

Outward Bound provides coping skills to last a lifetime

Asheville, NC — Summer vacation is just around the corner and students are already making plans on how to make it the best break ever. A growing number of teens are giving up laps around the mall and hanging out at the pool for bigger adventures — experiences that will offer them skills, introduce them to new ideas, and provide them with memories that will last a lifetime.

According to North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt, these teens may find a perfect match at the North Carolina Outward Bound School. "I know first hand of the valuable skills given to NCOBS participants of all ages — especially young people," said Governor Hunt, a 1989 NCOBS alumnus. "NCOBS inspires confidence to face new challenges and teaches self-reliance, determination and personal responsibility," Hunt said. "These are the skills that will prove invaluable in a person's academic pursuits and throughout his or her life."

Lacy Godwin, a 15 year-old student from Fayetteville, is taking a 23-day NCOBS course this summer. "I've heard from my friends that Outward Bound is really challenging, and I like new adventures," Godwin explained. "I will miss my friends, and it will probably be weird not having a telephone and TV, but I will also be making new friends and learning more about nature, which will be fun."

Lynda Brackett, director of student services at NCOBS, said that Godwin's

attitude is not uncommon. "I have definitely seen an increase in the number of young adults that are seeking out achievement-oriented summer adventures," Brackett said. "More than 50 percent of our prospective students say that the challenge is the most important attribute of an Outward Bound course."

Godwin also hopes to apply what she learns on her Outward Bound course to her classes when she returns to school in the fall. "I will probably try harder than before pushing my limits and trying new things," Godwin said.

A report, profiled in the May 1997 issue of "Education Weekly," showed that students do in fact make significant improvements in problem-solving abilities, leadership skills and independence following an outdoor leadership course like the ones offered by NCOBS.

After completing an Outward Bound course, more than 80% of

alumni said they felt more confident, physically stronger, compassionate and environmentally conscious. Most alumni cite their Outward Bound experience as being one of the biggest milestones in their lives, and many choose to write about their trips in their college application essays.

"My Outward Bound experience has helped me to become more confident, especially when confronted with big challenges," said Adam Helsel, a NCOBS alumnus and high school freshman from Raleigh.

"The course has also helped my communications skills with my family, friends and school groups," Helsel said. "It is easier for me to get my point across in a positive way and to work as part of a team."

Established in Great Britain in 1941, Outward Bound is the oldest and largest adventure-based educational organization in the world. The North Carolina Outward Bound School is part of a national federation of five wilderness schools and two urban centers, offering programs in more than 20 states. Internationally, there are more than 40 Outward Bound schools and centers. NCOBS began offering its first courses at Table Rock, N.C. in 1967.

The program draws its name from a nautical term, "outward bound," which describes the moment a ship leaves the safety of the harbor for the unknown challenges and adventures of the open sea. By using a teaching philosophy based on The Four Pillars (craftsmanship, physical fitness, self-reliance and compassion) Outward Bound strives to teach students the skills necessary to successfully and confidently approach new ventures.

NCOBS offers a variety of courses from backpacking, rock climbing and

mountain biking to white water canoeing and sea kayaking. In addition to learning technical skills, students also spend time learning about wilderness safety, environmental issues, community service and personal responsibility.

The school's adventure areas include the eastern North Carolina mountains, courses range in length from eight to 28 days, and prices start around \$950. Financial aid and scholarships are available based on need and as resources allow.

To request a course catalog, call toll-free 1-877-826-9702, or visit the NCOBS web site at <http://www.ncobs.org>.

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