



## From the Root to the Fruit

*Nate Sanchez wrote the headline and the major part of this article about his amazing experience at The Bridge. His experience is a lesson to learn from.*

“There I was again, sitting in a jail cell looking at a third prison term, the result of selling drugs and being involved in the street lifestyle of criminal behavior. I was living on a path of destruction. It was in that cell that I came to the end of my rope. It was there that I opened my first Bible. It was there I decided that I wanted to change and got down on my knees, and asked God to forgive my sins, and eventually gave my life to Jesus Christ. I started praying a lot and talking to God, asking Him for help and guidance. That’s when I met Mr. Casey during his weekly visits at the jail. I’d already read his book and immediately after I met him I felt a calm and understanding presence about him. He explained how he was an addict himself and had also been incarcerated in the same jail, but with the strength of Jesus he turned his life around, become a pastor and started helping other people with addiction. It was in that classroom that I knew that my prayers had been answered. After a few weeks of attending his classes, applying for residency at The Bridge, and a lot more prayers, I was allowed to go to The Bridge and given another opportunity at life instead of five years in prison.

As soon as I got to The Bridge, it felt so good being a part of something positive and being welcomed as family at Calvary Monterey Church. It felt good to have people believe in me and encourage me. I was able to get closer to God during my time at The Bridge and every day I’d wake up and thank Him for this opportunity and for giving me strength to not go back to that old lifestyle. And I thanked Him for my new family at The Bridge. I’m so blessed to be a part of this program. It helped me to change my life and develop the skills to become a man with integrity.”

Nate graduated from The Bridge November 2019. Thinking of his experience washing dishes, sweeping floors, and putting stickers on Second Chance items, he recalls having the attitude that he was “doing this for God.” After six months Nate became a Second Chance

*See Nate other side*

## Hey, Let’s Check Out What Second Chance Has Online

Sometimes what seems to be a huge disadvantage can be turned to an advantage. The Second Chance stores are making this happen during this time when customers aren’t allowed to come into their stores and while they must continue to pay rent and staff as well as offer vocational training to Bridge residents. Who would have thought that selling online was the answer!

The two stores have offered online shopping for quite a while, mostly on Amazon, but never advertised it. Now that online shopping is becoming more viable and used, those going on the Second Chance website to shop are finding that many items available and in addition, will find things they might not see at a store as so many are housed separately from the store. “We’ve sold online for several years but for the lack of bandwidth, we didn’t use it nearly as much and push it as we’ve begun to do now,” Michele Casey, manager of the Second Chance stores, notes. “We were selling quite a bit on Amazon, mostly books. We are also on Poshmark & Mercari. We started selling on Mercari during the Coronavirus as an additional way to get stuff out. The biggest thing we’ve spent the most time on is adding a ton of things to our online store that we’ve had for some

[secondchancepg.com](http://secondchancepg.com)



*See Online other side*

## Executive Director’s Corner Mike Casey



## How Powerful are Random Acts of Kindness

I’m seeing Christianity in action that has really hit me and has powerfully affected our Bridge residents during the Covid-19 lockdown. A chapter in my book, *Comfortably Numb*, talks about the kindness of strangers and how people helped me without knowing me. That’s been happening now to many of our new residents who came in either just before or during the state-wide lockdowns. They and other Bridge residents who have been here for a while are really surprised that so many people are dropping off cakes, pies, and pizzas at The Bridge house and also financially supporting them. Since our food bank is closed, people have been bringing in groceries and giving us gift cards. We get calls and people just drop stuff off. Our residents tell me, “They don’t even know me and they’re helping me? Why do they care? I came from jail.” I think that the way believers in Jesus do God’s work is showing The Bridge guys during this season how true believers are supposed to act especially in times of trial. They’re getting to see first-hand how people they don’t even know are caring for them. It really speaks volumes to them not only about our donors and supporters, but about what we’re called to do as Christians.

What really stands out to the residents is that they’re seeing first-hand what Believers are like. The random acts of kindness going on right now are phenomenal and not just us, but people and other ministries are seeing people step up in hard times. I believe that when this is over, churches are going to be busier than ever.

Our Bridge residents are doing a variety of things for others, too. We made 3,100 facemask kits. We’re cooking several times a week for people who can’t get out and get food. We’ve delivered lunches to the Natividad Emergency Room and the Monterey Peninsula Fire and Police Departments. We still have our group meetings and classes with zoom meetings. We’re doing the regeneration meeting online and got 1,000 views in a week.

This is tough, but our mission hasn’t changed. What I want our readers to know is that our donors and supports have really given our residents a view of what a Believer should look like.



