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## MAGAZINE

### THE GIVERS

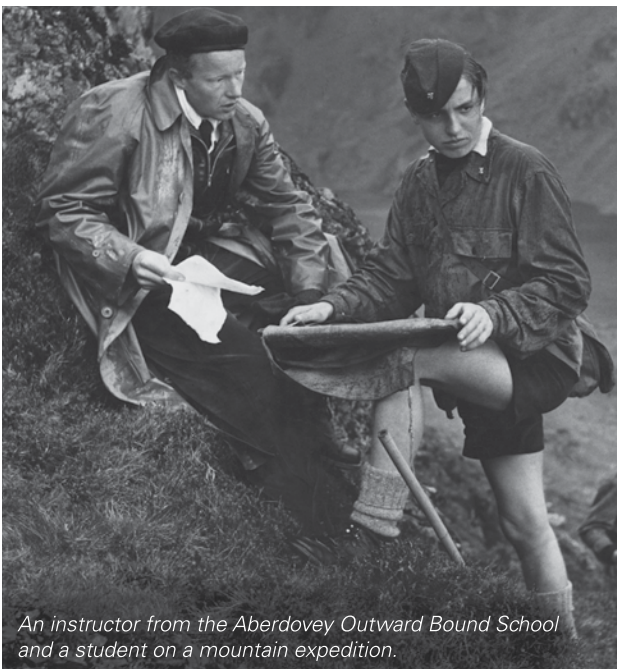
THINKING *OUTSIDE THE BOX* FOR 50 YEARS

# OUTWARD BOUND

**“Simply put, Outward Bound changes peoples’ lives by helping them realize they are capable of more than they ever thought possible. OB has been serving students from all walks of life in the United States for 50 years by continually adapting to changing times and community needs. We are more excited than ever about the next 50!” – Lee Skold, OBUSA Board Chair**

**T**his year Outward Bound, the renowned international non-profit, is celebrating its mid-century mark in the United States. Ever present in the global lexicon of organizations dedicated to making a difference, Outward Bound is one of those rare groups that has touched the lives of individuals from all socio-economic strata.

The unlikely beginning of the organization hails back to unique circumstances...and a unique individual by the name of Kurt Hahn. Hahn, headmaster of a German school during the rise of Hitler’s power, recognized the threat posed by the regime’s lack of acceptance of cultural diversity. He attempted to enjoin his students’ parents to stand with him in speaking out against the injustice and was jailed. Due to connections with Britain’s royal family, he was released and immigrated to the U.K.



*An instructor from the Aberdovey Outward Bound School and a student on a mountain expedition.*

In the U.K., Dr. Hahn continued to establish schools based on the styles of the classical masters such as Plato, Rousseau and others who believed that education should be grounded in life experience. A parent of one of Hahn’s students, Lawrence Holt, owned a shipping company that was decimated by German U-boats. Holt noted that mostly older sailors survived the attacks, not the ‘hale and hearty’ younger men. In conversation, Holt mentioned this to Dr. Hahn, and Hahn shared his belief that the younger men lacked the experience to survive.

Together the two men established the first Outward Bound programs in Aberdovey, Wales. The programs included sea-based training (with some land expeditions) to educate young seamen on how to pull together as a team, to remain calm and, ultimately, to improve chances of survival. This is where the name ‘Outward Bound’ originated. It’s a nautical term coined when a ship leaves the safety of the harbor, hoisting a flag known as the ‘Blue Peter’ that signals it is *outward bound* and venturing into the unknown.

In the early ‘50s a man by the name of Josh Miner learned of Hahn’s unique approach to education. He left *his* safe harbor in Princeton, New Jersey to work under Dr. Hahn. In 1961, he brought the program to Colorado.

Over the years, the primary mission of Outward Bound has been to help individuals discover their potential through challenging experiences, both physical and interpersonal, in new environments. This is why the outdoors works so well as a ‘classroom.’ By moving outside of their comfort zones, students learn more about themselves and can apply new-found skills to real life situations. The end result is a boost in confidence – lessons in leadership, trust, problem solving, communicating and listening are learned – and individuals become more accepting in ‘owning’ their actions. Instructors help students understand the link between the successful completion of a physical challenge and how to apply it to life. This methodology: experience, challenge and adventure promotes action and reflection, creating an ongoing cycle.

Outward Bound works on ‘Four Pillars’ that are incorporated into all curricula: 1.) Physical Fitness – building strength and stamina through activity; 2.) Craftsmanship – which incorporates the value of doing things well and developing a sense of pride; 3.) Self-reliance – encompassing decision making, problem solving and resourcefulness, and lastly; 4.) Compassion – the act of developing empathy and understanding for others...and for ourselves.

Outward Bound’s courses of study range from less than a day to three months and include over 1,000 single or multi-activity courses encompassing backpacking, canyoneering, canoeing, dogsledding, mountaineering, rafting, rock climbing, sailing, sea kayaking and snowboarding. More than 15,000 participants successfully complete an expedition or in-school program and over \$4 million in scholarships and financial aid is awarded annually.

Outward Bound also has a tuition-free veterans’ program (established in 1941) that has aided over 6,000 individuals upon their return to civilian life. In addition, Group Education Programs offering shorter wilderness courses to high-school age students are available. Urban programs are coordinated from Outward Bound centers located in The Twin Cities, Baltimore, The Bay Area, Omaha, Denver, Philadelphia, Portland and Atlanta.

Among students surveyed one year after their courses were completed, 79% were more successful at school or work; 88% displayed more leadership; and 93% believed more in their ability to succeed.

To date, more than one million students, including Tom Brokaw, Jack Black and Ben Affleck have participated in Outward Bound’s wilderness adventures. And today, after 50 years, Outward Bound remains dedicated to the challenge of giving their students the tools to identify, embrace, and travel their own paths.

For more information visit: [www.outwardbound.org](http://www.outwardbound.org)