

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

In many ways, Christian Encounter Ranch is like a big family. The Ranch is a safe place where residents learn how to develop a healthy love and concern for one another and experience living successful and productive lives. It is to be a place where people learn how to communicate feelings in acceptable ways and where we contribute to the lives of others.

## **Our Goals**

### **Mission**

Overcoming the cycles of brokenness, one story at a time.

### **Vision**

Broken lives restored in Christ; restored lives reaching the broken.

### **Purpose**

It is the purpose of Christian Encounter Ministries to provide a community in which people encounter Jesus Christ.

*"Lord, send those you want to be here."*

Jesus Christ is a Life Changer! We want your time at Christian Encounter Ranch to be life-changing. The staff members and interns work in cooperation with God using the basic concepts taught in the Bible to help you accomplish this goal.

It is imperative that you are open to the relevance of the life and claims of Jesus Christ. We don't require anyone to believe these things, but you must be willing to investigate and explore scriptural concepts. We believe that every single person is "fearfully and wonderfully made" by God (Ps. 139) for a purpose, and that it is impossible to live a healthy, fulfilling life apart from life in Him.

One of the ways your openness will show is in your willingness to cooperate with and submit to the authority of the leaders here. Christian Encounter Ranch is a Christian community, and those who live here must be willing to abide by Christian principles and the rules of the Ranch -- even if they do not personally agree with them.

If you have questions about any rules of conduct -- what you may or may not do here at the Ranch -- talk openly with a staff person or an intern. As a family, we share our hurts and frustrations. We also experience God's love through one another. Time will be scheduled for you to meet with your counselor and your discipler. *Living together as a family for the purpose of gaining maturity requires individual responsibility to honor general rules of conduct. So, here's what to expect:*

## **1. Daily Schedule**

- 1.1 Everyone out of bed: You must be washed, hair combed and bed made before breakfast.
- 1.2 Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. Be on time. Everyone is required to be at breakfast.
- 1.3 Devotions: 8:00 a.m. This is an important time of Bible study, prayer and focusing on your spiritual growth.
- 1.4 School: 8:45 a.m. High school students have an opportunity to make significant progress academically. Your education will have a very positive effect on the rest of your life. You will

- have classes every weekday morning and part of Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, as well as study hall four evenings each week.
- 1.5 Lunch: 12:30 p.m. Wash up and meet in the living room before the second bell rings. (There are ten minutes between the first and second bells.) Be on time. There may be announcements or changes to the day's schedule you need to hear.
  - 1.6 Work Program: If you're not in school, work program begins each morning (M-F) at 8:45 a.m., and immediately after lunch at 1:10 p.m. The school students' work schedule will vary from day to day depending on class schedules. You will find that it feels good to work hard and accomplish tasks that benefit the "family."
  - 1.7 Dinner: 6:00 p.m. Again, be on time-- before the second bell. This is a time for social interaction as well as eating. The table leader (an intern or staff person) will give you permission to obtain seconds and to be excused after the meal.
  - 1.8 Evening time: Staff or interns will supervise students after dinner until it is time to go to the dorms and go to bed. Those in charge are responsible for knowing where everyone is and what they are doing. You are expected to cooperate with them and follow their instructions at all times.
  - 1.9 Curfew: Lights out, quiet and in bed by 10:00 p.m. 9:30 p.m. is the standard time for going to the dorms to get ready for bed
  - 1.10 Family Night: Often on Tuesday evenings, sometimes on other days/times. The purpose changes from time to time depending on who is leading and what has been happening in the Ranch Family. One meeting may be a Bible Study, another a game or group activity, and so on. They're designed for your edification and/or instruction, and participation is required.
  - 1.11 Sunday Morning Church: 9:30 am. Worship, praise, group prayer and sharing, communion, and preaching. If you're here to begin developing your spiritual life, or want to mature in your faith, then you will find Sundays to be helpful and enjoyable.
  - 1.12 Weekend schedule varies slightly from that of the weekdays. Students and interns get a chance to sleep a little later. Saturday mornings, students and interns clean their dorms and have separate guys' and girls' meetings. Time is also scheduled for supervised recreation or "free time."

