



Christian Encounter NEWSLETTER

STUDENT PROFILE

Sophie

Sophie arrived at Christian Encounter in the fall of her freshman year of high school. Starting at a new school meant a clean slate and new beginnings. Sophie's father had recently suffered a stroke and his recovery process had greatly altered the family landscape at home. Her mother had homeschooled all five children until now.

Sophie entered the public school system for the first time as an eighth grader. Adolescence can be unforgiving and middle schoolers even more so. Sophie felt alone in navigating this transition and oftentimes sought solace in going to the public library after school. Her school work sat neglected in her backpack as she buried herself in distractions.

Sophie's bubbly personality became hidden underneath her anger and the shame and guilt of her behavior during this time. She was also mourning the loss

of the father she once knew. Sophie cherished the memories of daddy-daughter dates when she was a part of the American Heritage Girls, but those days now seemed a part of the distant past.

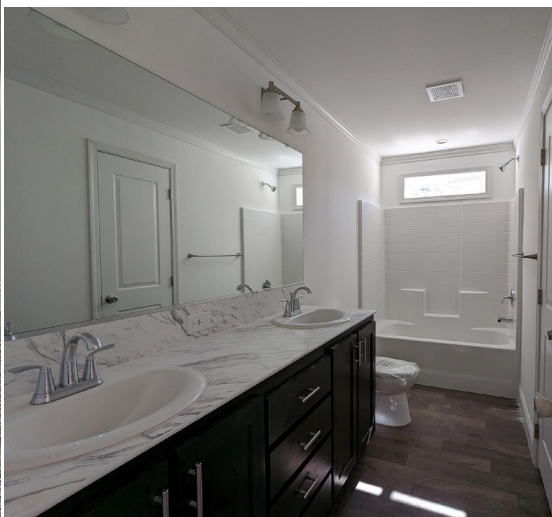
When Sophie arrived at the Ranch, she saw a wide open door to finish high school. Though she had just begun her high school career, she felt she was in an environment where she could learn and succeed. Her first quarter grades reflected this and boosted her confidence in what she could achieve. Sophie began acclimating to Ranch life and before too long the holidays arrived. At Christmas time, she saw piles of gifts deposited under the tree during the days leading up to the banquet.

(cont. on pg. 3)



New 1280 sq. ft. manufactured home

The Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) was delivered in the summer and all utilities have been hooked up. Setup is nearing completion. Staff member Salena Unitt and her husband Josh will be moving into this new unit, adding to the ministry team and community on site.



WILDERNESS TRIP 2023

The trip helped me grow in my faith as I was able to realize that praying and just sitting still long enough to talk and connect with God really does have a positive effect. Countless times we would be hiking through rough hard terrain, and I would think I couldn't keep going but would stop and pray to God to give me strength.... Every time I prayed about one thing, the Lord helped me in other things as well, things like appreciation for the beautiful nature we were surrounded by, as well as appreciation for other people in the group going through the same hike and probably struggling with some of the same things as me. - Brent

CER's annual 15-day backpacking trip serves as an opportunity for our students and interns to unplug from the responsibilities and distractions of daily life and experience the great outdoors. CER has been leading wilderness backpacking trips since the 1970's.



When I started to rely on the Lord and let go of my pride, things got easier. I wanted to help and stay in the back; I wanted to cook dinner, and I wanted to talk and hear about the struggles that my teammates had. I suddenly had the genuine want to help people.... This trip is one I'll never forget, even though it rained...It didn't grow me in the ways I thought I wanted to grow, but instead, planted the seeds, and cleared the dirt for real growth to take place. - Zaeda

One of my favorite things to have witnessed while in nature was the beauty surrounding me. When I was hiking, I would usually just keep my head down and stare at my feet, making sure I wouldn't lose my balance... However, I remembered on occasion to look up and take in what surrounded me.... Sleeping under the stars, seeing the Milky Way, the shooting stars and satellites making their way across the sky, all of it had my awe. - Brooke



Not relying on people and not trusting has been a thing I've struggled with my whole life. I have always had the mindset that I had to do things myself because there never really were people there for me when I needed someone to rely on. This trip helped me learn that I have people to rely on in times of need. -Addy

He was definitely out there walking alongside me, showing me endurance that I never thought that I had. - Sophie

The lesson I got from climb day is to trust people and trust God. If I didn't decide to trust the people and the equipment then I wouldn't have even hooked myself on. Doing things that we really don't want to do or are scared to do has great rewards because it pushes us to do harder things on a daily basis. It makes me think: am I more scared of rock climbing or having this hard conversation? - Andrew



Sophie (cont. from pg. 1)

“It was eye opening how much people love me. I used to think I had to work for everything, but there are people who just give freely and don’t ask for anything in return.”

