

## A Future I Can Live For

*The following is the story of Shandi, a 17-year-old who recently completed the Patch program.*

My mom died when I was two. Things went downhill until, as a teenager, I was living in hell. I was doing and dealing drugs, hanging out with bad company, and was constantly in trouble. I saw no point in school, so I never went, and had no intention of ever going to college or getting a job. My choices made me hate myself and I didn't care about anyone else, either.

My family was concerned about the direction I was headed, and knew they had to stop it. They saw something in me that could be better, and I thank God for that, because their belief in me and their decision to send me to Project Patch saved me.

Coming from the Cayman Islands to the mountains of Idaho in January was awful. I was freezing, and on top of that I was angry I was there in the first place. I begged, saying I would go to therapy at home – anything to not be at the ranch. No one believed me, and I was told I was staying whether I liked it or not. I was angry and felt like my family was just dumping me somewhere to forget about me.

As time went by, I began to see that the staff really cared about me. My counselor didn't judge or criticize me; she just loved me for who I was – even with all my poor choices and negative history.

As I adjusted to life at the ranch, I spent less time crying and ignoring everyone and began to focus on what needed attention: my addictions, poor

attitude, low self-esteem, and lack of respect for myself and others.

About a year later I completed the Patch program and I headed home with my aunt and uncle. It felt a little funny to be back with family after all the changes I had made, but I was very excited to try my hand at living what I'd learned.

My family saw the positive changes I had made and they were so happy. They didn't expect me to be the same old Shandi I had been a year ago, and their support was encouraging and gave me the strength to utilize what I'd learned at Patch.

There are no words to describe how much my aunt and uncle have helped me. I'm living with them now, and my aunt and I have much one-on-one time. We cook, bake, clean, study, and laugh together. She and I visited a college in town and found a paramedic program, which is what I really want to do. So I'm working hard to complete my GED so I can attend college and start my career. One thing Patch taught me that will stick with me for life is that you will only be a failure if you give up. Always keep moving forward. It may be hard, but hard work pays off.

God has blessed me in so many ways, protecting me from my poor choices and allowing me to go to Patch. Had my family not seen the good in me and sent me there, I'd be in prison or dead right now. Today my greatest wish is to be successful in life. I have a future – and I want that future.

## Cares & Prayers

The reason I am who I am today is because of the program and staff at Patch. Coming from the home I came from and the type of life I lived I wouldn't have had a prayer if it weren't for you all. Thank you. – S.M.

I support Patch so that other children can get the help they need before it's too late. My son was abused for many years by his father, unbeknownst to me, and he was rebellious and suffered from ADHD as well. He has spent many years in prison as a result of his choices. How I wish Patch had been around years ago to help my son. So I give so that others may get the help they need from Patch. – Anon.

We learned so much during the Family Experience at Goldendale – about ourselves, how God made us, and about His creation as we hiked around in it. – W.T.

Thank you for the service you provide at Project Patch in Goldendale. I am confident that your time invested in us will result in great support from at least our cluster of churches, if not our entire district. – M.O.

To share your Patch experiences and offer encouragement and support to our staff, email [info@projectpatch.org](mailto:info@projectpatch.org) or write to us at 2404 E Mill Plain Ave., Suite A, Vancouver, WA 98661.

- Each baby project participant (males included!) wears "the belly" anywhere from a few hours to an entire day.

## The Baby Project

Education is a huge piece of the Patch ranch experience, and we're not just talking math and science. The Baby Project is something most Patch teens experience – male or female – as a lesson in real life, and is something in which teens across the nation participate.

Each participating teen is given a "belly" to wear for anywhere from a

few hours to a day, simulating the final stages of pregnancy and what it's like to have a nine-month pregnant belly.

After the stipulated time of wearing the belly, each teen is given a computerized baby doll to take care of for two days. The babies cry at random times (including in the middle of the night!) and the teens must figure out how to make them happy (diaper change, feeding, burping, etc.). The babies can also register abuse (dropping, neglecting, hitting, etc.). Teens are graded based on the computer results from the baby's treatment during the teen's care.

- ◄ The Baby Project is a program that gives teens a small taste of what it's like to be a parent – nighttime feedings and ceaseless crying included!



"The kids complete assignments before and after the project, as well," explains Colleen Donald, ranch director. "The papers they put together include baby care issues such as cost and logistics that come with taking care of a baby."