## 2. General conduct

- 2.1 No smoking.
- 2.2 No drug use (including alcohol).
- 2.3 Absolutely no romantic relationships or sexual involvement. This is the time and place for you to focus on the areas of your life that need growth and change. This is the time and place to develop healthy friendships with everyone here. It is **NOT** the time or place for you to develop any romantic relationships. It is not the time or place for sexual involvement of any sort. Romantic relationships cut others out and deter the primary purpose of being here. Violating this rule will result in suspension or expulsion from the program. Any unlawful sexual contact between adults and minors will be reported and may result in charges being filed.
- 2.4 No profane, vulgar, or abusive language.
- 2.5 Any actions which make the ranch an unsafe environment for others (physically, emotionally or spiritually) may result in restriction, suspension, or dismissal.

## 3. Telephone, Mail, and Visitation Policy

- 3.1 Our general policy is that phone calls will be to/from immediate family members only. An "approved caller" list will be posted. Students will only be allowed to make calls to or receive calls from those on the list unless they have specific written permission from their counselor or other staff person.

- 3.2 Because this is a time for you to focus on the areas of your life that need growth and change, we ask that you put any existing romantic relationship on hold during your time here. Without exception, students will not be permitted to send or receive phone calls or mail to or from boyfriends or girlfriends. This is to ensure that they do not become a distraction.
- 3.3 You must get specific permission from the person "on Lodge" to make an approved phone call. Your calls will be monitored and limited to a set length of time.
- 3.4 The number of calls per month and the length of calls varies according to the "student level."
- After a new student completes the initial 2-week recruit period, they may make 4 ten minute phone calls per month.
  - At levels II and III, a student may make 4 fifteen minute phone calls per month.
  - At level IV a student may make 5 fifteen minute phone calls per month.
  - At level V a student may make 6 fifteen minute calls per month.
  - At level VI a student may make 6 twenty minute calls per month.
  - At level VII a student may make 7 twenty minute calls a month.
- 3.5 Incoming and outgoing mail will be limited to an "approved" list. During the first 3 months, "approved mail" will be limited to family members only. Any mail received that is not on the "approved mail list" will be refused. All exceptions must be cleared by the Counseling Department in advance.
- 3.6 After 6 months of stay, a student is allowed an overnight visit with family every 3 months.
- 3.7 After 12 months of stay, a student is allowed an overnight visit with family every other month.
- 3.8 Students are not permitted to have their personal cell phones while they are at the ranch. Students must either leave their cell phone at home, or turn it in for safekeeping in the intern office during their stay at the ranch. Phones will be returned when students leave for Summer and Christmas breaks.

#### **4. Money and medications**

- 4.1 Students are not allowed to carry cash. Money is kept in a "student account." You can fill out request forms to have purchases made.
- 4.2 Any permitted medications will be locked up for safekeeping (e.g. vitamins, lozenges, medicated creams, etc.). You'll be shown the procedure for getting any medicine you need. As a reminder, no prescription medications that regulate or affect mental health are permitted.

#### **5. Two-Week Evaluation (Recruit status)**

The first two weeks of your time here are important. It is a chance for you to get to know us and for us to begin knowing you. You'll make important decisions during this time, and you will start developing new relationships. We don't want potentially damaging or negative outside influences interfering with your initial experience here. Therefore, the following restrictions are placed on all new students for at least the first two weeks:

- 5.1 No phone calls or visitors. (No exceptions.)
- 5.2 Your mail is subject to restrictions. You may send outgoing mail to individuals on your "approved mail" list. Incoming mail you receive from those on your "approved mail" list will be held until the end of the two weeks.
- 5.3 You will be with a leader or the whole group at all times doing whatever the day's schedule calls for. There will be no trips to town or other individualized activities.

## 6. Dress Code

In order to help maintain a healthy and wholesome atmosphere, we ask that you dress modestly. Please follow the guidelines below.

General guidelines for dress:

1. All skirts, dresses, and shorts must be no shorter than mid-thigh.
2. All tank tops must have wide straps.
3. Shirts must provide full coverage (i.e. no cleavage, midriffs, etc.).
4. Leggings are not to be worn as pants.
5. Undergarments should not be exposed (e.g. underwear, boxers, bra straps, etc.).
6. Pajamas/sleepwear are only to be worn in the dorm.
7. Shoes must be worn outside at all times to protect from nails, rocks, and other hazards.
8. Gang related attire is not permitted.
9. Clothing featuring alcohol, drugs, secular music or related items is not permitted.

Jewelry

1. Jewelry (posts, studs, rings, etc.) must be removed from all non-ear piercings.
  - a. A single nose piercing with a small stud or ring is permitted.
2. No jewelry designed for a gauge size larger than 4 is permitted. No tapers or stretching mechanisms are allowed.

