macy's, and Morrison Senior Living. It is such an honor and a blessing to witness these young men's transformation into positive, contributing members of our society. Even greater still is to watch as they reach out to help others in need. As we've always proclaimed: As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

As the inaugural group of Flight participants is getting ready for graduation day on June 5, we're gearing up for another great summer. We are getting all of our last-minute supplies gathered for a trip to Colorado to volunteer with the National Park Service in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Afterwards, a few of us will be volunteering for the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater organization, which involves volunteering aboard their sailboat for a week on the Hudson River and educating young people about how to preserve and protect the river.

Between getting summer jobs and preparing for entering college in the fall, we plan to squeeze in a little hiking, camping, mountain-biking, and caving, too. Finally, we're always looking to lend a hand in our communities, so please inform us of any volunteer opportunities of which you may be aware, so that we can continue to give back.

As they always say: *that's how we roll!*

Sincerely,

*Rob Kivlan*

Flight Program Supervisor



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

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*Weekend trip to Baltimore brings a young man closer to his daughter...*



In February, I had the opportunity to go to Baltimore for the weekend with the Flight Program. Not only did we get to see the Inner Harbor and the National Aquarium, but more importantly I got to take my daughter, Cherish, with me. It was amazing to get to see her face when she saw all of the different fish and dolphins at the aquarium. Brandon brought his son, Brayden, and our new staff member, Matt, brought his wife and kids. It felt like family that whole weekend and I'm glad I got to show my daughter somewhere cool like that. I'm also glad that Flight helps me be the best dad I can be.

Sincerely,

*Dewayne Taylor*

*Leave No Trace Certification*

Dear Litterers of the World,

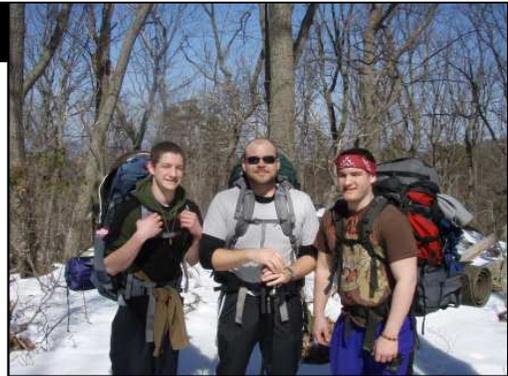
Have you ever walked out of your house in the morning to find trash on your lawn? How does that make you feel? I bet you would have feelings of being disrespected and mistreated... Well, on March 6 – 7 Ed and I, chaperoned by Rob, set out on a "Leave No Trace" certification backpacking trip.

As part of the certification, each of us had to teach something about leaving no trace in the wilderness. There were six of us, so we had the privilege of learning six lessons, which covered everything from planning a backpacking trip to toileting in the woods. They called it "basic outdoor sanitation," but I referred to it as "poop school." This was taught by yours truly since it was something I faced on nearly every day of my experience on Diakon's 30-Day Wilderness Course!

As a group, we learned much about the outdoors of which we, for so many years, had been unaware or neglectful. We were taught by Chris and Vallie Edenbo to have empathy for those who call the trails their home. Crawling out of your sleeping bag in the morning to find trash scattered throughout the campsite or reaching the viewpoint on a mountain to find bottles and cans peppering the area creates the same emotions as finding trash on your lawn. So the next time you decide to litter, which could be something as simple as throwing a candy wrapper on the ground, think about all the people who call that place home; think about all those who find unsurpassable beauty in that area. If neither of those hypothetical situations work for you, think about how you would feel if someone threw trash on *your* lawn... yeah, that's what I thought, so stop littering and have yourself a trash-free and blessed day!

Sincerely,

*Thomas C. Kemper*



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](mailto:kivlanr@Diakon.org)

Be sure to look for us on Facebook, keywords "Diakon Lutheran" or "Diakon Flight."

Interested in donating to the Flight Program?

Simply visit this page on the Web:

[www.diakon.org/DonationForm.asp](http://www.diakon.org/DonationForm.asp),

and select "Flight Program."



