

Michael E. Ackerman

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Career Summary

Talented in all aspects of program creation and business development. An experienced leader specializing in start-up and turn-around projects, new program implementation, best practices, the development of high caliber executive and employee teams, operational and logistical efficiencies, safety and compliance and the development of strategies for ongoing evaluation, review and refinement. Skilled in fiscal management, strategic planning, marketing and outreach, promotions and events and the cultivation and maintenance of high impact relationships and networks. Seventeen years of professional experience as an educator, adventurer and outdoor photojournalist. An indefatigable work ethic, limitless creative vision and a strong commitment to authenticity have resulted in a distinguished record of success.

Professional Experience

2014 – Present DURANGO SCHOOLS OF CHOICE INC. Founder/ Board of Directors, Durango, CO.

An overwhelming amount of momentum was generated from my success with Animas High School. Coupling that achievement with a desire to explore fiscal synergy with the local school district and propelled to action at the insistence of local parents and school choice supporters, I founded Durango Schools of Choice (DSOC) in the spring of 2014. DSOC's first project, The Juniper School, a public elementary school of choice, received charter authorization in March 2015 and is slated to open in the August of 2016.

2014 – Present TRIBUTARIES EDUCATIONAL SERVICES Executive-in-Residence/Lead Consultant, USA

A demand for my expertise and scholastic leadership has led to my engagement in a number of progressive start-up and turn around efforts. I'm currently coordinating a number of initiatives focused on organizational restructuring, school marketing, program outreach, facilities planning and new campus construction. In addition to Tributaries new school development projects, I also continue to represent local students and their families as a privately contracted, education advocate.

2013-Present THE DANVERS NEWTON GROUP Principal Partner, Durango, CO.

The Danvers Newton Group is an entrepreneurial enterprise that incubates and funds progressive business ventures and investment initiatives focused on improving social, cultural, educational and environmental consciousness and practices. Focused on supporting moderate risk, low capital, high return start-ups, the Danvers Newton Group leverages local market knowledge, robust business relationships and the enterprising talents and experience of our team to plant, grow and harvest success.

2013-2014

**ANIMAS HIGH SCHOOL
Executive Director, Durango, CO.**

In the spring of 2013, I transitioned from daily operations and my role as founding Head of School to lead the school's development, capacity and sustainability efforts. I managed the organization's budget and orchestrated fiscal strategy, captained marketing and outreach initiatives, oversaw the acquisition, construction and maintenance of campus facilities, spearheaded fundraising, grant writing and annual giving and gifting campaigns for the school and provided direct leadership to the Animas High School Board of Directors, AHS's Advisory Board and the AHS Executive Team. I also served as the school's liaison to the Colorado Charter School Institute and the CO Department of Education and was responsible for networking and collaborating with local school districts, city/county/tribal officials, programming partners, charter supporters and legislators at local, state and national levels. I served on multiple school subcommittees and provided programmatic support to Animas High School's administration, faculty, students and their families. In 2013-14, AHS continued to articulate and model a new vision of what a 21st century, public education looks like in the US. Under my leadership, we continued to solidify Animas High School as a rural beacon of excellence and refined what we believe is a visionary national template for public education reform and district/charter collaboration.

2009-2013

**ANIMAS HIGH SCHOOL
Head of School, Durango, CO.**

Served as founding Head of School for Animas High School in Durango, CO. In 2011, Animas High School was named an Irwin School of Excellence, an honor bestowed to the top 8% of schools in CO. In 2012, I was nominated for Colorado Charter School Leader of the Year. In 2013, 100 percent of AHS's senior class applicants were awarded admission into colleges and universities and Animas High celebrated its first graduating class. Under my tenure as Head of School, Animas High was consistently distinguished as a high performing high school and is currently the top performing school in our region.

2006-2009

**LEARN OUTDOORS INC./ LEARN OUTDOORS AZ. LLC
Founder and Director, Prescott, AZ.**

Founded in 2006 as an educational nonprofit, Learn Outdoors was a continuation of the extremely successful Central Arizona Outdoor School. Learn Outdoors strove to enrich participants' lives through challenge, adventure, exploration and direct experience in the natural world. We offered customized programs that fostered connections between people and their environment promoted individual growth, personal accomplishment and empowered participants to take on leadership roles. Our goal was to educate, engage and empower our students.

