



Christian Encounter NEWSLETTER

STUDENT PROFILE

Penelope

Penelope entered the world at 23 ½ weeks and spent the first six months of her life in the NICU. There were complications during the pregnancy, and when she was born, Penelope struggled to breathe on her own. During that time she contracted an infection. She was given strong antibiotics to combat the infection, which consequently damaged her hearing. While in the NICU she also had surgery on her stomach that necessitated G-tube feedings until she was three.

Her mom left the picture early on, leaving Penelope with her dad and grandma. Her grandma served as her primary caregiver in these critical years until her dad remarried when Penelope was six. She was the flower girl in the wedding.

Penelope faced more challenges when she started school. Her hearing loss impeded her learning, and being more

quiet in nature, she was overlooked in the public school setting. When her grandma took on the mantle of homeschooling, Penelope was starting a first grade level curriculum at age 11.

The setback in her education also contributed to other developmental delays. It made connecting and relating with her peers difficult. It was isolating.

As Penelope yearned for connection, she turned to what was most easily accessible and already at her fingertips. She began talking to people online and was quickly exposed to the wiles of those lurking on the internet. At the same time, Penelope was asking a lot of questions and exploring her identity. Her parents began questioning her decisions. Penelope felt misunderstood and confused. She began to eat less at mealtimes and sometimes even skipped meals altogether. The weight loss started to become noticeable. *(cont. on pg. 3)*



STAFF INTRODUCTION

Q&A with new Director of Counseling John Stewart

By Zoya Lee

We are excited to welcome John Stewart as our new Director of Counseling. John's involvement with the Ranch has spanned decades, beginning in the 70's when the ministry was just getting started and continuing through the years serving on the Board of Directors. John has served the local community by meeting with clients from Women of Worth, Living Well Medical Clinic, and Sierra Services for the Blind. He attends the Nevada County Christian Ministers' Fellowship and continues to serve on the board for the Daily Transformation Journal.

Z: John, what first brought you to the Ranch back in the 70's?



J: I was at a crossroads in my life. I was in seminary for pastoral care and counseling and at the same time my parents were getting a divorce. My cousin, Dan Stewart, had heard the founders speak at Lincoln Christian Seminary, and came out to CA to help. His brother, Steve, who later came on staff, was also a strong influence in my decision to come.

Another reason I came was the reputa-

tion that God was really working here - that God was present here. I hungered for that in my life.

Z: What was it like when you arrived as an intern?

J: There were three of us - we were the first interns. They first put me in charge of the counseling program. Then when Jim Parker came, he had me heading up the internship program. I was doing things I wasn't prepared to do - that was the case for many of us.

Living in a Christian community and working to change people's lives was really fulfilling, and it was also challenging learning how to relate to others in a vulnerable way. It was shocking for my Midwest upbringing.

Z: If I remember correctly, you and Pam met at the Ranch, right? (cont. on pg. 3)

Events Calendar

Agony Kickoff Training Ride
Saturday, May 9th, 9:30am

Spring Serve Day
Saturday, May 16th, 9am - 1pm

Year-end Celebration & Graduation
Saturday, May 30th, 10:30am

Family Camp
June 26th - 29th

44th annual Agony Ride
July 24th - 25th
Sign up today: agonyride.org



Congrats, Paxton & Danika!

Assistant Director of Discipleship Paxton Fitzpatrick and former Girls' House Leader Danika Young tied the knot last September in Valley Center, CA. Paxton and Danika are also both former interns. Executive Director Nate Boyd officiated the wedding.

Material Needs List

Consumable goods

- Copy paper
- Index cards
- Expo markers
- Energy bars
- Nature Valley Oats n honey granola bars
- Hot chocolate packets
- Apple cider packets
- 12 oz Disposable coffee/hot cups with lids
- 12-16 oz Disposable cold cups
- Heavy duty paper plates 8" & 10"
- Heavy duty foil
- Gallon & quart sized zip-lock food storage bags
- Potholders
- Twin bedding
- Toothbrushes
- Safety glasses
- Earmuffs for hearing protection
- Heavy duty loppers/pruners
- Lumber (2x4s, 4x4s, plywood)
- Shipping container

Guys' Igloo Trip snapshots



Penelope (cont. from pg. 1)

Penelope's parents had been seeking outside support for Penelope and found Christian Encounter. When she was accepted, they flew out from Oklahoma with Penelope.

