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Heather Crump and Trent Hamm relax in a canoe during their free time at T-Camp. T-Camp helps new Aggies make the transition easier for students transferring to A&M.

Dallas mom hopes to help her son

Woman wants to cure self-proclaimed white-supremacist's hatred by introducing teen to former KKK grand dragon

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS - A Dallas woman hoping to help her teen-age son, a self-described white supremacist, has introduced him to a former grand dragon who renounced his past.

Larry Trapp of Lincoln, Neb., a former grand dragon of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, told The Dallas Morning News in Sunday's editions he agreed to meet the Jewish boy, identified only as Eric.

His mother, who took him to a Lincoln synagogue to meet Trapp, also introduced him to Michael Weisser, the cantor leading the service.

Eric's mother wanted him to hear how Cantor Weisser and his wife, Julie, had befriended Trapp, taken him into their home and conquered his hatred with their love.

Trapp, now a blind diabetic, said that by accepting Eric as the Weissers had aided him, he would try to save the 16-year-old boy from "making the same mistakes I made."

Although the teen was raised Jewish for most of his life, he said he hated Jews, as well as blacks and "Mexicans" and counts at least one skinhead among his friends.

Eric's experience is typical of youths who gravitate toward white supremacists, said Mark Briskman, regional director of the Anti-

Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

He said many react to frustrations caused by unresolved conflicts within their families by turning to hate mongers.

In Eric's case, his home was torn apart in a bitter divorce in which his parents continue to battle over custody of him and his sister, who is now 13, according to the newspaper. While Eric's mother is Jewish, his father is Catholic.

The parents separated when Eric was five and divorced the next year. Now the boy lives with his mother and sister in a north Dallas townhouse.

Eric, who then alternated living with each of his parents in a succession of homes, began in the ninth grade to hate minorities when he was staying with his father, who was unhappy his son was raised in a Jewish home.

"Eric wanted to please both his parents," said his mother. Instead, she says, "he ended up in the middle of nowhere - with a great

deal of hatred."

The boy told the newspaper he was beaten up a couple of times for no reason by his schoolmates.

Eric said he hates Jews, but doesn't believe his own family is really Jewish because they came from Europe rather than the Middle East.

His mother, who first read about the Weissers and Trapp in a Jewish publication, said she learned how Trapp had harassed the Weissers with hate mail and threatening phone messages until Weisser offered to help him and converted him to Judaism.

She told the newspaper her son went through a succession of counselors and therapists and later abused drugs. This summer she said, Eric and the boy he described as his only friend stole several .22-caliber rifles and other items from a YMCA.

During the visit, the Weissers showed Eric videotaped news report that showed Trapp wearing Klan regalia and spouting Klan doctrine. Then they showed him a tape of the ceremony in which Trapp converted to Judaism.

Eric said he is still thinking about the trip and knows Trapp is likely to die soon. "I don't want that to happen," he said.

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By JULIE

Reporter

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