



Christian Encounter

NEWSLETTER

STUDENT PROFILE

Brent

“One of the first times I overdosed, I was at a buddy’s house smoking. It was the 4th of July. I smoked the same amount as I did any other time. I don’t know if this stuff was stronger. Next thing I knew I blacked out. My buddy tried to give me CPR.... He threw me in the car as fast as he could and drove me to the hospital. I was dead for a couple of minutes. I woke up in the hospital.”

Brent’s life had been steeped in drugs for the past couple of years. He had gone to rehab a couple of times to try to get clean, but each time he would relapse. He had been stealing to sustain his addiction until one day a passerby caught him in the act and made a citizen’s arrest.

The first week in jail was sobering. Brent was going through withdrawals and coming to terms with the reality he was facing. After the first week, he was



moved to a different pod, where he ran into a family friend who was a part of the kitchen crew. A familiar face put Brent more at ease, and within days Brent also joined the kitchen crew, which kept him busy during the day. In his downtime, the guys pointed him to the library where he picked up a book with an image of

cracked concrete on the cover: “70x7 & Beyond.”

As Brent read, he could see his own life reflected clearly in the author’s journey of addiction. He kept trying to get out, but he kept falling back in. Brent recognized his powerlessness to break the cycle. The author shared about his journey to faith - that Jesus

was the answer. This man’s story impacted Brent, and he began asking questions. Christian Encounter had been presented to him several months ago as an option to get help, but until now, this option hadn’t seemed appealing or necessary.

(cont. on pg. 2)

SPECIAL FEATURE

Baptism testimonial: Addy

Addy stood before the congregation and shared these words at her baptism:

I grew up in a Christian home, and my dad is the pastor of my home church. I grew up hearing all the Bible verses and going to Sunday school and all that. I’ve never really thought about what it means to be a Christian. I’ve witnessed several baptisms. I knew that it was a good thing, but I didn’t really take time to think about it. I remember thinking that because I went to church I was already saved. I eventually learned that was not how it worked. I eventually decided I wanted what my parents had, which was a strong faith in the Lord.

They seemed happy and I wanted that. As time went on, I started to have a hard time at home and became very angry with everyone around me. I decided

I wanted nothing to do with God and whenever my parents tried to mention something that had to do with the Lord, I would roll my eyes and tell them to stop or just walk away.

I refused to read the Bible, and sometimes refused to go to church. My heart was very hard towards the Lord. Sometimes, when I was forced to read something related to God, I would do it with no problem, but I wouldn’t actually pay attention.

A couple of months ago, however, Brent told me that I should read the Bible sometime. I said no, but that night I read it anyway. I ended up reading John 3-4 where it talks about being born again and when Jesus met and redeemed the Samaritan woman. That stirred something in me. I didn’t know what, and to be honest, I really didn’t care.

Two weeks later, tickets to a Lauren Daigle concert got donated and that’s where everything changed. I could hear the Lord calling out to me and telling me to come to him. *(cont. on back pg.)*



Brent (cont. from pg. 1)

When Brent arrived at the Ranch, he was missing his four front teeth, the effects of heavy drug use. At his first dental consultation, the dentist said that given the extent of the damage, the prognosis was multiple extractions and root canals, and ultimately dentures. Brent was given a referral to a specialist to begin his root canal treatments.

When Brent went to see this new dentist, after one look at his teeth, the dentist asked a few more questions. Brent shared his story and what led him here. The dentist decided he wanted to prescribe his own treatment plan to salvage as many teeth as possible. The process of restoration began.

Meanwhile, Brent was back in high school, picking up where he left off a few years ago. He had dropped out of high school when he was 16 and started working full time for his dad's drywall company. Brent's work ethic and sense of humor carried him through his first months at the Ranch.

Being an adult in the program, Brent struggled with the authority of the interns, many of whom were only a few years older than him. The court had stipulated that Brent must complete the program, or otherwise face more jail time. The fear of returning to jail hung over his head, but several months in he could no

longer feign compliance to the program. Brent was suspended from the program in December.

A few months away from completing the program, Brent was staring down the possibility of incarceration again. "I wasn't participating in my own growth. If this place was only a means to stay out of jail, it was never going to be enough to grow or be successful here."

Brent returned ready to be a part of the program rather than work against it. As he submitted himself, he began to experience for the first time "the peace that surpasses all understanding."

"After becoming a Christian, I've been able to see God has a plan for my life. He has preserved my brain through all the drugs I've done. People have done a quarter of the drugs I've done and been mentally handicapped for life. I've almost



Brent and former student Andrew on this year's Guys' Igloo trip.

died more than once - and God has kept me alive through that...."

