

Duane A. Bernard

2232 South Main Street
Suite 474
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103-6938
(734-904-0190) / (dabernard@earthlink.net)

April 25, 2008

Gladys Carrion, Esq.
Commissioner
New York State Office of
Child and Family Services
52 Washington Street
Rensselaer, NY 12144-2796

**RE: Allegations of Child Abuse at
Adirondack Leadership Expedition,
Saranac Lake, New York**

Dear Ms. Carrion,

Please accept my letter as a request to perform an investigation into potential adolescent mistreatment and abuse at the Adirondack Leadership Expedition, Saranac Lake, New York. The allegations of mistreatment and abuse are provided by my minor son, Matthew Anthony Bernard (DOB: May 10, 1991) during his captivity at Adirondack Leadership Expedition (here after referred to as "ALE") remote location from February 22, 2008, through March 23, 2008.

Please find attached for your consideration the following items: (1) Matthew Bernard's hand-written letter dated March 10, 2008, in which he describes his poor physical condition and the real dangers of his campsite; (2) the typed letter of Matthew Bernard dated March 10, 2008, (refer to item aforesaid item 1); (3) Matthew Bernard's hand-written testimony of mistreatment and / or abuse suffered by him at ALE at the hands of his captors; (4) the typed testimony of Matthew Bernard (refer to item aforesaid item 3); and, (5) Section 5 of the ALE Program Enrollment Agreement in which ALE acknowledges their program causes "emotional and physical injuries, illness or death" and that death or serious injury "occur during activities due to..negligence". Any program that puts the safety and security of their attendees first and foremost would not make such an acknowledgement.

In addition, I invite you to investigate the following websites, one of which publishes confirmation of abuse at ALE and other ALE camps affiliated through its parent organization Aspen Educational:

www.heal-online.org/aspenachievc.html
www.heal-online.org/childabuseusa.html

Gladys Carrion, Esq.
April 25, 2008

Page 2

In addition, www.edlabor.house.gov provides historical webcasts of the Honorable George Miller's, Committee on Education and Labor - US House of Representatives investigation into child abuse at residential programs (aka, ALE-type camps). You may also find additional information about the widespread abuse at ALE-type camps through internet searches (key words: "GAO + Residential"). Lastly, I can provide you a full listing of resources and industry professionals (including an independent survivor who was abused at ALE and a lawyer representing clients who were abused at camps operated by ALE's parent) who will provide insight into the mistreatment and abuse at residential camps.

Please note that a New York State Police investigation into the allegations had been performed (incident report no. SJS2442609). Unfortunately, on the date the investigating trooper visited ALE, he could not substantiate my son's allegations of mistreatment and abuse. I ask that New York State Office of Child and Family Services also investigate with a broader scope that some of these allegations of abuse and mistreatment occurred on public (and not private) lands.

Ms. Carrion, my intent is to support the national initiative that children are not mistreated or abused at private, for-profit wilderness camps / residential programs which are mostly unregulated, unlicensed and unsupervised. If such camps and programs exist and they have the ability to mask their mistreatment and abuses of troubled teens, we as society have an obligation to shed light on their tactics and hold them accountable. Troubled teens need guidance, help and love - not mistreatment, intimidation and abuse.

Again, thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Duane A. Bernard