

Buffalo Hide Academy October Board Report 2022

Student Spotlight!

Fancy StrippedSquirrel



Grade: 11th

Years at BHA: 2 years

Fun Fact: Auntie to four (soon to be five) nieces and nephews!

Q and A:

What do you like about being a student at Buffalo Hide Academy:

"I really like the environment of the Academy and all the teachers."

What has your experience been like since starting here?

"When I first started here, I was scared of being around a lot of people because of my anxiety. But being able to talk to the counselors and being around the teachers, and going to school with my sister, has been really nice and has helped me."

Looking towards the future, where do you see yourself after graduating high school?

"I still have another year at BHA, but I'm already thinking about going to college at Flathead Valley Community College and I'm also interested in the US Marines."

Wednesday's with Charlie

In our ongoing efforts to establish a safe, cohesive, and caring school community, we conduct a weekly school wide meeting during our last class of the day on Wednesday's. The entire Buffalo Hide school community gathers in Jason's room for this "family meeting" facilitated by me, Charlie (thus the cool meeting name). A primary focus of each meeting is to offer relevant and useful psychoeducation regarding salient mental health topics and issues our students and families encounter in their lives and community. I also take time to celebrate our accomplishments, make general announcements, reinforce our expectations and protocol...all the while imbuing our students with kindness, empathy, and hopefully confidence in a group setting.

Though it can be anxiety provoking for some, a group experience is integral and extremely useful within the context of our mental health goals. Our primary aim is to foster resilience and wellness through three primary areas of engagement, which I'll refer to here as the **3 R's** (Relationships, Regulation, and Resources). A major vehicle to enhance student safety is to lean into Rogerian interpersonal skills (unconditional positive regard, empathy, authenticity) in all interactions. By establishing healthy routines and rhythms, we promote positive relationships school wide. At a deeper level, our relational goals are aimed at improving the potentially damaged internal attachment systems of our students.

Emotional Regulation is paramount to our success both at the individual level and school wide. Regulated individuals can modulate their emotions and be thoughtful about decisions they

make. For trauma impacted individuals, which many of our students are, biophysical mechanisms that contribute to regulation are typically disrupted. Thus, much of our initial work revolves around emotional stabilization and teaching and practicing various regulation strategies.

Having access to certain resources is key to our survival. And in 2022, it's become even more important to have access to mental health resources and wellness services. We believe that the more resources we can connect our students with, the chances of accessing those resources and utilizing them may increase. The notion that we are stronger together resonates here, and the more people and organizations we have connected to us and rooting for us the stronger we can be. Being competent in life and thriving doesn't only involve external resources, but perhaps even more importantly *internal resources* as well.

This scientific and empathic approach, coupled with our unique curriculum designed to educate our students, empower them, and reduce the harmful effects of past and present experiences, will foster resilience and connectivity within our school community.



Dealing with Moral Injury/Depathologizing Shame

“Moral Injury is a syndrome of shame, self handicapping, anger, and demoralization that occurs when deeply held beliefs and expectations about moral and ethical conduct are transgressed.” –Gray, et al 2017

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCE) “Before the age of 18, I...”

Item	YES	NO
1. Was able to talk with the family about my feelings		
2. Felt that my family stood by me during difficult times		
3. Enjoyed participating in community traditions		
4. Felt a sense of belonging in high school		
5. Felt supported by friends		
6. Had at least two non-parent adults who took a genuine interest in me		
7. Felt safe and protected by an adult in my home		
Total YES's = BCE Score		

Benevolent Childhood Experiences (BCE) Counter ACES - “Growing up I had...”

Item	YES	NO
1. At least one caregiver with whom you felt safe?		
2. At least one good friend		
3. Beliefs that gave you comfort		
4. Enjoyment at school		
5. At least one teacher that cared		
6. Good neighbours		
7. An adult (not a parent/ caregiver or the person from *1) who could provide you with support or advice		
8. Opportunities to have a good time		
9. Like yourself or feel comfortable with yourself		
10. Predictable home routine, like regular meals and a regular bedtime		
Total YES's = BCE Score		

Cognitive Distortions

Spilling Cognitions are thoughts that undermine or spoil an otherwise positive experience

Can be future focused - *Exercise won't make me feel better...*

Can be focused on the past - *I used to exercise a ton and I still felt depressed...*

1. Determine the Accuracy and Usefulness of these thoughts
2. Psychoed. Regarding how depressive states can affect our memories

Staff Spotlight!

Irene Augare



Where did you graduate?: BHS 2007; Salish Kootenai College 2018 (Associate of Arts in Chemical Dependency Counseling with a Bachelor's in Psychology)

Family: My kiddo's are Cameron and Presley, My Husband is Colt Augare

What is your job title: Parent Community Outreach Program Coordinator

What is your job?: Short version, I help coordinate supportive services for students and/or families who are experiencing homelessness and assist with eliminating barriers by connecting them to resources. I also locate students who are not yet enrolled into an educational program and assist them with the process of enrolling. The biggest part of my job is creating relationships through a big focus on harm reduction.

What is your favorite part of your job: My favorite part of my job is witnessing students gain a different level of resiliency, independence, and accomplishment through hard work and dedication to themselves and their overall success.

Fun fact about yourself: I enjoy eating watermelon with salt.

SUN TOURS

September 30th, BHA was invited by Edward and Derek DesRosier of Sun Tours to join them on a Blackfeet Interpretive Tour along Going to the Sun Road in Glacier National Park. This was an incredibly unique opportunity as Sun Tours is one of the only Native concessioners in any national park in the country. This year marks 30 years since enrolled member Edward DesRosier won the right to operate a Blackfeet tour company in Glacier National Park in a court battle v. the federal government that progressed all the way through the 9th circuit court of appeals. His win expanded the sovereignty of the Blackfeet tribe and set precedent for future tribal commercial operations within federal lands throughout the nation.

Our students learned the details of that battle, helping them to understand the complexities of tribal governments and their relationship with state and federal governments, as well as the importance of sovereignty all while touring through our incredibly unique, extreme, and invaluable landscape.





