

## Our 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Bridge Dinner

*Exciting Evidence of The Bridge's Growth and Expansion*

The packed full room of attendees at this year's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Bridge Dinner not only applauded the men and women



graduating this year and going on to new lives, they also heard wonderful news about how The Bridge is growing and expanding. This year those listening included members of the Monterey Police Department,

Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, and Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital. "From a medical and judicial standpoint, these organizations are seeing how The Bridge program has been successful and want to continue to partner with us to bring addicted men and women back to their communities, to their families and their loved ones," noted Rick Barnett, Board Chairman.

It was inspiring to hear about the growth of the women's program as The Bridge is offering more vocational training opportunities that allow them to grow in their capabilities and success after graduation. "We've seen the women's program mature not only from the number of women serviced but also the way the program is conducted," said Rick. "The quality of the program has developed to allow a greater and more effective vocational training for women." Women are adding to their roles at Second Chance by taking on responsibilities as department leaders. For instance, the Amazon/Online Sales department is now headed by a woman. Women are also becoming supervisors alongside of Michele Casey. Vanessa Estrada, a Bridge graduate is now a house manager for the women's program.

Men, both graduates and those still in the program, are also moving into authoritative and managerial responsibilities at the Second Chance stores and in the houses. One example is Mark Zehm, a Bridge graduate, who recently joined The Bridge board.

It was encouraging to hear that the number of businesses in our surrounding community such as restaurants, service facilities, and commercial construction are looking to hire Bridge graduates. "We are fortunate to align ourselves with community partners to employ Bridge members," said Rick. "In some cases Bridge residents are able to intern during the worker's phase and are establishing long-term relationships after they graduate."

The focus for the year to come is moving The Bridge to its next phase of development. For instance, it is working with the broker representing Pepperdine University who owns a building in Pacific Grove so that The Bridge can expand its program, which it needs to do for both men and women. The plan is to double the size of the women's program and double the size of the second phase for the men. Establishing The Bridge in Salinas and in Napa are other indications of growth. Plans are already in motion for 2020.

As we applaud last year's accomplishments, we look forward to more in 2020.

## So Many Ways to Help

It is quite surprising to find out the different ways people can help The Bridge accomplish its mission. People might think, oh, I could never mentor people or sort jewelry for the Second Chance stores, but, as Michele Casey says, "It's just like the Body of Christ that is composed of all different kinds of people and skill sets. People don't have any idea how many different ways they could help." As part of The Bridge Restoration Ministry since its beginning, Michele has a broad overview of how people can use their interests and skills to help The Bridge.

Are you good at handyman things or maintenance? There's always a need for those skills. And then there are many different kinds of administrative tasks that volunteers can do and are doing, such as checking

*See Many Ways other side*

Executive Director's Corner

Mike Casey

## Pacific Grove Bridge Residents Help Grow The Bridge in Napa



*"One of my favorite Scriptures is Matthew 28:19 that basically says, 'Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations,' and that's the season where we're at, the season to send people to disciple other people and areas. We're sending people from our Bridge to Napa and working really hard to set up a Bridge in Salinas. This is the time when we need to go out and multiply the work that God is doing here." -Mike Casey*

As mentioned in the summer 2019 newsletter, a new Bridge Restoration Ministry is being planted in Napa. Its roots have since taken hold and it is now ready to accept people from their community and our area. Anthony Dixon and Tim Chorjel are two current residents from The Bridge who recently moved to Napa to help the Calvary Chapel Napa open a Bridge. Stuart Duncan is a third Pacific Grove Bridge resident who will also move to Napa in the next few



months. These three agree that they have embarked on a journey that gives them the opportunity to pass forward what they've learned here at The Bridge and how it has changed their lives.

Looking back at when they entered The Bridge, these three men now know

they can use the powerful changes they've since experienced to help themselves and others. "When I got out of jail and came to The Bridge I was beaten and broken," recalls Anthony. "I had absolutely nothing then. I'd thrown it all away." Anthony decided there had to be a better way to deal with his past issues and anxiety and found it at The Bridge. "I started caring

*See Growth other side*

## Gifts Received and Given

Grace Lasko happened to be driving past the Pacific Grove Second Chance after it first opened in 2006. She loved thrift stores not only because she loved bargains, but she'd also managed one at a church when she lived in Hawaii. She went into the new Second Chance thinking she'd find a great bargain. She came out with the idea to help in the store and has been there ever since. She recalls, "I stopped that day and introduced myself, 'Here I am. Work me.' I volunteered because I've always loved thrift stores, but the more I found out about the program, the more I loved it and that's when my heart and soul went into what I do there." Describing Second Chance and what it accomplishes, she says it's like envisioning people crossing a bridge, who are getting the second chance that not everybody does. As Grace has always loved jewelry, it was a natural for her to work on the jewelry donated to the Second Chance stores. Before it's sold, she brings the jewelry home to sort and categorize it, prices the bracelets, rings, earring, and pendants and finally attaches each item to a jewelry card. She also does small repairs to some items and puts new batteries in watches.