Penelope was overwhelmed being in a new place so far from home. But as she settled into the rhythms of Ranch life, health began to return to her body. Several weeks into her stay, on the Girls' Igloo Trip, she realized, "This isn't so bad. I can be myself here, and nobody's going to look at me weird."

"As time went on, I became more comfortable in my own skin. I realized no one was going to judge me. I was really insecure about myself."

Penelope wrestled with wanting to leave the program in June as she approached her 20th birthday. Though she had a strong desire to move towards independence, she recognized she was on a good path and had developed significant relationships in those five months.

As Penelope participated in weekly group counseling sessions in the summer, she gained a better understanding of her own actions and behaviors.

Completing the 15-day wilderness trip gave her a new confidence that was evident in how she carried herself. "I did



a lot of things I never thought I'd do. I didn't think I could survive in the wilderness for two weeks. I never thought in my life I'd eat a cricket. I didn't think

I would jump off a dam. I didn't think at 20 I would be courageous enough to do all that."

"Coming to the Ranch I've been able to let go, relax, process, and heal. I don't have to keep it inside anymore. I don't have to hide - I don't have to be afraid. What happened in the past doesn't haunt me anymore. God revealed to me how bad, how dark, how serious it was. It was a huge realization."

Upon reflection as her time at the Ranch comes to a close, Penelope shares, "I experienced healing and grew in maturity here. I experienced God through the people here. You can see God everywhere."

Zoya Lee

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with

hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
Romans 15:13

Q&A (cont. from pg. 1)

J: Yes, Pam came here to visit with a college group from Yuba City. I tried to convince her to stay, but she had to finish up a year at Chico State. We met again a year later at a mutual friend's wedding, and she invited me over for dinner. She came to help up at the Ranch that year, and by December we were married.

Z: You just knew!

J: We just knew. We'll be married 50 years this December.

Z: Can you tell me more about your private practice, A Renewed Hope, and how it started?

J: I opened my own private practice in 1993. I wanted to help other counselors get their hours for licensure so at one time I had seven counselors working for me. There were offices in Grass Valley, Auburn, and Folsom. Pam has been my bookkeeper and scheduler.

As I worked with both Christians and



John and Pam have remained connected with CER through the decades serving in different ways, including volunteering at the Agony Ride.

non-Christians, it was always hard [on a personal level]. The culture had become more polarized. My heart has been wanting to work more with those who want to pursue the Lord and wanting to integrate psychology and theology together. My desire to return to ministry grew, and I was serving on CER's board of directors

when the job offer came.

Z: It's cool to see how God was already priming you. What's something you're looking forward to in this next season?

J: I want to first learn the inner workings of what we're doing here and why we're doing it. I want to integrate my experiences into this new experi-

ence. I have a very creative side that likes to come up with new ideas, and I'm interested in how that can benefit the ministry, and the students and interns.

Z: We're so glad to have you aboard, John.

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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 Alison Arcadi, given by:
Michael Arcadi

In memory of Bill & Marion Boyd, given by:
Greg & Diane Boyd

In memory of Jack & Margaret Haden, given by:
Greg & Diane Boyd

In memory of Edward Fulenwider, given by:
Karl & Debra Fulenwider

In memory of Salli Hearn, given by:
Carol Douglass

In memory of Bill Heyenbruch, given by:
Marilyn Heyenbruch

In memory of Melba Wilcox Johnson, given by:
Marilyn Vaughn

In memory of James Wallace Knapp, given by:
Linda Knapp

In memory of George and Shirley Wallace, given by:
Marianne Moseley

HONORARIUMS

In honor of the Blackburn Family, given by:
Tyler Chicourrat

In honor of Rollin Haas, given by:
Jeremy Haas

In honor of Randy Hearn, given by:
Rachel Ricchini

In honor of Marion Parker, given by:
Mike & Gail Faulhaber

In honor of Cassie Peters, given by:
Diane Dawson