



# ADVENT GROUP MINISTRIES

Group Homes

Foster Homes

Counseling

Fall Quarterly

NOV 2009

## Former Client off to College

Family problems ... a drug problem ... an anger problem—that's what former client Jackie had been dealing with prior to her stay at Advent from February 2 to December 20, 2007.

When asked what changed her life, Jackie says, "I think what helped me was the fact that I went to meetings regularly and worked one-on-one with a recovery counselor. I was able to work through rough things from my past."

While at Advent, Jackie built a great relationship with God and reports that the staff were, and still are, very supportive. Regularly attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings also made a significant impact on her life.

Jackie met with a school counselor who helped her apply to Sacramento State, as well as apply for scholarships and financial aid. She reports, "I am proud to say that I received a scholarship, and financial aid is covering more than half my school expenses for a year!"

She began attending Sacramento State this fall, and her goals include getting a degree in psychology, with a minor in criminal justice, then transferring to Wheaton College to pursue her masters. Jackie wants to work with young people and she dreams of returning to Advent when she has finished school. She also has thoughts of being a probation officer, a counselor, or an attorney.

Alexandra Fillmore, Girls Program supervisor, remembers, "When I'm having trouble recognizing the small successes and victories that keep me doing what I'm doing here at Advent, I encourage myself by reminiscing about Jackie. She is a young woman who has taken the tools that she learned at

*Continued on Page 7 >>*

## Client Graduates from *Step Up!*

Roberto is a 17-year-old former outpatient client who started the *Step Up!* program on November 25, 2008 and recently graduated on September 30. He delighted guests at the Advent barbecue with his inspiring story.

*I came from a good family and good parents, but growing up I started to see violence and drugs in the city that I grew up in. I started smoking weed in the 5th grade. At first it was only a few times a month. Then I was smoking it a few times a week, and then I was smoking it daily.*

*Then I started robbing houses just so I could have money to buy more weed and other drugs. Eventually I got caught and sent to juvenile hall. That was my turning point—November 7, 2008 was the day my recovery first started. When I got released from the hall I was given the option to go to residential placement or go the *Step Up!* program. When I first came to *Step Up!* I was not really taking things seriously, but as time went by I started to realize how much I had changed, how I was hurting my parents emotionally. They were only trying to keep me from the drugs and violence.*

*Thanks to the help of Jacob, Janet, José, and of course the rest of the *Step Up!* and Advent staff, I started to get my life back. I realized these people only wanted what was best for me. They were there when I needed help and they were there supporting me every step of the way. They helped me get my life back on track. They're really great people. Honestly, I can't thank them enough for what they did for me. Now, thanks to the information they provided me and support they gave me I have been clean and sober for four months.*

*Continued on Page 7 >>*

**Advent  
Group Ministries**  
Quarterly Newsletter  
Fall 2009

*In This Issue*

- 1 . . . Former Client to College
- 1 . . . Graduation
- 2 . . . Facebook Challenge
- 2 . . . Homeless Get Help!
- 3 . . . Reclaiming Lives
- 4 . . . Client Corner
- 4 . . . Home Needs
- 5 . . . Houseboat Adventure
- 5 . . . Answered Prayer
- 6 . . . eScrip & Be A Volunteer
- 6 . . . 12-Step Teen Program
- 7 . . . Matching Grant Update
- 8 . . . Golf Sponsorships

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# Facebook Challenge



Advent is on a mission to get at least 200 fans on our Facebook page by Christmas (we currently have 76 awesome fans). **Help us meet our goal—go to [www.facebook.com/adventgroupministries](http://www.facebook.com/adventgroupministries) and become a fan today!**

Featuring important news and updates, inspiring stories, upcoming events, photos, and much more, our Advent Facebook

page is a great way to get the most up-to-date information on what is happening in our ministry.

