



Christian Encounter Ranch NEWSLETTER

STUDENT PROFILE

Wes

Wes grew up in a large family. After having two kids of their own, Wes' parents had adopted four children, including his half-brother. When Wes was born, he joined their family at thirteen months. In the coming years, his parents would adopt three more children and foster several more. Wes didn't have a shortage of playmates, but the challenge was their lack of permanency. Wes' parents stopped taking foster kids into their home as Wes neared his pre-teen years, but his parents' divorce threatened the ongoing stability of the family.

The shared custody agreement thrust Wes back and forth between homes week after week. Wes' father continued to abuse alcohol and began to take it out on his children after the separation. As his parents began to independently take disciplinary measures in response to Wes' behavior, he discovered he could avoid consequences by switching house-

holds. Although Wes' mother would eventually take sole custody of the children, Wes had already learned how to slip under the radar, and once he entered the public school system, Wes was just another kid in a sea of faces.

Wes arrived at the Ranch after exhausting all local schooling options, with a plummeting GPA of .3. He had donned a state of indifference towards life, adopting it as a sort of life motto. Being indifferent meant you couldn't get hurt. It meant you didn't have expectations or hopes of anyone or anything, so you could never be disappointed. Being indifferent was wearing a protective sleeve over his heart.

In the beginning of his stay, Wes wore jeans and a hoodie everyday, even through the summer. He had a full head of curls that obscured his face. It was easy enough to comply with the daily schedule, and Wes walked the 100 feet everyday to class. *(cont. on pg. 2)*



DIRECTOR'S VIEW

Generosity of donors accelerates ministry progress

If you've been connected with the Ranch for long, you know we don't pay professional fundraisers to push slick marketing campaigns to tug your heartstrings and purse strings. You also may have heard we are not government funded. Despite this, we offer a wide array of resources, and we never turn away potential students due to inability to pay tuition. This equation only balances because of faithful, generous people giving and helping.

Over the course of 2020, we continued to pursue clarity of vision from the Lord, even as the pandemic threatened nonprofits everywhere. The challenges were clear: cutting programs would have

been devastating to our residents, but even maintaining status quo would mean missed opportunities. To bring our vision to life, we needed additional resources. So, in December, we did a year-end fundraising effort. Our community's response

due to the pandemic, your generosity is creating opportunities and accelerating the pursuit of our goals. Our sponsorship money, which is so central to this ministry, is replenished. Our current slate of property improvements is now funded,



The duplex remodel project has been fully funded.

including a bathroom remodel, entrance redesign, dormitory work, and several other important deferred maintenance projects. Even the ambitious project to remodel the abandoned duplex on property is now fully funded, and plans have been submitted to the County Planning Department. And on top of all this, we're beginning to brainstorm further

was overwhelming.

Instead of having to "tighten the belt"

recreation options for residents.

(cont. on back page)

Wes (cont. from pg. 1)

His teachers were there to greet him and set an individualized plan to help him towards academic recovery.

As summer was winding down, it was time for the annual 15-day backpacking trip. Wes bounded up hillsides and rocks ahead of his team to scout routes. Every morning before they set out they were assigned a hiking buddy for the day. Day three became day fourteen, and Wes recognized that out in the wilderness his peers had become friends and his authority had become trustworthy.

Wes continued to make the daily investment in his school work and began to see his GPA climb. His teachers informed him of the possibility of receiving a high school diploma if he kept at it. Thanksgiving turned to Christmas, and Wes, along with his peers, donned suit vests and sport coats for the

occasion. A new pair of Vans, a disc golf set, a Hydroflask, and a new Bible under the tree.

It was becoming harder to stay in-



Interns Kevin, Joel, and staff member Aaron flank Wes atop Andesite Peak.

different.

Not too long after, Wes had the opportunity to summit Andesite Peak at 8,200 feet during the four-day snow trip. Wes was accompanied by male interns and staff being the only student who had expressed

interest in the hike. As they approached the ridgeline, the force of the wind threatened to knock Wes off his feet. Like a protective shield, Wes' leaders came around him, further reinforcing the message of love, safety, and care - for the one.

Wes shared a pencil drawing with me from his sketchbook the other day. On the page was a branch that had words written all over it. Words like unwanted, mistake, accident. Undeserving, disappointment, hopeless. Pain, contempt, hatred. But from this branch were leaves, growth, new life.

A new leaf springs up when Wes plays a round of disc golf with his dorm leader Kevin, or when he

takes another step in sharing his story, or when he reads his Bible. As Wes grows to see his role in this family more clearly, we are confident that new life will continue to spring up in the dead, negative places.

Zoya Lee

STAFF TRANSITIONS

New Director of Counseling hired



When Tom Griffith (left) announced his retirement plans last year, we began praying for the Lord to lead us to the next person to receive the baton in this crucial area of the Ranch ministry. We are very pleased to announce the hiring of Kevin Phillips as the next Director of Counseling. Kevin has lived in the Greater Sacramento region his whole life and currently resides in Roseville with his wife Vicki. Kevin has most recently worked with Koinonia's Homes for Teens both in administrative roles and as a counselor.

As Kevin completes hours towards licensure, Tom will continue to be involved, serving as his counseling supervisor. Tom has faithfully applied his counselling gifts and testimony during his years at the Ranch, and we celebrate with him as he begins to enjoy retirement with his wife Marilyn.



