



## Making Disciples Out of The Least

“The Bridge makes an effort to make disciples out of the least,” said Matt Turner when asked about the difference The Bridge made in his life. He had considered himself one of the “least,” having been in jail several times with a history of alcohol and substance abuse since he was 15

and living with the consequences until at 54 when he entered The Bridge.

Though a Christian at 20, Matt didn’t receive the grace that God offers and continued downward. Nothing worked in his life – marriage, jobs, even other rehab programs. He continually relapsed. However, his journey back to God began as he lay in his bunk in the Monterey County Jail, called out to God, picked up a Bible, began his relationship with Christ, and found The Bridge. He was interviewed by Mike but didn’t get in immediately. “In 2017 I went in knowing that I needed to give my life to the Lord, do what He guided me to do, get clean and sober. There wasn’t anything else left,” he recalls. “The Bridge reignited my desire to follow Jesus.” He had come to that point when he knew there was no other answer but Jesus. Life was certainly different as he began rededicating his life to Jesus, spending time in the Bible and building his relationship with Jesus. “I learned to live a day at a time. When I put Him first, seeking a relationship with Him, I received what He promised,” he said.

Another miracle happened. When he was closer to the Lord in his 20s he’d wanted to go to theology school and had applied to one but because he didn’t have a high school diploma, he couldn’t get in. While at The Bridge he was able to attend The Urban Ministry. “I became a disciple. I started doing what Jesus wanted me to do and that is learning The Word so that I can live it and let The Holy Spirit flow out of me to others,” Matt said. He became a house leader in the second phase of The Bridge and now sees what

*See Matt other side*

## Running For Recovery

As Emergency Physicians at the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, Dr. Reb Close and Dr. Casey Grover see patients in all stages of substance use and recovery. As a married couple, they have also seen how what works for one person in recovery doesn’t work for another. Together, they thought of a whole new approach to this overwhelming problem, The Recovery Run.

So began their hope about five years ago to get the Recovery Run up and running with the help of treatment centers. Unfortunately, it was a lot more difficult than expected as each treatment program has a different philosophy and approach. But this didn’t stop them. They found Sun Street Centers, which hosted the first Recovery Run, an in-person event held in March 2020 right before the lockdown.

This year’s Recovery Run was hosted by The Bridge Restoration Ministry and was a success despite the lockdown. Through social media, participants shared photos they took while participating whether walking on a trail, on the beach, or in their neighborhood. They submitted their time as proof they had done

*See Recovery other side*



## Executive Director’s Corner Mike Casey



## The Bridge’s Positives Over Covid’s Negatives

We’ve all been so affected by Covid-19, but it has affected some people that many don’t think about – those in the Monterey County Jail. Many people come into The Bridge because of the relationship I have with them while they’re in jail, and now the number is higher than it’s ever been because of the pandemic and I haven’t been able to go into the jail to talk to them. But the inmates can keep their vital connection with us because they are allowed to make collect calls to The Bridge. On a normal day I can get about 10 calls from people in jail. Most just want to talk or find out about getting into The Bridge or some other program. Though I’m glad to talk to so many people, I miss going into the jail to talk face-to-face and the relationships I build with them.

The people running the jail realize the benefit of what The Bridge is. They’re really diligent to bring in as many services as possible to inmates, such as counseling and help for those trying to get their high school diplomas or vocational training.

As a greater number of people want to get into The Bridge, I have to tell them that The Bridge is full, but we have waiting a list. We had two people who had signed up for The Bridge, but because of the pandemic there were no beds available. They’ll try to go back home or find other programs. People are realizing they really need help, and The Bridge can help them. I just tell them to hang in there and keep on checking back in.

