



The Open Sky Family Workshop & Graduation Experience

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Overview

The Open Sky Graduation experience will likely invoke feelings of both excitement and anxiety—for you and your child. We hope the following information will act as a guide to help you keep focused on your main reason for coming to Durango and the field: your child!

Why Do We Have the Family Workshop and Graduation?

The graduation experience at Open Sky is important for several reasons:

1. Starting with the Parent Workshop, and continued throughout the Family Graduation process, families learn what similarities exist between their experiences. With that knowledge, families are given the opportunity to offer support for each other as well give feedback and share ideas. Families will have time to interact with each other in both formal and informal activities.
2. The process is a chance for you as a parent to step out of your comfort zone and take risks. Your willingness to experience a small part of what your child has been through will be fundamental in your capability to gain accurate empathy and appreciation for your child, the Open Sky student. Another benefit is the bonding many students and parents experience when the parents share in the wilderness experience undertaken over the past weeks or months by the students.
3. Foremost, the graduation process serves the function of reintegrating families. Students and families will be involved in activities that promote the building of trust and the developing of models of communication that encourage respect, understanding, and honesty while establishing clear and appropriate boundaries for the student upon returning home or transitioning to another school or program.

Who Participates

All parents actively involved in their child's treatment at Open Sky are expected to attend the Sunday afternoon Parent Workshop. Siblings may attend **with the permission** of your child's field therapist.

Except for special cases, we expect that **all actively involved parents** attend the Parent Workshop and Graduation. This may include step-parents and/or divorced parents. Families are evaluated on an individual basis by the field therapist for the appropriateness of siblings attending the Graduation. **No siblings under the age of twelve are permitted.** We generally consider including only siblings who are actively involved throughout his/her sibling's stay at Open Sky (e.g., has written impact letters, attended family therapy, etc). **Please discuss this issue with your therapist weeks in advance of Graduation.**

Schedule

Sunday 3-6pm	Meet at the Open Sky offices in Durango for the Parent Workshop. We will spend our time getting to know other family members, preparing for the reunion with your child, and discussing the logistics of your field stay. Please be prepared for group participation. You will be on your own for dinner afterward.
Monday 9am	Meet at the Open Sky offices in Durango to prepare to leave for the field. Please have breakfast before you arrive.

- Monday 10am Leave for the field in Colorado for the Graduation with your child. You will be driving **your own vehicle** in a caravan to the Wilderness Base Camp in Colorado. Beyond this, the remaining activities for Monday and Tuesday will be tailored to the given group/family. Sometime either on Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning your Open Sky therapist will join you for an individual family session. On Tuesday the final graduation ceremony will take place around 12 noon. ***This is a very general itinerary that can and will change to account for specific concerns such as weather.***
- Tuesday 2:00 Departure from the Wilderness Base Camp in Colorado.
(Please note: departure time can change)

Travel Arrangements

Travel arrangements should be made so that you can arrive in Durango, Colorado by Sunday early afternoon. Please allow time to check into your hotel before the Parent Workshop begins at 3pm. The Durango office is about:

- 20 minutes from the Durango airport
- 3.5 hours from the Moab airport
- 4 hours from the Albuquerque airport
- 6.5 hours from the Denver airport
- 7 hours from the Salt Lake City airport.

Families will need to find accommodations in Durango for Sunday night (see attached hotel/motel list) and, Tuesday night.

Unless we strongly recommend that you **do not fly or drive out of Durango on Tuesday night**. If you do need to schedule a flight that night it must be 8pm or later on Tuesday. Graduation ceremonies finish up Tuesday mid afternoon and there is a long drive back to Durango from base camp (1.5-2.5hours, depending on whether we are in the UT or CO course areas). On top of travel time it is essential that your child shower before getting on a plane. Eating is something you'll want to fit in as well. Thus, the general practice is to **stay Tuesday night in Durango* and travel on Wednesday**.

*If your child is attending an aftercare program in Utah it will likely be more efficient to drive directly from the location of graduation and not come back through Durango. In this scenario you would spend the night in Moab, UT on Tuesday night and complete the drive to the aftercare program on Wednesday. To help you decide whether to drive or fly we suggest you check out drive times on Mapquest. In our summer course area in Colorado (~May-September), the closest town to base camp is Dolores, CO. In our winter course area in Utah (~October-April), the closest town to base camp Dove Creek, CO. Add 30-40 minutes to the overall trip time to account for driving on the dirt roads from base camp to town.

