

There are over 50,000 children kept in residential treatment centers every year. -*Latest findings in Children's Mental Health, Nearly 66000 children Mental Health Programs, Vol. 2, No. 1*

There are easily over 1000 residential treatment centers for youth in the United States. -[Residential Treatment Center Database](#)

At least 145 children have died from preventable causes in residential treatment centers, and at least 62 from asphyxiation or injury caused by restraint. -[PROPUBLICA](#)

There is little to no oversight over treatment programs for troubled youth in the United States. -[Position Statement 44](#)

Sources: <https://www.breakingcodesilence.net/facts> & <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-08-146T>

TTI Deaths

Over 31 deaths since 1980, including 3 in July of 2001 alone, had occurred at the time of this article's original publication, NYT "States Pressed as Three Boys Die at Boot Camp."

Tony Haynes, 14 AZ, Counselors physically abused him and forced him to eat dirt.

Ryan Lewis, 14 WV

Hung himself in a wilderness program.

Michael Wiltsie, FL 12, died after a 300lb counselor restrained him for 30 min.

Michelle Sutton, 15, died in a Utah wilderness camp. Her mom, Cathy, fights to close or regulate these institutions.

Ken Stettler 2001 about slow legislation, "States tend to be reactionary, rather than proactive."

1989 Nicholas Contreras, 16, AZ

April 29, 2020 Cornelius Frederick m, throws a sandwich at another boy, is restrained by multiple staff and screams, "I can't breath" as they kill him.

Some 81 boys have died at Florida's Dozier School for Boys and their bodies found in secret graves and in the basement of the building.

Source: NPR A True Horror Story <https://www.npr.org/2012/10/15/162941770/floridas-dozier-school-for-boys-a-true-horror-story>

America and Oregonians would do good not to forget it's history, even if they don't teach you it in school.

Chemawa (Happy Home) cemetery is a cemetery with over 200 unmarked graves believed to be the remains of indigenous children taken, separated from their families, abused, raped, tortured, and then killed. It's in Salem, OR.

Over 3200 children died in mostly Christian, un-regulated boarding schools across the country. They were attempting to "convert savage (indigenous) children" to conform to Christianity and society as they saw fit. When they wouldn't conform, they were tortured or killed.

Sources: Truth and reconciliation Commission of Canada and

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2016/1/3/unmarked-graves-discovered-at-chemawa-indian-school>

Hello, and thank you, for having me here today. Hello from the beautiful city of Roses here in Portland, OR! This is my home town where I was born back in October of 1985. I'm both humbled and grateful to spend just a few minutes with you to help you understand the importance of these bills and taking the actions they outline here in Oregon, but also around the country. I hope you can help us be a part of history in doing that and enacting these changes that can protect teens for our children are our future.

As I mentioned my name is Brett Harper. My adopted dad's name is Bill Harper. My mother is Chris Harper. I was adopted after my bio dad Michael Haynes shot and killed my mother Sarah Rose Mishler, may she RIP. She was just 16 years old. She is buried here in Portland. So I was a kid who was told this at a young age, and who, even before he was told this at age 9, had issues. I remember being more emotional than other kids. I remember being anxious even as a kid. I was home schooled through 4th grade but 5th and 6th went to a Christian school where nobody really talked to me at all and I didn't fit in with anyone. The same was true at the Christian middle school I attended in Prineville OR. I was highly sheltered and not allowed to date girls, hold their hands, kisses anything like that all forbidden obviously. If you passed notes to a girl, you were in trouble by the school. If my parents so much as thought I liked a girl, they would forbid I speak to her. I was not allowed to have very many friends and limited on when I could see them and where we could hang out what we could do etc.

I don't remember a lot of my childhood. My dad would beat me, yell at me, choke me out and scream, "Can you hear me now!?" And of course, choking for breath I couldn't answer so he'd get mad maybe smack me across the face or the butt a few times with his belt or his hand or a switch. Me having what I now know what childhood PTSD I'd yell back, break things, run away. The fact that he couldn't get a hold on his son made him look like a fool at work. He was a PO and worked for the Sheriff's department for 30 years.

