



# TIDINGS

Newsletter of the Penikese Island School

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## Just Business: The Behavior is Nothing Personal

By TOBY T. LINEAWEAVER, Executive Director

Perhaps you've seen those cartoons featuring Sam the Sheepdog and Ralph Wolf. The episodes begin with Sam and Ralph arriving at the pasture and exchanging pleasantries about the wife and kids before punching the clock and getting to work. Every day, Ralph slinks around trying to steal sheep while Sam intervenes on the flock's behalf and deals out the consequences to Ralph. When the whistle blows, they drop everything, grab their lunch buckets and say good night. Their jobs are nothing personal, just business.

Two months ago, I spent a day on kitchen duty with Ted, a new student who was ridiculing Penikese's expectations that he should abide by a clean and sober lifestyle while pronouncing that he would drink and smoke whenever he pleased, school rules be damned!

Performances like these really get my goat (which is what they are designed to do), but I took a breath and reminded Ted that Penikese is a program of choices, the most important one being that Ted chose to attend and, by doing so, accepted our rules. Whether or not Ted got high was his choice, and if he did, he would get caught sooner or later. So, shall we mop this floor and get on with making supper?

A month later Ted returned from his first home pass. We searched him and his bags, and administered a simple drug test before putting him on the boat, as we do with all the students. Predictably, the searches and drug tests came up empty, not altogether a bad thing, except this time we weren't

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## The Four R's of a Penikese Education

by CHRISTINE PALUMBO, Penikese visitor,  
Education Specialist from Lakewood, Ohio

As a Special Education Consultant and Ph.D. degree candidate preparing for my dissertation in literacy, I went to Penikese for 5 days in search of the three R's in education as applied to at-risk youth. I found things that I never expected. I found pigs and chickens and geese. I found authors, and poets. I found carpenters, and care takers. I found athletes, students, and avid readers. I found sons, adopted, biological and foster. I found staff that has chosen to make a living making a difference. I also found a fourth R: relationships.

In education we talk of holding kids accountable for their actions, we talk of natural consequences. We talk of helping them to believe in themselves, in their own abilities, and in their own futures and dreams. Nowhere have I seen these ideals infused into a school or program so naturally, so honestly,

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### Tidings On-line

You can always find past issues and helpful articles from **TIDINGS** online at: [www.penikese.org](http://www.penikese.org) in the Almanac section.

Also available are Penikese's annual reports, including the fiscal year 2003 report Over the Bar which includes the lengthy Clinical Spotlight "Working With Choices."

# Called to do More

## Supporters render services above and beyond

By PATTY PEAL, Director of Development

Most supporters of our school open our mail to read about our mission and, when inspired, sit down to write us a check. By fate and necessity some friends and supporters are called to do more than that.

One peaceful night on Penikese Island a boisterous game of tag between students and staff suddenly turned into a frantic game of find the missing tooth. Two students bonked their heads together, and the next thing, one had an ugly gash on his forehead while the other was on the ground, groping in the dark for his front tooth.

The tooth was quickly found, and Executive Director, Toby Lineaweaver got on the cell phone and called his friend and Penikese supporter, dentist Michael Adams. Dr. Adams coached Toby through a procedure to reinsert the tooth, but the student's gums were too swollen. Toby was told to wrap the tooth in wet cloths and get to Dr. Adam's office ASAP!

Unluckily, Penikese's boat had just been hauled from the water for maintenance. Penikese's captain Bill Rogers, always on standby, called another school friend and supporter, Jim Tietje of Patriot Party Boats. Jim loaned us his boat *Minuteman*, and Bill raced out to Penikese and back to Falmouth, finally arriving at the dentist's office and Falmouth Hospital Emergency Room just after midnight.

Thank you friends for unselfish, middle of the night service. Nine stitches were administered to the head of one boy, and a beautiful smile was restored to the face of another. Instead of getting a good night's sleep you came to the aid of Penikese and two students you had never met. We are grateful for such generous support.

### There are many ways to support the mission of Penikese Island School:

- Express your commitment through an **annual contribution**
- Contact your **employer to match** your annual contribution
- **Give a gift** of appreciated securities, real estate or life insurance
- **Include Penikese in your will** with a planned gift or charitable bequest
- **Sponsor or attend our events** to benefit programs and services
- **Let us know of a friend** who may be interested in Penikese

However you choose to support Penikese, please know that you can make a difference for boys who have known little opportunity. Call us at 508-548-7276 x207 or use the enclosed envelope for your convenience. Penikese is a tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) non profit organization.

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convinced. So, we waited a couple of days before testing all the students on the island again.

This time, bingo, the tests lit up positive for marijuana. When confronted with the evidence, the usual squall of denial, finger pointing and recrimination followed before the truth came out: Ted used pot, and gave some to the other students, too. Those involved lost their next home pass, including Ted who, by violating his probation, faced the possibility of jail time.