Seasonal Travel Advice:

From October 15-April 15, we strongly recommend that families rent 4-wheel drive or all-wheel drive vehicles. The one (small) mountain pass from Durango out to our wilderness field base can be immersed in a blizzard at any point between these dates. In addition, the last twenty miles into our base camp is on dirt roads, which can be impassable by 2-wheel drive vehicles when extremely wet and muddy. It may also, in extreme cases, be advisable to obtain rental insurance such that allows you to leave your rental vehicle anywhere for the rental company to pick up if it becomes impossible for you to drive the vehicle due to weather conditions.

Wilderness Experience

Families will spend Monday night camping out at the Open Sky wilderness base camp with their children, a very important aspect of family reintegration. While at Open Sky, your child has followed primitive and low impact camping methods, "Low impact" camping means doing the least amount of damage possible to the environment. Your child will teach you more about this.

At the Open Sky wilderness base camp there are no modern conveniences, such as flush toilets, running water, or electricity. Just as your child adjusted to this environment, parents generally adjust quite well themselves. It can, however, be intimidating for those who have not camped out in primitive conditions before. If so, keep in mind that this is one way in which you can gain more understanding of your child's experience. We hope that during your short stay in the wilderness, you might get in touch with the natural healing aspects of the natural environment and gain an appreciation for that which we often take for granted.

If a family member has **special medical requirements** related to being outdoors or in hot or cold weather, please contact Open Sky as soon as possible.

What to Bring

- A list of required clothing and equipment is enclosed in this packet.
- Clean clothes for your child to wear after graduation. Please don't bring these items to the Graduation site, but do have them available for your child post-graduation. You may leave these items locked in your vehicle during the Graduation process.
- Small duffel bag, overnight bag, or daypack for your gear; be prepared to carry it up to a few hundred yards.
- A duffel bag or suitcase for your child's belongings (kept in your vehicle until you leave the field).
- Families are asked to have all camping gear ready to go before arriving at the Durango office on Monday morning.
- Disposable camera.

What NOT to Bring

- **Goodies, snacks, or food for you or your child.** We ask that during the wilderness experience families eat only the food that is provided for them by Open Sky. This is your chance to eat what your child has been eating for the past weeks/months. (If you have special dietary needs, food allergies, or food intolerances, please contact us in advance so that we may discuss it.)
- **Gifts for your child.** Any gifts for your son/daughter are okay **only if** they are locked in your vehicle and not given to your child until the entire program is concluded.
- **Expensive cameras or video equipment**—but yes, please **do** bring disposable cameras. If you do choose to bring a digital camera, please be aware that the outdoor conditions can be hazardous to such equipment.
- **Any electronic items (cell phones, music players, laptops, etc.).** Open Sky **does not** have temperature-controlled facilities for you to safely leave such items while you are in the field.
- **Illegal substances or alcohol.** Or anything that advertises drugs or alcohol (i.e. logos on hats and clothing).
- **Cigarettes, chewing tobacco, coffee.** Your son or daughter has gone without drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes for many weeks. If you smoke, we ask that you do not smoke during this time. While we recognize this may be difficult for you, please honor our request. Tools that may help include drinking water, drinking green tea, taking smokeless drops (available at health food stores), taking vitamin C. Nicotine gum would **not** be appropriate because it would be distracting. If you have concerns about this issue, please discuss it with your Open Sky therapist.
- **Watches, make-up, mirrors, jewelry, any reading materials.** Yes, you **may** wear your wedding ring throughout the Graduation process—just remember that you will be living in the sandy, dusty, weather-prone out-of-doors and such conditions may be inhospitable to wedding bands.
- **Any fire-starting equipment (matches, lighter, fuel).**
- **Knife of any kind.**
- **An uncooperative or negative attitude!** Your child needs you to be fully present and supportive. If you have any concerns or questions prior to Graduation, please discuss them with your Open Sky therapist

In Conclusion

We are so looking forward to seeing you at Open Sky! We hope that this information will help you be better prepared for this important part of your child's—and family's—journey.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask your Open Sky therapist, or Open Sky's Family Service Coordinator.

Thank you for helping us to create the smoothest, most effective experience possible for your family!

