



Christian Encounter NEWSLETTER

STUDENT FEATURE

Judah

Judah shared these words from the stage at graduation:

I was originally apprehensive about coming to the Ranch, a program for - as far as I understood it - troubled or misguided youths, neither of which I considered myself. However, in weighing my options, I figured that it would be the best choice regarding my circumstances. Regarding my circumstances, I lost my mother to Covid-19 on November 8th, 2021, at just 14 years old. After her passing, I entered a long period of numbness regarding my grief that lasted until midway into the summer of 2023. I would later learn that her passing would result in the onset of my - now diagnosed - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. I also needed some method with which I could finish my high school education, and the Ranch seemed like a way to kill two birds with one stone.

I can say without a shadow of a doubt that the choice to come here is one of the

best decisions I have ever made. During this time I have had the chance to be surrounded by a supportive community to help me in the processing of my grief, and a wonderful group of teachers to help me finish out high school. I have had some of my darkest days here. Days when I was genuinely unsure I could go on through the onslaught of unbridled sorrow and the mental spiraling due to OCD I have been subject to. But it is with joy that I look back and see that not one of those days has lasted.

The interns and staff here have been an absolute blessing to me in the last eight months. I never thought I'd cry on the shoulders of more strangers than I can count on one hand, but I have, and not once did I hear a complaint in regards. Neither did I hear a complaint when I woke up the entire guys dorm at one in the morning, nor did I hear a complaint from [my intern] who drove me to the ER.

This kind of unconditional love is



reminiscent of the very kind that God shows us, and is more than I could ever ask for from a single person, let alone an entire team of ten or so. **(cont. on pg. 3)**

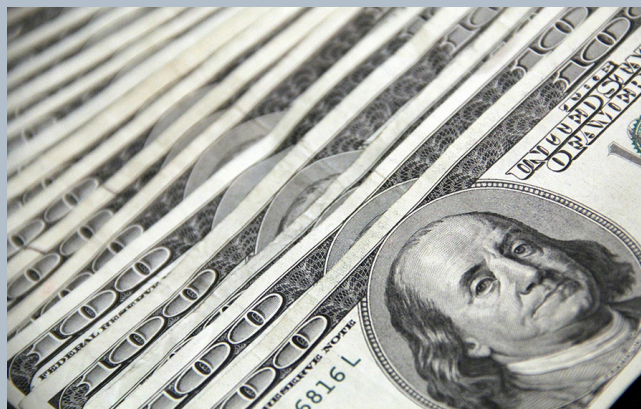
DIRECTOR'S VIEW

A \$57K shortfall

I'm in my 14th year on staff at the Ranch, and the Board of Directors gave me some sabbatical time for rest, soul refreshment, and study. Sabbatical is a rare gift in our busy culture! It's a Biblical concept, and God uses these times of rest to prepare us for renewed service. Both work and rest are gifts from Him.

When I came back and reoriented to the current state of the ministry, I learned that fewer donations had come in than normal. In fact, if nothing changed, we would face a financial gap of \$57K by the end of our fiscal year. That's a big number for us.

The next day I met with staff. We



talked through how to cut spending without negatively affecting our students, and we spent time together in prayer. Over the next week, two questions were common themes among us: What's worth sacrificing for? And what's worth sacrificing for it?

Staff members came to me offering to reduce their hours, take pay and benefit

cuts, and meet the need in a variety of sacrificial ways. Others gave money directly.

Then, within a week, I got word of four gifts: \$8K, \$10K, \$14K, and \$25K. That's a total of \$57K. None of these four donors knew our situation.

God sees the Ranch and its needs. He also sees you and your needs. Sometimes He meets our needs with sudden and dramatic gifts. These remind us of the power

of the One we trust. Other times, we don't see any gifts coming, and we can't tell what He's doing. These can feel like dark days. Perhaps an absence of gifts, though, is sometimes necessary.

If dramatic gifts were there everytime we needed them, I would come to take the gifts for granted. **(cont. on pg. 3)**

Year-end celebration & graduation 2024



Jackie Turner is the first former student to deliver our graduation challenge. *From Jackie's bio shared at graduation:* Jackie is a Kingdom-focused Deborah of the hour raising up evangelistic armies in today's society. Jackie works locally here in Placer County as the minister of communication and church relations for Acres of Hope. In her free time she teaches the Bible virtually to church plants in Pakistan, Uganda, Lithuania, Iran, and India. She is known as Jackie the Street Preacher, the one who will go into the darkest places to reach souls for Christ. Jackie's life focus is seeing the kingdom of God expand in every arena she enters.



