



# Christian Encounter NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL FEATURE

## What can be done at 15?

By Mike Petrillo, Former Executive Director  
and Kevin Phillips, Director of Counseling

*\*This article was originally published in the newsletter in 1981. Almost 45 years later we are finding its content still relevant. The article has been edited for republish.*

Families everywhere have discovered the long-term destructive effects of demonic philosophy, casual violence, materialism, sexual exploitation, and blatant pornography on TV and in social media. Children are being taught to disregard the importance of parental authority. The result is children who erupt like uncharted volcanoes, destroying the relationships of everyone in their paths, even by age 15.

Over the last 45 years, we have consistently observed that the 15-year-old applicant pool far exceeds that of all other age groups combined. This is an amazing statistic. The key question is: "What can be done at 15 to steer a person in the right

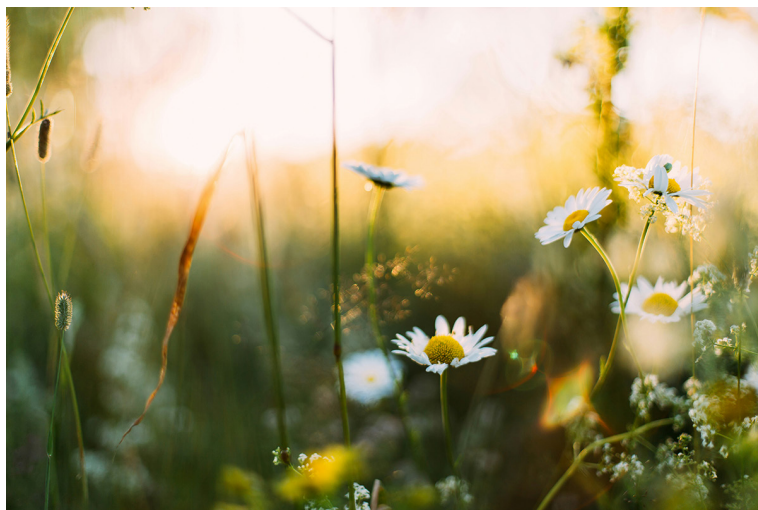
direction?"

When parents are looking into out-of-home placement for their 15-year-old, we know that their resources have been exhausted and they are out of options. Though our program offers safety, structure, love, and discipline, the answer we believe lies ultimately in Jesus. Christ transformed people of every age and set them free from all manner of evil—yet, many in his generation rejected him. And that's true today, too. Some have been trained in rejection, others are suspicious of anything religious, still others are so wounded emotionally that they have no will to be healed.

God does transform 15-year-olds, and 17-year-olds and others, as we've witnessed here time and time again over the past 50 years. But the extreme social pressures and the insecure family structure are taking a heavy toll on young lives.

Investing in our youth begins today. You—parents, grandparents, caregivers, and all of us—are needed right now. Invest yourselves in your three-year-olds, your ten-year-olds, your grandchildren. Your child needs love—now. Your child needs discipline—today. Your children need the security of commitment in the family—all the time. All of us need the Hope of Eternal Life, of purpose and promise for the future. And we need large doses of God's Word to overcome the worldly values that flood our senses daily.

*(cont. on back pg.)*



## PROJECTS UPDATE



*Clockwise: Girls' bathroom remodel, High school building expansion, first Angels' Meadow cabin remodel.*



A huge thank you to volunteers Tom Brown, Dave Thomas, Rob Galbreath, Dave Russo, Frank Gowin, and David Slobodenko for donating their time and resources to help make these projects possible.

# The call to Japan

In late 2021, Lydia was praying over friends Kyler and Claire Malarae as they were getting ready to leave for missions work in Japan. As she prayed for others to join them in God's work in Japan, she began asking God if her own family was a part of the answer to that prayer. She then invited Zach to pray with her, and the calling to Japan became clear.

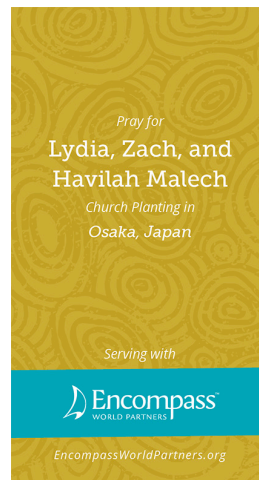
We are excited to share that Christian Encounter will be sending the Malech family as missionaries to Japan through Encompass World Partners.

The first two years on the field will be focused on acclimating into the culture, connecting with the team, creating new friendships with the Japanese, and learning the language. In the long term, their desire is to form a Christ-centered community by planting a church and making disciples who are also making disciples.