Deflated, Ted slunk around the island for a few days, head down. When we finally had a chance



to talk, Ted dutifully expressed his regret while promising better choices in the future. Then a moment of what I took to be meaningful silence hung between us before Ted suddenly perked up and said, "But I'm not telling you how I did it, and you'll never find out, ha!"

Good morning, Ralph, hello, Sam! *Adolescents need to test and push boundaries to find out where the limits are, and adults must hold the line until they learn.* It's a developmental task, and nothing personal, really.

### SAVE THE DATES:

**6/17/06 Benefit Concert with Pianist Bob Milne**

**8/26/06 Summer Gala on Penzance Point**

# Friends, Survival & Symbols of Success

## A volunteer's experience hosting a "Friend Raiser"

By BARBARA MARCKS, Board Member

The turning leaves remind me of an October friend-raising event at our house. Guests and staff members mingled over refreshments, and we heard brief descriptions of the School's mission from several Trustees and the School's Director. Everyone was moved to silence, however, when one Penikese graduate told us how much the School meant to him.

This young man had been in and out of other programs, group homes and foster care for years. He had never met his father, and his mother struggled with serious mental illness. Then, days before his hard earned graduation from Penikese his mother committed suicide.

The island staff broke the news. They helped him buy an appropriate funeral suit, flew out of town with him, and stayed with him during the services. Standing before our friend-raiser, he told us, "If it had not been for Penikese, I would be dead, too."

Several years had gone by since this young man left Penikese. He had a job and a fiancée and a future. Along with everything he learned at Penikese, he learned how to give back to the school by telling his difficult but powerful story.

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and so concretely than at the Penikese Island School.

Although no blood relation, the staff and students of Penikese work and live together as a viable family unit. We cannot lose sight of the importance of such relationships in fostering the literacy and learning success in our most marginalized populations, in the lives of those who need these relationships the most.



In an era of "no child left behind," of accountability and testing we seem to look toward higher test scores as the panacea to cure what ails us as a society. What we seem to have lost sight of is that role models and relationships, not repeated assessments, may have the most lifesaving and life changing impact. I am truly grateful to the students and staff for allowing me the opportunity to witness the "Penikese way." My dissertation, nearly finished, is now a joy instead of a chore to write!



The Penikese Island School Board of Trustees, Staff and Volunteers would like to invite you to Host a *Friend Raiser* For 12 to 50 people, at your home with your friends, family and colleagues for cocktails and hors d'ouvres, information and inspiration

Please contact: Patty Peal, Director of Development  
508-548-7276 x207  
or ppeal@penikese.org



- For information on referring students to the Penikese Island School or questions about **Aftercare and Transitional Services**, contact Kerri O'Malley, Director of Treatment Programs, at 508-548-7276, extension 202 or komalley@penikese.org

- For questions concerning **clinical consultation and supervision, arranging an in-service, or for any other information about the School's treatment model**, contact Pamela Brighton, Clinical Specialist, at 508-548-7276, extension 205 or pbrighton@penikese.org

Photos by Island Shift Leader Abigail Chapman

## Trends in Juvenile Justice

Just as buoys and other aids to navigation orient mariners to their surrounding seascape, Penikese keeps a lookout for indications that it, too, is on the right course. A survey of recent publications turned up the following interesting points that show Penikese is on the right course:

*From a September 2005 Department of Justice publication titled **Alternatives to Secure Detention and Confinement of Juvenile Offenders** (found at <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>):*

**On detention and confinement:** "As many as 50 – 70% of previously confined youth are rearrested within one or two years after release (p. 3)."

**On residential skills programs:** "Programs that serve troubled youth and provide education, job training, life skills planning, and aftercare programs. In 1999 – 2000 graduates had a 16% rearrest rate, compared with a rearrest rate of approximately 54% among all youth released (p. 17)."

**On Teaching Family Homes:** Teaching family homes (where a small number of delinquents live with supervising adults who focus on modifying behaviors) were effective in reducing recidivism. This type of program was one of only two interventions of 83 shown to be consistently effective in reducing recidivism among institutional youth. Teaching family homes produced an approximately 30 – 35% reduction in recidivism rates (p. 20)."

*From the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Programs Guide (found at [www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/mpg\\_index](http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/mpg_index)):*

**On residential programs:** "Two program types showing relatively large, statistically significant mean effects on recidivism for institutionalized offenders across all estimation procedures were interpersonal skills programs, and teaching family programs."

**On Aftercare:** "The term aftercare is somewhat of a misnomer because the process does not simply begin when the offender is released. It requires a seamless set of systems across formal and informal social control networks as well as the creation of a continuum of community services to prevent the reoccurrence of antisocial behavior."

