

Students experience Rite of Passage

BY KEVIN CALLAHAN • COURIER-POST STAFF • JULY 6, 2010



Five students from the UrbanPromise school camp out at Saranac Lake in New York during a Rite of Passage trip with the UrbanTrekks.

CAMDEN — When a group of high school students from Camden hiked up a mountain in the Adirondacks and camped alone overnight at Saranac Lake, they saw more than wondrous views of northern New York State. The five graduating seniors of the UrbanPromise School saw into themselves.

"When I was climbing the mountain, I wanted to give up," said Shanice Garrett, 17, of Camden. "When I don't want to do something, I give up, but I said, 'I might as well get to the top' . . . It was nice."

Garrett was joined by classmates Joshua Daniels, Jose Peralta, George Martinez and Robert Andre White on this Rite of Passage expedition to the Adirondack Mountains from June 12 to 17 through the UrbanTrekks program.

"I realized a lot about myself," said White, 17, of Camden. "I realized sometimes I have a bad attitude . . . I left behind my bad attitude."

The UrbanTrekks is now in its sixth year under director Jim Cummings. This is the second year of the Rite of Passage expedition.

This adventure trip packed more significance since the five graduating seniors all started

"They have been part of the UrbanPromise family for a lot of years and now they are all going in different directions," Cummings said. "There is excitement but also anxiety, so the Rite of Passage is a reflection on the past, 'what it was like growing up in Camden, how did it shape you,' but also envisions the future."

The Rite of Passage fits with the UrbanTrekker's mission of helping and teaching the youth of Camden through outdoor experiences and adventures.

The five Rite of Passage passengers learned what can't be taught in a school room with walls during this journey. They learned how to tough it out on a long hike to the sky and they learned how to rely on themselves alone on a little bit of land surrounded by water.

"It just changes you," said Daniels, 18, of Camden.

Reach Kevin Callahan at (856) 317-7821.