



Christian Encounter Ranch NEWSLETTER

DIRECTOR'S VIEW

Never beyond repair

My grandparents grew up during the Great Depression of the 1930's, when large numbers of Americans struggled to get enough to eat. Those experiences shaped how they thought about resources. A piece of furniture broke? Let's keep it—it may be fixable, even though it'll take a while. Old National Geographics? Keep them, they're good references. Unidentifiable tool/hardware? We may need it someday. But time is limited, so the stuff multiplies. And the collection of broken and unused things sits and some things never even get touched, let alone fixed or needed.

My generation grew up during a time of general prosperity and great opportunity, and I tend to think a little differently. Often I optimize by the value of time and storage space. How much time will it take to fix that nightstand? How much does a new one cost? Not sure it's worth keeping. Old magazines? If I need something, I can probably find it online—toss them.



"He can create something new in us..." A Ranch "pray out" symbolizes just this - that God has created something new in the life of a student. Upon their departure, our prayer is that He will bring to completion the work He has begun.

Unidentifiable hardware? Pretty sure I'll never need it, even if I had the skill to use it. But the collection of things I've disposed of probably contained items of value too.

There are pros and cons to both approaches, of course. Stewardship is a challenge, and we each do the best we can to organize and strategize and optimize.

We aren't the only ones deciding what to do with broken things. God is, too. His world is full of broken and damaged people. But He does not experience the limitations we do.

God is not limited by time. Even though His attention is priceless, He never discards us because He doesn't have time for us. *(cont. on back page)*

40 years, 40 Agonys

Mike Boon is the only person to have ridden in every Agony Ride since its inception. Mike has previously served as both CER staff and board member. He currently serves as Executive Director and senior chaplain at Placer County Law Enforcement Chaplaincy.



"The whaaat ride?"
"The Agony Ride."
"OK, that doesn't sound remotely like fun."

"Well, fun isn't necessarily part of the package. It's for a great cause. It's for Christian Encounter Ranch where kids can go get the life help they need."

"Twenty-four hours on a bicycle?"

"Well, as far as you can ride in that amount of time."

And so the conversation continues. I can't tell you how many times I have had that conversation over the last 40 years. More often than not it ends with some version of "better you than me" or "you ARE crazy." And, sadly, that's likely

more true than I want to admit.

Forty years, over three locations (well, more if you count virtual rides), and a number of route variations in the Sierra Valley. Stories and spiritual and personal insights abound. I could fill my word limit with just the keywords to the many stories and insights. The contrasts are astounding; worship at the summit, barfing in the valley, frozen water bottles, heat exhaustion, rattle-snakes, cows, and drunk drivers. I could regale you for hours. (Well for

30 minutes or so anyway; the rest of the time you'd be yawning and looking for the nearest exit.)

And so many motivational scripture references. "Run with endurance..." "Press on for the prize..." "Who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross..." *(cont. on pg. 2)*

40 Agonys (cont. from pg. 1)

These and countless others have been memorized, taped to handlebars, and otherwise utilized to help riders remember that their pain, their sweat, their efforts are not for accolades but for Him (Jesus) and for them (the Ranch students). Some came to break records, some came to raise money, some came to love on students; all came to put their heart into scholarships for students who bravely came for help.

Originally conceived as a challenge to push, stretch, and test the mettle of those who pushed and challenged others, the Whitney Challenge struck the entrepreneurial spirit of a Yates and Walsh CEM duo and the term "Agony Ride" was birthed. Over the years God blessed the diligence and faith of Ranch admin and the ride caught the spirit of challenge of many riders. Young and old they came to serve and maybe suffer. A few hundred bucks grew like a young boy's lunch from the widow's pennies to exceed a quarter of a million dollars.

John the Evangelist once wrote, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written." So goes the Agony.



I suppose that if every rider over the years wrote their Agony Memoirs they would fill a small library. For myself, with all the memories, all the challenges, the defeats, and the victories; all can be summed up in one word, "Obedience."