Talking about the residents she works with at the Second Chance she

*See Gifts other side*



## Growth *from other side*

about people again. I realized that Christ in my life is what I needed to be a more loving person." Anthony was given more and more responsibilities such as scheduling and logistics for The Bridge. "I accepted it willingly. The more they added, the more I wanted," he says.

Tim had a harsh background. His physically and mentally abusive parents divorced when he was in kindergarten. Since then, he'd done drugs for 43 years and was in seven recovery programs. Thinking about at how The Bridge changed him, he says, "The Bridge is the only one that's really worked. It's the only one where my desires to use drugs are totally taken away, which is a miracle in itself. Now every day I wake up happy in life. I've learned more about myself in the last year than I did in the previous 53 years. What I've learned is patience and that God has given me a lot of grace."

Stuart didn't know what to expect when he first entered The Bridge. "I came here to learn, to get closer to God, to get my relationship with Him back on track. What I've realized at Calvary Monterey is what Paul talks about in Ephesians 1:23, how love is the center of the church. I found that love here in Monterey, the love extended to people such as me who have problems."

Anthony will be the manager at Calvary Napa Bridge's first resident house. "I'm excited. I'm apprehensive, but I totally believe that I was made to serve people in a different way as I did as an emergency medical technician and sheriff's deputy. As assistant house manager, Tim says, "I will be helping Anthony as his assistant in every aspect of what he does. We are just putting our whole hearts and everything into this." When he gets to Napa Stuart is looking forward to also helping Anthony and to being a part of the Napa Bridge. For him, this move offers him a fulfilled life, which he says is his ministry. "It's a beautiful thing that God is doing there," he observes.



## Many Ways *from other side*

the mail that comes into The Bridge, making deposits, to keeping records and papers coordinated. People with writing skills can write articles for The Bridge Newsletter or daily quips for the Second Chance Facebook page. "There are so many unseen behind-the-scene things that can help us that people don't realize they can provide," said Michele.

Do you like talking to people and helping them by mentoring them? "We are looking for new and additional mentors," Michele says, though she notes that it's a process to become a mentor for men and women residents. Bible studies for men and women residents are another wonderful way to help. There are others doing that now, but more are needed.

Then there's driving residents to appointments. "One of our volunteers drives the women residents on Saturdays who are working at our thrift stores. We haven't had a women's driver for a while so she's a great help." Another women volunteer helps cover the women's residence house so that the managers of the house can do other necessary things.

As an example of the different types of volunteering, Michele describes a man at the Second Chance stores who is invaluable. "We call him our walking encyclopedia because he's so knowledgeable about antiques. He's able to discern prices for them." There's also someone who helps price artwork donated to Second Chance.

So if you think, "Oh, I could never do maintenance, price antiques, or mentor a Bridge resident," there are so many other ways you could help even if it's just at the Special Events that The Bridge holds at times. It could even be on the Board of Directors, all of whom are volunteers.

So think about what you can do and the joy you will receive from volunteering your skills. Go to The Bridge website and fill out the volunteer form. We'd love to see you soon.

## Gifts *from other side*

says, "Oh, they're my friends. They're always smiling. They are happy because they're getting a second chance." Grace says she doesn't care what their past was, what brought them to The Bridge. "We just talk and if they ask me for advice, I give it to them," she says. "I think of them as my kids. It doesn't matter what age they are. They give me a lot of pleasure. They laugh a lot and I see their happiness."

Since family has always been important to Grace, she shares her love of family with the "kids" who work with her at Second Chance. To Grace, a very important part of family is preserving photos of the family. She has photos going back seven generations. She tells residents that they need to make sure their family photos are preserved and taken care of. She also advises them to sit down and ask their family questions, like what was it like when they were growing up, what they did, how they handled situations. She tells the residents working with her that they need to apologize for some of the hurt they have afflicted on their family. "Mom, Dad, I'm so sorry. They need to own up to it. That gives them a fresh start," she says.

Grace loves the Second Chance program and describes it as people who have turned their lives around. "They've been given a choice and it's a hard commitment for a year. They've got lots of rules. I get such satisfaction because I know the program is doing such wonderful things for these people."

For people who might think of volunteering for The Bridge, Grace says even if they have only one or two hours of free time a week, they will get such fulfillment knowing they are helping such a wonderful program. "Whether it's sorting clothes or learning how to run the register, whatever time they can spare they're going to know they've helped a wonderful group of men and women whom I call my friends. It's something I have great pleasure in doing what little part I do."

# Second Chance Thrift Store

A Ministry of

105 Central Ave.  
Pacific Grove  
831-717-4479

2311 N. Fremont St.  
Monterey  
831-324-0143

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

[www.secondchancePG.com](http://www.secondchancePG.com)

## Donation Programs

The S.H.A.R.E.S program has been replaced by the eScrip program. To sign up simply go to [escrip.com](http://escrip.com) and create an account and select The Bridge Restoration Ministry at 225 Central as your charity. Shop at hundreds of popular merchants at eScrip's online mall!

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to The Bridge whenever you shop on AmazonSmile. To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. Choose charity: **Bridge Restoration Ministry, Pacific Grove, CA.**

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## Wants & Needs



- IT Volunteer
- Volunteers
- Mentors
- Storage space for Second Chance