Japan is largely Buddhist and Shinto

and is made up of less than 1% Christian, which causes the country to be classified as an "unreached nation". Many have never even heard of Jesus. The country's deep religious history is apparent, where streetside shrines, ancestral altars, and large historical shrines can be found everywhere. There are many reasons Japan is unreached, which is why many people view the spiritual soil of Japan as being "hard". Lydia shares, "Our team is going into this mission field with great hope in what God can do while understanding that we need to be patient and steadfast."

To contact Zach and Lydia to learn more, email [malech@encompassworld.org](mailto:malech@encompassworld.org).



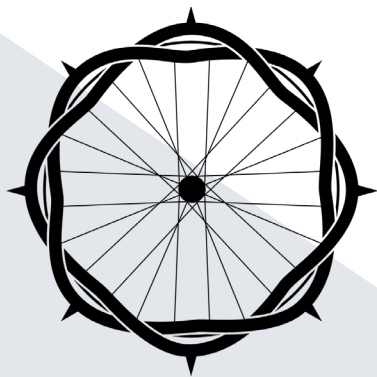
To give, visit [give.encompassworldpartners.org/person/zach-and-lydia](https://give.encompassworldpartners.org/person/zach-and-lydia) or scan:



Please pray for us as we look to fill Zach's position as the Outreach Coordinator.

## IGLOO TRIP SNAPSHOTS





# THE 43<sup>rd</sup> AGONY RIDE

We have 78 riders already committed to ride in this year's Agony Ride! Among them will be four of our staff members, featured below. To sponsor a rider, visit [agonyride.org](http://agonyride.org). Last year's Agony brought in over \$480,000, surpassing the previous record by over \$90,000. We are so grateful for the outpouring of generosity from our riders, sagggers, and donors! We hope you join us again this year.

JULY 25-26, 2025 | SIERRA VALLEY

Scan to see  
who's riding!



## Caryn Galeckas, Office Manager

Mileage goal: 300 miles

Through 43 years at CER I have been privileged to see countless young lives changed by the power and love of Christ. The Agony Ride has always stood as a small example of Christ's sacrificial love, and many students have been deeply impacted by it. Many of those students would not have been able to come to the Ranch without the money raised through the ride. Every Agony Ride I see God at work, both in my life and in others' lives. After taking several years off from riding to serve as Ride Director, this year I am able to ride again. I'm excited to see what God has in store.



## David Ramey, Assistant Maintenance Director

Mileage goal: 300 miles

I love physical challenges. The thrill of enduring through and finishing something hard brings me a lot of joy, but the Agony Ride is more than an intense challenge for me. I am riding in the Agony because I have witnessed first hand the work God has done and is doing in people's lives here at Christian Encounter. As a one-year intern and now as a staff member I experienced being a giver and a receiver of God's unrelenting love, and I want others to have the same opportunity. I love that the spirit of God is needed daily at the Ranch, and that there are endless stories of God's powerful work and provision. To ride alongside others who understand what God is doing at the Ranch, who

believe in God's heart for broken people, is truly a taste of eternal life.

## Angel Sanchez, Guys' House Leader

Mileage goal: 250 miles

I finished my two-year internship in February and am excited to be the new Guys' House Leader. I've seen first hand the way the Lord works in the lives of the students and walks through their struggles with them. The Ranch is doing a very important job and playing a role in the world that the Lord uses to bring the Gospel to those who need it. This ride is what allows the students to receive the opportunities for healing that they do. Thanks for supporting this ministry!



## Salena Unitt, Executive Assistant

Mileage goal: 202 miles

Riding in the Agony every two years as a staff member is uniquely special. I get to try to one-up myself from last time in miles while secretly competing with the other staff for money raised haha! And although training is hard work, my favorite part is riding into each SAG station knowing which student and intern I will see there. Because that's just it, relationships are everything. And if I can suffer for a little while so that another student can experience a chance at a relationship with God, well then it's all worth it.

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*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.*



## MEMORIALS

*In memory of James and Alma Snyder, given by:*

Wil and Donna Snyder

*In memory of Shirley Wiggin, given by:*

Jeanne Wiggin

*In memory of Bob Wright, given by:*

Robert & Lauri Hadobas

John Hartnett

## HONORARIUMS

*In honor of Chris Palmer, given by:*  
C3X Inc

## What can be done *(cont. from pg. 1)*

*Our current Director of Counseling, Kevin Phillips, LMFT, shares research since this article was first published:*

Over the years, research has shown that the human brain takes much longer to develop than previously believed. The prefrontal cortex (PFC) of the brain—which is instrumental in executive function such as making sound decisions and weighing consequences—is not fully developed until approximately age 25 in males and slightly sooner in females.

Many of us can look back on our adolescence and early adulthood and scratch our heads at certain decisions we made. Decisions that perhaps were more impulsive or risky than the decision we would have made in the same situation just a few years later.

Be mindful of this as you continue to “train up your child in the way he should go” (Proverbs 22:6). Prayerfully seek patience and wisdom as you endure in love.