



Christian Encounter Ranch NEWSLETTER

GOD'S RESTORATIVE WORK CONTINUES 1970-2021

“Welcome (back) to the Ranch”

By Former Executive Director Mike Petrillo

Welcome to the Ranch! Those words were part of my introduction to CER long ago, and, 50 years later, they still convey the warmth and joy of acceptance and belonging that comes from God's family. During that first visit, in 1971, I felt the Lord's peace amongst the trees and meadows. The tranquil water of the Lodge pond was disturbed only by the fish nibbling near the surface, and the bullfrogs croaking along the shore. Two



sought God's peace through repentance in Christ these past five decades—too many to count—and the angels have seemingly been on permanent choir duty above the pond ever since.

God brought the founding family, the

Cecils, here for their first look in 1969. And by the time CER was incorporated in 1970, the “Welcome to the Ranch” phrase had become part of the daily lexicon of life. New

Christians were born again, struggling brothers and sisters found peace and healing. Fellowship and worship and prayer and preaching took their place alongside the machinery of Ranch chores, work projects, and meal preparations. Those shared family experiences all fit in to make the “welcome” a unique and powerful experience.

I'm sure you, too, can remember, either fondly or with fear and trembling, what it felt

like to become part of the Ranch family. It was a gradual warming up process for many of us; others were already filled with certainty and faith as they drove up Retrac Way. Those who preceded us,

students, interns, staff and family members, paved the way with open hearts, with kind words, with understanding. We all felt their conviction that this was a place where God would work something deep and lasting into our souls.

When we gather for the 50th Reunion in September, we will all have stories about our first moments here. And we should share not just those moments, but what God has done for us in the intervening years. The Covid pandemic

has kept us distant from fellowship and Christian support far longer than we all expected. So, the timing and impact of our Ranch reunion will have spiritual force greater than we imagined before

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2020. You are welcome in the Ranch family—and welcomed home to Jesus' family. Join us, if you can, and add your personal meaning to the purposes for which God instituted this place. Surely Jesus has been guiding and leading us all along the way, and it was He who spoke first, “Welcome to the Ranch!”

**50th anniversary
celebration:**

Sept. 24-26, 2021

Come for the whole weekend or drop in for part of the festivities! There is no charge for the event.

Registration is open online.



friends of mine had recently been baptized in those same waters, and they had conveyed to me the excitement of meeting with Jesus here at the Ranch. The murky waters have enveloped many more who



Provision #1: In May and June, our maintenance crew, along with a small army of volunteers, completed significant renovations to our boys' dorm rooms, including a complete remodel of the vanity, new fixtures, appliances, carpet, and paint job.



Provision #2: A generous donor and friend of the ministry responded to a need shared in the newsletter last fall. We've already put our utility trailer to good use!



Provision #3: A local ministry group supplied lumber and metal frames to construct a seating area for our Meadow venue. Thank you to the Christian Youth in Action crew!



End of school year celebration The Ranch family enjoyed a leisurely evening in Angels' Meadow complete with BBQ, lawn games, and cotton candy! (The cotton candy machine was another donation!)

MEMORIALS

In memory of Jerry Clayton's birthday, given by:
Wanda Clayton

In memory of Sue Mott, given by:
Christopher & Diane Streff

In memory of Jim Parker, given by:
Stephan & Leslie Harris
Lyndall & Cathy Propst

HONORARIUMS

In honor of Mike & Susie Petrillo, given by: Henry & Sue Bruneau

TRAINING LEADERS



Name: Faith Noe
Age: 23
Hometown: Longview, Texas
Education: East Texas Baptist University, B.A. International Studies, minor in Religion
Ministry experience: Nursery, choir, youth

group, missions coordinating team, education ministry team
What I hope to get from internship: I want to learn where my strengths and weaknesses lie when it comes to serving others and how God has uniquely gifted me to minister in His kingdom.
First impressions: "I always feel supported - by the staff, the community, and the volunteers who pass through. I'm building into a community here. If I needed refuge in the future, I know I could return."



Name: Ethan Jepma
Age: 21
Hometown: Clayton, NY
Education: Senior at Cedarville University, Biblical Studies major; Biblical Care Counseling minor
Hobbies: Making a good stir-fry, hiking,

drumming, rock climbing, Spikeball
Ministry experience: Discipleship ministries at Cedarville
Why I'm here: "My previous ministry job placed me more on the sidelines and I was ready to do something hands-on. When I heard internship compared to a soldier doing trench warfare, I knew this is where I wanted to be."
Future occupation: International church planting



Name: Rayna Markle
Age: 21
Hometown: Philadelphia, PA
Education: Senior at Cedarville University, Psychology major, Art minor, Bible minor
Hobbies: designing tattoos, baking, sports
Why I'm here: "I have

a heart for adolescents and want to be a means of support for those who are working through trauma."
Future occupation: Trauma counselor
Random fact: Rayna and her friend started the group Mental Health Anonymous at school to give students a space to share and find support.



Name: Grace Bunn
Age: 22
Hometown: Greensboro, AL
Education: Mississippi College, B.S. Administration of Justice, minor in Servant Leadership
Ministry experience: Inner city

ministry in Jackson, MI through local nonprofit We Will Go
Hobbies: Basketball, football, reading
Future occupation: Judge or history teacher
First impressions: "Some places you leave and never return. This isn't the same. It's like family here...[the Ranch] becomes a part of people."



Name: Chiara Baldacci
Age: 21
Hometown: Winfield, IL
Education: Senior at Patrick Henry College, Classical Liberal Arts major, Biblical Studies minor

Hobbies: hiking, painting, gardening, music, reading
Ministry experience: worship ministry in various capacities
Bucket list item: hike the entirety of the Pacific Crest Trail
First impressions: "I'm impressed by the spirit of unity here and the way every staff and intern expresses genuine consistent Christ-like love.

[The Ranch] is a very unique environment for growth. We're thrust into a parenting role...it's interesting how much it's revealed my own assumed systems of authority and guidance."



Team bonding The female interns gather for one of many photo opportunities during their June intern retreat in Lake Tahoe.

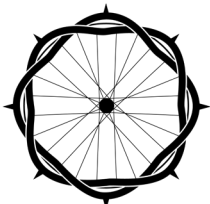
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Christian Encounter Ranch is a non-profit, non-denominational, residential community helping 15- to 24-year-olds by providing love, spiritual guidance, high school education, counseling, and 24-hour supervision. Internships are offered to young adults 21 years and older. We are a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and all gifts are tax deductible.



AGONY RIDE

JULY 23-24, 2021

AGONYRIDE.ORG

Overcoming obstacles At the end of every school year, we have a celebration to honor our high school graduates, the service of our interns, and to present scholarship awards. This year we had the privilege of giving the Founders Award to two individuals, Wes (left) and Isaiah. The Award is given in honor of the Ranch's founding families and the obstacles they overcame to pioneer the ministry in the 70's.