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Subject: My Boy's About Face
Date: 2009-08-19

My Boy's About Face...

Dear Dear Dear Dr. Laura,

Four plus weeks ago I had tears streaming down my face as I dropped my bright and loving, but underachieving and lazy 13-year-old boy off at the airport to fly to Texas by himself, with nothing but a carry-on bag containing 6 pairs of underwear and a few toiletries. No iPod, no cell phone, no clothes other than what he had on his back. Two days ago I had tears streaming down my face and sweat dripping down my back as I stood for Colors and the National Anthem in the blazing Texas sun, then watched my ANYTHING BUT underachieving and lazy 13 year old Private First Class Cadet march proudly past me with his platoon to graduate from a four week Marine military boot camp. He'll return in two weeks to begin 8th grade at Marine Military Academy. I'll let him explain in his own words from one of his letters some of what he did:

"Dear Mom, I just wanted to tell you I'm doing fine but it's a workout times 1,000 more than anything I've ever done. I've done rappelling regular and Australian (face first) style off a 90 ft tower, zip line, the COPE course, the full Marine obstacle course, leadership reaction course, paintball, 10 meter BB gun target shooting, rock climbing, mud course, pugil stick fighting, boxing, Iron Man competition, and have hiked about a hundred miles, no lie! I can about face, right face, left face and all that stuff. I haven't been hit once in paintball and asked 3 guys in a fox hole to surrender! Love you lots and thank you for this opportunity."

Dr. Laura, the accomplished (and very tired) cadet I picked up in Texas two days ago is taller, stronger, prouder, more introspective, respectful and polite. He can't wait to get back to school in two weeks, most especially he's looking forward to the incoming Plebes having to call him "Sir". We are all going to miss him desperately and he us, most especially his 19 month old baby sister, but we are all willing to make this sacrifice for him, emotionally and financially, so he is not just another boy barely getting through school, at risk for drugs and booze, with no real goal for his future. Now, he wants to be an honor student, he wants to rise in the ranks at school, and he no longer plans to be a "professional video game player" when he grows up. The course of my boy's life has been changed forever and I owe you and the Marine Military Academy in Texas for that. If it weren't for listening to you suggest military school for underachieving, unmotivated boys like mine, I would never have considered this, nor had the courage to send him. I will keep you updated as to how he is doing and plan to start a blog about our experience as a family, to help dispel the myth that military school is punishment. On the contrary, it's an honor and a privilege and should be viewed as such.

You saved my boy. I am forever grateful to you for that. God Bless you and God Bless America!

R.

[Back](#)