

CONVERSION PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT: Ironwood in Maine

By Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE (<https://www.cope.church>) Dated: 5/5/21

The HEAL Mission of COPE has received 65 complaints from individuals and families alleging fraud (academic fraud/healthcare fraud), kidnapping, negligence, causing intentional harm to children and parents, withholding/lack of transparency, HIPAA noncompliance, child abuse, coercive thought reform (level system), evidence from October, 2018-July, 2019 that a young man's mental health severely deteriorated while enrolled, use of escorts/hired transporters to spirit youth away to the program, one loved one of someone enrolled who wrote them in 2011 reported via e-mail to HEAL Mission "Apparently in level one or whatever its called, she doesn't have a mattress. cannot hum, cannot speak or even cough without raising her hand, and more. I don't know everything about the school and I've been researching it for the past week, finding almost nothing about it. The lack of transparency, the deceptive wording of their main webpage, along with the information that my friend's given me. Leads me to believe that something is not right about Ironwood," staff named Kevin reportedly said "I fucking hate my job, I don't care what you kids do after hours, just don't make it obvious to the cameras...", another staff was reportedly fired for using "hard drugs" while on duty, censoring/monitoring communication including communication blackouts or being held incommunicado at times, in 2014 another survivor reported to the HEAL Mission in an e-mail that read in part "Every week, we were required to write an e-letter to our parents, which were supposed to have (I still wish I was making this up) only "positive things" about our week included in them. If we didn't do these types of activities per the staff's satisfaction, we usually were punished with demerits, which would translate to hours of work on our only "free" day, Sunday... The journalling we were required to do every night was supposed to be a private affair, and we were reassured that "nobody will ever read this." Our journals were read on multiple occasions. They lined us up one night and dished out consequences based off of the contents of our journals. I used my journal like a normal human being up until that moment. After that, I started to write very nasty things "to whomever may be reading my journal again". They still required you to write in a journal, and to bring it to a staff member for inspection so they could check it off of a list. Every night.... I was placed in a position where I could not leave a 5x5 foot circle of rocks without permission, outdoors during Maine winter. I was not allowed to make eye contact, or any form of communication with anybody. I was not allowed to ask to use the bathroom. This is called Impact, a time for "reflection". The minimum amount of time you can spend on Impact is 3 days. You could potentially have an indefinite stay in this position, as I've seen teens spend weeks there. I've heard stories of girls using menstrual pads as diapers while on Impact. I've witnessed strange moral codes. I've seen an open vegan be fed a tuna fish sandwich for their lunch...One day while I was out on Impact, I saw a boy in a wheelchair attempt suicide by putting himself in his fire. This happened basically right next to me.", homophobia, unqualified staff, food poisoning/tampering, labor trafficking, rape victims blamed for their victim-status, and in 2018 another survivor reported to HEAL Mission via e-mail "They say they will bring your child back. But like a cult, sex slave industry, or a baby horse, they break you in till you have no power and no will to fight. In sex trade or prostitution. The woman/men are forced over

and over to have sex until they have no reason to say no. They strip their identity, their rights, their self esteem, and their self worth so that they do as told the first time. At Ironwood we were the dogs in training and the treat that was dangled in front of us and taken away everyday was the chance to see our families, to talk to our families for even five minutes. And at any time like a prison they can add time to or take time off.” at Ironwood. Some of these complaints are referenced online and others remain confidential and on file with the church. With the intention of providing an opportunity for closure, clarification, and potentially peace, on 4/27/21 Rev. Angela Smith invited Ironwood victims (families and survivors) as well as staff whistleblowers to provide a guest sermon. That invitation read thus:

“Dear Ironwood Survivors and Families,

Ironwood is on the HEAL Mission watch-list (of fraudulent and abusive programs) and enrolled in the COPE Conversion Program based on your reports to the HEAL Mission alleging fraud, abuse, and/or other violations. You can learn more or refresh your memory at <https://www.heal-online.org/thelist.htm> and/or <https://www.heal-online.org/iron.htm> .