Women's counselor Elise Gallagher with Addy who received the Cornelius Grant - a \$500 tuition scholarship.



Director of Student Life Jensen Near presents Joseph with the Williamson Award, given to a student who has demonstrated ongoing spiritual growth and maturity. Joseph, along with former students Andrew and Zaeda, all finished high school earlier this year.

This kind of unconditional love is reminiscent of the very kind that God shows us... - Judah

Judah (cont. from pg. 1)

Here at the Ranch, I have had the chance to live away from my family, in an environment where taking initiative was paramount, and it has taught me valuable life skills that I am positive I will take into adulthood. I have had the experience of dipping my toes into the water of autonomy, finally realizing that I have to, and am blessed to live my life as I see fit.

I need to say thank you to [CER counselor] Kevin Phillips. I don't know what I would've done without you. I cannot sugarcoat your importance to me. You of all people know exactly what I've been through, and you have helped me through all of it. Thank you for your wise counsel when I didn't know what to do, thank you for the times you were there for me when I fell to pieces on your couch, thank you for the can of Coca-Cola I got out of your fridge, and thank you for every piece of peace and joy that you have sowed into my life. I promise you that it means an unimaginable amount to me.

... And yes, I have known pain in my life, but it has made me who I am.

And yes, I will still have grief over the passing of my mother, but it'd be an injustice to the wonderful woman she was if I didn't.

And yes, I have OCD, which can be treated, but is without a cure, but I can say with the confidence that can only be found through faith, that it doesn't faze God for



Judah flanked by his brother and father, who flew in from MO, on graduation day.

a second. He is working with me where I am, as the Ranch did unto me, and I am sure that He who began a good work in me will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.

I have been loved so much during my time here, more than I can say in a three to five minute speech. So thank you to every single one of you. Every person here who sowed into my life. You have changed it. Thank you.



Maintenance Director Austin Sather presents volunteers Don and Donna Lichti with the Outstanding Service Award. Don and Donna invested many hours to see the ADU project to completion.



The Alumni Award for 2024 is in memoriam, given to Kim Baker, who passed away in 2017.

Kim was a student at Christian Encounter from 1985-86. After leaving the Ranch, Kim returned home to Huntington Beach, CA, and finished high school. She continued

her studies at Hope International University, and graduated from Cal State, Fullerton in '91 where she studied Music Education and Mathematics. She worked at a school for five years and then as the Assistant Credit Manager for a manufacturing firm in Fullerton, CA. All the while Kim worked with high school girls in her local church.

In April of 2010, Kim's missionary dreams became a reality. She joined MAF, Mission Aviation Fellowship, as the finance manager in Maseru, Lesotho. Kim worked with MAF for 14 years.

In November 2015, Kim adopted Wyleigh from an orphanage in Lesotho. They had a couple of sweet years together before Kim's cancer diagnosis in 2017. She passed away that same year. Kim was singing worship songs with friends who visited her hospital bed up until her final days.

Shortfall (cont. from pg. 1)

My relationship with the Giver might narrow to just expecting. This is hardly more substantive than my relationship with the water faucet, which I simply turn on when I need water. But God loves us enough to want an actual relationship with us. He knows exactly what we need—or need to lack—to be formed into His image.

Times of gifts and times of their absence, are, like work and rest, both good things from God. This time of financial stress left us remembering again what's worth sacrificing for, and rethinking what we're willing to sacrifice for it. Whatever your situation, you can trust that God knows your deepest needs and will provide. He has already given you the best gift—His Son.

Nate Boyd, Executive Director

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*Join us for the 42nd Agony Ride!
July 26-27, 2024*

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.



HONORARIUMS

*In honor of Kalah Richardson, given by:
Robert & Rebecca Richardson*

Momentum Ministry Experience Travel Team visits (above)

Last month a group of 20+ ministry minded teens from the midwest partnered with us for a couple of days helping with grounds maintenance on our 86 acres. They joined in on some water balloon games and Ultimate frisbee during our Tuesday family night.