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Helping Children & Families Find Their Way

**Red Top Meadows**

## **Parent Information Packet**

Red Top Meadows, a program of Teton Youth & Family Services, is a 14-bed residential treatment program established in 1980 to serve adolescent males. The facility is located on 20 acres bordering the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

Common issues for our students include poor school performance, family conflicts, poor peer relationships, attachment problems, depression, childhood trauma, attention difficulties, sexual issues, and poor decision- making, coping and social skills.

Teton Youth & Family Services, *Bruce Burkland, Executive Director*  
P.O. Box 290 Wilson, WY 83014 • 307.733.9098 • [tyfs.org](http://tyfs.org)

We at RTM would like you to know that we understand that placing your child in residential care can be a difficult and confusing time. It can also be an exciting time of growth and positive change for you and your family. The information in this packet is intended to help you be involved in this process. Please talk to us about our program and how we can provide the help and support you need.

# To the Parents

## RTM Staff

The staff at Red Top are all individuals who work at RTM because they care about helping our students and their families lead happier lives. Parents should feel free to talk with the staff members about their child and ask questions about the program. There are 20 fulltime staff members at RTM. Listed below are some of the staff you are likely to talk with while your son is here.

**Executive Director** – Bruce Burkland, LMFT

**Director:** Tom Concannon, LMFT

**Program Manager / Wilderness Director** – Ted Nichols

**Program Therapists** – Dick Lundeen and Peter Moffatt

**Program Administrator** – Kilee Amborski

**Education Director** – Erin Silcox

**Teachers** – Kyle Knutson and Frances Saron

## Family Involvement

We feel strongly that family involvement is an essential part of the treatment process for the following reasons.

1. Family input results in more productive goals.
2. Family support and encouragement are essential in helping the child through the changes he is trying to make.
3. To provide useful background information and advice regarding their child. ( Parents do know their child the best)
4. Maintaining positive change and future growth is dependent on the relationship between the student and his family. RTM is practice for the work that needs to happen when he leaves.

## Families are encouraged to be involved by:

- Attending and participating in the intake meeting to help clarify and develop meaningful treatment goals
- Attending regularly scheduled family therapy sessions with RTM treatment staff twice a month, in person if possible or by phone if travel is too difficult.
- Attending and participating in scheduled family days and ceremonies • Talking with RTM staff about their child's accomplishments and progress
- Contacting their child via mail or phone on a regular basis. • Visiting your child at pre-arranged visitation times
- Seeking professional counseling from a family oriented therapist in your home community to prepare for your child's return home.

## Phone Contact

Frequency of phone contact with your child and a list of approved family members should be established at the time of intake or shortly afterwards. Students are encouraged to communicate with their families but not rely on them to solve their daily problems. The RTM phone # is 307-733-9098. If no one is around to receive your phone call, please leave a message on our voice mail and someone will return your call as soon as possible.

## Visitations and Home Visits

After a short (one or two weeks) orientation period for the student, parents and families are welcome and encouraged to visit with their son at RTM. Due to the busy schedule and the number of parents wishing to visit, we ask that arrangements for family visits be scheduled ahead of time. When possible, it is helpful for your son's treatment progress to schedule visits in conjunction with a time that a family session can happen. Local families unable to visit during family session time are encouraged to visit between 2:00 – 4:00 PM on Sundays. We request that families from out of town set a time of arrival with your son's therapist so that the necessary arrangements can be made to have the student available and a time can be arranged for a family meeting with the therapist.

The number of home visits a student has is dependent on what stage in the program he is on. The higher the stage, the more home visits he is eligible for. Home visits are scheduled five times per year; after each of the seasonal wilderness trips and at Christmas (see annual schedule). Home visits are a time for students to practice newly learned skills with their families. Students on higher stages, who have committed to and have been practicing new skills at RTM, are more likely to practice them at home and are thus offered more opportunities.

RTM has three separate systems for managing and rewarding appropriate behavior and treatment progress. The stage system reflects a student's commitment and progress on treatment goals while the point and level systems focus more on daily and weekly behavior.

# Points, Levels and Stages

Below is a description of each of the systems so you may better understand the meaning of the stage and level your son is on at a given time.