*Please note that our policies around graduation are made with two main goals in mind for all participants: **physical and emotional safety** and **continuity of the program**. If you have any questions, please ask us and we will be happy to answer them!*

Parent Gear List

*Please bring the following items with you for your field visit for your child's graduation.
If you have any questions, please ask.*

All Seasons

Personal Items

- Personal Hygiene Products (include toothpaste & toothbrush)
- All Prescription Medications (if taken as-needed, bring plenty)

Equipment & Gear

- 2 Quart Water Capacity
- Headlamp (recommended) or Flashlight and Extra Batteries
- Unbreakable Bowl and Spoon
- A Duffel Bag or Daypack for your gear; be prepared to carry it up to a few hundred feet
- A Duffel Bag or Suitcase for your student's belongings (keep in your vehicle until you leave the field)
- A Change of Clothing for your son/daughter is recommended when they depart Open Sky (please keep these street clothes in your vehicle until the entire program is concluded)
- Glasses rather than contacts

Clothes

Be mindful and err on the conservative side in terms of the clothing you choose to wear. Please do not wear clothes, hats, or shoes with inappropriate messages/logos (beer logos, suggestive images). Extremely tight or revealing clothing is also not appropriate for Open Sky.

All Weather

- Synthetic or Cotton T-shirt
- Underwear
- Sun Hat
- Sturdy Hiking Shoes or Boots
- Light-weight Fleece Jacket
- Rain Jacket or Poncho

Additional for Spring/Summer

- Synthetic or Cotton Pants
- Synthetic or Cotton Shorts (with at least a 6-inch inseam)
- Light-weight Long Underwear Top & Bottoms
- 2 pairs Socks (light-weight wool recommended; cotton okay)
- Camp Shoes or Sandals

Additional for Fall/Winter

- Synthetic or Wool Pants
- Heavy, Warm Jacket
- Winter-weight Long Underwear Top & Bottoms
- 2 pairs Socks (wool recommended; one pair of liner socks also)
- Warm Hat; wool or fleece or a combo is appropriate
- Long-Sleeve Shirt; a polypropylene layer is appropriate
- Warm Gloves/Mittens

Open Sky provides families with the following:

- Food
- Tarp for shelter
- Sleeping bag and pad
- Pots and Pans
- Water
- Stoves and Fuel
- Toilet Paper
- Soap

Hotels in the Durango Area

Downtown Area

The Strater (970) 247-4431 (mention Open Sky for a discounted rate)

Double Tree (970) 259-6580, 1(800) 222-TREE

General Palmer (970) 247-4747, 1(800) 523-3358

The Leland House
or Rochester Hotel (970) 385-1920, 1(800) 664-1920

Bed & Breakfast

Blue Lake Ranch (970) 385-4537

Apple Orchard Inn (970) 247-0751

Aspen Groove (970) 247-1430

Gable House (970) 247-4982

Willowtail Springs (Mancos, CO) 800-698-0603 www.willowtailsprings.com

Corporate/Business

Holiday Inn (970) 247-5393

Best Western (970) 247-3251

Days End (970) 259-3311

Hotels in the Albuquerque Airport Area

<http://albuquerque.airporthotelguide.com/airporthotels.html>

Suggested web site information for the Durango area

www.durango.org

www.durangogov.org

<http://www.durango.com>

www.durangomenu.com

RENTAL CAR OPTIONS

1. Enterprise Rent-A-Car:
 - 1-800-736-8222
 - (970) 385-6860
2. Hertz Rent A Car:
 - 1-800-654-3131
 - (970) 247-5288
3. National Car Rental:
 - (970) 259-0068
 - (970) 382-8090
4. Dollar Rental:
 - (970) 259-3012
5. Budget Car & Truck Rental:
 - (970) 259-1941
 - 1-800-527-0700
6. Avis Rent A Car:
 - 1-800-831-2847
 - (970) 247-9761

Restaurants in Downtown Durango
(* Indicates a prominent bar on location)

www.durangomenu.com

Sit Down Nice to Casual Dining Experience:

* **Season's** 764 Main Avenue 382-9790

"Offers a casual atmosphere. The creative menu features a wide array of great selections, always made from the highest quality ingredients." Dinners from \$20-30

* **Ken & Sue's** 636 Main Avenue 385-1810

"This restaurant serves new American cuisine with an Asian flair plus an incredible Sunday brunch. They are sure to have a selection on their extensive menu to please you! Dine on their large patio, weather permitting." Try their divine Molten Chocolate Cake for dessert—it needs to be ordered with dinner as it takes them 18 minutes to bake this yummy treat.

Cypress Café 725 E. 2nd Avenue 385-6884

"Is located one block off Main Avenue and features award-winning Mediterranean cuisine served in the casual elegance of a century-old, quaint Victorian. Cyprus Café highlights natural meats, sustainable seafood, and farmer's market produce. Patio seating, weather permitting." Dinners from \$10-20.

* **East by SouthWest Sushi** 160 East College Avenue 247-5533

"Serving Pan Asian cuisine featuring a collage of Thai, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Japanese with a full service sushi bar. They strive to create cuisine that is low fat, light, and healthy, using the freshest ingredients available."

