



Christian Encounter Ranch NEWSLETTER

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Paige

For many of our students, the obstacles in the weeks leading up to their arrival are significant. This was true for Paige. Prayers were offered up on her behalf - for God to make a way for her to come. Paige's cousin Shauni had been a source of support for Paige through the years and had shared with her about the Ranch. Prayers were answered and Paige arrived at Christian Encounter last fall, in time to begin her senior year of high school.

Before coming to the Ranch, Paige had heard Shauni share about her faith, about a God who loved her. Paige was drawn to her cousin's words, but it wasn't until she was at the Ranch that Shauni's words truly came to life and Paige experienced communion with the living God. It was here that Paige knew peace and joy for the first time, here where her eyes were opened to her inestimable worth in Christ. Paige made a public profession of faith through baptism the day after she walked the stage to receive her high school diploma.

Paige returned home to Washington state in June where she is beginning community college this fall. Below is an excerpt from her graduation speech:

It's been a long time coming to get where I am today. Everyone says high school is supposed to be the best four years of your life. I think we have this idea in our heads that our high school experience is supposed to look like this wild exciting adventure. My high school experience was not at all what I pictured it would be. In the spring of my sophomore year Covid hit, so we had an early summer that year. In my junior year we only had online classes. Personally, school became more difficult. I ended up dropping out of high school. I was so far behind on credits even before Covid that there was no way I was going to graduate. I honestly didn't see myself capable of getting a GED.

If it weren't for the Ranch, I would not be up here today. I want to thank the teachers as well as the interns for loving me, supporting me, and not giving up on me. The Ranch has not only helped me school-wise, but it's helped me grow closer to Christ as well as learn to love, what a genuine friendship looks like, and how to speak up for myself. Thank you for pushing me.



STAFF INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to share that Carissa Miller joined our staff last month as the new Food Service Manager. Carissa graduated from Ozark Christian College in Joplin, MO with a major in biblical justice before moving to California to intern with us. Having already served in the internship capacity for nine months made for a seamless transition for her to continue to serve the students and interns in the kitchen. Carissa values the approach to ministry here: "The Ranch sees the students as a whole person and cares for each aspect of their life - physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. This is what leads to healing. I've seen ministries only focusing on physical needs while ignoring the others - the Ranch provides holistic care."

AGONY RIDE 40 YEARS

July 29-30, 2022

Come join us in the Sierra Valley for the Agony's 40th anniversary! With 113 riders currently signed up, we are looking for volunteers to come help run our support and gear stations. Sign up at agonyride.org or scan below.



Year-end celebration & graduation 2022

Allowing others to hear my story made me scared of judgment and shame. I was shown grace, compassion and love from the Ranch family. Letting people into my life was the hardest and best thing I've done here. I was able to learn things about myself I never knew and to understand myself on a deeper level. After high school I plan on attending Modesto Junior College, with a goal of attending UC Davis to achieve my dream of being an Equine Veterinarian.
- Grace, CEHS graduate (right)



Throughout internship, I feel like God has given me a better understanding of His love for me and how to love others well. I think about the feeling of loss at a dismissal, the weight and heartache when giving a consequence, the tears shed as you hear and share stories and testimonies. I also think of the overflowing joy of seeing someone learn something new, graduating, and even giving their life to Christ...Getting to see how God can transform broken lives and restore hope is one of the most beautiful things I have gotten to be a part of during my internship.

- Faith Noe

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Staff member Caryn Galeckas was honored for having served at Christian Encounter for 40 years. Caryn serves as the office manager, has been an integral part of the wilderness program, and serves a major role in events including Family Camp and the Agony Ride.



Melanie hugs CER staff counselor Kevin Phillips upon receiving the Founders Award. This award is given in honor of the founding families of the ministry to a student who has persevered to overcome obstacles.

This first year [of internship] has been one of joy, pain, and continual surrender of my own will unto the Lord. Internship has really taught me how to count the cost of following Christ. I never really understood the weight of what it meant for Jesus to ask the disciples "Come follow me. I will make you fishers of men." We can easily remember that encounter, and it can just be Jesus calling His disciples. But we rarely consider that they had a choice. They chose to leave everything they knew to learn from the Messiah. They had to wrestle with leaving their families, not running their businesses, and simply trusting that Jesus was good.

During my internship, I have wanted to get away from the structure of Ranch life. I wanted the connection with my friends back. I was missing my family. I wanted to give back to the Lord the responsibility He had given me. But that isn't what I truly wanted in my soul. In these times of pain, I was just really experiencing the cost that comes with committing my life to Jesus and sharing the truth of the gospel.

- Grace Bunn





During my internship, I have learned how powerful relationships can be. I have seen what it is like to feel tied to people and desperately want them to succeed, but being forced to trust that God has a plan for their lives. I have learned how essential community is, having a group of people that has your back, that can support you when things feel too hard to bear on your own. I have learned how to trust God to give me strength, when I literally couldn't do it on my own and discovered that He is faithful in giving us what we need to get through any situation. The Ranch has taught me so much, but the thing that stands out the most is this - to understand so much more deeply what it means to love like Christ.
- Rachel Burdick

The Ranch really is a special place, a place where so many people are dedicated to the kingdom of God, working to build each other up and make each other better.



Above: The intern office walls are lined with the names of those who have served an internship at Christian Encounter through the decades.



The lifeblood of the ministry, our interns: Front row (L to R): Rachel Burdick (Tustin, CA), Danika Young (Winchester, CA), Carissa Miller (Salina, KS), Grace Bunn (Greensboro, AL), Jacqui Nunez (Reedley, CA), Faith Noe (Longview, TX). Back row (L to R): Intern Director Jensen Near, Julia Brown (Merced, CA), Aldin Basilio (Buena Park, CA), Alec Thies (Kalamazoo, MI), Asst. Intern Director Paxton Fitzpatrick, David Ramey (Grass Valley, CA).

Julie (Smithson) Otero ('03) shared a message of encouragement from the stage as our Alumni Award recipient. Julie, Dennis, and their three boys Daniel, Mike, and Levi reside in Pacifica, CA. Formerly a junior high teacher and coach, Julie stepped down to homeschool her children. Julie and her family have been faithful attendees of CER's Family Camp the past several years.



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*40th Agony Ride | July 29-30, 2022
Sign up today!*

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.



Above: The winning team gathers for a photo at the annual Ranch family ultimate frisbee game to close out spring quarter.

MEMORIALS

*In memory of Milt Burgess, given by:
Craig & Kimmer Burgess*

*In memory of Jim Parker, given by:
Julie Shapland*



Left: The Ranch family gathers in Angels' Meadow for an outdoor banquet to celebrate this year's high school graduates.