In the new year, Sophie had the opportunity to build igloos and enjoy the beauty of the snow-laden forest for an extended weekend with her peers. During that trip, they each shared about their faith experiences and the current challenges they were experiencing in their faith journeys. Sophie witnessed one of the students give her life to the Lord that weekend.

Though Sophie was no stranger to the church, she had found herself on the outside looking in, confused, angry, and hurt. “Coming to the Ranch, I was in denial of God. Then I saw the love and joy and peace of the other students who had accepted Christ. I thought I was too far gone, never able to have that relationship.

“Ever since I was 12, I felt I had the responsibility of my younger siblings. God put on my heart to let go, to give him my burdens.... He gave me peace - I didn’t have to try to find it anymore....”

Sophie was the third student to get baptized this spring. Her whole family



was in attendance. “It was special to see my mom’s face when I was coming out of the water.”

Sophie’s mom later shared at a Ranch Sunday service, “It was amazing to watch Sophie get baptized here - something that didn’t seem like would ever happen. I’ve seen the fruits of the spirit in my daughter - love, joy, peace, patience. It’s amazing.”

Sophie hit her one year mark at the Ranch last month. Last year, she arrived

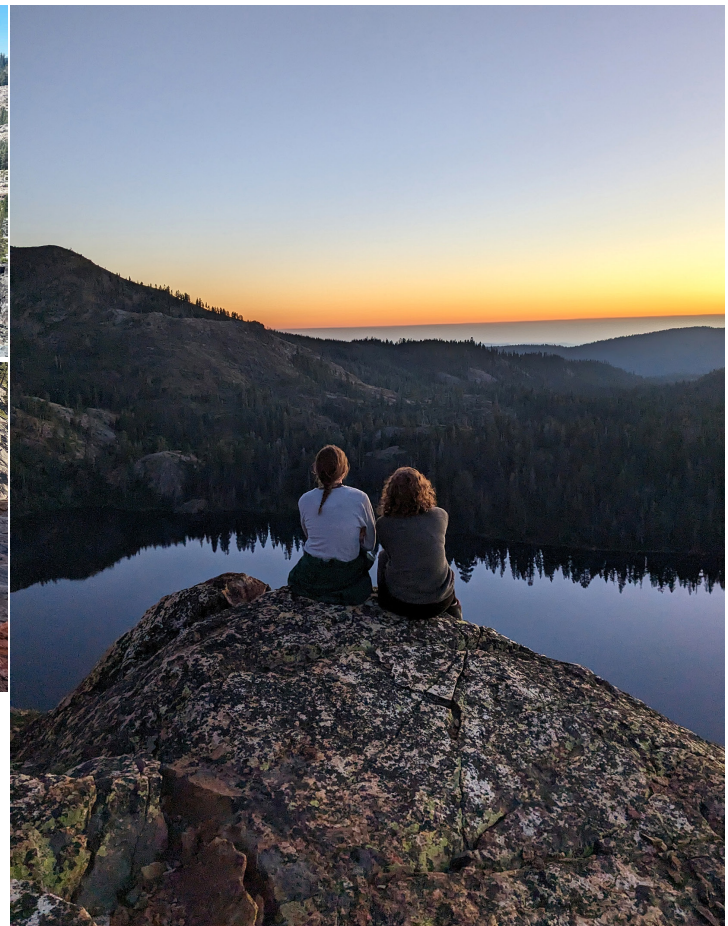
a week after everyone returned from the 15-day wilderness trip. Fast forward one year, and Sophie has completed her own wilderness trip and is standing before a packed room sharing her own stories of perseverance and growth.

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” - Isaiah 43:19

Zoya Lee



It was an incredible trip to celebrate others, many of them doing things they would have never done but showed that they are capable of much more than they thought. We came back stronger because of it. Strength is looking beyond your own nose to see the people around you. Strength is utilizing others’ strengths and talents. Strength is cheering people on even when you are struggling. Strength is finding refuge in the Lord Almighty. - Bethany



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PO Box 1022
Grass Valley, CA 95945

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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PERMIT NO. 60

Join us for a potluck feast on Thanksgiving Day
at 2pm! RSVP requested.

MEMORIALS

In memory of Dave Roberts, given by:
Candyce Roberts

HONORARIUMS

*In honor of Shawna Majerus, given
by:*
Michael Majerus

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.

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