School credit is awarded for participation in the project, but teens that experience the Baby Project receive much more than a grade: They gain a better understanding of the responsibility that comes with being a parent, and the serious changes that would come about with a baby in their lives.

To learn more about a typical day in the life of a Patch teen, visit [projectpatch.org/ranchday](http://projectpatch.org/ranchday).



## Our Daily Bread

A moving company in Boise, Idaho, currently employs two former Patch residents. As they shared their stories with their employer, Brian Lohnes, they told him how Patch helped them when life was a challenge during their teen years. Touched by their stories, Lohnes decided to support Patch through Operation Giving Thanks, an organization he started as a way to serve the community and reach out to others.

"People just need people to love on them," says Lohnes. "Broken homes and other things happen. We want to serve others where we can."

Operation Giving Thanks gave Patch a generous donation of a month's supply of groceries.

Project Patch works hard to keep tuition costs low and offers scholarships when it can.

"Obviously there are still monthly bills we must pay," says Colleen Donald, ranch director. "Generous donations like this help us to help others. We love it when we get a call from someone asking how they can be a part of changing young people's lives for the better."

To find out how you can help Patch change lives, call 360-690-8495 or email [info@projectpatch.org](mailto:info@projectpatch.org).

For a list of specific needs and desires for both the youth ranch and the family center, check out our current Wish List on page 6 of this newsletter.

You can also see a regularly-updated version of the list at [projectpatch.org/wishlist](http://projectpatch.org/wishlist).

- A gift of a month's worth of groceries for the youth ranch was a wonderful blessing.



► In October supporters and staff of Project Patch honored founders Tom and Bonnie Sanford as they move into semi-retirement.



## Celebrating a Legacy

For nearly thirty years, God has worked miracles through Project Patch and we have been blessed by being His hands and feet. Together with our generous donors and thoughtful supporters, we have restored over 1,000 teens and served dozens of families.

In October, Patch supporters joined us at the Patch Family Life & Conference Center in Goldendale, Wash., for an event to honor founders Tom and Bonnie Sanford. Attendees recognized the collective impact they and Patch have made together in the lives of families and celebrated what we have accomplished together with God.

While still involved in development, Tom has stepped into semi-retirement and has handed over directorship to Chuck Hagele, current Patch executive director. For the past two and a half years, Chuck has proven his very capable leadership, with a passion as big as Tom and Bonnie's for helping hurting teens and building stronger families.

"It was very important to me to turn over the reins of Patch while I was still alive and relatively healthy," says Tom. "I want to ensure the continuity of Patch well beyond my lifetime."

At the October event, Tom stood and thanked everyone present for their part in doing God's work through Patch. A few representatives from Patch's faithful supporters had an opportunity to share their stories of blessings and the memories they share with Tom and Bonnie and Project Patch.

"It has been a joy to call Tom and Bonnie friends, and we have so appreciated our contacts over these past many years," says one. "We have been so impressed with their bravery and commitment in stepping out to found Project Patch, and its success is surely due to their vision and commitment."

Another said, "I have learned a lot from Tom and Bonnie, but one thing that really stuck was that you can find some way to relate to and encourage any kid, and they are all worth the effort."

Long-time Patch supporters and Goldendale residents Chuck and Del Null were able to attend the event.

"It has been exciting to watch the family center here in Goldendale develop," says Del. "It's an incredible place for families to go when they need help. It amazes me how Tom and Bonnie

## Tools of the Trade: Tips for Successful Parenting

By Jim Smith, Family Counselor

A good parenting style is one that demonstrates responsibility. The parent is the grown-up and the child is...well, the child. A parenting style that is dictatorial tends to produce rebels and a parenting style that is overly permissive tends to produce dependent and emotionally dis-regulated children. A good parenting style knows how to set limits (boundaries) and yet listens and involves the children as part of the process. Especially as children grow up, "Let's talk about it" is much more effective than "Because I said so."

were able to take an idea, no doubt planted by the Holy Spirit, and bring such a wonderful ministry to fruition. God has certainly blessed."

To send a note to Tom and Bonnie, email [info@projectpatch.org](mailto:info@projectpatch.org).

## Serving the Community

Project Patch's work doesn't stop at our youth ranch and family center. Our passion lies in building stronger families who are more connected, communicate better, and work together as well as possible. To that end we don't just wait for families to come to us for help; we reach out to them, to offer resources, tools, and information that can help their family grow.

