



PATCH *works*

THE ROAD TO PATCH

It's only a mile-long gravel road, but it's life-changing for our teens and staff. Drivers need to concentrate on avoiding holes, puddles, and runaway cows, and it's hard to focus when driving in such a beautiful place. The wetlands are full of red-winged blackbirds, and the green fields have cows, elk, and an occasional fox. It's not unusual to see a hawk, heron, or sandhill crane. You drive toward Charters Mountain, which signals the change of seasons, and as the road dips, you get the first glimpse of the pond, Payette River, chapel, and dormitories.

It's hard to imagine a better location than the Project Patch campus for teens to find peace, hope, and healing. Solomon understood how spending time in nature expands our perspective about God and our lives. He writes, "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart, yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end." (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NIV).

Science confirms what we know from scripture. The National Institutes of Health found that spending time in nature results in positive mental health benefits. At the same time, the National Alliance on Mental Illness claims that time in nature can lead to a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

It's no wonder our 169 acres, nestled in a secluded valley on the banks of a scenic river and surrounded by nature, support the life change our teens desperately need. Unfortunately, it takes a little longer for some of our teens than others to appreciate the beauty surrounding them.

The most beautiful thing about Patch is you come in with the scenery, and you leave with the scenery, but you're a changed person.

Christina, a Patch alumna, recalls how "disgusting" she thought it was when she arrived. However, over the year she was at Patch, she came to love the campus. Her favorite place was the bridge between the pond and the river. "It's surrounded by beauty," she says, "and I had a lot of memorable talks [with] other girls, staff, and my therapist [there]."

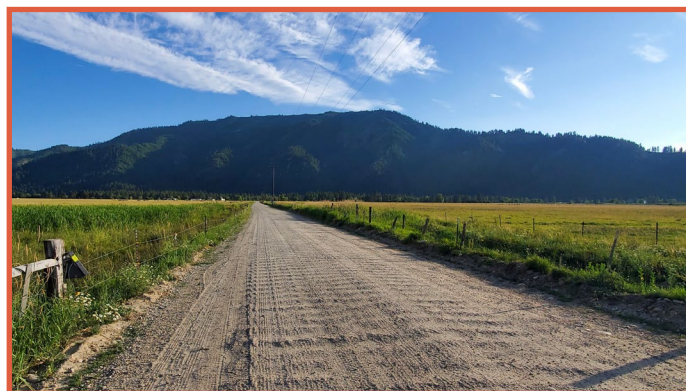
A surprising favorite area for some is the "wilderness" area, where teens spend up to a week living in self-made shelters and cooking over a fire. They grow in confidence and often make significant commitments during this life-changing experience. It's not an especially beautiful place, but beauty often rises from this transformative opportunity.

Kids and staff love the firepit and remember burnt marshmallows and deep conversations around the fire. Sandy Beach is a popular spot when the days are hot, and the river offers cool relief. The basketball court and lawn in front of the dorm are places to play and be a kid again.

Like Christina, many staff and alumni love walking around or sitting overlooking the pond. Clients and staff often walk around the 4-acre pond. The fishing isn't great (yet), but teens spend hours hoping for the best. Watching baby ducks and geese chasing their parents around the pond is especially fun.

"One day when I was sad, and it was raining, I witnessed the most amazing rainbow that I have ever seen in my life," recalled a staff member. "It spanned from one end of the pond to the other, engulfing me in a gigantic God hug that brought much-needed peace."

There are also deeply spiritual places. The small eddy and beach at the island's base is where many teens have been baptized, surprised by the cold water and warmed by the presence of friends standing in the shallow water supporting their big decision.



Road to Patch



Chapel



Wilderness

... continued on page 4



YOUTH PROGRAM HAPPENINGS

Cookout & Horseback Riding with the Boys



Sprinklers & Stargazing with the Girls



TO DONATE GO TO
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PARENT WEEKEND 2023

Something powerful happens when people learn they aren't alone. Parents often feel they are the only ones who are struggling to the point of sending their kids to Patch. They may be criticized for their parenting skills and then judged for sending their kids away. Sure, they know there are other parents in the same situation, but they've never met them ... until Parent Weekend.

Parent Weekend isn't new to Project Patch, but we hadn't been able to hold a session since 2019. The goal of Parent Weekend is to support the parents and help them prepare for their child to return home. Time is divided between classroom sessions, group builders, worship, and time with their kids. A mom shared, "It gave me a better perspective of what day-to-day life is like here."

Sessions include a summary of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT is our emotion regulation model), sharing our faith with our teens, building connections through Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI), and helping teens who struggle with technology. These interactive sessions let parents know what their kids are learning and ways to support their growth when they return home.

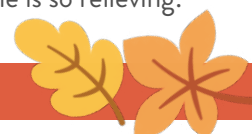
Parents especially enjoyed the group builder during which their teen joined them for a fun but challenging activity. "It shows and builds communication skills and teamwork," commented one of them. Seeing their teens having fun and communicating well was a bonus for the weekend.

