

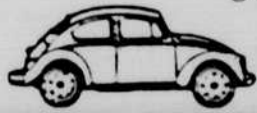


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## Community

# Outward Bound offers adventure

By Ann Ziegler  
Emerald Contributor

While some people think of lolling on a sandy beach alongside azure waters as the ideal way to escape from the stress of the daily grind, others imagine an action-packed adventure as the perfect getaway.

Outward Bound specializes in adventure. Its schools provide a way to simultaneously relieve stress and develop a new perspective on life.

Outward Bound is an international non-profit organization that offers outdoor adventure courses for men and women as well as juniors aged 14 to 15.

Participants test themselves on wilderness courses, climbing mountain peaks and crossing rugged trails, challenging rapids and deserts, and learning to survive alone and in groups.

"Outward Bound is a marvelous program," said Laura Dale, an Outward Bound river instructor since 1988 and graduate student at the University. "People come with this great desire to learn and change, and

it's wonderful to be around that energy," Dale said.

The schools stress social dynamics rather than individual competition, Dale said. Although participants learn some technical skills, they mostly take with them the success of having tackled some tough psychological challenges, she said.

Courses can last from a few days to several months. Some are tailored for individuals with eating disorders and substance abuse problems, for cancer patients and their families, or for victims of violence and others with special therapy needs. Outward Bound even offers a professional development course to promote teamwork and personal effectiveness in the workplace.

Dale said a typical course is two to three weeks in the mountains and one week on the river. A final expedition might be a hike from one mountain peak to another within a certain time frame, with an instructor following the group.

A seven-day river course might begin with a 100-mile rafting trip down the Deschutes or Rogue River, Dale said. With instructor supervision, students are in charge of their own boats after one or two days on the water.

Rock climbing would likely include the exhilarating experience of rappelling down an 80-foot cliff. Each trip includes a "solo," or one to three days of uninterrupted solitude in the wilderness for a chance to contemplate and reflect on whatever the student chooses.

Dale said Outward Bound is the first big outdoor school of its kind, founded by Kurt Hahn in the 1940s. It has been quite successful, she said, and operates on trustee donations and participant fees of about \$100 a day. Scholarships and college credit are available to students through the program as well.

"One of the big tenets of Outward Bound is service," Dale said. She said Hahn's interest in groups and personal well-being are evident in Outward Bound's philosophy.

Kathy Kinser, a geography student at the University, went through a wilderness leadership semester course at Colorado Outward Bound in the spring of 1989. She spent two weeks winter mountaineering

in the Cascade Range of Colorado, then explored Canyon Lands National Park in Utah, went rock climbing in Wyoming and white water rafting on Utah's Green River.

Kinser's solo adventure took place in the canyon lands over three days and nights. During the course she subsisted on mostly peanut butter, crackers, cheeses, and what she called "bloatmeal and cream of punishment" food packets.

"The group was left to figure out meals," Kinser said. "We had to get to camp by a certain time, dig snow caves or put up a pyramid," which is a tarp tent for snow camping.

What if someone panics or decides not to participate? "You encourage them," Dale said, "especially rappelling."

Group members encourage each other to face challenges, and one of the rewards of a course is to see people rooting for someone who was a stranger to them before the trip, Dale said.

Safety is a top priority in Outward Bound schools. Instructors have several years of experience and extensive training at Outward Bound, including first aid, CPR and wilderness emergency management instruction.

Kinser said her 83 days in the wilderness went by quickly, but there were times when being out there, "making do with what you have" was more of a personal challenge than she imagined.

"Outward Bound emphasizes group communication skills, which I believe is excellent," Kinser said. "They bring together technical and communication skills that combine to give people a chance to grow within themselves and with others," she said.

Kinser said her Outward Bound experience gave her more self-respect and the knowledge that she can succeed in a variety of situations.

Outward Bound courses take place in the wildwoods and badlands of 22 states, including Oregon, Texas, Maine, Colorado, North Carolina and Montana.

For more information, call Outward Bound at 1-800-547-3312.

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