

# The Desert Sage

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## BRAT CAMP SPECIAL EDITION

July 28th, 2005 VOL. XI



### *“Brat Camp”*

## What’s in a name?

“No, we do not refer to our students as ‘brats’ at SageWalk.” And, “No, we did not have any control or influence on the name of ABC’s television program ‘Brat Camp’”. Most of us at SageWalk have had to go through this questioning with friends, families, prior students and their families, consultants and, surprisingly a fair amount of strangers on the street. “Brat Camp” is the title of ABC’s franchise series on wilderness therapy programs. It began with Redcliff Accent, a wilderness program in Utah, and has continued with us. The original production company for the first Brat Camp was based out of England where the term “brat” is widely used to refer to “kids”. ABC bought the British production and the rights to the name as well. Brat Camp remains the controversial, yet catchy title for wilderness therapy on television.

“Would you have participated in this production had you known they would call it ‘Brat Camp?’” This too has been a frequent follow up question by both skeptics and supporters of SageWalk. “*Absolutely!*” is the response. SageWalk remains confident and

proud of our involvement with the Shapiro/Grodner production company and believe that we have played a monumental role in increasing the awareness of a viable and extraordinary intervention for youth at risk. All wilderness therapy programs stand to gain from our demonstration of how we use the wilderness as a challenging, yet healing change agent.

“Brat Camp” is two words that may carry a confusing connotation for its viewers, but is not meant to represent how we care for our students. I would be curious to hear what people would have found more palatable that would have generated the same degree of viewer interest...

**Scott Fitzwater MA, LPC a.k.a. “Fire Bear”**  
**Program Director**



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### Wilderness Therapy – *Where's the "therapy"?*

Alright, as a therapist who did a lot of work with the students of Brat Camp I'm a bit relieved that the presentation of the "professional" therapeutic piece has been minimized. These nine students received the same amount of therapy (individual and group services) two full days a week. Flying Eagle, Mother Raven and I facilitated strong elements of emotional development with each student as well as their families. Several intense emotional growth workshops were facilitated to raise awareness and provoke new realizations. As therapists, we all shared concern regarding the public viewing of these personal and private processes and it appears that the production company has been sensitive to these requests. You may not see SageWalk therapists featured, but, I assure you, we spent many quality hours with students!

Scott Fitzwater, MA LPC



### (this) Summer at SageWalk

Peak season is upon us. SageWalk is running three female and three male groups. We are proud to be graduating a good number of students who are returning home as well as transitioning on to boarding schools following their summer at SageWalk. Our students are not only making exceptional progress therapeutically, but are also averaging upwards of 100 miles hiked per 30 days at SageWalk. These graduates are stronger and more confident for having accepted and embraced the challenges of wilderness.



### Seen and Heard on "Brat Camp"

Hundreds of thousands of people have been introduced to the industry of **wilderness therapy** because of Brat Camp and, assumedly, view SageWalk as a company that does this well. We have been handling hundreds of curious inquiries weekly since this program aired. The following are some of the key characters in the production of Brat Camp. You are welcome to contact them directly.

"Fire Bear"	<a href="mailto:scottf@sagewalk.com">scottf@sagewalk.com</a>
"Mother Raven"	<a href="mailto:cindyf@sagewalk.com">cindyf@sagewalk.com</a>
"Free Bird"	<a href="mailto:ericf@sagewalk.com">ericf@sagewalk.com</a>
"Glacier"	<a href="mailto:tonyr@sagewalk.com">tonyr@sagewalk.com</a>
"Cougar"	<a href="mailto:cougar@sagewalk.com">cougar@sagewalk.com</a>
"Little Big Bear" c/o	<a href="mailto:scottf@sagewalk.com">scottf@sagewalk.com</a>
"Fire Shaper" c/o	<a href="mailto:scottf@sagewalk.com">scottf@sagewalk.com</a>
Other instructors c/o	<a href="mailto:scottf@sagewalk.com">scottf@sagewalk.com</a>

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### Testimonials

“At first the nature of the show turned us off of the show, then knowing what we know now we really wanted to watch the show. We are so thankful for the staff there, they saved our son. Kevin is not a brat, he strayed from the path. I found that this show is very emotional to watch, realizing that we sent our only son there to do those things and deal with some issues we never knew about. If we had to do it again we would without hesitation... Without the dedication of the SageWalk staff we would never have found our son again.”

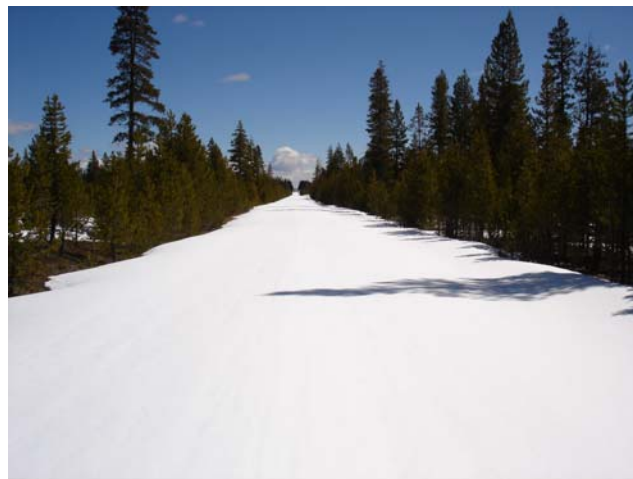
- mother of Kevin, former student, Fall 2004

“My name is Lisa and I’m an old student – I was at SageWalk (during the summer of 2004) and as of now am attending an emotional growth preparatory school. Right now I am on my third trip home. My parents recorded Brat Camp and I watched it this morning. It brought back a lot of memories and emotions. I saw Cougar, Glacier and Mountain Wind and they were around back when I was at SageWalk. It was strange seeing all that on TV – seeing those kids go through the same experience similar to mine... I went through my journal that I kept... Anyways, I just want to say thank you to everyone...I think you guys saved my life...”

- Lisa – former student

“I was a student at SageWalk in the summer of 2000. My mom (who sent me to you) taped the Brat Camp special and I must say it brought back so many great memories. I just wanted to drop a line and let everyone know that I am still sober... completely. I am a student at a local university and am steadily working on my bachelors in Biology. I just really wanted to let everyone know that SageWalk saved my life. Everyday I am grateful that my mom cared so much about me to help me. I still have all my gear, booklets, everything. Thank you so much.”

- Ashli – former student



### Appreciations

SageWalk is proud to be involved with this television production and the potential impact on programs providing emotional growth opportunities for adolescents. We appreciate each and every educational consultant who has contributed to our student’s success and continue to endorse SageWalk as a viable and effective intervention for at-risk youth.

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