

SEEING IS BELIEVING

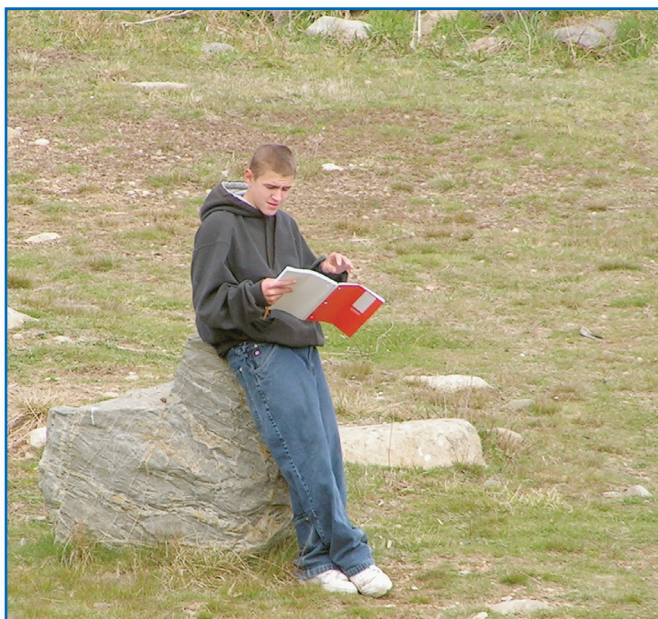
a visitor's first impressions

Over this past winter I had the opportunity to visit Penikese Island School. There were several reasons for doing so, but the triggering event was when I read a newsletter from the school in which the word “broken” was associated with “adolescent boys.” While it is painful to think of any person being “broken” in mind, spirit, or heart, to think of a boy whose whole life lies ahead of him being “broken” was an unbearable thought to me. So I decided to check the school out.

You may be interested in a quick overview of my impressions of that day. First and foremost, I was overwhelmed by the compassion I saw in the eyes of the director and the counselors as they interfaced with the boys. I learned more by being allowed to just listen during the course of that day than I could have learned in a semester in a formal educational institution.

The program itself is so basic and simple. Assume responsibility and good things will happen. Don't assume responsibility and bad things will happen. Treat people with respect, and they will return the respect. Be offensive and you will probably be offended. I saw several examples during these few hours of how effective that basic message is and quickly saw the positive results of their efforts. The boys were learning, laughing and inter-relating with each other, as teenage boys should. Just months earlier these same youngsters had come to the island bitter and angry.

The documented success of the Penikese Island School has been its safe, nurturing and teaching residential environment. As I journeyed on the boat back to the mainland, my thoughts turned to your children and mine who have been raised in stable families, enjoyed the best of educations in safe environments,



and yes, who have had privileges some other children may never have. Then I thought of the boys I had just left behind.

“...a wonderful thing is taking place...”

It is my estimation that a wonderful thing is taking place at Penikese Island School and it permeates the human spirit. But of course the very nature of this all encompassing program makes it very costly to operate and it must rely upon all of us who can help. So I am asking if you would join me, and the many others, to share what we can with this family of youngsters attending this special school. Thank you kindly for taking the time to consider the appeal I am making.

Sincerely,

Barry Maher

F. Barry Maher, Esquire
Visitor and Volunteer

P.S. I came away from my visit totally reinforced in my basic belief in the goodness of people. I encourage you not only to give what you can but make it a point to visit when you can. Summer Sunday Visitors Trips are scheduled for July 22nd and September 9th, weather permitting.

Call 508-548-7276 x207, Patty or x208, Suzanne, to sign up.



Penikese Island School