

SEAN HOYER

Sean Hoyer, BSW, MA, is a VU graduate and he had written the department during the holidays!! Here are some excerpts from his letter. . . .

Dear family and friends, . . . This past year has been fairly good by most accounts. I continue to work as a Clinical Social Worker with OMNI youth services. OMNI is a large community based youth agency in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago. I primarily work with court involved youth referred to us by juvenile probation for drug, gang, or criminal behavior. In addition to seeing youth one on one each week, I also meet with their parents, and run several groups that address decision-making, substance abuse, and learning how to live in society. It is challenging and rewarding work.

As a perk of my job, I also serve on a team that does outdoor adventure therapy trips. These usually entail taking clients on 5 to 7 day trips. During these trips, the youth work on issues related to their counseling, such as anger management, making good decisions, or communicating well with others while they rock or ice climb, backpack, sea kayak, or winter camping. This has been a wonderful way to incorporate my love of the out-of-doors with my passion of working with youth to help them solve their problems.

We currently go anywhere in North America. As a result, I have been rock-climbing at Devil's Tower, WY, backpacking in the Canadian Rockies, Bryce Canyon, UT, and Big Bend, TX, and ice climbing in Northern Michigan. OMNI even paid for a three-week training trip with National Outdoor Leadership School to the Cascades of Washington State. During that trip, I did backpacking, learned mountaineering, and did rock-climbing for four days in Squamish, Vancouver, BC. One highlight of the year was the opportunity to present with two co-workers at a regional conference for professionals working in Adventure Therapy. This was a chance to present our OMNI program to others who also integrate counseling with outdoor trips. Although a bit shaky for our first time, we anticipate presenting to larger audiences in the future as our program and its reputation continue to grow.

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