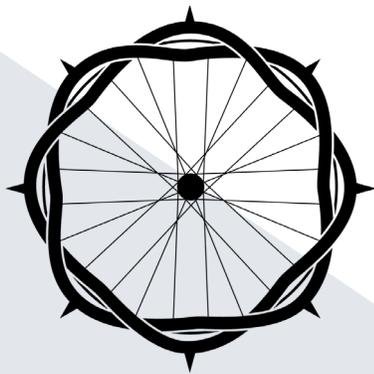
In the past year, Brent has had 51 dental procedures, including seven root canals and 13 crowns. The work isn't completed yet, but he's leaving with four new front teeth - and a strengthened faith.

Zoya Lee

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1



Girls' Igloo Trip (L to R) Intern Rachel and Addy pose in the entryways of their adjacent igloos; the ladies stand atop their completed igloos.



The 42nd Agony Ride

Last year's Agony brought in just over \$390,000, thanks to the incredible generosity of riders, sagers, and donors. Our hope is that together we can raise \$400,000 this year to go towards student scholarships. Sixty-six riders are already committed. Among them will be four of our staff members, featured below. To sponsor a rider, visit agonyride.org. We hope you join us again this year!

JULY 26-27, 2024 | SIERRA VALLEY

Nate Boyd, Executive Director

Mileage goal: 300 miles

Fundraisers aren't normally life changing, even if the funds can be. But every year, some of our young people come back from the Agony different. The money hasn't yet covered their tuition, but what they witnessed and participated in for 24 long hours has formed new understanding. The Agony is made of sacrifice, love, and simple acts of kindness as one weary person cares for another—and it creates a vision for how life can be. This will be my 14th year sagging or riding. The novelty is gone, but I've learned to arrive expectant. The Lord is going to work. I will see it in others' hearts, and I will experience it in my own. Each year I come back different too, renewed by the joy of loving and giving as a community. That's what happens when you encounter Christ working in His people, and it is a gift to participate. Would you join us, by giving, sagging, or riding?



Zoya Lee, Communications Coordinator

Mileage goal: 320 miles

Several years ago, someone shared on Agony Sunday that at Agony, it's like there's no sin. Every person has their place, rallied for the same cause, putting others before themselves for 24 hours. It really is a beautiful picture. But I think it's more accurate to say that at Agony, there are a multitude of sins, but "love covers over a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8)." An even more beautiful picture. Love as a covering, a shelter, a protection. Our students come to us from backgrounds of abuse, neglect, and abandonment, looking for somewhere to lay their head. A safe place. The Ranch serves to be this place for them, and once a year, they experience this type of community in greater measure at the

Agony, where hundreds of individuals are, together, laying down their lives. For them. Will you join us this summer?

Jensen Near, Director of Student Life

Mileage goal: 250 miles

There is nothing like the Agony Ride: 200+ people gathered together in the Sierra Valley united with a single purpose—raising scholarships for our precious students. Nothing is sweeter than watching students serve the riders, except getting to be the rider they are ministering to. If you've never witnessed an Agony Ride in person before, come see it for yourself! I am excited to ride my third Agony this year, and am hoping to eclipse my previous best of 250 miles. Please join us as we seek to extend hope and healing through every mile we ride!



Austin Sather, Maintenance Director

Mileage goal: 315 miles

I love riding in the Agony because of the opportunity it provides to share about the incredible, redemptive work that God is doing daily at the Ranch. Additionally, God's design for us to support each other as the body of Christ is on full display at the Agony. Volunteers work together in various roles to run the SAG stations and riders encourage each other. It is beautiful to see people serving one another as the hands and feet of Jesus. People come from afar to participate as well, reminding us of the larger body of Christ we are a part of. Thank you for supporting the Agony and the Ranch, where God, in His great grace, is bringing more members into His body.

Christian Encounter Ranch
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Grass Valley, CA 95945

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
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*Spring Serve Day
May 18, 9am - 1pm*

MEMORIALS

*In memory of Norman Brouwer, given
by:*

Mary Brouwer

*In memory of Donna Verlene Garvis-
Wagner, given by:*

Govert Tad Bassett

*In memory of Dianne (Kuntz)
Wallace, given by:*

Diane Johnston

HONORARIUMS

*In honor of Paxton Fitzpatrick, given
by:*

John & Joan Jones

In honor of Tom Salter, given by:

Peter & Claudia Grubeck

*Christian Encounter
is a non-profit, non-
denominational, residential
community helping 16- 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.*



Baptism (cont. from pg. 1)

As much as I wanted to, I felt resistance and I wasn't sure that I could.

A couple of weeks later, I sat down to journal and found myself talking to God.

He again spoke to me, only this time He asked me if I was ready to trust Him. After thinking for a couple of minutes, I said "yes" and gave my life to the Lord.

It took me a bit of time to decide to get baptized. I knew it was the next step but I wasn't sure if I wanted to and again was struggling with resistance. After thinking about it and talking to the Lord, I finally decided to take the next step.

I am a bit nervous, but this is part of following Jesus.



*Former intern Cassie and staff member Salena
with Addy before they get in the water.*