

# **IB Outward Bound**

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From September 30 through October 2 , 2006, 35 of the class of 2008 IB Juniors and three LHS teachers attended a weekend at the Leadville site of Outward Bound. I was among those 35 students, and I came out of the weekend with an experience I will never forget.

Throughout the course of the weekend, we all managed to conquer any fears or apprehensions we may have had in order to overcome the various challenges we were faced with, which varied from rock climbing and hiking a mountain to group problem- solving skills. Overall, the result was extremely rewarding on numerous levels. While some students believe that the biggest benefit of the weekend was a strengthened sense of camaraderie among the IB juniors, others felt that they had found the ability to overcome whatever personal barriers they may face in the future. Not only were valuable life skills learned, but there seemed to be a general appreciation for the relaxation that the weekend at Outward Bound afforded. (Who would have thought that hiking a 13er could ever be considered relaxing?) The skills that were strengthened during the weekend also tied closely to the attributes which IB identifies as essential traits of well-rounded students, such as **thinking, communicating, risk-taking, reflection, care**, and leading a **balanced** life that not only is intellectually developed, but also physically and emotionally sound.

The weekend began with games of the “get-to-know-you” variety, where we were all introduced to our instructors and one another. From there, we broke up into four smaller groups, aptly titled “patrols,” with whom we would spend the better part of the weekend. Each patrol was led by two Outward Bound Instructors and consisted of about eight students.

The first day, the patrol was led through various challenges that required immense teamwork and cooperation. At times, the challenges felt daunting and nearly impossible, such as getting all members of the group over a 12-foot high wall with no holds on it. Others required more complex problem-solving skills, such as the challenge where we were asked to maneuver our way through pedestals given only a few boards, and the rule that we were not allowed to touch the ground. We were forced to become active **communicators** and **thinkers** to decide on ways to best approach and execute these large-scale challenges. Despite the demanding nature of the tasks, they were all very much enjoyed by the students.

The second day was spent hiking considerably high mountains of around 13,000 feet in altitude. Two patrols tackled Mt. Galena, while the other two attempted Mt. Champion. Whether or not the patrols were able to summit, it seemed as

though everyone learned a lot about themselves and finding the will to push forward no matter how tired they may have been. The will to push forward when fatigue kicked in came partly from being **reflective** and able to mentally assess our own needs, but also from the **caring** quality demonstrated by the members of the patrol toward one another. Encouragement certainly was not in short supply as we climbed the mountains.

On the third and final day, we went rock climbing at a nearby rock face. While some students had significant prior experience with rock climbing, others (myself included), had none whatsoever. Experienced or not, all students and teachers were able to set individualized goals which were met with enthusiasm, each and every one of us acting as **risk-takers** in our own way. For some, reaching the top of the rock face was a challenge in and of itself, though others attempted to climb blindfolded, with their leg tied to another person's, or a combination of the above two. One student, Will Cernanec, even managed to climb the face without use of his hands. No matter how the rock face was climbed, we all learned invaluable lessons in trust, especially when the person belaying for you is a novice.

The weekend concluded with a ceremony with our patrols, where all students received pins and certificates. While these, and perhaps a few snapshots from the weekend, may be the only tangible confirmation of a weekend well-spent at Outward Bound, the lessons that were learned from the trip will certainly enhance our IB experience and beyond. By displaying many the qualities that are central to IB, the Juniors demonstrated that, even early in the IB experience, some of those qualities are already being shaped.