Mike Boon

AGONY RIDE 40 YEARS

Join us July 29-30 in the Sierra Valley! We have 92 riders signed up at time of publication. Motorcycle rovers, transporters, medics, massage therapists, bike mechanics, food prep assistants - we need you! Sign up at agonyride.org.

STAFF INTRODUCTIONS



Kevin Campbell joined the business office staff after finishing his nine-month internship. Kevin completed his Master's of Business Management at Azusa Pacific University while assistant coaching Division II women's volleyball.



Garrett Kronland came on as part-time staff to serve in communications and administration. Garrett is also an LMFT and works at the local counseling center, Anew Day. Garrett and his wife, Jenny, have been married for three years.

ALUMNI NEWS



CER Staff member Salena (Berger) Unitt (intern '16-'18) and husband Josh tied the knot on January 1st at Auburn Grace Community Church. Staff member Zach Malech officiated the wedding. Former Food Service Manager Chris Unitt, also mother of the groom, joined then Food Service Manager Kathleen McNama in catering the event.



Since 2017 Mike Ritter (intern '10-'11) has been a missionary with Steiger International, which mobilizes followers of Jesus to reach young people who would not walk into a church. He has gone on numerous missions to eastern Europe, where he met his wife, Annie.



Megan Moreno (student '14-'15) graduated from CSU Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in Sociology in 2021. She is working as a patient access representative at Adventist Health Sonora.



Rogelio Batson (intern '16) graduated from Azusa Pacific University with a Master's in social work in May. Rogelio resides in Hacienda Heights, CA and started working as a case worker for a local nonprofit helping foster youth.



Clockwise: 1. Ranch family gathers for a game of glow-in-the-dark Ultimate Frisbee. 2. Melanie shows off the tres leches cake she made for a fellow student's birthday. 3. Students gather for a photo with Easter baskets gifted from a local church. 4. Interns and co. enjoy a Friday night out at a staff residence.



Friends from the community join our students, interns, and staff on the course at our 9th annual Rescue Run 5k in April.

FAMILY CAMP

We have the weekend planned.
You bring the fam.

\$50/tent site (cabins are full)
Daycampers welcome



July 1-4
More info online

Christian Encounter Ranch
PO Box 1022
Grass Valley, CA 95945

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GRASS VALLEY, CA
PERMIT NO. 60

•

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.



amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Our material needs list is available through AmazonSmile Charity Lists under "Your Lists".

Simply select Christian Encounter as your charity.

MEMORIALS

In memory of Edward Fulenwider, given by: Debra Fulenwider

*In memory of Ron McCurley, given by: Panela Hettich-Roberts
Matthew and Dianne McCurley
Dennis Plank*

In memory of Jim Parker, given by: Dora Jean Bemis

HONORARIUMS

In honor of Alyssa (McMahon) Mickschl, given by: David & Nadeane Naquin and Cindy Ann Manning

In honor of Kalani (Manning) Tapia, given by: David & Nadeane Naquin and Cindy Ann Manning

In honor of Kalah Richardson, given by: Robert and Rebecca Richardson

Repair (cont. from pg. 1)

No matter how broken we are or how much help we need, we're never so broken He tosses us away. He keeps working, and working, and never stops working on us.

God is not limited by ability, either. We are never beyond His skill level. There's nothing about us that's too difficult for God, and nothing we face that goes beyond His wisdom.

Have you ever wondered if you're still fixable or usable? God is not assessing you to decide if you have value to Him. He already decided that, while He was hanging on a cross for you.

It doesn't even matter if we're "fixable." He is the one who is able to "call into existence the things that do not exist." He can create something new in us even if all we have left are dust and ashes. And Ephesians 2:10 tells us we are indeed usable: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

God redeems us—not just our souls for eternity, but the time we have in this world too. And each of us is valuable and needed in His redemption story.

Nate Boyd, Executive Director