One way we can do that is through

seminars. Based on their extensive experience with teens and families, our presenters can provide seminars on a variety of topics, including parenting, church youth ministry, technology in the home, and more.

Our staff is also equipped to do sermons and other short presentations to fit your group's needs. We would be happy to work with you to present whatever your group needs.

For more information or to schedule a time for us to present in your area, please visit [projectpatch.org/seminars](http://projectpatch.org/seminars) or call us at 360-690-8495.



# To My Girlfriend's Dad

The following is a letter a Patch resident wrote to the father of his girlfriend. He was assigned to write it when he admitted to ranch staff that he had broken boundaries with her on a home visit. It was not a letter that would be mailed, but rather a lesson in humble responsibility and accountability for one's actions.

Dear Mr. Lorthan\*,

Over the past two years I have had the privilege of dating your daughter and sharing very many positive, joyful experiences with her that I wouldn't ever wish to take back.

Along with the positive came many negative experiences that have been difficult to bear for the both of us. We became emotionally attached to each other and drawn into a very unhealthy relationship that was tearing us apart. We weren't quite ready for the commitment that we had and it led to many unexpected and unwanted struggles that we didn't know how to deal with correctly.

I have deeply regretted causing a great deal of emotional pain for her; this guilt within has overwhelmed me with grief and depression in the past, but no matter how hard I tried I couldn't take back the pain I caused her.

The core of these deep pains I feel is because I and your daughter were involved in sexual relations together in an attempt to fill a void of loneliness within ourselves. But instead of receiving satisfaction we received greater need to be with each other and when that need couldn't be filled it was filled with miscellaneous harmful risks.

I can only imagine the anger I have caused for you and I believe it is entirely justified, but I pray that it will be completely focused on me. I was very foolish, selfish, and false in the past, desiring instant gratification, ignoring long-term results and hoping to evade any consequences that I might receive for my choices.

I thought I was getting away with it, but as time moved on, conflict arose inside me and little by little I began to fall apart. I realize that no matter how hard I try I can't take back what happened or the pain that has been caused because of my actions. I don't expect forgiveness for me and what I've done, but I beg forgiveness for your daughter. I don't wish for her to take any blame for the decisions I made; I have already seen her experience enough pain and I don't want any more caused because of me.

Sincerely,

Damien\*

\*Not their real names



◀ Lanae is headed toward a bright future and looks forward to serving and loving others.

## Wherever God Leads Continued From Page 8\*

challenge. As she was pushed outside of her comfort zone, she became frustrated.

"I was used to finding the easy way out of everything," says Lanae. "I wanted to do the same at Patch, but they wouldn't let me. Being around people who believed in me when I didn't was a struggle, but every time I accomplished something without giving up it made me feel like I could do things and that I wasn't worthless."

John 15:2 became very clear to Lanae during her time at the ranch: "He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so it will bear even more fruit." She began to realize that Patch was a pruning time for her.

Lanae's family also attended the Family Experience at the Patch family center together.

"When you're at the ranch you have personal growth away from your family,"

says Lanae. "At the Family Experience you get to experience growth with your family, and it's a totally different thing. It was a wonderful weekend."

Recently Lanae attended a mission trip to India.

"I love people, serving, and God," she says. "This was an opportunity for me to love and serve people, and grow in my relationship with God."

Lanae's group spent two and a half months serving lepers, singing and performing skits for children in the slums, and working with widows and orphans. They witnessed many healings and people giving their hearts to Christ.

"Others in the group had done mission work before; I felt so unqualified," says Lanae. "But God calls us to do great things whether or not we have experience, because He's always by our side guiding us."

Though Lanae admits she relapsed

once she returned home from the ranch, it was short-lived, as she used her newfound relationship with God and the skills she learned at Patch to make better choices.

"Forgiveness is such a powerful thing," she says. "God gave me the strength to walk away from self-destructive behavior, and while I learned a lot from Patch, I'm who I am today because of God."

Her goal is to work with church youth groups and become a teacher or counselor, while still continuing to do mission work. Lanae feels that her testimony of coming out of life as a troubled teen could really impact youth.

"I have my own plans for my life," she says, "but I never know where God is going to take me."

For more information about the Patch programs, visit [projectpatch.org/ranch](http://projectpatch.org/ranch) or [projectpatch.org/family](http://projectpatch.org/family).

## True North Couples Weekend

You have a mission statement for your business and your church, but how about a mission statement for your own family?