New to Facebook? Facebook is a global social networking website where users can keep in touch with friends, send messages, make a profile, upload pictures, and much more. Users can also join various networks and groups that represent their interests, including charitable causes they care about. It's free, it's easy and it's lots of fun.

## Homeless Get Help!

Last June, in association with St. Joseph's Family Center in Gilroy, Advent received a grant to provide drug and alcohol counseling for homeless adults in Gilroy.

Bruce Pickett, Advent associate therapist, spends several hours twice a week at the center providing individual and group counseling. He averages about 10 people in each session, and it is open to both men and women who generally range in age from 40 to 70.

Gilroy has the highest rate of homelessness per capita in Santa Clara County, and the participants are also provided safe and supportive housing in the area.

Another highlight for the group is DreamPower Horsemanship, which offers therapeutic horsemanship lessons at their facility in San Martin.

Four of the men have started a community service group called the Gilroy Street Team. They do weeding, painting, and trash pickup in the downtown Gilroy area.

"The merchants noticed them and now really like having them around. Some of the merchants have even hired the men for side jobs, and the men are very proud to be able to be standing on their own and making a paycheck," says Bruce.

# Reclaiming Lives

*It's on us ...* declared the Advent Group Ministries invitation to their 17th annual barbecue held on Saturday, September 26, at the Gateway home in San Martin.

The event is Advent's way of saying *thank you* to current friends and *welcome* to new friends, as guests get a firsthand look at what the ministry accomplishes while helping clients reclaim their lives.

Though it was an unusually hot day, with the temperature over 100 degrees, folks turned out in good number and did their best to stay cool beneath the huge tent.

As visitors arrived and registered, they were soon off on a tour of Gateway, where many lingered as long as possible, attempting to beat the heat inside the air conditioned house!

Leslie Dartt, addictions counselor, explained her involvement in the lives of the guys. When coming to Advent, each client receives a recovery binder and must get a sponsor. There are currently 20 clients in the program and Leslie meets with them one-on-one every week.

A typical day starts with breakfast and meditation, and then the boys are off to school. When they return to the home they do chores and help get things ready for dinner. Once a week each young man is assigned dinner preparation and gets to select what he wants to cook. Some of the guys are excellent chefs and do the entire meal without any help from the staff.

While they eat the teens all sit together at the table and discuss the highs and lows of their day. Afterwards they attend meetings, and on weekends they are free to watch TV and play video games.

Generally there are two boys to a room and they are allowed to hang



*The boys praying before they perform.*

family pictures, as well as other appropriate artwork and posters. And every week an award is given to the boys with the cleanest room.

Following the excellent barbecue, a musical rap performed by Francisco, John and Ricky got the program underway, and board member Eric Leonard welcomed the guests. A fantastic testimony was given by Roberto (see page 1 for his story), followed by a musical performance by **BLRR**—Breanne, Lauren, Rhonda and Ryan—two vocalists and two guitarists.

Clients Yesenia, Johnny and Vanessa shared how Advent had helped them reclaim their painfully out-of-control lives that had been riddled with drugs, heavy drinking and living on the streets.

Vanessa came to Advent 11 years ago and reports, "I needed

lots of attention and was shown unconditional love. On my 14th birthday I received a book, which was *not* what I wanted for my birthday! But I came back to it later in life and it was very meaningful. I give God and Advent all the praise for who I am." Since her time at Advent she has graduated from college and is married and doing well.

Executive Director Mark Miller presented *in absentia* the *Volunteer of the Year* award to Wendy Close-Lindstrom. Wendy holds Bible studies for the girls and when the kids memorize Scripture she gives them \$5 gift cards from Jamba Juice, McDonald's or Starbucks. She has also opened her home to former Advent clients who needed a place to stay; she and her husband Keith have recently started a 12-Step support group; and she has raised funds and planned the girls houseboat trips the last two years.

Mark wrapped up the festivities by thanking his wife, Jane, for making the delicious cookies, and accolades were given to Tony Mannino and his group—John Hunsberger, Steve Silveira, Tim Fortino, Kim Manzo, Angela Mannino, AJ Mannino, and Joey Mannino—for providing and barbecuing the scrumptious meal.

