

## Time to Decide What's On Your Top 10 List for 2020

Think of the many important decisions you had to make during 2020....in fact, make a list, say a Top 10 list...like who and/or what to vote for represented the most recent in MY Top 10 of this year. Faced with the facts, I decided to accept Christ as my Lord and Savior in 1989 (which was at the top of my list that year). For the men and women of The Bridge, their decision to "give up" and "give in" to a new life free from the addiction of drugs, alcohol, and the associations with others that would lead to a life of dependence will top THEIR list. We pray that accepting Jesus will be at the top of their Lifetime List like it was on mine.

What about you?

There is still time to do one or two great things to add to YOUR list. What could they be? What will they be?

There is time for all of us to ask the Lord to guide us in our year-end decisions, adding to our Top 10 list. I can honestly say that the volunteer involvement and financial contributions made by many have made a difference in the lives of the men and women that Mike and Michele Casey work with each day...7 days a week, 365 days a year.

And to close up this year, we wanted to thank you with the Friends of the Bridge Annual Banquet. This year it was an all virtual gathering of graduates from The Bridge, Mike and Michele Casey's message to all of the supporters and guests, an auction, a raffle, and the drive by dinner banquet. Thanks to all who participated in this year's event. Check out some of the highlights on our website: TBRM.ORG.

So as we close 2020, we look back at its challenges and victories. Never doubting, our Lord is on the Throne. God Bless you all. YOU are on our Top 10 list! Lives are changed because YOU decided to help. Rick Barnett, Chairman



## I Found Myself and God Again



February 20, 2019, I found myself in the Community Hospital of Monterey once again detoxing from alcohol. I had come to a point in which I would be sick when I drank and sicker when I did not. Though a Christian, I no longer was practicing my faith. I was angry with God and felt abandoned. The last two years I was either in the hospital, in jail, or living in a car with my lifelong

friend and girlfriend Jamie. She, too, was an alcoholic seeking detox treatment. We had plans of getting clean, and getting back to work, and even marriage. Prior to our ending up homeless, she was a nurse and I was a supervisor for Tesla Motors.

My alcoholism, drug abuse, and terrible decision making led me to cash out my stocks and quit my career leaving my family behind. I was extremely depressed and lost the desire to exist. Life became meaningless. I eventually ended up in Monterey, homeless, stumbling down the street in search of cigarette butts in the gutter. I could not drink enough to dull my lifelong depression and most of all conviction from the Holy Spirit. I did not know how to restore my sanity and life. I began crying to God at night to please save me and my girlfriend from this nightmare or take me in death.

Around the seventh day of my detox Pastor Mike Casey came to talk to me about The Bridge Restoration Ministry. While he was talking to me, I asked a visiting friend to check on Jamie as I had not heard from her in a few hours. She was still detoxing as well and having a hard time of it. A few minutes later my friend returned and told me there were doctors and nurses in her room working on her. Mike prayed with me and went to check on my girlfriend. Around 20 minutes later her doctor told me Jamie was gone. The detox was too much for her heart and she had died.

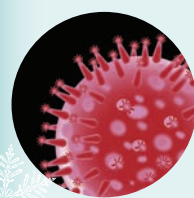
*See Myself other side*

## Executive Director's Corner

**Mike Casey**



## Pre-corona Virus From The Bridge's Standpoint



The pre-corona virus and opioid crisis have been a big national news story because there's about 30% increase of people relapsing. Our standpoint at The Bridge is to focus on getting a handle on it in our community and in our program. We are getting more involved with Prescribe Safe, which is a group of physicians who are getting together to provide alternatives for people struggling with opioid addiction and particularly, sentinel, which is going crazy right now. This group of doctors and healthcare providers are getting together to talk about what's going on locally to provide avenues for people who want to achieve sobriety.

What's really made this crisis come to the forefront is a drug called fentanyl, which is a fraction of the cost to buy and a hundred times stronger than heroin. People are buying it and mixing it with other drugs. The problem is that fentanyl is causing death by overdose. While the corona virus is filling the headlines, the opioid crisis is working in the rear. One of the most important things in sobriety is consistency and certainty. With the corona virus there's no consistency, no certainty, no job security, and it thrusts people into a complete tailspin, not knowing what's going to happen to them.