The True North Couples Weekend (June 22-23, 2013) will help you and your spouse achieve what you may have never done before – discover your God-given mission and potential for changing the world!

Any couple who wants to make the most of their time and lives will enjoy a weekend devoted to discovering their purpose, family values, goals, and dreams. This weekend provides couples of all ages with an achievable goal – to write a mission statement for your family, then begin to activate your God-given potential.

True North is perfect for families of all ages including "empty nesters" seeking to influence the next generation.

Attendees will experience a guided process of reflection and discovery through activities, exercises, and discussions that rarely happen in today's busy homes – all in the beautiful surroundings of the Project Patch Family Life & Conference Center in Goldendale, Wash.

This unique weekend is led by Ron and Suzanne Frey, along with Patch Family Center director Jim Smith. They will help you explore your vision, values, and giftedness and will help you develop a deeper understanding of the stewardship of your time, talent, and treasure. The weekend culminates with



▲ In October supporters and staff of Project Patch honored founders Tom and Bonnie Sanford as they move into semi-retirement.

a session devoted to writing your family mission statement and a focus on how you will begin to achieve it.

For more information and to register for this event, visit [projectpatch.org/truenorth](http://projectpatch.org/truenorth).

*For more than 30 years, Ron and Suzanne have served in ministry organizations and the church to teach, counsel, lead, and encourage others in their spiritual growth. They are owners of Frey Resource Group, a consulting firm for non-profit organizations.*

## Wish List

**Below is the current wish list for Project Patch. If you are interested in helping us fulfill these needs, please call us at 360-690-8495, or email [info@projectpatch.org](mailto:info@projectpatch.org).**

### Youth Ranch

- Expanding Christian music collection (iTunes gift cards) - Various
- Girls' bicycles, (3) – \$210
- Hockey sticks, (20) – \$300
- Orchard fruit trees (8) – \$320
- Laptop – \$400
- Hay baler feeder conversion – \$500
- Cheese grinder/shredder for mixer – \$500
- Truck tires – \$800
- Fix air leak in girls dorm fire suppression system – \$800
- Therapist continuing education – \$2,500
- Phone system & wiring – \$10,000

### Family Center

- Rock polishing supplies – \$50
- Folding tables – \$240
- Frisbee golf sets (10) – \$250
- BBQ (propane) – \$600
- Folding chairs – \$750
- Basketball & volleyball equipment – \$800
- Deck furniture (tables w/chairs) – \$1,200
- Greenhouse (used) – \$2,000
- Wi-Fi enabled commercial copy machine/printer (1) – \$2,500
- Gravel for roads – \$3,500
- ATV/Mule or van (4-6 passenger) for safety/rescue – \$14,000



## Progress Report: Alla

*Alla is a 17-year-old resident at Project Patch's youth ranch. She is in the middle of her ninth month in the program and has made great strides toward creating a healthy, happy future for herself. We found her progress to be inspiring, and very much enjoyed interviewing her.*

### What brought you to Patch?

My adoptive mom didn't approve of my choice in friends and since we couldn't agree on who I should spend my time with, I stopped talking to her at all. She was very sick and had a lot of stress in her life, which rubbed off on my brother and me whenever we were around. He and I ended up arguing over everything. I became disinterested in God, stopped going to church, and completely shut out anything having to do with religion. The last conversation I had with my adoptive mom before coming to Patch was an argument. She said something I didn't like and I blew up at her. Then she told me we were going to get professional help.

### What have you worked on most at the ranch?

My education. As soon as I leave Patch I'm going to start college and work on getting a job and starting my life as an adult. Also, forgiveness. I have a lot of forgiving to do, including of myself, and I know if I don't try to do that now, while I'm younger, it will affect all of my relationships. I have to constantly remind myself that I don't have to hold my past over my head just because someone else does.

### Have you seen any change happen in yourself since arriving here?

Since no one here demands a specific religion, I've tried to open my heart to believing. Even though my mind tells me no, my heart wants to believe in God, and the openness and willingness are definitely evidence of a change in me since I got here.

### Share with us the best part of your experience so far.

I've learned a lot here. For instance, being away from those I care about most has taught me to focus on life in the moment and prepare for the future. If I don't do that, I won't go anywhere. And being in a group where everyone is accountable to each other has been a learning experience that others' actions affect you, even if you're not involved – and my actions affect others, too.

