

ADVENTURE PROGRAMS: HOW TO GET STARTED

Over the course of teaching adventure curricula for eighteen years and training for Project Adventure for thirteen, I have often been asked a series of similar questions. Many are associated with getting a program started and how to sell the idea to the powers that be.

The majority of my experience is with Project Adventure Inc., the best known and most visible organization in the field. However, there are other reliable and possibly less expensive vendors available.

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Anyone reading this knows that the business of education is political. You need to find an ally. Find someone who speaks to a different constituency than you. Find someone who can direct you to other possible supporters. Adventure is difficult to teach by yourself and impossible to sell by yourself.

You should be prepared to answer many of the questions listed below when approaching this potential support. Ignorance is your enemy.

WHO ELSE IS TEACHING THIS PROGRAM?

Have a list of school districts that are also teaching adventure. The closer to home the better. Schools with similar profiles to yours need highlighting.

WHAT IS THE TARGET POPULATION?

Know to whom you wish to present the program. Is it for the Middle or High School? Is it from some special group, an alternative school, or intervention program? Draft a statement of needs. You can always expand outwards once you have your foot in the door.

WHAT ARE THE PROJECTED BENEFITS?

Check the NYS Standards. Adventure is the ideal lab for teaching personal living skills. Look to designing objectives/outcomes that are specific to your needs and the Standards.

IS IT SAFE AND WHAT ABOUT LIABILITY INSURANCE?

Safety will be the number one concern. Be prepared. Project Adventure can supply you with their 15

and 20 year safety study. Adventure programs are twice as safe as traditional physical education programs. Survey some of those districts that are teaching adventure. I am sure that you will find that they have better safety records than the safety study.

Insurance should not be a problem. Most carriers are familiar with adventure programming, and Project Adventure in particular. They do not see this program as high risk. If it does seem to be a problem, and they will not insure the program or want a special rate for it, look elsewhere for the entire district. That usually opens their eyes.

Separate riders and/or separate carriers are also possible. However, this should not be necessary.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO BUILD A ROPE COURSE?

Project Adventure can provide you with a price list for outdoor construction. My experience is that most school districts initially spend \$8,000 - \$14,000. Outdoor courses are built with the idea of limiting access when not in use, therefore limiting a potential liability issue. An indoor rope course is a custom construction job depending on the structural implications of the site. Estimates will run from \$7,000 - \$14,000 on the average. An indoor course provides more security and limits maintenance issues. For an outdoor site without trees, a telephone pole course can be constructed. Add \$8,000 - \$10,000 to the estimate.

You can build low rope courses. Project Adventure provides instruction and consultation through a program called Challenge Course Construction.

Schedule construction when others in your area are doing it. This will lower the cost for travel and lodging. Get a site evaluation before you do anything.

WHAT ABOUT ANNUAL COSTS?

Depending on the extent and location (indoor or outdoor) of the program, annual maintenance and equipment costs vary. My course is indoors with 700 kids involved. My cost is \$250 a year. Every fourth year I purchase new rope which runs an additional \$700. Project Adventure also recommends an annual

inspection. This can be a costly affair unless you schedule it at the same time as your neighbors.

HOW CAN I PAY FOR THIS?

What is your history? Do you do fund raising? This is a high profile project, which can involve services to a variety of local organizations. Get their help. Drug Free Schools money can be used. It has been used for both construction and staff training. Use appropriate language in your grant proposal.

WHAT ABOUT STAFF TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION?

Make sure the people who are going to teach this, want to do so. It is best to have at least two people who can work together. Training is a must. You can send your staff away for a workshop or have one customized at your site. Get some neighboring districts to train their people at the same time and save significantly.

There is no such thing as certification. Those who attend get a certificate of attendance. The issue in the adventure industry is "Who certifies the certifier?"

In-house training, where someone who has been trained, trains a colleague, is a big mistake. You need variety as well as checks and balances. This will not happen with everyone making the same mistakes.