Several parents even indicated that they wished they had more time with their teens. This might not sound astonishing, but given the state of many of their relationships when they arrived at Patch, it demonstrates how much their relationships are improving. During breaks, parents joined their kids playing on the sports court, hung out in the dorm, sat on swings, and walked the campus. They spent mealtimes talking with their teens, then helping do dishes and clean-up.

When they arrived on Friday afternoon, the parents were strangers, unsure of how to interact and only there because their kids were at Project Patch. Two days later, they hugged, shared contact information, and made plans to meet again. They left Project Patch, equipped by all they had learned and encouraged by the fact that they weren't alone. One dad summed it up like this: "Finding out we are not alone is so relieving!"



CELEBRATING PATCH



It's almost time for a milestone birthday for Project Patch! Next year marks 40 years of helping teens and families.

In 1984, Tom and Bonnie kept getting asked to help struggling teens, but their home was already full. They asked others to help. This launched the first version of Project Patch and functioned as a referral and placement program for struggling teens. Many teens were helped, but the need became too great for this circle of loving Christian homes. Project Patch version two was born in 1989 with a gift of 116 acres in southern Idaho. Since 1993, over 1,000 teens have been physically, emotionally, and spiritually renewed through a program that started from a couple's willingness to serve God's teens.

Will you help us prepare for a special year of celebrating all that God has done? Will you join us in serving the next generation of teens? We would love to hear from the teens, families, and staff whom the ministry of Project Patch has helped. Please share your stories, memories, and pictures at www.projectpatch.org/memories.

40 years

SCHOOL BREAK

Teens at Project Patch go to school year-round – 10 weeks in, followed by a 3-week break. Like teens everywhere, our students count the days until their break starts. In addition to the possibility of a short home leave during school breaks, our students might be found catching up on schoolwork, completing work projects, having some fun on campus, or going on trips with those in their dorm.

This past school break was no different. While the boys went bowling, took a hike, had a day at the park, and enjoyed extra free time on campus, the girls took an exciting camping trip to Bruneau Dunes. The trip was not only a time for these students to recharge and prepare for the new term but also an opportunity to bond with one another, enjoy the outdoors, and learn some new skills. Prior to the summer camping trip, most of the girls had never camped before or, if they had, had never been responsible for the logistics of it all. By the time the weekend was over, every one of them knew how to put up and take down a tent, had helped cook over a campfire, and understood the importance of putting trash and food away to keep animals out. And if you leave your camp chair out overnight, you will have a wet chair to sit on in the morning! In addition to the basic camp skills they learned, on this particular trip they also enjoyed sand sledding on the tallest single-structured sand dune in North America, a peak rising 470 feet above the surrounding desert floor. Another highlight was stargazing (see Youth Program Happenings) at the beautiful Idaho skies at the Bruneau Dunes Observatory.

When they returned to the dorm on Sunday, they were all tired but also proud – proud of what they had accomplished. Who knows? A bonus could be a new-found love of a healthy hobby they can enjoy long after their school breaks at Patch are treasured memories.



Sand Sledding



WELCOMING OUR NEW CHAPLAIN

Helping our teens grow spiritually is at the heart of our mission. In fact, every job description has one duty in common: “Encourage spiritual growth in clients.” Additionally, every staff member must live a life consistent with Christian principles and agree to assist with worship activities. This doesn’t mean they have to preach - they can support discussions, read from a book, or help find an inspiring video. Finally, all staff are expected to mentor clients through prayer, Bible study, and one-on-one discussions.

Our chaplain supports our staff as they minister to the kids. They also play a critical role in serving the spiritual needs of our teens. The chaplain is responsible for Sabbath services, Bible class, organization of dorm worship, and meeting directly with teens.

Angelo Acevedo, our chaplain since 2019, is following God’s calling to transition with his family to Mexico City to serve God in the same place he first accepted Jesus as his Savior. Angelo came to Patch in 2016 and faithfully served in the boys’ dorm, including a time as assistant boys’ director, before becoming our chaplain. He will be missed, and appreciates your prayers as he enters this next chapter in serving God.

We are excited to welcome Gary Van Dyk back as our new chaplain. Gary is no stranger to Project Patch. He served as chaplain from 2008 to 2013 and 12 years before that in the dorm. Gary can be hard to find on campus because he doesn’t tend to sit still. He likes to be with the kids and staff as they work, play, study, and relax. He works hard to present the Bible in a way that teens understand and relate to. His sermons are conversational and shaped by his personal study and the needs he discovers while spending time with the teens.

Gary will also play an important role on our prayer team. As chaplain, he will write a short devotional each month to be included in our email newsletter, which shares answers to prayers and requests for prayers. You can join our prayer team at www.projectpatch.org/prayerteam.