2005-2006

**CENTRAL ARIZONA OUTDOOR SCHOOL
Program Director, Prescott, AZ.**

- * Assumed the leadership of a premier provider of adventure and environmental education programs for public and private school groups
- * Implemented a new marketing strategy designed to attract new clientele from the population centers of Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Phoenix and Tucson
- * Facilitated frontline marketing efforts at conferences, special events and industry wide gatherings
- * Redesigned the school's website and logo to increase brand and company recognition
- * Expanded the school's programs to include experiences for alternative and independent schools, home school groups, therapeutic and residential programs
- * Developed and refined the school's organization and leadership structure, fiscal strategy, experiential curriculum, trip offerings, risk management plan and the program's policies and procedures
- * Expanded activity offerings to include new courses in top-rope and multi-pitch climbing, rappelling, mountaineering, backcountry skiing and snowboarding, avalanche training, outdoor leadership, backcountry cooking, wilderness medicine and adventure photography
- * Oversaw daily operations, staffing needs, program budget, logistics, permitting and scheduling
- * Guided and instructed field courses

2005-2009

**PRESCOTT COLLEGE
Adjunct Instructor, Prescott, AZ.**

- * Worked with core faculty to design and support current curriculum/field courses
- * Participated in adventure education field experiences, providing students both technical and instructional feedback in all areas of the adventure education competence including logistics, integrated curriculum, in-field lessons and the facilitation of groups while in the backcountry
- * Faculty for rock climbing, ice climbing, whitewater rafting, avalanche forecasting, search and rescue, backcountry snowboarding, mountaineering, backpacking experiences and multi-day expeditions

2005-2007

**WHITMAN COLLEGE
Adjunct Instructor, Walla Walla, WA.**

- * Instructed SCRAMBLE leader training course for future student leaders
- * Collaborated with the Outdoor Program Director to review the school's adventure trips, wilderness routes, risk management measures and safety policies
- * Contracted climbing guide and technical instructor for the school's Advanced Climbing Systems course

2004- 2005

**THE OLIVERIAN SCHOOL
Director of Adventure Programs/ Founding Faculty, Marketing
and Admissions, Pike, NH.**

- * Assisted in the creation and development of a private, alternative boarding school located on an 1800 acre cattle farm and wildlife preserve on the western edge of White Mountain National Forest
- * Collaborated with fellow administrators and faculty to design and implement residential, academic and risk management policies and guidelines for the new school
- * Oversaw the school's four season adventure program including the development of curriculum, acquisition of permits, equipment and resources, recruitment and training of staff, creation of safety policies, establishment of industry partnerships and affiliations and the day-to-day management and facilitation of modules, projects and courses
- * Developed a variety of marketing avenues including the creation and distribution of press releases, web and email updates, the collection and distribution of digital images and program photos, the design and publication of the school's quarterly newsletter, the creation of a program of studies catalog for the Stewardship and Adventure programs and on-going editing and refinement of general school and program information
- * Assisted with admissions, campus visits and networked with parents, programs and educational consultants to increase student enrollment
- * Social studies faculty member

2001-2003

**A. CROSBY KENNETT HIGH SCHOOL
Founding Director of Alternative Education Dept., Conway, NH**

Founder/Director of the Tributaries Alternative Education program for disaffected students in grades 9-12. Responsible for thirty students, three program staff, multiple paraprofessionals and special education aides. Collaborated daily with school administrators, department heads, local law enforcement agencies and

community outreach groups. Participated in weekly meetings with administrators and department chairs to discuss the logistics, safety, and future development of the high school, the faculty and 1,200 students.

- * Created an integrated, thematic curriculum to meet district and state standards
- * Introduced adventure education experiences to include hiking, backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, rappelling, skiing, snowboarding, wilderness first aid, map and compass, survival and Leave No Trace skills
- * Instructed students in Civics, US History, Language Arts, Environmental Education, Interpersonal Communications and Group Dynamics
- * Devised and implemented a transition plan for students returning to the mainstream
- * Developed program-specific assessments and a level-based accountability system
- * Recognized by Mt. Washington Valley's school district (SAU-9) as a Distinguished Educator, awarded multiple years in a row

2000-2001

**MT. WASHINGTON VALLEY ACADEMY
Program Consultant/Lead Teacher, Conway, NH**

Assumed the leadership of a struggling, off-site alternative program experiencing a decline in student attendance. Led the program through a ninety-day probationary period and generated recommendations for future alternative programming. This resulted in the creation of a new alternative education program, (Tributaries) which was relocated to the high school's campus.