## Point System

The point system serves as a daily reward for positive behaviors, and provides students with an opportunity to earn and manage money. Students may earn five points per day: three points from the milieu (daily living), and two points from the school. A point is worth 25 cents. The five categories and examples of the expected behaviors are as follows:

- **Therapy** – A student can earn a point by working on his goal and skills for the week which are decided on during the students weekly level meeting with a supervisor
- **Relationships** – A student can earn this point by working on improving his relationships with other students and staff by practicing effective communication and being respectful.
- **Responsibility** – A student can earn this point by doing his room chore and unit work chore. He is also responsible for showing up for activities, and group meetings on time and prepared.
- **School** – Student makes an effort to follow the schedule and be co-operative in the classroom (1 point). Makes a solid effort to complete work (1 point).

The points earned can be saved, turned into cash, used to pay off debts, or spent on store items. Prior to home visits, students are given the chance to turn points into cash.

## Levels

In general, privileges are earned through the stage system. But, if a student engages in a major rule violation or demonstrates consistent untrustworthiness, he may be put on level 1 or restrictive level where all privileges are suspended until the student can demonstrate a consistent effort to engage with the program.

## The Stage System

The stage system at RTM is intended to structure the treatment program and help guide students through a logical series of steps necessary to achieve their goals. The system reflects the philosophical principals of our program and is designed to help students develop healthy relationships, learn important things about themselves and others, and provide opportunities for students to contribute to the local communities.

There are five stages to work through to complete the RTM program. Each stage has a set of behavioral, academic and therapeutic expectations that need to be completed in order to move on to the next stage. The expectations are flexible enough to address individual needs and capabilities. Community service projects and wilderness/adventure experiences are included throughout the program and may not be associated with a particular stage. As a student progresses through the stage system they are expected to take on more responsibility and are thus able to earn more privileges.

**Stage I - Orientation** – A new student is oriented to the program with the help of a mentor, learns the basic rules and expectations and starts forming relationships with peers and staff.

**Stage II – Personal “Talk”** – Students are matched up with a development team who helps students develop goals and identify corresponding skills. Daily logs are customized to reflect these goals and skills and students are expected to write daily comments and observations. Students are expected to participate in all areas of the program. Students are offered education in problem solving, conflict resolution, anger management, developing healthy relationships, identifying and expressing feelings, values clarification and communication etc.

**Stage III – Personal “Walk”** – Students are expected to effectively control and manage their behavior and consistently demonstrate effort towards achieving goals. Students are expected to participate in daily and weekly self-assessment by writing and reviewing daily logs with a focus on matching up their personal feelings and issues with daily behaviors. Students are expected to maintain a good effort in school, completing assignments and earning passing grades. Resolving conflicts effectively, expressing feelings appropriately and completing assignments for therapy groups are also part of walking the walk.

**Stage IV – Community** – Students are given responsibilities for the group and group members. Students become mentors and teachers for new students and develop their own community service projects. Students continue to learn how to be empathetic, caring individuals and complete assignments involving apologies and restitution. Students will be offered education in areas of diversity and tolerance.

**Stage V – Transition** – Students start wrapping up their relationships at RTM and preparing to go home or move on to the next placement. Students are involved in setting up support and after care plans with family, schools etc.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Is there a specific day and time to telephone my child?**

**A:** No, however it is best to call between 3:45-4:30 PM or 6:30-8:00 PM. This allows for the fewest interruptions to the program schedule.

**Q: Can my child call me whenever he wishes?**

**A:** Yes, unless it becomes so frequent that the student is using the calls to avoid interacting with any staff or students.

**Q: What should I send with my child in the way of clothing and supplies?**

**A:** Please see the Clothing List included in the Parent Information Packet.

**Q: Are there any restrictions with regard to amount or types of personal belongings?**

**A:** Red Top Meadows discourages students from having personal belongings that are irreplaceable or are fragile. Things are frequently broken or lost by students and RTM cannot be responsible for those belongings.

**Q: What number should I call if I want to find out information about my child?**

**A:** Red Top's phone number is (307) 733-9098.

**Q: Who are the staff members who can provide information about my child?**

**A:** The Director is Tom Concannon; Wilderness Director is Ted Nichols; Program Therapists are Dick Lundeen and Peter Moffatt; Program Supervisors are Henry McLaughlin, Andy Eckl, and Mike Shoumlin; Education Director is Erin Silcox; Program Administrator is Kilee Amborski. Any of these staff members can provide updates on your child.

