



Established in 1962, the first U.S. basecamp built by Outward Bound is in Marble.
Photo by Carolyn Ansell.

Outward Bound was founded in 1939. During the Battle of the Atlantic, marooned sailors were dying not just from wounds, but also because they didn't fight to survive. Merchant shipper Lawrence Holt and educator Hurt Hahn thought that they could change that by starting a new kind of school. Founded in Aberdovey, Wales, its mission was "to change lives through challenge and discovery." Borrowing a sailing term, they named it Outward Bound.

Over the years, Outward Bound has changed—and saved—many lives.

The Carry Home: Lessons from the American Wilderness tells about one of them. Gary Ferguson, the author of 16 nature books, wrote *The Carry Home* about a pilgrimage he took to scatter the ashes of his wife Jane, who was killed in a canoeing accident. Ferguson's memoir, published in 2014, chronicles both his physical trek through the five wilderness areas Jane most loved and his psychological odyssey from devastating loss to rebirth.

Jane Ferguson had been an Outward Bound instructor, choosing outdoor education as way to give back after experiencing a lifesaving awakening in Outward Bound. As a teen, Jane struggled with anorexia, but in Utah's slick-rock country, she found she had "a talent for handling hardship." She discovered that the wilderness gave her perspective, a measure of sanity and "the assurance that she could be strong in the face of random weather."

Today, Outward Bound offers courses of varying lengths and welcomes veterans, business professionals and community leaders as well as youth. Its courses include time-honored passages that have changed little over the years: outdoor skills training, challenging environments, a solo and a final expedition where students are thrown onto their own resources—sometimes harrowingly so.

Ravenscraft, who has taught for Colorado Outward Bound for five years, comments, "Our instructors are not guides. Guides try to

make you comfortable. We try to make you *uncomfortable* because this is about challenge."

COBS alumna Darylann Aragon says she's always been a perfectionist. She's studying International Business at the University of Denver, taking a whopping 18 credits per quarter. She's the first in her family to attend college and muses, "Being 20 is so hard sometimes. I'm a worrywart and put a lot of extra pressure on myself."

After training in Leadville, Aragon's course toured the Andes, alternating between working on farms—building a fish hatchery, picking coffee beans and harvesting food that filled students' backpacks—then trekking up over frigid, 15,000-foot summits and down through sweltering, equatorial rain forests. Aragon, who weighs just over 120 pounds, carried 60 to 70 pounds of gear daily.

On one 12-hour trekking day, Aragon and a friend were in charge of the map. "The instructors told us we had to take a left turn or we wouldn't get to the camp," she recalls. "People were complaining and so exhausted. And we missed the turn! The trip leaders *knew* exactly where we missed it, but they let us walk on for another hour or so. When they finally told us, we had to walk back a full extra hour! Emotions were running high and I just started crying. I felt so angry, so defeated! It was *my* fault and I felt really guilty. Later, I realized that if anyone *else* had missed the turn, I wouldn't have been so mad at *them*."

"I learned that it's okay to cry, to do what your body needs, and if you make a mistake, you fix it. Outward Bound changed me," says Aragon. "It taught me how to be alive and fully present in what I'm doing. By the time I finished the course, there was just an overwhelming sense of peace, this incredible ability to forgive myself."

The lessons that this article's author learned back in 1968—lessons about leadership, following the line of my own compass and repairing the morale of an unraveling group—were not what I went to Outward Bound to learn. But after handling Susie Bell's insurrection, I brought my patrol in safely and on time while others went awry. I learned that I could master minds as well as mountains, and those lessons have endured throughout my life.

As Ravenscraft says, "Outward Bound is there to change people. It's character development through the lens of outdoor adventure. During the course, you have some of the most deep and profound conversations of your life: about what you want to do with your life and what you need to do to get there. These are conversations that we all need to have."



COBS alumna Darylann Aragon on a farm in Palugo, Ecuador.
Photo by Molly Ingram.

WindWalkers and Jaywalkers: Striding Toward a Healthy Future

ARTICLE NICOLETTE TOUSSAINT
PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED

A slender young man in a white cowboy hat steps off the mounting platform in the WindWalkers barn and eases into the saddle. Once he's securely seated aboard Cody, a sorrel quarter horse with a white forehead blaze, a man and a woman grasp the reins and walk forward to make sure that Cody and "Cowboy Joe", his developmentally-challenged rider, are making strides in the right direction.

The two directing Cody are volunteers: In the lead is Elaina, a student at Colorado Mountain College who is working toward a

Steve Valenta
and therapy
horse Becca.



Left to right: Evan from Jaywalker Lodge, Cowboy Joe from Mountain Valley Developmental Services and CMC veterinary tech student Elaina.



veterinary technology degree. Evan, Cody's "sidewalker", comes from Jaywalker Lodge, where he's enrolled in the Solutions program and making strides of his own: living the "12 steps" to rebuild his life and transition to sober and independent living.

Evan is one of nearly a dozen "Jaywalkers" who volunteered last spring and summer to help with the equine therapy programs offered by the nonprofit WindWalkers. Located in Missouri Heights above Carbondale, WindWalkers Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy Center serves more than 50 clients each week and is home to 11 therapy horses. Its staff includes riding instructors, a psychotherapist, a physical therapist, a program director, a herd manager and a volunteer coordinator who stretches WindWalker's \$470,000 annual budget by keeping as many as 50 volunteers productively occupied.

Last summer, nearly a dozen of those volunteers came from Jaywalker Lodge, a Carbondale treatment facility that helps men