### What are some of your current goals?

Right now I'm working through grief and loss with my counselor so I can stop being angry and blaming myself for my birth mom's death when I was a kid. Also, I'm working hard to get my high school diploma so I can focus on college when I leave Patch. I only have three classes left and plan to finish them before I complete the program here.

### Tell us about your plans for the future.

I want to learn massage and work on a cruise line so I can see the world. I want to see what's out there and what's available to me. I want to save money for a home for my future family, and I want to open a restaurant. I have a lot of memories as a child watching my birth mom and grandma cooking together, and I want to cook like they did. It's something I think is exciting and will keep me in touch with my heritage.



## Piecing it Together

Chuck Hagele, Executive Director



The spring thaw is great because it signals that warm weather, green grass and that summer fun is on the way. Yet the spring thaw comes with a cost of slush, mud, and unpredictable weather.

It's hard to put into words how awesome it is witnessing kids and families transition from hopelessness and fear to

dreams and a strong future. It's similar to watching the winter thaw. Things are unpredictable with moments that seem like winter and others that hint of sunny days. Change is slow but the change is real and something to celebrate.

A family left the Family Experience in Goldendale tired from the intense experience but ready to move forward as a united family. They left confident yet called back within a few days of getting home because there was conflict. This was the first test for the family on how they would process conflict, focus on family values and remain connected. It was a hard test and they passed with flying colors. The family was in the midst of the thaw on the hard road to summer.

"Changing the family tree" is a popular

phrase and it involves making generational change in the family. Trees can die rapidly but growing and blooming takes time. Many families and kids give up on change because it's hard and there are many setbacks. The good news is that if you have setbacks and discouragement, you aren't alone. The better news is that there will come a day in which the difficulties of winter and the thaw will be forgotten as you enjoy a great summer day.

Psalms 30:5 says, "Tears flow in the night but joy comes in the morning." I hope as you read this newsletter you will be encouraged by stories of life in thaw. Not perfect lives but lives being transformed. I also hope that if you are in the midst of a personal "thaw" that you will keep going and press forward.

## PATCH Snaps



▲ Beautiful spring weather brings the kids at the ranch outside for some fresh air and sunshine. Safety first, then fun!



▲ Some of the boys enjoy an afternoon hike near the ranch with chaplain Gary VanDyk and family.



▲ When the sun comes out, so do the kids! The girls enjoy soaking up some Vitamin D on the lawn in front of the dorm.



▲ Swings facing the river on front campus provide a place for comfortable reflection and relaxation.

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## Support PATCH: Buy a Time Share

Thanks to generous donations, Patch owns two time shares; one with three locations in Mexico, and another in Lahaina, Hawai'i. Though we had previously used these properties to generate income for Patch, we are now unable to do so and are looking to sell these properties and use the proceeds to support Patch's ministry. If you are interested in the details of either of these properties, please call us at 360-690-8495 or visit [projectpatch.org/timeshares](http://projectpatch.org/timeshares).

## PATCH Prayer Warriors

Sign up to become a Prayer Warrior for Patch and receive monthly emails with updated requests and praises from all three Patch locations (Garden Valley, Goldendale, Vancouver). Then, join us in prayer for these special requests throughout the next month. Sign up today by visiting [projectpatch.org/signup](http://projectpatch.org/signup).

## Help Us Save Money!

We are now able to offer this newsletter in electronic form! If you are interested in receiving this newsletter via email instead of in hard copy (which costs us printing and a stamp), sign up at [projectpatch.org/signup](http://projectpatch.org/signup). Thank you for your help!

## Wish List

We maintain a list of things we need and want at each of our locations, so supporters know how they can best provide for our needs. Check out our current list on page 6 of this newsletter.

## Wherever God Leads

Life was falling apart for 15-year-old Lanae. She was angry and bitter toward authority, and played the "victim" when anything she didn't like happened.

"I was self-destructive," she says. "I had no boundaries with men, smoked weed and cigarettes, attended inappropriate parties, got into cars with strangers, lied, and was failing school."

Her passive-aggressive and verbally abusive tendencies with her family led Lanae's parents to seek outside help.

"My parents were tired of constantly fighting with me," says Lanae. "It was stressful for them to even come home. They wanted to help me, so they called Project Patch."

Accustomed to doing only what she wanted to do, Lanae found the youth ranch a



▲ After leaving a life of parties, drugs, and anger for the Patch program, Lanae has completely turned her life around.

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