I want to let people who are supporting The Bridge know that we are providing a safe environment in all the chaos that's going on. Prescribe Safe is for service providers and for people struggling with addiction in San Benito, Monterey, and Santa Cruz. We are working with Prescribe Safe to find solutions for the variety of people we deal with. They are finding solutions in several ways, such as getting people connected with solutions for this crisis, and making physicians aware of how bad the opioid crisis is, and to provide alternative medications that aren't addictive. We are getting involved with our local hospitals and healthcare providers to help figure out safe solutions for people. We've done that initially by getting involved in Prescribe Safe and we're also going to host the Recovery Run this year through The Bridge. Its goal is to encourage healthy lifestyles while helping to end the stigma of addiction and to highlight successful community members in long-term recovery from addiction. This is a national crisis and we here at The Bridge are working to be part of the solution.

## There Is A Positive Side

It's been hard for thrift stores in our area during this covid season, but to look on the positive side, the Second Chance stores in Monterey and Pacific Grove have dealt with the issues while learning some valuable lessons. There's no rule book on how to navigate covid.

We re-opened the Pacific Grove store in June and used the Monterey store for storage and to quarantine items that people bring to us to sell. The entire staff from both stores has been employed during this time and that too, is a positive. We were a lot busier than we thought we'd be, but everyone is excited to see that we're open in Pacific Grove.

Another very positive change has been selling



our items online. We've done that on Amazon for several years, but it was mostly books. We also have a Shopify store where we post items. Now

*See Positive Side other side*





## A Successful Ride to Raise Funds

With all that has happened this year, things have changed in how The Bridge holds fund raising events. However, they saw an opportunity with a Fundraiser Bike Ride, an event they haven't done since 2015. Like the first Ride in 2011, this one began at the Golden Gate Bridge and continued down to the Pacific Grove Bridge. The idea for the 2020 Bike Ride came up when The Bridge realized they would have to do an online fund-raising dinner without the usual silent auction, raffle, or prizes that bring in funds for the ministry.



"The idea of adding the bicycle ride came up and Mike Casey thought it might help the fundraising deficit," said Calvary Executive Pastor Andrew Kipsey. "It took some work, but it was a blessing to keep the logistics more simple than the past rides. Those previous rides included signing people up, mapping multiple routes, to getting signs for every turn. Then you're dealing with all the insurance and waivers, aid stations, plus getting supplies and coordinating food. This year, due to covid, we kept the number of people in the ride smaller with only six riders: Ross Doyle, Tim Uncapher, Jude Hargett, Dave Springer, Christopher Springer, and myself. Four people from The Bridge and two vehicles supported us along the way. The ride was on The Bridge web site. We sent out texts and emails, told our networks about it, and the word got out."

It was a success, as the bike riders rode the 132 miles in just under nine hours plus some time for lunch and pit stops. The riders left from San Francisco right at 7:15am just as the sun was rising, and they arrived in Pacific Grove a little past 5:30pm.

"We reached the goal The Bridge had for it," Andrew appreciatively recalled. "It was a blessing to see people engaging with it as we were doing live updates along the way. No one got a flat tire or had any mechanical issues with the bikes. No one crashed. Everybody made it. We rode well. It was a good time. It also seemed to be an emotional lift, because it was an unexpected positive for this year. The opportunity for people to follow us live on Facebook was great, and even though we didn't have very many riders this year, a lot of people donated to The Bridge. The Lord used it this year to help continue the mission of The Bridge and I know they are grateful for the support!"

If you want to see videos of the bike ride, or even donate still, go to <https://www.tbrm.org/b2b>

## Positive Side *from other side*

that things will be online a lot more, we would like to continue to develop our online store. Pre-covid only a small number of people knew about our stores selling online, so during the quarantine we are putting time and effort into growing our online presence.

Another big change came when we sold items literally outside the store as we needed to clear out some of our inventory. Now that fewer customers are allowed in the store we thought how about an outside sale! We were able to use a parking lot across from our Pacific Grove store. It was successful. We weren't sure if people would come, but they did. We've just tried to be creative in adapting as needed.