Sharing clothes

1. Students are not allowed to borrow, give, or trade clothes with one another. If clothes are needed, we will make every effort to help meet the need.

The above list is not exhaustive. Interns and staff have the authority to ask a student to change their attire if it is deemed to be inappropriate. Staff have the same authority to address interns if needed on this issue.

## 7. High School and Wilderness

Students enrolled in the Ranch program who have not yet graduated from high school will be expected to attend school here. All students, whether in high school or not, will participate in wilderness trips.

- 7.1 The school provides both standard group classes and independent study, averaging 5 hours per day.
- 7.2 Classes are small, averaging a 3:1 student-teacher ratio.
- 7.3 Each student works toward individual goals based on academic assessment.
- 7.4 Students can graduate with a California state high school diploma.
- 7.5 Learning disabilities can be accommodated.
- 7.6 Students' future academic goals are supported.
- 7.7 Credits may transfer to other high schools.
- 7.8 The option to study for the Proficiency Exam or G.E.D. may be given with approval from the principal after one full semester of regular classes.
- 7.9 Two wilderness trips are provided annually--one in winter, one in summer. All students enrolled in the Ranch program will be required to participate in any wilderness trips during their stay. CER provides most of the equipment, but the student may need to provide personal articles and clothing, and may incur some expenses, particularly for boots.

## 8. Work Program

Work is a normal, healthy part of life and an essential part of successful living. Good work habits require self-discipline and self-motivation. Ranch life includes the "work program" (see Section 1.6) and additional daily chores.

- 8.1 Work Program is the time for you to work not only on projects themselves, but also on your attitude toward work, toward those in charge, and toward your fellow workers.
- 8.2 Work hours will not be used for scheduling personal trips (shopping, etc.) unless absolutely unavoidable and only with staff permission.
- 8.3 Personal tasks (laundry, letter-writing, reading, etc.) are not to be done during work hours. There are other times during the day that these will be allowed. Learning to balance personal time with work responsibilities will be one of the important life skills you will develop while here.

## 9. Personal Hygiene

- 9.1 Bathe daily! Showers should not exceed 10 minutes.
- 9.2 Brush teeth at least twice daily.
- 9.3 Wash prior to meals. Wear clean and appropriate clothing.
- 9.4 Do laundry (sheets too) every week on your assigned laundry day.
- 9.5 Wash your hands after using the restroom and before meals -- always!

## 10. Lodge Building and Living Quarters

- 10.1 Stay out of the pantry unless you are on official kitchen duty.
- 10.2 You are not allowed in the kitchen unless you are on kitchen duty.
- 10.3 No beverages or food allowed on carpeted living areas or in dorms at any time, unless a special announcement is made by a staff person.
- 10.4 No food (candy, mints, anything!) is to be kept in the dorm, school, or cubby (locker). (You have no place to store food or snacks for your personal use. If someone wants to send you a special "treat", tell them to send enough for you to share with everyone and it will be served at an appropriate time.)
- 10.5 You'll be sharing the living space here with lots of other people, so consideration is called for. Don't leave your clothing and books in the living areas or restrooms. Pick up after yourself, or you will have your belongings confiscated for a time.
- 10.6 Beds are to be made daily before breakfast.
- 10.7 Dirty laundry must be kept in an approved laundry bag or hamper. (If you don't have a suitable container, check with your room leader.)
- 10.8 All heaters and coolers will be regulated only by an intern or staff.

## 11. Recreation

- 11.1 Swimming: All students must pass the ranch swim test before they join in the recreational swimming times. Swimming is allowed only at specified times with a certified lifeguard on duty.
- 11.2 Boating is with permission only and you must wear a life jacket. (See a leader before boating for the complete list of boating regulations.)
- 11.3 Movies are regulated by the staff and monitored by interns. This is to provide a positive environment conducive to personal growth and positive change.

- 11.4 Reading material other than the Bible and what is on the Ranch bookshelves must be approved by the Discipleship Department or the school principal. This includes all books, magazines, catalogs, etc. Please do not subscribe to any publications.
- 11.5 Music must be approved by the designated staff person before it can be included in the music collection. Due to copyright laws, CER must own original music in order for it to be played here. No personal music is allowed. Please leave all portable media players at home.
- 11.6 CER is structured to help you grow and change in a safe, secure environment, free from distractions. Many activities that are completely acceptable outside of these premises are not appropriate here. For this reason, bicycles, skateboards, skates, electrical equipment (iPods, video games, amps, etc.) are not allowed. While we realize this can be difficult for some, remember that your time here is only a small fraction of your life. There are many daily activities here that will occupy your time and allow you to develop new relationships and find new interests.
- 11.7 Saturday and/or Sunday afternoon often involves some form of organized recreational activity.