One day my parents decided to take me to a "councilor" that was going to make everything better. We went to my dad's work where he introduced me to a man named Tim Smith. Tim owned West Coast Academy for Boys just outside of Prineville, OR. It was a small boys home for 5 of us boys, two older 17 year old's the rest of us 15 and under. I was just 14 when sent away. I had my 14th birthday at the

program about a month after joining. The program was run out of Tim and his wife's home out in the country.

Here I would be physically assaulted by the other, older boys, staff and two JR staff members hired by Time and his wife to watch us constantly. They would hide behind corners with their fists in boxing gloves ready to clock you in the temple and KO you. Or they would wrestle you to the ground and put you in a choke hold until you passed out and play tricks on you by shutting the lights off and scaring you when you woke up or leaving. I was later sexually assaulted by Tim's wife and two of the old boys threatened to make me beat off a horse and shoved my face in horse manure. I was chained to a tire and made to drag it up the hill in 2 plus feet of snow while they honked at me and spun the wheels in their suburban like they were going to run me over if I didn't hurry up, which is what they would scream at me to freak me out and make me move faster. The older kids and JR staff got a kick out of power slamming some of us young kids like the WWI wrestlers did but in real life. Couple times everything went completely white afterwards like a blank screen. I think this was the start of my back problems being dropped on my head and low back like that, slammed around into walls and the floor. My head was even put through an apartment wall once. Literally stuck my head in the wall then made me repair it later. I got in trouble for "making the JR staff so angry they did it". It was my fault apparently.

My father eventually did pull me out after hearing they snuck me into an R rated movie, House on Haunted Hill when it first came out (great movie). Anyways my freedom was short lived though. After I told my dad all that bad things that happened to me there he apologized initially and said he would never send me anywhere like that again. Well, that was a lie. Not long after leaving West Coast Academy an ed consultant sold my dad on Agape Boarding School. I'm not sure which one. I just know it was a lady over the phone talking to my mom at first then my dad. I ran off into the woods with no plan to pack or survive. I literally ran off into the woods because of fight or flight, a reaction people with PTSD have. My dad eventually found me but I was prepared to stay out there and die. He said he was sorry that I misunderstood and he wouldn't be sending me away.

Not long after that we headed home like we usually did in his car after he got off work at the Parole and Probation Office in Prineville, OR. But something felt and seemed really off. As we drove home we passed my mom and I remember being able to see her crying and upset visibly as our cars passed each other. I asked my dad what was wrong and he said she was just having a hard day and was going to get us a movie and some pizza. I asked why we couldn't pick it up then and he was silent. Something was wrong. When we got home the screen door was swinging in the wind. We lived on 40 acres 40 min outside of Prineville. Maybe mom or one of my siblings left it open I thought as it bangs hard against the frame if you do.

We got inside and all of a sudden two men came out of the bathroom and showed me these badges. They said they were here to take me to a boarding school and that I could go the easy way or the hard way. They informed me they were hired by my dad. They said normally they don't allow the parents to be present but because my dad is law enforcement, they felt like it would be ok. I told them the easy way, got dressed like they asked, showed them I had no weapons and allowed them to cuff me and put me in the van with my dad. He apologized and said that I was going to a boarding school that would help me get my attitude right and get right with god.

I was told I could have a leg brace put on, and that if I struggled, they would take me all the way across the country to Missouri in a van. I said I'd comply. They undid the cuffs. They forced me to say goodbye

to my dad who I was pissed at and we headed for the plane. They lied to me the rest of the way there including while on a van trip from Kansas City Airport to Agape. They offered me a cig at Denver Airport, I didn't smoke or do drugs.

The transport itself, although not overly violent, is traumatic enough where I still have night terrors to this day at age 35 and this was 21 years ago. Most people who are transported to residential treatment facilities, boarding schools, wilderness camps etc. Have night terrors and some for the rest of their lives. I've spoken with survivors that have had night terrors about being transported 30 years later.

