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## Losing Means Winning At NC School

We were there as Payton Rich began a journey to lose 50 pounds, and she hoped the staff at a brand new boarding school would help her do it.

Brevard, NC -- Sunrise over a mountain lake provides a picture of peacefulness, but walk a few steps, and the scene changes dramatically.

Right in the middle of it a familiar face stands out.



Payton rich lives in Randleman, but for the past few months home has been a small boarding school called the academy of the sierras.

"Being so far from home is a big adjustment," she says.

Some things aren't so different from home, like daily chores and schoolwork.

Payton is a good students, always one of the first to volunteer an answer. But this school is about a lot more than just, well, school.

"I didn't really this it was going to be this successful," she says.



Payton measures success in pounds, down 34 pounds since February 1.

Thanks in part to what comes through the kitchen window.

"12 grams of fat a day, and 1200 calories a day," explains Food Service Director Sarah Olliges.

Students share responsibility for what they eat. Calorie and fat information is posted in the dining hall and students track it all in a food diary.

Food is also the topic of discussion at weekly therapy sessions designed to with more than weight loss in mind, says clinical director Rachel Yudin.

"The losing weight, I almost see that as a side effect, or by-product of them starting to think healthy thoughts, starting to deal with their emotions and express them in a healthy way"

"I've lost 77 pounds since I've been here," says 8th grader Kenneth Puccini.

Kenneth Puccini could be the poster child for AOS success, losing more weight than any other student in just two months.

"Now I have friends, I talk, I smile... I wasn't actually a smiler."

Payton is a now big smiler too. Self-confidence shines through everything she does.

"I can definitely do more than I ever thought I could."

The Academy of the Sierras, North Carolina is a therapeutic weight loss school for 6th to 10th graders.

It costs about \$6000 a month, up to a third of which may be covered by insurance; and there are scholarships available.