## 12. Dorm Rules

- 12.1 Every person has a designated area in which to neatly keep his/her personal items.
- 12.2 Your bed is to be made and all personal items put away before breakfast. Dorms may be inspected during the day.
- 12.3 Bathroom items and personal toiletries are to be neatly kept in available cabinet space. Towels are to be hung neatly on racks.
- 12.4 Dorms are to be considered a bedroom and bathroom only. They are not a place to spend free time. The lodge is considered the living area for the Ranch Family.
- 12.5 Guys are never allowed in a girl's dorm, or vice-versa. At dorm time, students are to remain in their own dorm room.
- 12.6 No food, drink or candy in dorms.
- 12.7 At least once a week the dorm room is to be cleaned thoroughly. All members of the dorm room are responsible for cleaning the room together.

## 13. Leaving Ranch Property

Students may leave the Ranch Property when:

- 13.1 They have staff approval, and
- 13.2 They are accompanied at all times by a CER intern, staff or someone whom a staff person has specifically given permission for the student to be with.  
(For minor students it will require parent or guardian permission for the student to be allowed off property with anyone other than a CER intern or staff or pre-approved volunteer.)

## 14. Student Visitor Policy

For the protection of the student and to enable good communication between staff and interns:

- 14.1 When students have visitors, they are still responsible for their jobs and chores. They will need to trade with other students or interns if they are to have "off time." This does not include special counseling times. In that case they are excused from their duties.
- 14.2 Students always sleep in the dorm and keep dorm hours unless they have written permission from their counselor or the director.

- 14.3 Students must have permission from their counselor or the director to leave the property with family. The time they are expected back is to be agreed upon.

## **15. Sexual Harassment Policy**

Christian Encounter Ranch ("CER") is committed to maintaining an environment in which all individuals treat each other with dignity and respect and which is free from all forms of intimidation, exploitation and harassment, including sexual harassment. CER is prepared to take action to prevent, investigate, and correct any violations of this policy. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

### **Definition of Sexual Harassment**

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from, or in, the workplace or educational setting. The possession and/or distribution of pornographic images on CER property, on CER transportation, or at CER-sponsored events are included in this definition of sexual harassment.

Student to student and employee to student sexual harassment is prohibited.

### **What to Do If You Experience or Observe Sexual Harassment**

Students who feel that they have been subjected to conduct of a harassing nature are encouraged to promptly report the matter to one of the staff designated below. Students who observe conduct that is of a sexually harassing nature are encouraged to report the matter to one of the Christian Encounter Ranch staff designated below. All complaints will be promptly investigated.

### **Where to Report Sexual Harassment**

The following individuals may be reached by telephone at 530-268-0877 or in person at Christian Encounter Ranch and are specifically authorized to receive complaints and to respond to questions regarding sexual harassment:

Nate Boyd, Executive Director

Jensen Near, Director of Student Life

Sharon Palmer, Assistant Director of Operations

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to protect the privacy of the parties involved in any complaint.

However, Christian Encounter Ranch reserves the right to fully investigate every complaint, and to notify a student's parent/guardian and appropriate government officials as the circumstances warrant.

### **Protection against Retaliation**

It is against Christian Encounter Ranch's policy to discriminate or retaliate against any person who has filed a complaint concerning sexual harassment or has testified, assisted or participated in any manner in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing concerning sexual harassment.

### **Procedures for Investigation of the Complaint and for Taking Corrective Action**

When one of the CER staff designated in this policy receives a complaint, he or she shall immediately inform the administration. An administrative team and/or the staff members

designated above will conduct an investigation of the complaint. If the investigation confirms the allegations, prompt corrective actions shall be taken.

The individual who suffered the harassment shall be informed of the corrective action that has been taken. In addition, any employee or student found to be responsible for sexual harassment in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or termination. The severity of the disciplinary action will be based upon the circumstances of the infraction

## **16. Non-Discrimination Policy**

Because we believe every person is created in the image of God, Christian Encounter Ranch admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at CER. Christian Encounter Ranch does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and other CER-administered programs.

Internal use only:

Last revised:  
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