



Christian Encounter Ministries
PO Box 1022
Grass Valley, CA 95945
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Christian Encounter Ministries

January 2012

Tending Lives... Training Leaders Since 1970

Christian Encounter Ministries is a non-profit, non-denominational, residential program helping 16- to 25-year-olds by providing love, spiritual guidance, high school education, counseling, and 24-hour supervision.



Contact us at:
www.ChristianEncounter.org
cem@ChristianEncounter.org
530-268-0877



“You Spin—They Win”

CEM's Annual Indoor Stationary Bike-a-thon
12 noon to 12 midnight
Saturday, February 4, 2012
South Yuba Club of Grass Valley
(by Raley's)



You Spin:

**Come join us for 1 hour, 12 hours,
or any amount in between
\$15 per hour or \$150 for all 12 hours**



They Win:

**All proceeds benefit the CEM students
(You win, too, with a great workout and lots of
fantastic raffle prizes from local businesses.)**

Michael chooses the difficult path

by Mike Petrillo

“I was searching for a way to change, to get out of the hole I was in. I needed help.” These are the honest words of someone searching for a new life. These are the words of many men and women who choose to come to Christian Encounter Ministries, ready for change, desperate for hope.

Michael was failing in school, caught up in substances, hanging out with guys who were already deep in despair. Folks from church intervened on several occasions, inviting him over for days at a time to interrupt the terrible cycle of drugs and failure and depression and anger. “The anger was out of control—I would come home and start screaming and yelling until my voice gave out.” His parents had split up, and then things got worse. Michael’s mother died at home. When Michael and his dad came home they discovered she had gone to be with the Lord. It has now been just over a year. At first he blamed himself. He got angry and became more depressed. He tried to use his mom’s death as motivation to do good...and to some degree that worked. She was one of his biggest encouragers, always positive that good things would happen. That encouragement still stirs in Michael’s heart.

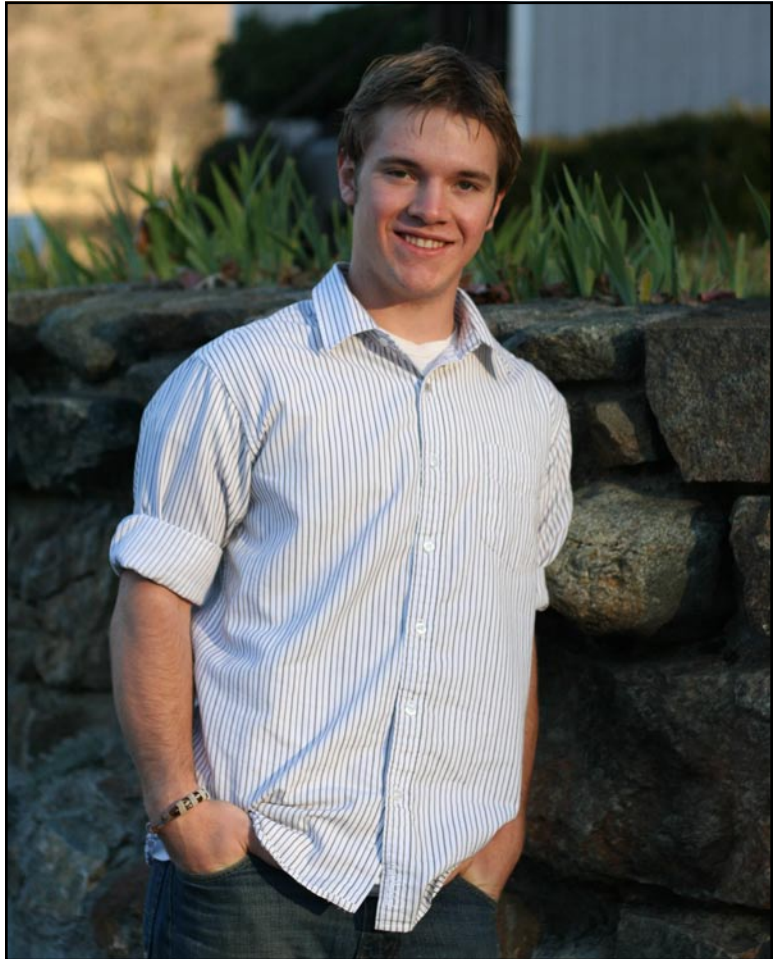
Five months after his mother’s death, talk about going to CEM surfaced again. His Christian family helped pave the way for Michael to visit, apply, and go through the interview process. Once here at CEM, Michael began to utilize the encouragement his mom had given to him, and applied the truth of scripture to deal with the grief of loss. This has been a rough year for

Michael, and without God’s love, support from his dad and brother, and the strength of the Body of Christ it would have been overwhelming. Wonderfully, just as scripture has promised, there is great hope for Michael’s future. He is on track to graduate from high school in June. Michael made his first Honor Roll ever last spring quarter. He hopes to find God’s direction and leading for a career by going to the local community college, perhaps while living at the CEM Men’s Ministry house. “I know ‘My life is in his hands and He hears me when I call.’ The first decision is His... and for me it is to do His will only. I like the promise in Deut. 28:1-2: ‘If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments...all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you...’”

We asked Michael how he got out of the pit of despair, anger, drug use, and depression. He gave a very thoughtful answer. “I was looking for a way out. I had to STOP what I was doing. I had to REVIEW what I had caused. I had to look at OPTIONS for a better life. I had to realize that worse consequences would happen unless I took the option God gave me to go to CEM. Then I had to COMMIT to do His will—doing things God’s way, not mine. That’s what I am working on now.”

This is no easy road that Michael has chosen. This isn’t the easy part of change. The decision, the fortitude

to go, the commitment to start—all take guts. Learning God’s ways and unlearning all the old ways is the toughest part. But Michael is well down that road now. He can see hope on the other side of the depression and he can see success on the far side of loss. “Finding God’s will...” Michael’s voice trailed off. “Finding God’s bigger purpose after the emptiness...that will be God’s will.” This is the way of the Lord—guiding us through and past our obstacles, overcoming by God’s grace. And that is the road Michael is traveling.



Jeff, Micah, Austin, and Anthony provide good, healthy fellowship for Michael.