**Q: How many children are in residence at Red Top Meadows at any one time?**

**A:** Red Top Meadows has a maximum capacity of 14 students.

**Q: Do the residents live in a dorm?**

**A:** Yes, residents live in a dorm—housed in a log cabin. Each dorm has a maximum of four boys to a room and each room opens to an outdoor boardwalk.

**Q: What type of recreation will be available to my child?**

**A:** Thanks to the spectacular surroundings, 20 acres of property, and proximity to the National Forest, we offer at least one, usually two, outdoor activities per day. These include running, soccer, basketball, initiative tasks, cross-country skiing, and hiking. In addition, approximately fifty days of the year are spent on wilderness trips.

**Q: Am I allowed to visit my child?**

**A:** Red Top Meadows encourages visits from family members!

**Q: Is there a special day of the week and/or time for a visit?**

**A:** It is most convenient for RTM if you visit Sundays between 2-4 PM however other times and more time can be arranged if it is difficult to get here. Please call to make arrangements with your child's therapist.

**Q: Will my child be allowed to come home for visits?**

**A:** Yes, the visits range from 2 to 7 weeks per year depending on your son's progress on his treatment issues. You will receive a program schedule at the time of intake that outlines the dates of home visits. At a minimum, all students have a week home visit at Christmas and in mid-August.

**Q: Will my child attend public school? If not, where will he/she go to school?**

**A:** All students attend school on grounds at RTM. Red Top Meadows is a certified school by the Wyoming Department of Education.

**Q: Will my letters be read by facility personnel?**

**A:** No, your letters will go directly to your child.

**Q: Are there limits as to what I can send my child (i.e., treats, gifts)?**

**A:** We ask that you not send candy or treats as it interferes with our point system. Students earn points daily that can be used to purchase sodas and snacks. Reading, drawing and art materials are all encouraged.

**Q: Will my child be given stamps to send letters?**

**A:** Yes, but we appreciate you giving your child stamped envelopes to write you and extended family. When families demonstrate interest in receiving letters it encourages the students to write home.

## Mail & Packages, Transportation, Medications, Music & Games

### Mail and Packages

Receiving mail is an important time for students. Receiving letters lets students know they are being thought of outside the RTM community. For this reason we encourage parents to send mail but discourage sending treats and food items. RTM has a point system for students to earn and buy extra treats etc. To maintain the effectiveness of the point system and for all students to be treated equally and fairly it is important for parents to not send food treats to RTM. Any treats that do come into the program will be shared amongst every one. Items that are more helpful and appropriate to send are stationary, stamps, books, art supplies, pictures of family and friends and clothing (see clothing list). Please keep in mind that RTM does not have very much storage space and students are limited in the amount of personal items they may have.

Mail should be sent to:     **Students Name**  
                                      **Red Top Meadows**  
                                      **Box 290**  
                                      **Wilson, WY 83014**

Packages should be         **Students Name**  
sent via UPS to:             **Red Top Meadows**  
                                      **7905 Fall Creek Rd.**  
                                      **Wilson, WY 83014**

### Medications

RTM staff is responsible for storing, facilitating self-administration and documenting all types of medication including prescription, over the counter and/or homeopathic. Parents can be helpful in this process by:

- Remembering to take medications home during home visits and returning with them to RTM. Parents should not have students be in charge of their own medications.
- Handing medications directly to a RTM staff and exchanging any important information
- Sticking to the scheduled times when administering medications at home. Documenting the time is helpful for our records.
- Coming to RTM with enough medication to last until a prescription can be filled or refilled. If there is a transfer of prescribing doctors this may take a week or so.

### Music and games

Music at RTM is a stage IV privilege. Stage IV students may earn the privilege to have a small music player to listen to on free time, please no multi-media devices. Parents of new students should hold on to their son's music until the time that he has earned the music privilege. RTM staff attempt to screen music before allowing it in the program but as technology changes that becomes increasingly difficult. We find electronic games to be a distraction for the students and prefer that they spend their time at RTM practicing other, more social, free time skills. Board games and puzzles are welcome but generally don't last long before pieces are lost.

