



# Evolution of Success in Therapy

Students at Pathways are enabled to succeed in school and in life by a comprehensive program of therapeutic support. Each receives individual and group counseling, help in learning social skills and behavior management, and assistance when in crisis. Pathways staff work to establish relationships and to expand the web of therapeutic support to include students' families. In addition, Pathways recognizes that students often need alternative avenues through which to express themselves, and our staff use an array of creative approaches to help students grow in self-awareness and progress in the therapeutic process.

## Encouragement to Stay Healthy

Pathways' Student Assistance Program (SAP) is at the forefront of the school's effort to support students in making positive choices with respect to every aspect of health, including food and nutrition, exercise, and the avoidance of drugs and alcohol. The SAP program includes small group discussions conducted at every Pathways site that are focused on lifestyle issues, as well as larger group assemblies and mentoring of individual students. Pathways was the first nonpublic special education school to participate in Montgomery County Public Schools

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Project and to have staff trained in the project's school-based



A banner on display at the Drug Awareness Rally

intervention program. The Pathways SAP team is able to help identify students who may be having problems related to alcohol and other drug use and to refer them for assessment and appropriate services. Each year SAP sponsors a week of special workshops and activities to raise student awareness of the dangers of substance abuse. The kickoff is a Pathways-wide Drug Awareness Rally, in which students from every Pathways school participate by sharing their artistic talents in expressing their own reasons for choosing to live healthy and drug-free.

## Wilderness Education

Through partnership with the Rolling Ridge Study Retreat, Pathways has access to a 1500-acre wilderness preserve in the foothills of the Blue Ridge along the Shenandoah River near Harpers Ferry, WV. The acreage, which is owned by the Rolling Ridge Foundation, is to be used for environmental education as well as conservation. While at Rolling Ridge, students experience life close to nature through camp-



Students and staff from Pathways-Edgewood prepare for rapids on the Shenandoah during their trip to Rolling Ridge in May.

ing, hiking and community service projects such as trail blazing and stream cleanup. The annual autumn or spring trip to Rolling Ridge is a highlight of the year for some Pathways programs, particularly since the teambuilding activities for students and staff involve rollicking adventures while mountain biking or rafting on the Shenandoah.



Setting up camp in the woods at Rolling Ridge

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## Therapeutic Horseback Riding

When Pathways students go to the Rock Creek Park Horse Center in Washington, DC their experience involves a lot more than riding lessons. They learn about responsibility by taking care of the horse they choose to ride, including feeding, grooming and cleaning the stall. Over time, they develop a relationship with the



*A confident student horseman at therapeutic riding*

horse, and learn that successful riding means that the rider must adapt to the rhythms and style of the animal in order to effectively guide it. The students grow in confidence with every trip to the stable and learn just as much about themselves and their abilities as they do about horses and riding.

## Teaching Peace

At Pathways, emphasis is placed on encouraging, modeling, reinforcing and practicing ways to resolve issues and settle differences using positive means. On a daily basis, our staff takes advantage of every “teachable moment” to give guidance on social skills and positive problem solving. In individual and group therapy, and in the classrooms, halls and meeting areas throughout Pathways, students are encouraged to participate in a culture of respect, acceptance and compassion.

In recent years, students at Pathways-Anne Arundel have been enthusiastic about completing a peace project as a group, and this year was no

exception. With help from staff, they built the “Pathways Float of Hope”, an elaborate structure erected on a trailer with the theme of caring for the Earth. A beach scene, a globe covered with flowers, and a trash can served to remind people of the beauty and fragility of the environment and the responsibility to treat the planet with respect.

The float was on display during the Pathways-Anne Arundel annual retreat for students and families. Dr. Helen Williams, Pathways Educational Director, commended the students for their creativity and work in completing the project, a part of which was featured at the Pathways Academic Expo.



## Basketball for Leadership



*Hands-in at OneOnOne Basketball*

This was Pathways tenth year of the OneOnOne basketball program, which teaches students life skills while they play ball. Pathways was the first special education school to work with the national OneOnOne basketball organization. All students regardless of previous experience or skill level are eligible to participate in OneOnOne, which uses basketball to build self-esteem, cooperation, teamwork and leadership.