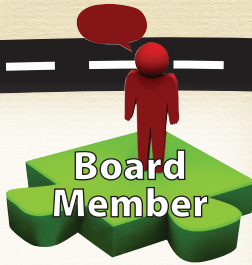




Editor's Corner

**Getting a Job  
in the Real World**



Describing how a program works is best explained by hearing from the people who founded it and have seen lives thoroughly changed. So to learn about the Vocational Training Program for residents of The Bridge here are the experiences of those who founded it and those who are currently involved with it. This program helps The Bridge men and women face the challenges of getting a job while going through the process of changing their perspectives about life. Participants learn skills that enable them to transition into the work force and to become financially responsible before re-entering the community. Mike Casey and his wife, Michele, who founded The Bridge and the Program, talk about its purpose. "It is difficult for anyone with a history of addiction or a record to confront that dreaded box on a job application – Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If yes, please explain," Mike explains. He knows from personal experience how hard it is for those with prison and addiction backgrounds to get jobs, but by working with community partners, The Bridge found businesses willing to hire residents. These connections are built upon trust and the proof that The Bridge residents who have been hired are good workers. "The Bridge is a working program that teaches the residents good work ethics," says Mike. He's seen how the employers who have given residents jobs "have a heart for these guys and get to know them on a personal level." The Vocation Training Program has been successful and as Mike observes, "The program continues to grow. I have seen God's grace poured out over the men and women of The Bridge."

***"It is difficult for anyone with a history of addiction or with a record when they confront that dreaded box on a job application – Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If yes, please explain."***

Mike Casey,  
Founder, The Bridge

**He Found God Still Had a Plan for His Life**



Sam Guerrero learned from first-hand experience that he could trust God and that God would always provide for him. Through his experience with The Bridge and getting a job he also learned some important aspects of life. "I learned that God still has a plan for my life. I felt I was too old to be forgiven, but I was incorrect. I had to learn to trust God and that He would always provide for me. Through His love, I have been able to work and provide for my family," Sam concludes.

Sam entered The Bridge in 2011 and was there for almost three years during which he held many jobs and responsibilities. After the first few months, he was asked to help The Bridge by becoming a house manager and doing maintenance work at

Calvary's church grounds. Over time he was given another job of managing other Bridge members and was placed on The Bridge's insurance policy so that he could drive members to appointments and court appearances. Sam recalls, "This was a big responsibility since many of The Bridge men did not have licenses and could not drive themselves." In addition, he helped renovate The Bridge's Second Chance Thrift Store, which included painting, stripping the floor, building walls and bathrooms. He also volunteered his skills to other organizations, such as the Yellow Brick Road Thrift Store,

See **Sam** other side



**His Business Helps Bridge Residents Transition Back Into the Community**

By offering Bridge residents jobs, business owners help them return to life's normal routines. But how to find businesses that will offer Bridge residents a job? The Main Event Transportation and Monterey Airbus does so. It transports people to events such as weddings and golf tournaments or the airport. Bridge residents are hired as customer service representatives, drivers, and detailers.

Andre Planchon, owner of this business, began hiring Bridge residents while attending Calvary Monterey. He and his wife saw firsthand the transformation that The Bridge had on residents and that the ministry was producing fruit. "We believed that God gave us the ability to contribute to the transition process from The Bridge to the world," Andre comments. "It is inspiring to see the progress men have made personally and within the company. God has blessed us with the ability to help people when they need and want another chance. What God has done for me has been

my motivating factor to help others." Andre explains that hiring followers of Christ in the Vocational Training Program has been refreshing because "they bring the light of Jesus into what can be a difficult and challenging place."

***"We have been blessed to see God work in the lives of The Bridge graduates who work with us. To see people blossom is the most exciting part of this journey. They are great additions to our work family and bring a lot of joy to our business. We are all His children and God loves all of us."***

Andre Planchon, Owner, The Main Event Transportation and Monterey Airbus



**By the Grace of God, I'm Still Moving Forward and Haven't Looked Back**

It all started at the age of 12 when I had my first experience with drugs and alcohol. For the next 26 years, I caused chaos and destruction all around me because of my addiction. I never thought about the loved ones I was hurting due to my selfishness. All I cared about was getting high.

Throughout the past 20 years, I've been to jail numerous times. I was sent to rehabilitation centers and tried many different programs assigned by the court, but these were all unsuccessful. The last time that I was locked up I knew something had to change. I was facing a possible nine years in prison and it was during this time one night that I had my first spiritual

See **Erik** other side



## Sam from other side

the Tri-Cal Marathon, and events held by the city of Pacific Grove.