"It has been an extremely difficult year, as the economy has been devastating and has seriously impacted our agency," Mark says.

*Continued on Page 7 >>*

# Client Corner

By Francisco, John and Ricky

I'm free/because Christ paid the penalty  
 Giving Him glory as I meditate on Calvary  
 Living a different life, He turned the darkness into light  
 I can't wait for the day when my faith becomes sight  
 Looking back on that crooked path I was on  
 Not even caring I was doing dirt and living wrong  
 I was living to get high and to do it big  
 Not even trippin I was neck deep in the sin  
 But God almighty had a mighty plan for this sinner  
 He started opening my eyes to see the bigger picture  
 He showed me Christ and I was cut to the core  
 How could I be the one the Son of God gave his life for?  
 My mind started shifting while my heart became flesh  
 I wanted to live for Christ/embrace the gospel and repent  
 By the grace of God/the spilled blood of the King  
 and His resurrection from the grave/your boy's been set free

## Chorus

I've been/washed clean by the blood of the King  
 I was/once blind but now I see  
 Just how the devil had his grip on me  
 I was locked in chains now I've been set free

King of all kings/washed by the blood now you see  
 Demons in my head telling me its cool to smoke some weed  
 Devil's on my back and he wanted me 6 feet deep  
 That's why he had me on the streets  
 not caring about my family  
 The ones thats gonna be down  
 When everything goes down the drain  
 And there aint no rebounds  
 Am I going to heaven? Or am I straight hell bound?  
 I was chasing down the high life like I was a blood hound  
 I was only 9 when I first saw a body drop

And guess who it was? It was my biologic pop  
 Didn't know how to cope so I let my soul rot  
 Grew up not knowing mom  
 All because she was smoking rocks  
 Smashing down the wrong road  
 Chasing down the false goals  
 I'm living through the devil's eyes  
 believing every single lie  
 Had my mom always crying  
 I've been set free and now his lies I aint buying  
 I aint buying his lies  
 Man his lies I aint buying

## Repeat chorus

The Lord has set me free/ and now I could see  
 How he wanted me to be/to be on my knees  
 Praying for my life/ to do whats right, stand up and fight  
 Now I know where to go when I need the help  
 Look up to the sky/look up high/open up your eyes  
 He's trying to tell you/you are the one  
 He died up on the cross for you are the son  
 No more walking down the streets  
 No more trying to make ends meet  
 I went from sleepless nights  
 To freedom in Christ  
 I used His name in vain just to deal with the pain  
 Now I'm asking for a change  
 I was once on the block/I was once selling rocks  
 But now I'm free/ and now I can see  
 The life that I've chosen is the life for me  
 Where else would I be?  
 What else would I do if I couldn't be with You?  
 Now I can see I can be free

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## Make Our Houses More Like Loving Homes

- Dressers
- Dining room chairs
- Sofas
- Towels and washcloths
- Mattress pads (twin)
- Bedding (twin)
- Cups and glasses (plastic)
- Lamps (table and floor)
- Cooking utensils
- Pots and pans
- Sports equipment
- Bowls, platters, dishes
- Silverware
- Picnic tables
- Picture frames
- Tupperware
- Pyrex pans/baking equipment
- Weight equipment
- Curtains/blinds
- Hanging soap dispenser
- Wall pictures

# Girls Summer Houseboat Adventure

Sonshine Ministries—a nondenominational Christian resource ministry that offers houseboat experiences for junior high to college-age groups—provided a treasure of fun and adventure for Advent girls the week of July 19-24, as they enjoyed cruising on the Sacramento Delta.

Volunteer Wendy Close-Lindstrom was instrumental in raising funds and planning the event again this year, and about 10 of Advent's former clients and outpatient girls were able to go on the summer outing.