## New Changes in the Culinary Program

With its motto, “*Changing lives one plate at a time*,” the Bridge’s Culinary Program has been successfully doing so over the years. However, there are some wonderful recent changes happening – changes that include Tammi Suber-Duell, who recently became its new director. Having been in the restaurant and culinary business for over 30 years, she brings experience and new ideas. “I’ve done a lot of things, but I guess you could say my major point of expertise is organization,” she says. She enjoys working with food, but it was the structural aspects of the culinary program as well as

*See Culinary other side*





## Nate *from other side*

driver's assistant for their delivery truck, another experience that changed his future. "I really loved it, picking up stuff, driving the truck, just meeting people." He also used this opportunity to tell people about Second Chance, its mission, and how it was helping many people.

But that experience gave him the idea to drive trucks as a full-time job after he graduated from The Bridge. Again, Nate saw God's provision for him. After contacting his probation officer, he got a grant from the probation department to attend, totally funded, the Truck Driver Institute in Watsonville. He prayed a lot while there. "It wasn't easy," he recalls, "but it gave me the opportunity to get really close to God. I prayed whole heartedly for His help, His guidance." After getting his license which was also a testimony to his faith in God as he'd failed the first test, studied hard for a week, and then passed it, Nate looked for a job. Again, the door seemed closed. "No one hired me because they wanted one year's experience," he said. But that didn't stop Nate from praying and He did. Nate now works for the ABC Supply Company driving a brand-new commercial truck delivering shingles.

There were more miracles. Nate rebuilt his relationship with his two children who he says, "Now see their father going to work and hanging out with them not on drugs."

Nate wanted to close his article with what he's learned from John 15: 1-4 and how that applied to the changes Jesus has made in him.

*"Jesus said, 'You cannot produce fruit alone, you must stay joined to Me.' I want people to be able to relate to what I'm saying because it's coming from my heart. I've asked Jesus to make my words His words because I want to edify Him throughout this story."*



## Online *from other side*

time. Our direct selling site is [secondchancepg.com](http://secondchancepg.com) and we went from a couple hundred items to close to a couple thousand while our stores were closed. We were so happy to be able to offer the curbside pickup and be able to get our essential items out to people."

During the time the stores were closed the staff really banded together to do a lot of things behind the scene. Although the Coronavirus was very challenging for the Second Chance stores, in a lot of ways it created more opportunities for learning and hopefully more future job opportunities. "It's been a learning curve shoved on us with no options, but in the long term it will end up being a good thing," Michele says. "This has forced us to mobilize and organize for a bigger online platform. I'm so proud of the staff. They've risen to the challenge. Obviously, God is in charge. Now that we are open, we are hoping that people will not only shop instore but continue to shop online as well. For those who are still wary of coming from inside to shop, they can still do it from home."

## Culinary *from other side*

training culinary residents that brought her here.

Tammi is focusing on several key areas, such as getting local chefs to help train residents and obtaining state certification for graduates. Giving a few other examples, she says that teaching culinary program residents about sanitization is one of them as are changes to the actual cooking program, such as teaching residents about different sauces. She adds, "When we have the curriculum ready, I will bring in local chefs to teach the technical aspects."



As the Monterey area is a culinary epicenter, creating a connection between the culinary program and the local hospitality industry is another aspect Tammi will focus on. Noting that people here do get culinary training, such as Seaside High School's culinary program, many don't stay here. "Finding people with the skills of chefs, line cooks, positions in the grille and pantry are really hard to find around here," she observes. She plans to get Bridge culinary graduates out into our community as well

bringing local chefs in to teach skills to program students and form relationships with them. Aware of the skills Bridge residents have learned and the culinary experience they'll have, when someone in our area needs a chef, "They'll know where to find them," she notes. Catering is also a growth area in which Tammi has experience and knows this requires a whole other level of culinary training. Training in catering will bring in more possibilities for Bridge students since the culinary program has already done catering for the city of Pacific Grove.

A major change Tammi has already made is including women in the culinary program, which is now open to both men and women. "Women definitely stand out in the culinary industry in our community," she says, noting that women residents in the culinary program will learn needed skills from working in the Grille and dealing with customers.

For all those in the culinary program, Tammi sees wonderful opportunities to "show their greatness," as she puts it. "We're going to give them that nine-to-five work ethic to complete tasks." And what's more, she sees other places where what they learn in the culinary program can lead them, noting that, "At the end of the day a lot of these skills, such as work ethic, translate into other industries and recently were used by the culinary men and women during the recent Covid-19 shut-down as the culinary program has been feeding various agencies in our area such as the Monterey Co. Fire Departments, a youth warming shelter in Salinas, and the Emergency Department in Natividad."

# Second Chance Thrift Store

A Ministry of  The Bridge

105 Central Ave.  
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[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. You link the account to your Lucky's shopping card and benefit the Bridge by shopping for groceries or shop at hundreds of popular merchants at eScrip's online mall!



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