## *Giving Thanks*

On March 19, Flight Program participants and staff had the honor to meet and thank the state senator responsible for helping to secure funding for the first year of the program.

Sen. Pat Browne, a Republican from the 16<sup>th</sup> District (Lehigh, Monroe, and Northampton counties); Mark Pile, Diakon president/CEO, Corey Carothers, executive director of the Diakon Wilderness Center; Rob Kivlan, Flight Program supervisor; and Tom Kemper, Flight participant, all spoke, giving thanks to the Senator.

After the speakers, we were asked to share our scrapbooks with everyone in attendance and also had a photo-op with Sen. Browne. Flight members in attendance were Rob Kivlan, Sean Morgan, Matt Reichard, Tom Kemper, James Martin, and Ed Oslowski. It was a great honor and privilege to have this experience.

Sincerely,

*James Martin*

## *Helping those in need...*

Psychological first aid is one of the many skills I have learned since being in the Flight Program. We all attended a class taught by the American Red Cross on psychological first aid and learned how to help people who have been through a natural disaster or some other bad situation. Course instructors taught me how to make a situation more relaxed, comfort victims, and help out.

Recently, a home down the street caught fire and I got to put my skills to work. A mother and a 10-year-old son were affected. I spoke calmly to her and offered her something to drink and even watched her son while everything was happening. He came to my house to play Xbox while I stayed with the mother and kept talking with her to make sure she was okay, offering help whenever I could. I'm glad I learned this so that I was able to help—it felt great to help someone in need.

Sincerely,

*Ed Oslowski, Jr.*



## *Dining with Diakon*

I was honored with the opportunity to give back to the people who saved my life by being a guest chef at this year's Dining with Diakon – Central Region fundraiser.

I made Pasta Carbonara that night because that's the meal I had when Corey Carothers, administrator of the Diakon Wilderness Center, Rob, Chef Michelle from DWC, and I got to go out to eat after I joined the Flight Program. Having these people support me keeps driving me to succeed.

At Dining with Diakon I got to meet all sorts of great chefs and caring people. My family, my son, and some of my brothers from Flight all came out





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to cheer me on. I was able to raise over \$5,000 for the Flight Program so that other kids can get the same help I received. It felt great to give back. I'll never forget that night for the rest of my life.

Thank you to everyone who supported me and the Diakon Wilderness Center!

Sincerely,

*Brandon Kelbaugh*

### *Rock Climbing*



I believe one of the most remarkable things I did this year, which I will cherish for the rest of my life, was rock climbing at Pole Steeple. The reason for my feeling is simple: I mentally and physically pushed myself and had a chance to find my inner-self while help-



ing my Flight brothers to their full potential as well. The bonding experience I had and the willingness to be an asset for another's success really helped me to understand that I have a purpose in life.

God has been using me as a tool to spread His word, while teaching others to be supportive, loving people. That's why I thank the staff and my brothers in Flight for being the key players on God's path for my reaching the fullest of my spiritual potential.

Sincerely,

*Steven Reid*

### *Paddling the Conodoguinet Creek*

One of the great things about the Flight Program is that we interact with people young and old, rich and poor, rural and urban, of all different colors, religions, and backgrounds. In late April, Flight took a canoeing trip on the Conodoguinet Creek. It was a special float on calm waters where we fished, splashed, and talked our way downstream. We spotted fish, turtles, and a majestic egret—sights that, as urban youths, we had never seen before.

One of our guests on the trip was a 12-year-old boy who had never been canoeing. It was great to see his excitement. It helped me experience the wonder of a first-timer. When we concluded the float, there was a barbeque dinner with families in attendance. The principles of Flight were embodied on that beautiful afternoon. The older generation joined the younger. The urban experienced the rural. People of different backgrounds broke bread together. It made me proud to be part of such a program.

Sincerely,

*Sean Morgan*

Flight Program Counselor



## *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 our 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 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 stories.

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*Soaring  
to New  
Heights*