

Minnesota Boys to Men Moves into Third Big Year

Beating Drum, the Newsletter of ManKind Project Minnesota **November, 2003**

It promises to be another banner year for the Boys to Men of Minnesota. In September 2003, we co-hosted our third annual Rites of Passage Adventure weekend (ROPA) for boys together with the new BTM center in Sioux City Iowa. A total of 14 Minnesota men and boys went down to Sioux City. Our caravan was a mix of adult mentors, previously initiated "Journeyman", and new initiates. After a weekend that was challenging, emotional, and fun, we now have our 2003-2004 journeyman circle meeting in J-groups once a month for the next year. Minnesota journeyman Mike Erickson joined co-leader Charlie Borden in guest staffing Washington D.C.'s second ROPA on Oct 24th. Mike has showed real leadership and compassion in his work with the new guys. After the gift of service work & connection at camp, Mike got a tour of Downtown D.C. and the monuments to boot.

Erickson is joining his fellow journeyman Paul Mata this November 15th for the Boys to Men's first annual leadership training conference in San Diego California. The weekend training is for Boys to Men journeymen who've completed their ROPA, staffed at least once, and are ready to stretch into greater leadership in their lives as a whole. Good luck to Mike and Paul!

Congratulations to Gerardo Ramoz, and Jim Lovestar who are BTM-MN's most recent mentor volunteers. They've been matched with new journeymen who were as yet unmatched from the Iowa weekend training. Too late to make the local mentor training event in August, Gerardo flew to the St. Louis BTM mentor training in October to get trained and prepared for his service. BTM-MN is fortunate to have two friends working for airlines who get us standby airline tickets for these and other similar BTM travel events.

BTM's center director, Bob Pahl recently concluded chairing a series of vision & mission clarity sessions for BTM-MN. The conclusion: BTM-MN will continue delivering it's annual Rites of Passage Adventure weekends, and follow up community & "J-Group" events. However, we will begin seeking another twin cities based mentoring program to collaborate with who will take over the mentor match component of our program. While we may still provide men and training for mentors as we are able, we have found the mentor outreach and match casework to be an unsustainable workload for a core group of our size.

Yet, we will continue to seek mentor matches, and many of our existing matches are continuing. We now have men and boys in relationships from brand new to up to 3 years in connection. These relationships, with our ongoing ROPA and community events are making real differences in boys lives. While the specifics are

of course confidential, it can be said that we've walked with boys through everything from play events to suicide attempts. We've been with the boys in school meetings, hospitals, woods and homes. The love has returned to the men as well. There are gifts here that can only be gotten by committing to a needing boy.