- * Devised a plan for continued programming at the Academy and stabilized student enrollment
- * Managed the renovation of the facility, the implementation of new curriculum and the introduction of adventure programming
- * Collected data on student attendance and performance, inventoried resources and downsized program's cost
- * Instructed Civics, Environmental Science, Interpersonal Communications and Group Dynamics

2001-2005

**APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB
Educational Workshops Department/Senior Education Instructor
Pinkham Notch, NH.**

- * Provided safe and professional mountain instruction, backcountry guide services and assistance with search and rescue efforts for the oldest outdoor education and recreation organization in the US

- * Facilitated high-end, multi-day workshops and advanced skills courses including backpacking, hut-to-hut travel, ridge treks, mountaineering, and backcountry snowboarding experiences
- * Responsible for leading custom courses and guiding private workshops for corporate clientele, long-time AMC members and elite donors
- * Demonstrated expertise in the natural history and ecology of the White Mountains and the New England landscape
- * Developed Instructor Training and Educational Workshop curricula
- * Received national recognition for the design and implementation of backcountry snowboarding courses
- * Created written course summaries, contributed photographs and assisted with the design and layout of the club's seasonal workshop catalogs
- * Assisted in the marketing and promotion of the AMC's annual Backcountry Ski and Snowboard Festival, winter travel, avalanche and climbing programs
- * Instructed Leave No Trace Master Courses throughout the United States in collaboration with the LNT Center for Outdoor Ethics

1995- 2009

OUTWARD BOUND USA

**Course Director, Lead Wilderness Instructor, Outreach Programs
Various Locations**

Beginning in 1995 with an instructor shadow experience, I have worked as a course director, field instructor, mentor and most recently as an Outreach contact for many students. In addition to my diverse experience within the organization, my Prescott College education provided me with in-depth study of OB's history, philosophy and experiential strategies. I most recently served as Winter Trainer/Course Director/Lead Instructor for all of OB's North American Backcountry Snowboarding courses based out of Leadville, CO.

- * Field instruction and training with NCOBS, PCOBS, COOBS, TIOBEC, OB West and OB Wilderness
- * Instructed 8 to 28 day courses teaching and guiding: backpacking, rock climbing, white water rafting, mountaineering, glacier travel, off-trail navigation, backcountry snowboarding, LNT and solo
- * Experienced in facilitating and modeling Outward Bound's core values, message and mission
- * Outreach Programs/ Photo Marketing, OB West, OB Wilderness, OB USA

1999-2000

**SUMMIT ACHIEVEMENT INC.
Lead Teacher/ Wilderness Guide, Stow, ME.**

- * Facilitated the transition of school program into a newly constructed academic facility
- * Collaborated with wilderness and therapeutic staff to ensure efficient daily operations
- * Instructed students in Language Arts, US History, Environmental Education, Interpersonal Communications, Group Dynamics, Conflict Resolution and Adventure Education

Education

**2012 – 2013 Harvard Kennedy School of Government
Non-Profit Leadership and Governance**

Completed HKS EE Graduate Cert in Non-Profit Leadership focusing on governance as leadership, nonprofit financial stewardship and developing strategic frameworks for nonprofit organizations.

**2012- 2014 Fort Lewis College
Continuing Education- Certificate Program, Non-Profit Management**

Completed Non-Profit Management Program Cert offered by Fort Lewis College's Continuing Education Dept.

**2010 – 2014 Harvard University Graduate School of Education- Non-Degree Track
Programs in Professional Educational & Leadership/ Principal's Center**

PPE programs at HGSE since 2010. Member of HGSE Principal's Center since 2011

**1999 Prescott College
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Adventure Education**

Additional Skills and Qualifications

- * Proficient in both Mac/PC platforms, Microsoft Office/Publisher, Adobe Photoshop, QuickBooks. Skilled in web development/design and the creation/maintenance of social media and online networks
- * Dynamic public speaker available for trainings, motivational/promotional events, slideshows and multi media presentations- talented musician, storyteller and performer.
- * Professionally sponsored outdoor athlete conducting product research, testing and design for multiple outdoor equipment manufacturers.
- * Independently contracted logistician and backcountry guide/ talent/crew for independent film productions and documentary projects produced throughout the United States
- * Accomplished photojournalist and freelance writer.
- * Strong commitment to community service and stewardship. Recent volunteerism includes:
 - Four Rivers Institute, Ignacio CO. (board member 2009-2011)
 - Durango Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, Durango, CO. (council/commission advisor 2010-2014)
 - The Juniper School Durango, CO. (school board member 2014-present)
 - The Liberty School, Durango, CO. (advisory board 2015- present)
 - Durango Parks and Rec Advisory Board (board member 2015-present)
 - Colorado Trail Foundation/Trails 2000, Durango, CO. (trail crew volunteer 2010-present)