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

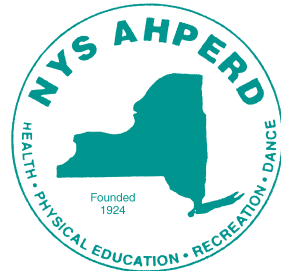
You are not out there by yourself. Everyone who has started a program has dealt with similar issues. Don't reinvent the wheel. People who have had the greatest success with difficult Boards and superintendents have asked an outsider to come and talk informally with them. Don't hire a vendor to do this. A successful neighbor will be more powerful, because they will be able to answer those tough questions without bias.

If you have questions that I might be able to help you with, write to me at the Hommocks Middle School, Larchmont, New York 10538; or call me at (914) 834-3915.

Ken Demas
Hommocks Middle School



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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CREATING THE ADVENTURE IN EDUCATION

Learning can and should be a cheerful adventure. Project Adventure has provided that joyous learning adventure to children and others since 1971.

Project Adventure, a non-profit organization, has created a variety of experiential adventure programming. It uses four basic models:

- Adventure Programming-Physical education and recreation programs
- Adventure Based Counseling-Therapeutic programs
- Academic Programming-Classroom academic programs
- Staff Development Programming-Adult educational and corporate programs

Adventure programming represents a philosophy and approach to teaching which is different from the traditional teaching style. Presentations and managing groups of students enable teachers to ensure learning that will produce a joyful adventure, with safe results. Those educators who have taught traditionally now see the light of a joyful adventure. Each joyful adventure takes its roots from a fundamental belief.

The principal Project Adventure objective is Challenge by Choice. Choice allows students to set their own goals, accomplish personal achievement and to reset their goals at an even higher level. Educators and students alike maintain an atmosphere of mutual support in which cooperation, encouragement, and interpersonal concerns are consistently present. These surroundings weave throughout all adventure education course content to maintain the prime objective, challenge by choice.

Adventure education course content includes the following: non-traditional warm-up exercises, new games, initiative problems, trust building activities, and low and high ropes challenge courses. As students pursue these activities, they become part of a group that learns to listen, respect and care for itself.

Social skill development is essential for all

school-aged children. Adventure education programming helps students develop such social skills as leadership, followership, communication, cooperation, teamwork, decision making, perseverance and trust.

Trust is the most important workplace social skill to develop. Trust needs to be put to good use. Imagine trusting your group's success to people you have just met. Imagine trusting your group's success to both the able-bodied and the disabled. Imagine trusting your group's diversity to improving the group process. Adventure education programming utilizes team-building activities to help a group to come to trust itself. Physical and emotional trusts comprise the necessary foundation to establish another meaningful social skill-teamwork. Without trust, very little will be accomplished. Groups rely on trust and teamwork skills to focus on a process. Trust is a social skill that educators need to develop, protect and cherish. Project Adventure's adventure programming helps students to develop proficiencies in those social skills that will be needed in the workplace.

UP & COMING EVENTS (Mark Your Calendars!)

The Council of Administrators
New York State Association of Health,
Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
Announces its Annual

STATEWIDE DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 17 - 19, 1999
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
THE LODGE AT WOODCLIFF

THE COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATOR'S SUMMER MEETING

July 14 and 15, 1999
Hofstra University
Call President Berhang to
book a room

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Council of Administrators
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Editor's Column



"I dream my painting and then I paint my dream," Vincent van Gogh wrote this in a letter to his brother, Theo, a museum curator. The artist's paintings demonstrated van Gogh's desire to express his vision of the misery and poverty of humanity. The power of bringing his visions into existence survives in art galleries and can be admired by viewing any one of van Gogh's famous paintings. Will the visions of physical education administrators and teachers also endure the artistic test of time?

Think of van Gogh, as a physical educator, dreaming about adventure education. He may envision

education as a fun adventure, as a celebration of each other's diversity, and as means to challenge, build upon and sustain the principles of teamwork and leadership.

When most educators speak about adventure education programming, they call it by its business name—Project Adventure. Adventure education has also been labeled as experiential educational programming.

This issue of Administrative Times brings to light different perspectives and understanding of adventure education.

Project Adventure is a non-profit organization that has been around since 1971. It has many different staff development programs and continues to provide current research in adventure education.

Just like artists employing visual tools (color, value, line, shape, form, space and texture) to bring their thoughts to life, educators should use like tools to bring their dreams into physical existence.