Rescue Run 5k

APRIL 17, 9:30AM

Come join us for a 5K run/walk on our property! As a trail run spread out over 86 acres, this event is well suited to pandemic adaptations. We will observe the restrictions in place at the time of the event. Challenge your body in a beautiful environment while supporting this ministry!

Agony Ride in the Sierra Valley

July 23-24, 2021

Plans are in motion to gather in the Sierra Valley again this year (pending county permits), and we already have 20 committed riders at time of publication. Representing the Christian Encounter staff are first time riders Salena Berger and Zach Malech and second time riders Paxton Fitzpatrick and Austin Sather. They share their reasons for saddling up here.

Agony Ride FAQs

Will you continue to offer a virtual option?

Yes. We want to give those who cannot make arrangements to be in the Valley the opportunity to ride. We also recognize the value of the witness of people riding in their own communities.

How can I sponsor a rider?

You can make a pledge online at agonyride.org or mail in a check.

How much money did last year's Ride bring in?

\$250,000+. We shattered the previous record by over \$25K.



Salena Berger, Executive Assistant

Mileage goal: 125 miles

I learned to ride my bike in the neighborhood I grew up in. Some of the students I've met at the Ranch can't say as much though. If you asked, they would probably say that they didn't have access to a bike or that no one ever cared enough to teach them, much less did most of them even have a stable place to call home. Many of the kids I've talked to essentially didn't get to grow up, at least not in a way that prepared them well. Our broken world started them out with no chance. I'm riding this year so that the students I see day in and day out are able to have the tools to break generational cycles and the opportunity to pursue the abundant life Jesus has for them.



Zach Malech, Outreach Coordinator

Mileage goal: 300 miles

As I process with students about their time at Christian Encounter, they all share about the genuine love and care they received here.

Love is powerful. Unfortunately, too many people exist unaware of the depths of the relentless love of Jesus

Christ. The kind of love that fights for, sacrifices, and champions His children. The kind of love that says "you matter, you have value, you are worth it." That kind of love is transformational at its core. And when you experience it, you can never be the same.

At the Agony, riders and sagers become the physical embodiment of that kind of love, and this year I want to join the riders in the proclamation of that message to those who need to hear it.



Paxton Fitzpatrick, Assistant Intern Director

Mileage goal: 250 miles

During my last ride, the students ministered to me in profound ways. It's a side of them that I've never seen before (and I see them nearly every day on property). For that reason, I asked my family to

help mobilize as many people as they can to be at the event itself. The Agony Ride is the best opportunity for others new to CER to feel the warmth, safety, sacrifice, and acceptance that is displayed each day the rest of the year. My goal this year is to use the platform of riding a bike for 24 hours to grow the Ranch's extended family. The students need to see love shown their way in the form of riders, sagers, and volunteers. But at the same time, those people need to witness the power of God working in the lives of our students.



Austin Sather, Maintenance Coordinator

Mileage goal: 320 miles

Christian Encounter is a safe place for people looking for healing. Over the past four years, I have seen this play out over and over for the students who come. Daily, I have the privilege of experiencing what sacrificial love looks like in action as students heal and learn the love that the Father has for them. The Agony Ride is a wonderful event that gives them a tangible picture of that love and just how much they are worth as people push themselves to their limits in support of the ministry. I am very grateful to have the opportunity to participate in the ride again this year and to be one of many that God is using to communicate how much He loves each and every one of our students because they are worth it!

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Generosity *(cont. from pg. 1)*

This is an exciting time. Every facility we can improve to better meet the needs of our residents--and show them they are worthy of investment--gives me joy. Pray with us that the Lord will steward every dollar according to His plans.

My last newsletter article was about doing what we can and trusting God with what's beyond us. I quoted Jonathan from 1 Samuel 14:6: "Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few." When I think of this verse, I'm usually reminding myself the Lord can use few--few people and few dollars--to accomplish His purposes. Today, I'm thanking Him for the many, many people who gave. Thank you for being part of the Ranch community!

Nate Boyd, Executive Director



When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates 0.5% of your purchase price to the charity of your choice. Simply select Christian Encounter as your charity.

50th Anniversary Celebration

SEPTEMBER 24-26, 2021

Registration is now live on our website! Join the Facebook event to see who's coming and to invite students and interns from your time.

Christian Encounter Ranch is a non-profit, non-denominational, residential community helping 15- to 24-year-olds by providing love, spiritual guidance, high school education, counseling, and 24-hour supervision. Internships are offered to young adults 21 years and older. We are a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and all gifts are tax deductible.

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MEMORIALS

In memory of Rob Eggink, given by:
Bill and Karen Frazee

In memory of Jane Guiremand, given by:
Trevor and Katy Christianson

In memory of Roger H. Lace, given by:
Kim Meyer

In memory of Peter Mosgofian, given by:
Jean Tritenbach

In memory of Sue Mott, given by:
Christopher & Diane Streff

In memory of Jim Parker, given by:
Ryan Koch
Wayne, Carolyn, and Marcus Bigelow
Jack and Carolyn Shook

In memory of Ilean Powert, given by:
Tess, Colin, and Alan Devenish

*In memory of John and Myrna Wright,
given by:*
Jeff and Terri Wright