Angelo leading prayer for Gary

GIVINGTUESDAY



NOVEMBER 28TH IS #GIVINGTUESDAY. HOW WILL YOU GIVE?
Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference.

Make a difference this GivingTuesday by joining our Prayer Team or donating to the Christmas Fund for our teens!
www.projectpatch.org/PrayerTeam OR www.projectpatch.org/GivingTuesday

WISH LIST

For those who prefer to give toward a specific project, the following list contains items that are needed, yet are not part of the operating budget.

HexClad Pots & Pans Set** - \$700

Washer for Boys' Dorm - \$975

5 Dorm Staff Chairs** - \$75 each

2 Weighted Blanket Covers** - \$35 each

2 Headphones** - \$40 each

8 Snow Gloves** - \$20 each

4 Snow Shovels** - \$50 each

12 Scooter Boards** - \$110 for 6

Music Rights for Chapel - \$150

2 Scheduling Boards - \$150 each

Classroom Smartboard - \$3,000

Pond Improvement Project - \$8,000

** Also available from Amazon at www.projectpatch.org/AmazonWishList

Please note on your gift if you would like it designated for a *specific* Wish List item or the *highest need* Wish List item. If the item has already been purchased, we will contact you for further instructions.

To donate via credit card:
call 360-690-8495

OR

donate online at
www.projectpatch.org/wishlist

OR

mail a check to the address below

CONTACT US

PO Box 820209
Vancouver, WA 98682

info@projectpatch.org
www.projectpatch.org
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PLEASE

Let us know if your address, email, or phone number has changed!

PIECING IT TOGETHER by Chuck Hagele

It seems like just last week . . . the trees bloomed, and fresh leaves weighed down the branches. Was it yesterday that those same leaves provided shade from the hot summer sun? Now, the leaves are golden . . . hanging on while the rain and winds try to rip them from the tree. Like it or not, seasons change, and with them come a loss and a new beginning.

No matter the season, our campus remains an extraordinary place for teens to discover hope and healing.

This edition of PatchWorks feels similar to a changing of the season. Like the season change, our 40th year of ministry has snuck up on us. We mark the departure of Angelo, our chaplain, while welcoming back Gary as our new chaplain. We celebrate the relaunch of Parent Weekend and the impact of bringing parents together.

While seasons change, some things remain the same. No matter the season, our campus remains an extraordinary place for teens to discover hope and healing. Our kids continue to experience a high level of care and opportunities to learn new things and develop lifelong friendships.

There is an ongoing mental health crisis facing teens. The statistics and trends are discouraging. The teens we serve continue to have challenging behaviors, habits, and vulnerabilities. Yet we are not giving up! There is still work to do in this season, and we are committed to faithfully serving the teens and families God places in our care.

Thanks so much for your past support and care. This life-transformative work would not be possible without your financial support. Would you consider making a financial gift as we enter this next season?

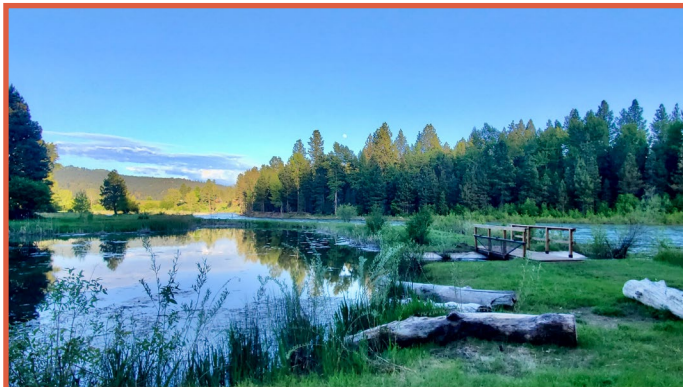


THE ROAD TO PATCH . . . continued from page 1



It's not outdoors, but the chapel is a favorite for a graduate who shared that it's "the place I was most intimate with God. When I needed a Savior most, that's where He was."

Like many others, it wasn't until after Christina's graduation that she recognized the beauty surrounding her and how instrumental it had been in her healing. As she drove down the gravel road, with the cows in the fields and the sun starting to set, her eyes filled with tears. "The most beautiful thing about Patch is you come in with the scenery, and you leave with the scenery," Christina says, "but you're a changed person."



Bridge between the pond (left) and river (right)

If you are ever in the Garden Valley area, drive down our gravel road and experience the positive mental health benefits of spending time on our campus - see the beauty surrounding you, find your favorite place on campus, and maybe experience your own hug from God. Call us at (208)462-3074 to schedule a tour - we'd love to see you!



Project Patch has been partnering with parents since 1984 to help teens with behavior problems. Parents trust our licensed and accredited Youth Program in the mountains of Idaho as a therapeutic place for their teens to gain the insight, skills, and motivation to live a positive life.