As physical educators, we have been asked many times about the value of our programs. President Berhang brings out in her article the values of adventure education. She paints the importance of social skills and the need to develop them for the work force of today and tomorrow. She shapes goal setting and how it relates to a principal objective—challenge by choice. Her article also uses another visual tool to describe the philosophical texture of adventure education.

Do you dream about starting an adventure education program? Would you like to know where to begin? You will surely want to read the Ken Demas article. He reveals clear how to pictures enabling you to move your dream from thoughts into adventure programming existence.

If van Gogh painted adventure education...Each painting would contain the brilliant hues of staff development that would be swirled over a canvass of tightly woven curricula strands. Each painting would also be supported in shape and form by the physical design of a high and low ropes course and problem solving initiatives.

Bob Zifchock
Valley Central Schools



Beekmantown's Adventure Education

The Beekmantown Adventure Club under its director Jay Magiera is in its second year of existence and offers students in grades 6 - 12 many unique challenges they might not otherwise experience in traditional programs. The club is supervised by teachers from within the school and offers such activities as camping, rock climbing, kayaking, canoeing, snow shoeing and skiing.

The club has also been involved in community service projects such as the clearing of a nearby brook and cross-country trails. Members of the club are asked to write reports about their adventures that link outside experiences to their academic disciplines. Several students have used their written reports as projects for both English and social studies course work. They also showcased their club's activities last year with a slide show and skit presented to their parents and the school community.

One of the recent activities was an urban adventure in the city of Montreal, Canada. Beekmantown is a very rural school district with many of the students not having a lot of exposure to a big city atmosphere. Chaperoned by members of the foreign language department, the adults remained silent as the students were left to figure out the subway, language barriers and other city experiences.

"The concept behind the club is learning how to take a risk and learning to trust yourself and others," chaperone and physical education teacher Joni Cummings was quoted as saying in a recent newspaper article highlighting the program.

Interest in the club is definitely on the rise. The expectation is to continue to integrate the learning experiences of the outside real world with the curriculum in all academic areas within the school.

Presently, the club is trying to raise money and receive the proper authorization to build a climbing wall within the school. Currently, their climbing experiences are in a climbing facility in nearby Montreal. They are also in the planning stages for winter activities such as snow shoeing and skiing. The majority of the spring semester focuses on an overnight hike / camping trip in the Adirondack Mountains. These are experiences and memories that will last a lifetime.

The club tends to "make the members willing to go out in life and take on challenges they might not have taken on," says Cummings.

Project Adventure and Valley Central Middle School

Valley Central Middle School climbs the Great Wall. After fifteen years of Project Adventure New Games, Low Ropes Course, Orienteering being taught in our curriculum, the great climbing wall has arrived with awaited expectation and excitement. Our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students are ready for the "Challenge by Choice". In all Project Adventure activities, participants are engaged in "Challenge by Choice" where no coercion is involved. A reasonable willingness to try is the criterion for success. The actual mastering of a particular feat is not as important as the attempt itself. It is through a series of these attempts that groups become teams and strangers become friends. The Challenge Ropes Course facilitates this growth and learning experience.

We asked P.A. to install a challenge ropes course consisting of the Dangle Duo, Spiders Web, On the Wild Side, Mohawk Walk, Wild Woosey, Tension Traverse, Centipede, Climbing Ladder, Prouty's Landing, Nitro Crossing, and Prussik Climb.

Project Adventure programming utilizes the Challenge Ropes Course as a tool; a catalyst for personal and educational growth. The course is a blend of low and high activities presented in a prescribed sequence and designed to take individuals and groups beyond their own expectations, or perceived willingness to try.

The goals of the Project Adventure Curriculum are

- 1) to increase personal confidence,
- 2) to increase mutual support within a group
- 3) to develop an increased level of agility and physical coordination
- 4) to develop an increased joy in one's physical self and in being with others
- 5) to develop an increased familiarity and identification with the natural world.

An atmosphere that is fun, supportive and challenging characterizes the P. A. concept. Non-competitive games, group problem-solving initiatives and Ropes Courses help "Bring the Adventure Home." We at Valley Central Middle School are ready for the "Challenge by Choice."

