

# RANCHO SAN ANTONIO

Boys Home, Inc.

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[www.ranchosanantonio.org](http://www.ranchosanantonio.org)

Winter 2018

## *Season's Greetings & Happy New Year*



I  
AM THE  
LIGHT  
OF THE  
WORLD.  
WHOEVER  
FOLLOWS  
ME <sup>WILL</sup> <sub>NEVER</sub>  
WALK IN  
DARKNESS  
BUT WILL  
HAVE THE  
LIGHT  
OF LIFE.



JOHN 8:12



**A LETTER FROM OUR  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AUBREE SWEENEY**

**The Spirit of the Season**

*“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” Step Twelve/ Alcoholics Anonymous.*

**R**ancho carries the message of twelve-step recovery with the youth we serve, and the twelfth step is truly about giving back to others what you have learned. This season, the practice of “giving back” has really “hit home.” For many of us, we hear of trauma and our instinct is to help. It is a personality trait that draws us to work in the helping profession. But what happens when those called to heal others have their own well-being compromised? Much like firefighters working around the clock after being evacuated from their own homes. As they grieve, they fight on.

Several Rancho staff members were evacuated from their homes during our local fires and knew those touched by the tragedy in Thousand Oaks. Our warriors who come to work every day with “thick skin” were raw. Rancho is a 24/7 facility. We cannot “close the doors” for the day. Many staff drove redirected routes and traveled long distances to be at work. Our dedicated staff members put their call to serve first. When we feel helpless, by fires, random acts of violence or other trauma, having control to do something meaningful is proven to help heal. I learned of a fellow Group Home in Paradise, CA that lost 10 of their 13 homes and reached out to offer placement to their displaced youth. The

“spirit of the season” spoke to me in a very different way. I am so grateful for our dedicated staff and have such empathy for the trauma our youth have endured.

A recent study on the science of giving back found that having purpose in life is linked to better health. The study shows people who give back sleep better, live longer, and have higher cognitive function than their counterparts. In recovery, the twelfth step is about giving back. I will never forget sitting with a client and his sponsor and his sponsor told him, “I am here to help you, but please know, I’m helping you for selfish reasons. When I help you, I help me. Helping you keeps me sober.” This holiday season, let the joy of the season be in the spirit of helping others. In doing so, **you** are the one receiving a gift. You will sleep better, live longer, and feed your life purpose. Donations can be in the form of time, money, or valuables. As they say in relation to recovery, “We only keep what we have by freely giving it away.”

**A HALLOWEEN MASQUERADE**

**T**his year for Halloween at Rancho, we invited an improv company to our campus to put on a performance for our residents. The Grimprov Company provided four professional actors to engage with our youth and staff in a two-hour, interactive mystery event. The youth dressed for the dinner theme, a Masquerade Ball. They made their own masks and worked in teams to help solve a



mystery by trading clues with each other, gathering information, and solving the crime before the masked menace got away! This was their chance to be a real-life “detectives” where

they all worked together to solve a case! We all had a glamorous evening full of mystery and intrigue. Our youth also took part in our traditional pumpkin carving contest. There were many fantastic pumpkin creations, however, the first-place pumpkin was a re-creation of a McDonald’s Big Mac.



## WORKING TOWARD A FUTURE

Our ultimate goal for our youth is for them to develop into mature, productive, responsible members of the community. One method for assisting in this transition is offering a work experience program. A job can help teenagers better develop their identities, achieve new accomplishments, acquire work experience, and become more independent. We are currently working with two work experience programs which offer our youth comprehensive training and employment services. Their services ensure that young people who have barriers to employment or education gain the skills that are required to enter the workforce, based on the labor market economy. This program has been successful as it is providing our youth with opportunities to gain confidence, a sense of responsibility and independence.



## THE POWER OF GIVING BACK

The holiday season is here and we look forward to our tradition of giving back to the community. Our youth and staff will be offering their help to local homeless shelters, eldercare facilities, fund raising for people in need, and much more. Our staff also participated in a fundraiser raffle where 50% of the ticket sales went to the victims of the recent California fires.

*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." -Mahatma Gandhi*



## A LETTER FROM BROTHER JOHN

Dear Friends,

I was moved by Father McNamara's sermon on November 3, 2018, based on the Gospel of Mark, regarding the second commandment of "Loving your neighbor as yourself." His definition of this would be "actively helping others". That is easily said, but at times difficult to fulfill.

As our thoughts turn toward the meaning of Christmas, I suggest we might practice "actively helping others" by considering the following:

I will live in Peace with God, my neighbor and myself. I will bring peace to my patch of this earth.

I will be happy. I will remember that my joy is up to me. I will carry my confidence to all I touch each day.

I will not be a party to pessimism nor join the indifferent. I will give hope whenever I go.

I will test my love of peace by doing an act of love each day. By doing this we will rejoice in the Lord all year.

All our benefactors, living and deceased, will be remembered in a Novena of Masses at Christmas.

Sincerely in Holy Cross,

Brother John Crowe, C.S.C.

# Rancho San Antonio Benefactors List

Rancho is grateful to our friends who contributed from August 2, 2018 through October 31, 2018.

All donations are greatly appreciated, our mission would not be possible without your continued support.

*Please excuse our mistake if your name was omitted and contact us so that we may correct our error.*

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*Happy holidays from the youth and staff of  
Rancho San Antonio*