\*RTM will not be responsible for lost, stolen, traded or broken personal items. Belongings of value should be left at home in safekeeping.

### Admissions

The most important part of the admissions process is gathering as much accurate and useful information as possible. This information is crucial for the treatment team to assess the appropriateness of a referral and make a good decision about whether we think we can help a particular student.

Common issues for our students include poor school performance, family conflicts, poor peer relationships, depression, childhood trauma, attachment disorders, attention difficulties, sexual issues, and poor decision making, coping and social skills. RTM can be a helpful program for many boys, so our licensed staff members review each referral independently.

Qualities which are generally **inappropriate** include:

- History of violent episodes that have required physical or medical restraints.
- Developmental limitations that make it difficult to learn from therapy groups.
- Being under 12 years of age.
- Having a psychiatric condition that has not been stabilized by medication.
- A need for substance detoxification.
- A major medical problem that has not been stabilized

## Admissions, Services and Fees

### RTM Residential Program Daily Fees for Services

Treatment Services, Tuition, & Room and Board:

\$8,300/month

*Please note: Medical costs and clothing are not included in these fees.*

### Description of Services

#### A. Education

*The RTM School is accredited by the Wyoming Department of Education.*

- Individualized classroom instruction with certified teachers
- Physical and vocation education
- Including career planning, technical skills and consumer education programs
- Standardized Testing
- Educational planning to meet graduation standards and requirements
- Monthly progress reports
- Development, compliance and documentation in Individual Education Plans for all identified students and adherence to all state and federal regulations regarding these services.
- Related services may be an additional fee and vary according to the service.

#### B. Treatment Services

*Please see the Program Information for specific descriptions of each service.*

- Individual, Group and Family Therapy
- Therapy and Education Groups for Special Populations
- Planned and Therapeutic Daily Recreation
- Wilderness Experiences
- RTM Wilderness Program is accredited by the Association of Experiential Education
- Wyoming Department of Family Services
- Horticultural Experiences
- Milieu Therapy
- Point and Stage System
- Treatment and Aftercare Planning
- Monthly Progress Reports

#### C. Room and Board

*Room and Board is provided in compliance and with certification from:*

- Teton County and the Wyoming Department of Fire Safety
- Teton County and the Wyoming Department of Health

#### Clothing

Providing clothing is the responsibility of the parent or guardian of a RTM student. As you know, adolescent boys grow out of clothing quickly and wear through even the toughest clothes. In addition, the outdoor/wilderness nature of the RTM program creates extra clothing needs. Below is a checklist of clothing your son will need at RTM. If you need help providing these items, RTM may be able to provide certain items or offer them at a reasonable price. Please contact us with any questions you may have.

## Packing List

- 3 Pairs of Jeans or Casual Pants \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Pair Sweats (Top and Bottom) \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Pair Dress Pants \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Pair Shorts \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Shirts suitable for School \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 T-Shirts \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Pair Underwear (Briefs or Boxers) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Pair of Cotton Socks \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Pair of Wool or Synthetic Hiking Socks \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Sweater, Fleece Jacket or Fleece Vest \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Lightweight Wind Jacket \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Pair Running Shoes \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Pair Tennis/Basketball Shoes \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Pair Hiking Boots (should be approved) \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Pair Sunglasses or clip-on's if student \_\_\_\_\_ wears glasses
- 1 Baseball Cap \_\_\_\_\_
- Personal Hygiene Items (no cologne)

### EXTRA for WINTER MONTHS

- 1 Ski Hat that covers Ears
- 1 Pair Ski Pants
- 1 Pair of Winter Pack Boots
- 1 Pair of Long Underwear (top and bottom)
- 1 Ski Jacket

Students are allowed 1 small milk crate of personal possessions in their room besides their clothing i.e. books, toys, memorabilia etc.

Please do not bring: Shirts or any clothing that advertises or promotes violence, sex, gang orientation, or drugs (including alcohol and tobacco), electronic games, food items, inappropriate reading materials, knives, matches or lighters, tobacco products, money, excessive jewelry or fishing gear.

RTM cannot be responsible for lost, traded or stolen clothing. It is helpful if all clothing has the student's name marked on it.