



Q Hernandez Testimony

Prior to The Bridge, I spent 10 months at program in Napa before I relapsed. When my family found out, they gave me an ultimatum – that if I messed up again, all contact would be cut off. And for months, I didn't talk to my family. I continued to use and got into trouble. I was released from a 51-50 place, with nowhere to go and no one to call and no phone. So, I walked across the freeway, and it happened to be my sister's church. I asked to use their phone and the person I asked was the pastor. He said he knew who I was and that they had been praying for me. When I reached out to my sister for help, I explained my situation – that I wanted to get clean but had nowhere to go - she mentioned that she had just ran into Pastor Aaron from The Bridge Napa, just hours prior to me reaching out to her. She told Aaron about me and he told her about The Bridge Restoration Ministry recovery program in Pacific Grove. At first, I thought it was a coincidence, but now I know it was God.

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful, He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

I was exposed to church when growing up, but I did not believe. So, when I got to The Bridge, I was vocal about it. I kept asking questions. And I can't pinpoint exactly when my heart changed - it just happened. I saw things differently and found clarity for open heart, mind and surrender. I thought, *if this will help me stay sober, let's do it.* Overall, I had a good experience in the program. The house was welcoming and the people I was around were easy to get along with. I love learning new things. So, I really enjoyed my time working in the Second Chance Thrift store.

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” (Romans 5:3-4)

Fast forward to now, I'm nearing 3 years sober. Staying connected has been so beneficial for me. Working at the thrift stores, helping with the house, giving back to the program that helped me - it all reminds me of where I was when I came in and that I don't want to go back to that place. So, I'm staying focused and am thankful to have landed in a community where people are supportive. This community supports the program; between the church and customers, they've all been so supportive. I'm keeping my focus on sobriety and my relationship with God because when I surrender to Him, I can push through any obstacle.

Executive Director's Corner Mike Casey



Making a Difference



Recently, Michele and I had the opportunity to take a road trip. We made use of the time by listening to a couple of books that were highly recommended to us: Dreamland and The Least of Us both written and outline the history of opioids in our country. We were both quite overwhelmed with the information. At about the midway point through the book, Michele was quite exasperated, and made this statement to me: “All of this is so overwhelming, and so widespread, encompassing the whole United States. With the sheer volume of opioid addiction and destruction of family, what difference can we possibly make? It almost seems too overwhelming to overcome.” I reminded her of the story of the starfish, that my mentor had shared with me in my early recovery:

THE TALE OF THE STARFISH (adapted from “The Star Thrower” by Loren C. Eiseley)
A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up, and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement. She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, “Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!” The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied, “Well, I made a difference for that one!” The old man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined, and all the starfish were saved.

I reminded Michele that we were making a difference. As small as it may seem, it was our part and it is what God has called us to do. Thank you to all who support TBRM and please continue to join us in making a difference in restoring the lives of the men and women of The Bridge.



2023 Annual Dinner Recap

The Bridge celebrated its 17th Anniversary with an outstanding gathering of friends, supporters, volunteers and residents. Over 152 men and women have graduated the program as of this year. Plus, 2nd phase has given over 34 graduates a transition path to vocational opportunities, as well as reunited them with their families. Guests heard of the journey the men and women take, to become freed from the chains of addiction. Real life stories of lives changed through a life led by Jesus.

An outstanding menu of braised short ribs left no one disappointed. Highlights included not one but two auctioned vehicles, a Nissan Titan from Salinas Valley Ford (Thanks Lars!) and a beautiful Hyundai Sonata. Along with nearly a dozen live

and bidders, making this one of the best fundraising events ever.

What to expect next year? With the ministry's connections at Community Hospital and Salinas Valley Memorial, referrals continue to alert us to the need to save lives through a new, expanded facility. YES... we need your help. Keep us in your prayers and, if led, consider us for a year end donation. You are appreciated.

Rick Barnett
Chairman



This Year at Second Chance

by Michele Casey
Program/Store Manager

As of October, our Monterey location on Lighthouse Ave has been open for a year! Wow, that year went by fast...