We also have some positives happening at The Bridge like the Recovery meetings that are held at Calvary church. People are finding that it’s a place to plug in and the meetings are also livestreamed on Facebook. About 600 people watch it plus the 100 or so who come in person. Now that things are starting to open up, it will take a while for normality to return. We’ll be opening for volunteers in mid-June. Other positives include two women graduates of The Bridge who will be going into jails to talk to the women there and The Bridge will be opening a facility in Salinas. We need to find people to staff it and finances to get it going. This is a problem that needs to be solved, but again, here are more positives that have come from negatives.

## We Can Eco It!

What do you do with clothes you don’t want anymore? Well, think of what a store like Second Chance does with all the clothes donated to them that people don’t buy. It’s a significant problem. Second Chance looked for a solution and Eco World was it. “We’ve been aware of the problem of our excess, what to do with it rather than throwing it into the trash. It’s a thrift store problem,” said Michele Casey, manager of the Second Chance stores.

“We’re grateful for all the donations people drop off. We do our best to sort through the donations, process them, put them on the sales floor,” Michele continued. But this problem is very evident when Second Chance sorts clothes and linen items and finds some that are not appropriate to sell. Items that are damaged or soiled so much they can’t be cleaned have to be thrown away. Some clothing items are cut up into yarn balls for people to use for craft projects but that doesn’t take care of this big problem. “Internally, we have been recycling just a snippet of our excess that couldn’t be sold.

*See Eco other side*



## Recovery *from other side*

it to receive a finisher medal and T-shirt.

The Recovery Run flags were a big part of this event. “The Bridge wanted to create a display of the influence and impact of substance use on our community. So, we offered people black flags to honor someone who had died, red flags to honor the families of those struggling with addiction, and white flags to celebrate someone in recovery. “It was such a joy to work with The Bridge this year and the year prior with Sun Street Centers. Kudos to Mike and Michele and all the folks at The Bridge for offering up a program that takes people in with open arms, accepts them where they are, and helps to rehabilitate them.”



The lawn at Jewel Park in Pacific Grove.



Dr. Reb Close and Dr. Casey Grover, Emergency Physicians at the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula.



Tobias one of volunteers from The Bridge who helped setup the flags at different locations throughout the community.



The lawn at Calvary Monterrey, Monterey.

This year’s Recovery Run was hosted by The Bridge that put out the flags to display the impact of substance abuse in our community – red for those still in addiction, white for someone who got out of addiction, and sadly, black those who died from addiction.

## Matt *from other side*

Jesus has done for him.

It’s been five years since Matt entered The Bridge. Looking toward the future, he’s waiting to see what opportunities God provides. “Whatever you go through is not wasted. God uses it to spread His Message,” he said. That’s what The Bridge means to Matt. He sees Jesus shining through imperfect human beings and he knows he was an imperfect person. Seeing how his life has been changed, Matt says, “It’s been a gift for me to see God’s work at The Bridge. When I actually see Him having an effect on people’s lives, I’m like, “Lord, thank You.”

## Eco *from other side*

There were no places here on the Peninsula for recycling of textiles,” noted Michele.

Then there is the problem of what to do with clothes that don’t sell. Some go to the Monterey Supply Sale, some go to the Pacific Grove sales floor or to super sales and last of all the Pink Dot sale, a 50cent rack that is doing well and sold 5,000 pieces of clothing since last June. Second Chance also donates unsellable clothes to residents in need and also partners with other local agencies to provide clothing as needed, but that also doesn’t fix the problem either.

Eco World solved both problems. As a textile recycling company, it works with local nonprofits by keeping items that cannot resold out of landfills and began servicing the Monterey Peninsula a few months ago. They accept clothing, shoes, purses, and backpacks, and new or used items that are not wet or molded. “They have places to send these items to be cut up to make things like padding or to down-cycle it. They pick them up and they’re either resold again or upcycled or downcycled in some way. It is what we’ve looked for for a long time, but nobody was servicing Monterey Peninsula until just now. We are very happy about our new relationship with Eco World,” said Michele.

# Second Chance Thrift Store

A Ministry of **The Bridge**

105 Central Ave.  
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Monterey  
831-324-0143

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

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