

Sugar Hollow Retreat
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SUGAR HOLLOW AWAKENS THE SPIRIT FOR LEARNING GROUPS

BUTLER, Tenn. – For this group of adults, it was time to connect to the earth and awaken the spirit.

And Dingo Brown needed knew just where to go.

Tucked away in cabins at Sugar Hollow retreat, his annual “awakening the spirit group” performed Nia dance and used music and drumming to get away from the scrambling of work days and remember the thrill of life.

Brown, who runs several programs for children and adults through the Blue Ridge Learning Center in Boone, NC, said Sugar Hollow Retreat provides the perfect setting. Midway between Boone and Elizabethton, it’s far enough to give a sense of escape without too far of a drive.

“It’s close enough to get to,” he said. “It’s near the Appalachian Trail and [Watauga] Lake. I could use both aspects and have the privacy. And I could have the choice of cabins or camping out.”

The participants agree, because of the 300-acre site’s setup, which allows for more than one group to use the campus at the same time.

“They loved the place,” he said. “They thought it was beautiful.”

One of his programs, VisionQuest, takes eighth grade students from Montessori Community School in Durham out to Sugar Hollow for three days. There they fast, learn about the woods and get in touch with their inner selves as they prepare to embark upon high school.

“It’s a healthy rite of passage,” Brown says and “a powerful moment for this time in their life.”

Brown has also run corporate retreats at Sugar Hollow, providing team building exercises in the campus’ 1,200-square-foot conference center. One group can stay in one of the retreat’s four multi-bedroom cabins or the 10-bedroom lodge.

Brown says he’s been using Sugar Hollow for three years now and he continues to return, not just for the gorgeous views and peaceful setting, but for the convenience.

“And Jim [Gresch, the innkeeper] is always flexible. They’re really willing to help out,” he said.

Blue Ridge Learning Center - <http://www.brlc.org/>