Mrs. Mary J. Goldberg
Valley Central Middle School



A Parent's View

I wanted to share with you how appreciative we are of your ability to make our son feel comfortable, and even try to improve himself in the area of athletics. In his past school, he was anxious and very uncomfortable with gym. As I was told by a past gym teacher, "He'll never be an athlete." Even knowing this, you have taken a boy who is obviously awkward and self-conscious, and refused to accept that as an excuse not to try to improve. Kyle was so surprised by his gym grade and thought a mistake had been made. I explained that you probably graded him on what he tried to do, not what he couldn't do. This is the first time he hasn't been made to feel like "Don't even bother."

He felt a sense of "Wow, someone noticed!" He has always shied away from anything considered a sport. But now he attempts to run one more lap for you, and his feeling of self worth have doubled.

Thank you for having the vision and seeing each child's potential and encouraging it to take the most important step through it. This is a life long skill you have reinforced. I know Kyle will always remember you as a teacher who made a difference in his life.

Again, we realize the time and patience you have invested in Kyle will help not only his emotional well being but his physical health as well. Your skill and ability to instill a personal motivation to "keep trying" is highly regarded in our home.

Many thanks.

Food Allergy Resources

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

611 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202
1-800-822-2762
www.aaaai.org

The Food Allergy Network

10400 Eaton Pl., Suite 107
Fairfax, VA. 22030-2208
1-800-929-4040
fax 703-691-2713
www.foodallergy.org

International Food Information Council

1100 Connecticut Av., NW, Suite 430
Washington, DC 20036
202-296-6547
e-mail food info@ific.health.org
ificinfo.health.org
(Food Allergy Resources and Information Kit available free by request)

American School Food Service Association

1600 Duke St., 2nd Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314-3436
1-800-877-8822
www.asfsa.org

The Council of Administrators Section of New York State Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Presents

Dr. Kenneth Cooper's Institute of Aerobics Research
Certified Physical Fitness Specialist Certification Course

• **Certification:** Certification courses require proficiency testing. These tests consist of a multiple-choice written exam (Friday @ noon), a practical demonstration of skills (Thurs. afternoon) and an open book case study assignment. Upon successful completion of all requirements, you will receive a professional certification signed by Dr. Kenneth Cooper.

• **Course Content Includes:**

Feedback Methods	Goal Setting	Wellness and Coronary Risk
Fitness Assessment	Exercise Physiology	Nutritional Methods
Motivational Techniques	Anatomy and Kinesiology	Exercise Prescriptions
Safety Programming	Stress Management	Strength Training

• **CPR:** Proof of current certification in CPR is required for certification. Please bring documentation to the course. The RIT site will offer CPR Certification.

• **Grants:** Several zones have funds available for mini grants. Contact your zone president or Rick Amundson @ 716-670-5061 for details.

• **College Credit:** Three graduate credit hours are available through Hofstra University. If interested, call Dr. Sarah Doolittle at 516-463-5084 (email: hpsrad@Hofstra.edu).

• **Course Participants Receive:**

1. The extensive Cooper notebook
2. Use of a Polar Accurex II Heart Rate Monitor for the week with the option to purchase (\$140).
3. Information on Fitnessgram and Physical Best youth fitness testing

REGISTRATION FORM:

Date: _____
 Name: _____
 Home Address: _____
 Home Phone: _____
 School Address: _____
 School Phone: _____
 Emergency Contact & Phone: _____

Check your workshop choice and mail with \$425 Registration Fee to the site coordinator by June 1, 1999

—Shaker High School,

June 28 - July 2
Fred Powers, Bethlehem Central School, 700 Delaware Ave, Delmar, New York 12054
Phone 518-439-4921 Fax 439-2837

—Roch. Institute of Tech.

July 19 - 23
Linda Joyce, 5 Crabtree Circle Webster, NY 14580
Phone 716-787-2149 Fax 421-1985
email: ljoyce2252@aol.com

—Hofstra University,

July 12 - 16
Barry Cox, 67 Cove Hollow Road, East Hampton, New York 11937
Phone 516-329-5245 Ext 136
Fax 329-6321 email: bcox@ross.org



JUMP ROPE FOR HEART