* **The Red Snapper** 144 E. 9th Avenue 259-3417

"Fine dining in a perfect setting, just a few steps off Main Avenue in downtown Durango. Seafood, steaks, prime rib, appetizers, nightly specials, unique desserts, and Durango's best salad bar."

* **Palace Restaurant** 505 Main Avenue – next to train station. 247-2018

"Casual meals served in two beautiful dining rooms reflecting the charm of the turn of the century Durango." Dinners from \$10-30.

* **Mutu's Italian Kitchen** 701 E. 2nd Avenue 375-2701

"Durango's newest Italian 'hot spot' is conveniently located in the heart of historic downtown Durango. Veal osso bucco, rock shrimp/lobster ravioli, and deep-dish lasagna are only a few of the 'hot' dishes." They also provide a Gluten Free selection.

* **Carver Brewing Co.** 1022 Main Avenue 259-2545

"Since 1986, Carver's has offered the very best in bakery and brewery. Featuring handcrafted baked goods, fresh soups and stews, and a healthy choice of entrées. It just tastes better at Carver's. Outdoor patio dining."

Walk-In or Take-Out

Nini's Taqueria 552 Main Avenue 259-4221

"Freshly prepared, wonderfully spice-filled giant burritos, soft tacos, and grilled quesadillas. Take out or dine in. Casual Mexican feeling."

Nature's Oasis 300 S. Camino Del Rio 247-1988

"Natural foods market with an expanded deli: featuring fresh sandwiches, salads, and soups daily. Fruit smoothies. Vegetable juice bar. In the market: organic produce, additive- and preservative-free groceries, vitamins, supplements, bulk foods, herbs." They also have Gluten Free options.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

START: DURANGO, CO AIRPORT
END: OPEN SKY WILDERNESS DURANGO OFFICE
1970 E 3rd Ave Suite 205
Durango CO, 81301

Directions

Total Est. Time: 27 minutes **Total Est. Distance:** 15.6mo

- 1: Head **Northwest** on **Airport Rd/Co Rd 309** toward **Co Rd 309A**
- 2: Take the 1st Left to stay on **Airport Rd/Co Rd 309**
- 3: Turn LEFT onto **US-160 West**.
- 4: Stay STRAIGHT at Junction where US-160 West merges with US-550 North / **CAMINO DEL RIO**.
- 5: Continue onto Camino Del Rio
- 6: Turn left onto **N. Main Ave**
- 7: Turn right onto **E Park Ave**
- 8: Continue onto **E 3rd Ave**

9: You will see Durango Public Library on your Right, just past this you will see **Rivergate Professional building 1970**. Go through the doors at the entrance, we are on the **3rd floor, suite 205**

START: OPEN SKY WILDERNESS DURANGO OFFICE
END: DOWNTOWN (STRATER HOTEL) DURANGO

Directions

Total Est. Time: 6 minutes **Total Est. Distance:** 1.3 miles

- 1: Head **South** on **E 3rd Ave** toward **E 19th St**
- 2: Take the 1st right onto **E 19th St**
- 3: Take the 2nd left onto **Main Ave/US-550 Continue to follow Main AVE**
- 4: **699 Main AVE** is on the **Right**
- 5: End at **Strater Hotel** 699 Main Ave, Durango, CO 81301, US



Graduation Assignments

After your initial reunion, you will be sharing in the following exercises with your children: *“I feel” exchange and “the four ‘R’s”*.

Please prepare three “I feel” statements:

- a positive (in recognition of a positive quality)
- a constructive (in recognition of a difficult or problematic quality that they can work on or change)
- a challenging/scary situation or trait but something that needs to be said in order for genuine communication and for the relationship to grow.

For example:

- I feel happy and confident when you share your relapse prevention plan. I imagine I feel this way because it looks like you are serious and realistic about your sobriety. In the future, I hope you will attend NA meetings and find peace of mind.
- I feel anxious when I remember how you would stay out for days at a time. I imagine I feel this way because I had no idea if you were alive and safe, and I couldn't sleep. In the future I hope you will be able to talk to me and so that we can at least see if we can work out whatever it is that is upsetting you.
- I feel disrespected and hurt when you said you wanted nothing more than to get out of each other's lives, slammed the door and gave me the silent treatment. I imagine I feel this way because I've always just wanted to support you and it seems that you have nothing but contempt for me, our household and its rules. In the future, I hope you will think how hurtful your words can be and how scary you can sound when you shout.

Next, please prepare four statements:

- something you **respect** about your child
- something you **regret** about your child or your past actions or the state of your relationship
- something you **resent** about your child's behaviour or the state of your relationship
- something you **request** of your child