When I got to Agape, I was stripped searched, yelled at, slapped across the face for talking back in front of the owner by Kelly VanderKooi, an X Marine and the man who ran their boot camp. I was put through a military style boot camp with harsh PT times or Physical Training that included push-ups, sit-ups, leg lifts, running, staying in push up position with your hands cooking on hot white newly paved sidewalks or on sand. I had scars for many years after that on my hands. Still have a few scars from work crews. We were made to haul heavy rocks from one point to another, sometimes for no reason other than to make us work hard. They seemed to like to watch us suffer. You didn't ask for water. It was provided out of a hose once or twice in a 8-hour work crew. We build many of the staff members' homes and when a tornado destroyed a lot of the buildings and damaged others, we rebuilt everything in 2002.

Due to the abuses, I've suffered, being separated not just from my birth mom but then ripped away from my adopted parents, stuck far away from home in a place where I couldn't even speak honestly over the phone or through letters about the place because they would beat me or punish me harshly if I did. Was not allowed to talk to other students which has messed up my social skills for life. I now have Major Depressive Disorder, CPTSD, anxiety, night terrors every night, and lots of issues maintaining relationships. I've had two back laminectomy discectomies back surgeries because I've had sciatica for over 17 years. Sciatica is radiating pain from your sciatic nerve in your lower back. My S1/L5 nerve roots were impacted by a bulging disc that fissured when I left the program after turning 18. My entire adult life I have struggled to keep from going homeless, maintain jobs that require ANY amount of bending, twisting, lifting, standing, walking for long periods of time even sitting for long periods of time; often relying on the kindness of others to stay off the street. My family hasn't always been there, and friends come and go, so life has been chaotic at best. The combination of mental illness with constant physical pain and the way it limits me has made it very difficult and lately impossible to remain employed.

In Oregon, we now have a lot of good laws to help protect teens in residential care facilities and programs. I know laws aren't perfect and neither is the enforcement of said laws but for the most part Oregon does not have a lot of abusive programs. However, it is important and I would argue it is the duty of this body, the Oregon State government, and the Government of the United States of America to protect this state's children and children in other states who could be harmed by someone running an illegitimate or under-regulated business here in Oregon. I have a disability hearing Mar 17th. I'm hoping I can get some relief.

I am sober now. Have been sober from alcohol for 22 going on 23 months now. It will be 24 in June. Drinking was how I self-medicated after I got out of the programs and became an independent young adult away from my parents. It helped me not remember and also helped me socialize which I really struggled with and still do. Unfortunately, alcoholism runs in my family and people with CPTSD really shouldn't drink. I'm very happy to be able to say that I've been able to quit and it's had a positive impact on my life but I want to point out a lot of survivors of these programs turn to drugs and alcohol and

many die from it or end up in prison or in jail or on the streets. The success rates for these programs are very low and tragically many of the people I went to high school with are dead (died of some misfortune or an OD), in and out of jail or prison, or have committed suicide. The suicides being some of the most tragic deaths.

I don't want any more Oregon kids to have to go through what I am and what I have gone through. I don't want any kid in another state to be transported by an Oregon transport company to a place that will torture and abuse them. I don't want ed consultants to be able to prey on vulnerable and gullible parents who are struggling to find the help their teen needs but get some very fraudulent advice from someone who pretends to know what they are talking about on the internet. I don't think you do either. We can put a stop to this and protect our teens!

This is why I started my nonprofit Spare the Rod. I started it to protect teens and expose dangerous unlicensed and often unregulated or under-regulated transport, fraudulent ed consultant companies, and dangerous facilities around the country. I look forward to working with you all here to get these bills passed and signed into law. Thank you for your time! May you all be blessed, stay safe, and may we together keep these kids safe!

You can find more information about my nonprofit at the links below:

www.SpareTheRodNP.com

www.Facebook.com/TheSpareTheRodRevolution

www.Reddit.com/r/SpareTheRod

www.Twitter.com/SpareTheRodNP

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