We so appreciate people shopping in our Second Chance store inside, outside, and online. It's been challenging, not just for thrift stores but for the entire economy. For me personally, it's been really eye-opening to understand how we all have become interconnected even with so many different stores closed or altered. We're all just trying to make the best of it.

The Lord has been faithful for The Bridge and for the Second Chance stores. God is ultimately the One in charge. Financially from the ministry and vocational side of the program standpoint, it's been the hardest year for different reasons, but the Lord is good, and God is working that out. I am grateful that Second Chance is open. Hopefully, we'll be able to keep that momentum going no matter what happens in the future, no matter how long covid lasts.

## Myself *from other side*

My breath left me, and I could not hear or see anything. I believe I was sedated because I can't remember anything after that. I was accepted to The Bridge when a bed was available. I wanted nothing more than to leave the hospital and get drunk. The cravings and emotional pain from grief were incredible. I called Pastor Mike and asked if I could leave the hospital and just come to The Bridge when there was an opening. He told me I was to stay in the hospital. I was shocked a bit at his stern fatherly demeanor and stayed there. A few days later I was released and taken to Calvary Church of Monterey where I met some of the residents of The Bridge and my new home. The house could not be made up of a more eclectic bunch of guys. It felt like each brother in that house was handpicked by God to be there with me. We laughed, cried, argued, and

prayed together creating real relationships and bonds that last to this day. I was able to take a year out of my life and commit it to restoring my relationship with God. I had never truly submitted to the Lordship of Christ and found that true joy only comes through serving Him through The Bridge. My depression, anxiety of life, regret of my past, and dread of the future melted away. I learned for once in my life to be present.

As of November 2, 2020, I am one of the house leaders and employed by The Bridge as a Ministry Assistant. I have found purpose, peace, and contentment I could not find outside of God's fellowship. The Bridge afforded me the opportunity to find myself and find God again. I can never thank Pastor Mike and Michele Casey for giving me the opportunity to heal and grow in sobriety and faith. In His grace, Tommy

# Second Chance Thrift Store

A Ministry of The Bridge

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

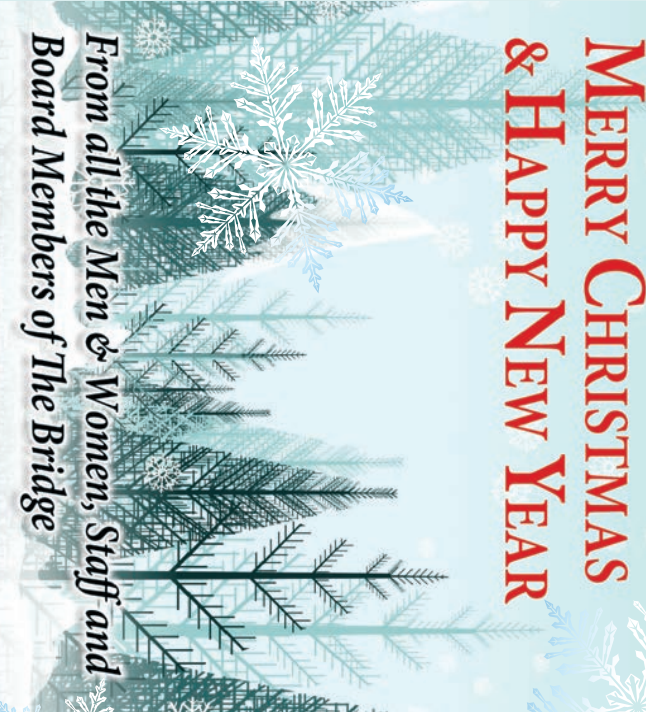
up simply go to [escrip.com](http://escrip.com) and create an account and select The Bridge Restoration Ministry at 225 Central as your charity. You link the account to your Lucky's shopping card and benefit the Bridge by shopping for groceries or shop at hundreds of popular merchants at eScrip's online mall!



Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible

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**Thank you for your support,  
happy shopping!**



From all the Men & Women, Staff and Board Members of The Bridge

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
& HAPPY NEW YEAR

**The Bridge**  
LIFE RESTORED  
FAITH • FAMILY • COMMUNITY  
P.O. Box 113 | Pacific Grove, CA 93950  
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