A typical day begins early in the morning when the kids wake up to a beautiful sunshiny day and soak in the peacefulness and grandeur of being on the water. After eating breakfast they have quiet time and Bible study.

The gals then don life jackets and get geared up for waterskiing and other activities, including swimming, rafting, wake boarding, knee boarding and exploring. By then the young ladies are famished and a delicious lunch is served.

Wendy reports:

*My guests were young women ages 15 to 20, all hurting from serious family issues like drug addiction, parents in prison, parents on drugs, homeless parents, parents living in shelters, prostituting to survive, dealing drugs to pay for siblings, taking care of young siblings, taking care of a sick grandma, mother in a wheelchair, etc.*

*Two girls accepted Jesus as their personal savior; four girls were baptized in the Delta; three girls rededicated their lives to Jesus; several girls were delivered from bondages; and two experienced some significant healing. Praise God!*

Meetings were held in the evening with the entire group, with singing and sharing being a highlight of the day. And of course there were skits, games and lots of talking before the day ended with lights out!

It was an incredible week of blessing for all the gals who participated in the houseboat adventure and they all agreed that it was *really cool*.

## A Mom's Prayer is Answered!

A well-seasoned Advent foster family had been longing for another baby and the mother—who has a real heart for children—had been specifically praying for God's direction and wisdom about a possible adoption.

She and her husband specifically prayed that if it was God's will they would be blessed with a newborn baby girl at the beginning of the year.

On January 1, 2008, Dale MacGowan, director of Advent's foster care program, just happened to stop by the children's shelter to check in and see if any children needed homes. He was told about a baby girl who had been born a few days before who needed placement.

Dale went back to the office the same day and immediately called the foster family to see if they would be interested in taking this baby into their home. What an incredible answer to prayer!

Another miracle was that this all took place on a holiday and normally Advent would not have been the first social service agency called for placing the child. The foster mom exclaims, "I waited 15 years to be a mom. It shows God's timing is perfect."

Fortunately, the birth parents and the foster family got along exceptionally well through the placement and adoption process, and under the supervision of Tammy Greer, foster care caseworker, the birth mom was able to visit her baby each week at the Advent office.

The adoption was finalized in August 2009, and the mom reports, "Even though it is a closed adoption, we have the birth family over twice a month. It has been really easy and comfortable for me so far. As long as it's safe for the baby, we'll continue to do it. They are very kind and generous people."

Tammy adds, "The grandfather showed his support by making the adoptive mom and baby matching necklaces!"

## Sign Up For eScrip Today!

*eScrip* is an easy way for Advent supporters to raise money for our kids simply by shopping. Here's how it works:

1. Logon to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com). At the top of the page click on "Sign Up."
2. Search "Advent Group Ministries." Click on our name after it appears.
3. Click the "Next" button and fill out the required information.
4. Register your grocery club cards, debit cards and credit cards.
5. Once you're registered, every time you shop at participating locations with a registered card, 2%-10% of your total purchase will be donated to Advent. It's just that simple!

We need everyone's help! If you have any questions please contact **Jennifer Morrow at (408) 281-0708, Ext. 125.**

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### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Work parties
- Host a house party
- Outpatient mentors and drivers
- Administrative office assistant (filing, data entry)
- IT support
- Transportation

## 12-Step Programs for Teens

On September 14, the first Advent 12-Step Program meeting was held for teens 13 to 18 years old.

The group meets every Monday evening at Bernal Bible Church in San Jose.

Ann Keller, Friendship Family coordinator, was instrumental in bringing together Keith and Wendy Lindstrom, husband/wife team, to work with the outpatient clients.

Though Wendy was already heavily involved with Advent as a volunteer with the Girls Program—leading Bible studies and holding spiritual retreats—she was also willing to work with the outpatient kids.

Ann had convinced Keith that he and Wendy would be a great fit to run a 12-Step group once a week after the clients' regular Advent meeting.

