Read the passages and write a response to the writing prompt.

**Passage 1**

**Outward Bound Stresses Teamwork, Self-confidence for Teens**

By Marc Weinstein

Oct. 23, 2014

Fifteen­year­old Ana Cano of Mendham and several other teenagers had no choice but to swim in a rushing river, sometimes floating on their backs to minimize exhaustion. All but one of their six canoes went missing after a thunderstorm struck during their trip in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in early July.

The West Morris Mendham High School student and her companions took to the river in hopes of finding the canoes. The canoes came loose from the force of the storm and floated downstream. They also hoped to find the leader of their group, who could not be found after the storm.

Fortunately, the teenagers later found both the canoes and their leader. One of the youths suffered an injury during the ordeal.

“It was a bit intense,” recalled Cano of the incident that tested her survival skills.

That was but one experience that Cano and 19 other New Jersey high school students shared with each other and their families. They spoke at a graduation ceremony of the Outward Bound Youth Leadership Corps of Northern New Jersey (NJYLC) on Saturday, July 19 at the Essex Hunt Club.

On that day, instructors of the Outward Bound program handed certificates to the purple T-shirt clad teenagers acknowledging their completion of a challenging two-week program. The teens had been canoeing on the Delaware River or hiking, rock-climbing, and camping across a section of the Appalachian Trail.

The teens are now members of an elite group of 300 high school students who have participated in the program since its inception in 2003. The program selects students who submit the best applications explaining who they are and why they are interested in participating in Outward Bound, along with three letters of recommendation.

“The kids who go through this process are rare and amazing,” said Michael Stanley, the program’s founder and formerly of Far Hills.

Stanley said this year’s program included students from both suburban and inner city communities across the state. They choose a mix in order to have teens from various backgrounds work together to meet the challenges that nature will throw at them.

Stanley is an ex­finance professional who departed the canyons of Wall Street for the great outdoors 25 years ago. He said the program is designed to create difficult situations which the group is forced to overcome.

“We tell them to get out of their comfort circle,” he said. “But once you overcome these challenges, you can overcome any challenges.”

The members of this year’s group couldn’t agree more with Stanley.

Tatum Pappas is a 16­year­old Roseland resident who attends West Essex Regional High School in North Caldwell. She said the program was indeed a test of her resolve but one she never backed away from.

Her 16­year­old [twin] sister, Courtney, also is a West Essex Regional student. She said her participation in the program marked the first time she was away from home. And she feels a little more independent because of it.

“It’s a life changing experience that you have to go through,” she said. “You are away from your comfort zone.”

**“Challenges a Part of Life”**

For Lorenzo Beer of Warren Township, a 16­year­old Oratory Preparatory School student in Summit, the Outward Bound program taught him that there will always be challenges and one needs to think positively when confronting them.

“Challenges are always going to be part of life. But you need to be happy while you are going through the challenges, so it won’t be such a struggle,” said Beer. He was also part of the group that swam in the river when its canoes disappeared after the storm.

Another one of the challenges in the program was that each member of the group had to setup camp alone in the woods for 48 hours. They were provided with only a tent, rain gear, and water, enough food for a meal or two, and a journal to jot down their thoughts.

Stephanie Roser of Florham Park is a 16­year­old Newark Academy student in Livingston. She said she wasn’t scared of being alone in the woods for two days and nights. In fact, she was worried about “being bored for 48 hours.”

Roser said “going solo” in the wilderness allowed her to reflect a lot about her life. She added that the entire experience made her a stronger person.

**Passage 2**

**Outward Bound: Missing Adventure Group Found Safe**

By Tracie Cone

Nine teenagers and two adults who were reported missing in a rugged area of the Sierra Nevada mountain range hiked to safety Wednesday, hours after rescue teams launched a search.

The teens, ages 13 to 16, and their two 30­year­old guides turned up at a remote camp store several miles outside the search area, said Brad Mushovic. He is executive director of wilderness programs at Outward Bound, the nonprofit group that organized the expedition.

The hikers had last been seen on Sunday.

“We’re happy to see such a positive outcome,” Mushovic said. He reported no injuries.

The hikers were nearing the end of a two-week backpacking and rock-climbing trip in the Sierra National Forest about 10 miles west of Kings Canyon National Park. They had supplies to last them through Friday, according to the Fresno County sheriff’s office.

They were reported missing to authorities on Tuesday, two days after the group missed a rendezvous with a third guide. That guide had separated from the group Sunday to scout a possible climb. When he returned to the prearranged meeting point, the group wasn't there, Mushovic said.

The guide, who was in possession of the group's only satellite phone, called Outward Bound officials for help, Mushovic said.

Fresno officials and parents of the children were called Tuesday when the group still hadn’t been found, he said.

One of the adult instructors called Outward Bound after the group emerged at the Florence Lake Store near the midpoint of the John Muir portion of the Pacific Crest Trail, about three hours east of Fresno.

The teens were part of Outward Bound's Sierra Rock Climbing Expedition, a $1,795 back country trek to the Courtright Reservoir on the Sierra western slope and into steep terrain. 1

The teens were from all over the country, including Hawaii, Connecticut, Montana, Massachusetts and California, sheriff’s officials said.

**Writing Prompt**

You have just read two passages about teenagers involved in Outward Bound programs. Imagine that you were a member of the group canoeing on the Delaware River or hiking in the Sierra Nevada mountain range—and you got lost. Write a first-person narrative telling about your experience. You may create additional characters to make the story more interesting. Use factual details from both passages to support your narrative.

Manage your time carefully so that you can plan your narrative and do some prewriting in the space provided. Be sure to use details from both passages and avoid over relying on one passage. Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph narrative.