Did you know that all clothing donations are processed at the Monterey store? Once they are sorted by type, they are filtered to the sales floors of Pacific Grove, Monterey, and our online store: WWW.SECONDCHANCEPG.COM. We are so grateful for your donations! The stores solely operate from your continuous generosity. Donations that are unable to be sold are picked up by Eco World who we partner with so nothing is

wasted!

In November, we celebrated one year of being open at the Monterey location with hot dogs by Flava2You, cookies baked by The Bridge Culinary Program, and a fun, free raffle drawing with several prizes! We're excited to have Flava2You, owned by a previous Bridge graduate who just started his catering business. We played hopscotch and had a great time with our customers. Here's to another year on Lighthouse Ave!

This December, we invite you to come by both stores (105 Central Ave in Pacific Grove and 443A Lighthouse Ave in Monterey) to visit us during our Christmas Candyland theme, and get your free candy cane! We can't wait to see you!



Culinary Adaptability

The Bridge Restoration Ministry's Culinary Program is a shining example of how determination, resilience, and creativity can thrive even in the face of adversity. The program enrolls up to four concurrent students and offers a 20-week course that blends online study

and hands-on training, plus live cooking demonstrations in our commercial kitchen. Providing residents with an opportunity to learn the art of cooking, and training them to prosper as skilled culinary technicians, the initiative is designed to ready our graduates for the professional placements in the culinary and hospitality fields.

Bridge Culinary introduces a wide range of culinary styles, skills, and techniques. Our students are challenged with diverse menus of international favorites, ensuring their proficiency in preparing dishes from around the globe. From hand-made Italian pasta to Thai curries, from French pastry to Mexican Mole, our program covers it all.

What sets our program apart is the focus on practical learning. The students are not just mastering recipes; they are learning how to think creatively and work within the confines of limited resources. Ideally, culinary students would have access to a fully stocked pantry and cooler, with a steady supply of fresh produce and protein. However, the reality of our situation has led to a unique, and compelling, culinary education. With the availability of ingredients largely dependent on donations from the Monterey County Food Bank, local churches, and other benevolent organizations, our students face unique, "Top Chef"-like, challenges. Specifically, creating delectable and nutritious meals from an irregular supply of unpredictable ingredients. As it turns out, however, this has become a badge of honor for our program's identity, pushing our students to think on their feet, adapt to changing circumstances, and harness their culinary knowledge to its fullest extent.

In their final... a four-course culinary finale... our students invite guests to taste their creations. The results are always affirming, showcasing the culinary competencies that each individual cultivated during their time with us. These invitation-only, professional debuts are an exhibition of the students' determination, creativity, and hard work.

We're turning out skilled, intuitive, and hard-working culinary professionals, and the Culinary Program, as a whole, has earned some recognition. We've become an in-demand resource for both internal and external catering events and have prepared meals for offsite community events and private parties.

As we move forward, we invite you to join us in supporting the Culinary Program at The Bridge Restoration Ministry. Your donations and support are crucial in helping us provide our students with the tools and resources they need to succeed.

Thank you for being a part of our journey and for helping us make a difference in the lives of those we serve. Together, we can continue to nurture talent, feed hope, and create a brighter future for all.

With gratitude and warmth, Chef Greg Miller



SECOND CHANCE THRIFT STORE



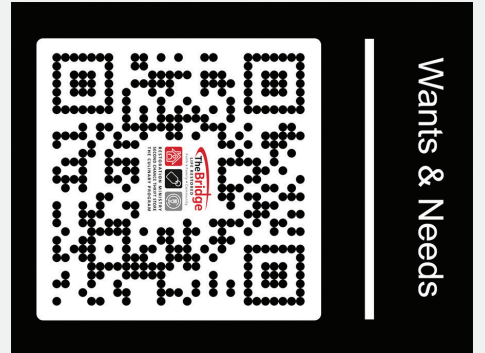
105 Central Ave.
Pacific Grove
831-717-4479

443A Lighthouse Ave
Monterey
831-324-0143

STORE HOURS: Mon, Wed, Sat 9-5 and
Tues, Thurs, Fri 10-6

Website: secondchancepg.com

If you are interested in helping us in any of these areas please scan the QR codes.



Wants & Needs



Legacy Giving Info



The Bridge
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RESTORATION MINISTRY
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Wtbm.org | T 831-372-2033

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