"Wendy has already been such a blessing to the girls program," says Ann. "She is just amazing at showing Christ's love to these gals. I really wanted Keith to become involved with the Advent kids, too, so I approached him with the 12-Step meeting idea. He was on board with it right away."

So far the attendance at the meetings has been small, with an average of five clients. The focus has been on peer and mentor support for the recovery of addiction or other behavioral issues. These young people discuss various recovery steps and share

personal stories from their past, as well as where they are in their recovery process.

Keith and Wendy are working to strengthen the meetings and have requested feedback from the attendees on how to make the group function better.

"It has been very beneficial for the kids," says Keith, "and we really like doing it."

Wendy adds, "We are asking people to pray for the group on Monday nights. We want them to know we are praying for their fight for continued sobriety. We would also like prayer for creative ways for Keith and me to tell them about Jesus and help them work through the 12-Step Program to recovery.

"Lastly, we are asking for a hedge of protection around our family and the teens as we press in to see the Kingdom come—young people saved, healed, liberated and alive in Him and telling the next generation of the goodness of God."



**Reclaiming Lives from Page 3 >>**

“We have had to cut \$300,000 from the budget, including cuts in staff, medical and dental benefits, salary cuts, and we even had to close one of our group homes.

“But in many ways we’ve had a wonderful year, as Saratoga Federated Church provided carpet and furniture for all our homes and we have a new well at Summit,” he adds.

Mark expressed his deep appreciation to everyone for coming to the barbecue and he encouraged them to get involved in the ministry by volunteering and through financial support.



*BLRR performs.*



*Prepping for the closing prayer.*



*The boys perform their original rap.*



*Cooking up yummy food!*

**Jackie to College from Page 1 >>**

Advent to heart. She works hard to practice them daily and strives to keep stretching herself. She’s a living example of what God can do inside of us if we’re willing to put in just a little bit of effort to see who He created us to be. Seeing the progress Jackie has made over the past three years gives me hope that each one of the girls I work with can succeed.”

We are pleased that Jackie has been clean and sober for over 30 months and she’s enjoying having good, clean fun. And with that kind of track record we’re confident she will accomplish her goals and make her dreams come true!

**Roberto from Page 1 >>**

*Now that I have my life back on track, I am able to pursue my dreams that I know I can reach. After I graduate from high school I plan on joining the Marines and doing service for the country that gave my parents a new life, and now a better life. After that I am going to continue my studies and try to get admitted to Arizona State University so I may pursue a career in bio-engineering.*

*I would like to thank the Advent staff again for supporting me on my way to recovery. Thank you so much. I know I couldn’t have done it without the staff.*

*Thank you everyone.*

## Matching Grant Update

### We met the Challenge!

We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who participated in October’s Matching Grant Challenge. Your gifts enabled us to meet our goal of raising \$30,000 in only 35 days, qualifying us for the additional \$30,000 match. That is a grand total of \$60,000 in funding that will go directly to our life-changing programs.

Our sincerest thanks to the couple who anonymously pledged this matching grant. We are so very grateful for their faithful support.

*Advent's 12th Annual  
Mary and Martha Golf Classic*

We are already gearing up for our 2010 golf tournament to be held in June at the prestigious Los Altos Golf and Country Club. Our goal is to obtain sponsors to fund 100 percent of the overhead so that every dime of the proceeds can go directly to help our kids.

We hope you will choose to become involved in this important event, and we look forward to partnering with you and providing the best publicity possible for you and/or your organization.

**Get ahead of the game and secure your sponsorship today!**

HOLE SPONSOR	\$ 500
ANGEL SPONSOR	\$ 1,000
AUCTION SPONSOR	\$ 5,000
GOLF SPONSOR	\$ 7,500
BANQUET SPONSOR	\$10,000
TEE PRIZE SPONSOR	\$20,000
NAME SPONSOR	\$50,000

For detailed information on sponsorship levels, please contact Jennifer Morrow at (408) 281-0708, Ext. 125.

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