The HEAL Mission and COPE Conversion Program (for Conversion Programs) has updated our protocols to provide entities populating the watch-list and/or enrolled in the COPE Conversion Program three ways off the watch-list or out of the program. Death and/or closure remains one way after which they will be buried at <http://www.beyondbusiness.net/youarenext.htm> with the others who didn't make it off the list or reform in time. Programs enrolled in the COPE Conversion Program/placed on the watch-list are also eligible for graduation if they meet the minimum Honesty In Marketing Standards described and/or provided via hypertext link at <https://www.cope.church/standards.htm> . The third option is merciful release. Merciful releases are determined by date of last directly reported to the HEAL Mission complaint (date of incident(s) of abuse), whether those incidents occurred prior to when by custom or law the requirement to retain such records has expired, and whether Sponsors (you) are actively participating or maintaining interest in holding your program accountable.

The most recent complaint the mission has received occurred in 2020 (if you were abused later than that then you did not include the dates of your enrollment when you contacted the HEAL Mission) on Ironwood. The custom is to retain such records for 7 years in Maine. So, the requirements for merciful release have not been met. This is an invitation for you to provide a guest sermon no later than Wednesday, May 5th, 2021 at 8pm Pacific if you wish to provide one rather than have a progress report posted at that time. For sermons (including guest sermons), see <https://www.cope.church/sermons.htm> and for progress reports see <https://www.heal-online.org> . Here's how to participate:

1. In the body of an e-mail message write out your complete sermon and include answers to the following questions:

Did you report fraud or other unlawful actions to the proper authorities? If not, why? If

so, what happened with the reports? (So, 2 part question)

Why do you believe Ironwood should remain enrolled in the COPE Conversion Program?

2. Send that guest sermon to me at rev@cope.church with your first and last name (full) and notify me if you wish for your contact information to be included or for all feedback to be handled by the mission and/or church. Your full first and last name will be shared along with your sermon as written and provided by you. It will be posted as a Guest Sermon at <https://www.heal-online.org> , <https://www.heal-online.org/iron.htm> , and <https://www.cope.church/sermons.htm> .

If no one provides a guest sermon and there are no new complaints received by the HEAL Mission by October 31st, 2027, Ironwood will receive a merciful release.

Thank you in advance for participating. And, please learn more about how to value your contributions at <https://www.cope.church/givetoday.pdf>.

In Solidarity,

Rev. Angela Smith
HEAL Mission National Coordinator/Founding Mother of COPE"

Now, there was a vote on whether Ironwood should remain on the watch-list initiated on March 30th, 2020 where all Sponsors of that program's placement in the COPE Conversion Program were invited to participate. The Sponsors unanimously voted against merciful release or the equivalent at that time. HEAL Mission and the COPE Conversion Program recognize participation in the vote in March as recent enough participation even if Sponsors prefer more time to consider, write, and/or provide any guest sermon. While we understand this may be disappointing for Ironwood, it is the hope that this progress report helps explain the reasons for the continued enrollment/placement in the COPE Conversion Program. Additional or continued participation by Sponsors, including providing guest sermons or participating in future votes will impact whether or not the program qualifies for merciful release or remains enrolled. Lack of participation by Sponsors, where all other criteria for merciful release are met, will result in merciful release of the program.

Similar invitations will be going out to all survivor/victim/whistleblower e-mail lists and their respective programs placed on the watch-list. It may take some time to get through the entire list especially if enrollments pick up. But, we are working on it and everyone can submit Feedback at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> at any time regardless of position regarding program placement or enrollment.

To close, I remind everyone that there are remedies at law. Labor trafficking, rape, fraud (misleading marketing/false advertising), false imprisonment, kidnapping, battery, assault, and any crime or tort you could name are actionable at law. The HEAL Mission of COPE is prepared to assist all victims by providing reporting resources and

information for the sake of justice and we appreciate all Sponsors who selflessly contribute content for the sake of informing the public to help those exercising due diligence avoid becoming a victim. Reporting Guide Available at: <https://www.heal-online.org/report.htm> and <https://www.heal-online.org/iron.htm> .