The next phase of The Bridge allowed Sam to find a job that used his prior work experience and skills, however it took him a while to find the right fit. For the first few months he worked with a friend building fences and putting up sheetrock. Having

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Sam Guerrero, Warehouse Manager, Disaster Kleenup Specialists

been a tow truck operator, he then found a job with a tow company in Monterey but soon realized he wanted more of a challenge. This led him to an interview for a warehouse manager at the Disaster Kleenup Specialists.

It was a much bigger challenge than he expected. "The interview process involved a personality test, and I was nervous," he confides. To his surprise he was offered the job and took it. "I now supervise a team of several employees and am in charge of three warehouses and their employees. I keep track of client contents from their homes that have been in a disaster. My team cleans the contents and stores them in the warehouse," he continues. He's learned a lot. Not only is he required to use electronic cleaning systems, he's gotten even more experience by attending special training conferences and being on the company's

## Erik from other side

awakening and my "moment" with God. I knew I couldn't do this alone anymore.

My parents never gave up on me but they had to cut off all ties with me. The life I chose to live was too much for them. It came to the point where I was stealing change

from water fountains in the middle of the night to support my methamphetamine addiction. I was homeless, living in storage units, sheds, and in my car. I spent many nights at the Calvary Church parking lot. At this point, I was 6'4, 145 pounds and near death.

After my God "moment" I knew I had to start making changes. God gave me the strength to take the necessary steps towards my recovery. I first completed the Liberty's Pride drug program and a relapse prevention class in jail. Thank the Lord I was not sent to prison and made it out of jail. I placed myself in a program up north and graduated after eight months, but I still knew that wasn't enough for me. I wasn't ready and wanted and needed more recovery time. I called The Bridge and talked with Michele Casey. Five minutes later Mike Casey called me back and said, "We'd love to have you and there is a bed waiting for you." I bought myself a bus ticket and was on my way. During my year at The Bridge, I got what I needed to prepare myself for the "real world." I received support, counseling, and the spiritual guidance to spread my wings and fly. Mike and Michele handed me the ball and it was

leadership team. "I went from being an hourly paid employee to being on salary with a significant raise in wages," he says.

Looking back at his work experience before The Bridge and how The Bridge changed his attitude about being employed, Sam observes, "All my life I've always provided for myself and had a job. I really like to work and stay busy. The difference between my work before the Bridge and after is that I was more selfish with my money. I was irresponsible and didn't manage money well. Now I am

able to support my wife and three children and pay off debts."

Sam also learned other important things about himself, such as how to work with a team and how to communicate. "I worked alone as a mechanic for many years," he notes. "With my new job as warehouse manager, I had to learn to work with a team. I had to learn how to communicate professionally. I can be very shy when first getting to know people." Furthermore, he was never required to use technology in any of his previous jobs. "I had no idea how to send and receive emails or how to communicate through group text messages. The knowledge that I had from my previous experience did not transfer over to my new career," he explains. "I am grateful for my job and stability it has given me and my family of five," he states.

up to me to run with it.

By the grace of God, I'm still moving forward and haven't looked back. Since graduating The Bridge I've been living a clean and serene life. I got my smile back and everything that I ever wanted is happening for me. I moved into a new home that I can call my own. I have a great, stable job with the Pacific Grove Chamber of Commerce where I've been working for the last four years. I also work at the new Second Chance thrift store in Monterey, which I enjoy very much. I finally got back the girl I've always wanted, who 20 years ago couldn't be with me because I was on a dark path. The best part of it all, I have my parents back and we are a family again. I am now a person who can be trusted and people can depend on me. This is something that I've never felt before and it is amazing!

Even after almost six years of sobriety and being clean, I am still learning something new every day and strive to be better each day. I make it a point to stay connected with The Bridge and the men and women in it. I see them as my family. We are all here for the same reason, which is to get better. It doesn't matter if it's six years or six months. What we have is today and we need to make the best of it! It's not about how many times you fall down, it's about picking yourself back up and trying not to fall again. I am so grateful to God and thankful for Mike and Michele. The Bridge has helped me get to where I am today. Miracles do happen because you're reading about one now.

# Second Chance Thrift Store

A Ministry of 

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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!



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**Thank you for your support,  
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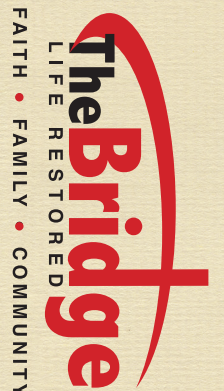
Friday, October 7, 2016



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