

# IN BALANCE TIMES

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From L to R: Luke H, Jackson R, Jonah B, Brady G, Jack C, JP R, Sean C, Gavin K, Parker B, Victor U, Jack S, Sam L, Neil J, (staff) Sharon R

By: Sam L

Every year In Balance puts together a choir of students to sing Christmas carols. Facilitated by Sharon Reynolds, the choir sang on four separate occasions. But to get to those performances, the choir had to practice their Christmas songs, with a backbone of musicians from Sharon's music class, and some passionate volunteers from the rest of the campus. Sharon reserved the schoolhouse for a couple of afterschool practices, which went very smoothly. Finally, our first performance came at Brother Mark's annual Christmas party in the schoolhouse. The party set the stage for the first time the choir performed in front of anyone other than themselves. The performance was very good; the crowd of students and faculty really enjoyed it, and the end of the performance was greeted with applause.

The next performance for the choir was the special one. Every year In Balance facilitates an Adopt-A-Family program, where a couple of families with children with mental and physical disabilities, are given a Christmas they probably couldn't have themselves without help. The choir was given the opportunity to play a couple of songs for the kids and their families. Due to space limitations, the choir was split into two different groups. The first group played for a child with issues with audio stimulation, so they played very softly and smoothly to prevent from overstimulating the child; the result was a success and the children, and their families loved the performance. The second group did not have any children with any disabilities involved, so the choir performed normally, and that too was a success.

Finally, the last two performances took place. First, we

performed at a local nursing home and then the Sierra Vista Mall. When the choir arrived at the nursing home, we already had a crowd, and after waiting for a couple of minutes, the show began. The choir played more quietly because some of the people had hearing aids. By the end, the residents of the nursing home had grins on their face and the Christmas spirit within them. As

the choir left, they shook the hands of all the residents wishing them a Merry Christmas. Finally, the choir arrived at the mall where there was already a crowd of InBalance staff to cheer them on. The performance was loud and energetic and full of applause, a truly good way to end the caroling tour. Of course, none of this could be possible without the help from Sharon and Jim Reynolds and Sally, as well as the Barrasso family and the Children's Hospital in Tucson, who put this whole thing together. Thank you and Merry Christmas!





# Adopt-A-Family



Front L to R: Tony Barrasso, Connor C, Ian L, Patrick Barrasso,  
Middle L to R: Max C, Sam L, Parker B, Brice S  
Back L to R: Jack S, Henry F, Gordon S, William A, Betsy Barrasso,  
Sharon Reynolds and Jeff Hoey as Santa

By: Brady G

When we all found out we would be participating in the Adopt a family project everyone was super excited and ready to shop. On Wednesday morning Sean, Karsten, Gordon, Alex, Jack, Ian, Max, and I all packed in the van and headed to Walmart to begin shopping for our family. When we got to Walmart, we split into two

groups and headed to the clothing department. We shopped for the kids the parents and any siblings that they had. We got them all a couple of pairs of clothes and some pajamas and then headed to the fun stuff - the toys! Like little kids again we were running up and down the aisles trying to find the best presents for our family, and an hour or so later the shopping carts were full of gifts that ranged from talking toy dogs to a Barbie. Now that we were done shopping the wait began until we could finally go meet these families and give them their gifts.

It was Friday morning, and everyone knew what that meant, loading up and heading to Tucson to give these awesome gifts and sing Christmas carols. When we arrived in Tucson, we unloaded the gifts and set them all up in the room we would be presenting them in. A few minutes later the families came in and grabbed some food, and we all began to sing Christmas carols. It was awesome to see one of the disabled girls laughing and clapping during our whole performance. Now the moment we all have been



waiting for - the gift opening! Although it was hard for the two girls to show how they felt about the gifts you could see in their face how happy they were. After the two girls opened their presents the moms opened theirs, you could see in their faces how extremely grateful they were for us and how much this meant to them. Doing this, and seeing their reactions was such a great experience. It felt so good to give back and help the families in need.





# Winter Wonderland



## IBA Christmas Spirit





# Horse Trek

By: Lane N

Horse Trek departed December 7th and returned the 10th. It was the best experience I have had on the Ranch. Michael, Rene, and Krystina do an amazing job. When we arrived at the campsite, we started setting up camp. Our main task was to build a fire pit. Our group did a great job and credit goes to Trey for coming up with an idea to put seats inside the pit. It



L to R: Trey P, Harrison L, James H, Sean C, Jonathon L, Ryan L, Lane N, Gordon S, Luke W

and their strengths. Sunday was my favorite day. We got to see a little bit of Michael's and

their fears of falling off. When we got back, we went on an hour solo by ourselves building earth



made our groups amazing. The next day we went on a long trail ride up the mountain. We got to see Arizona and all its beauty. We got back to camp and did a neat group. It was so cool because we got to see other kids

Rene's competitiveness through a game of Cowboys and Indians. After that, we went to a playground, and we all got to do a group canter. All the guys did such a great job with controlling their emotions on their horses and facing

sculptures about our processes. It was amazing to see people's creativity and what helped them change. After that, all the students and staff asked questions and got each student to really think about their sculptures. The last day it was sad to pack everything since I had such a great time. I am extremely grateful to the students for doing a great closing circle and really expressing their love for everybody on the trip. I am also grateful to the staff for being there to teach us and to help us have a lot of fun. All in all, it was a great trip, by far my favorite so far.





# Level 4 Retreat



Front: Staff-Austin; Middle L to R: Ian L, Nathan A; Back L to R: John E, Nathan T, Connor C, Brady G

By: Connor C

Early in the morning, five other students and I hopped in a van and headed off to Utah. It was a long drive, but eventually, we reached Zion National Park. We arrived at a campsite and set up our tents. The first night we roasted marshmallows and set our intentions for the trip. The next day, we woke up early, ate some oatmeal, and prepared to hike. We packed our backpacks to the brim with snacks and our hiking bladders up with water. We hopped on a bus that took us to the bottom of the mountain. As we journeyed up the mountain, we took many spiral corners and switchbacks. Upon reaching the top, the view was fantastic. I could see where our campsite was and how far we climbed. The bodies of water and canyons were absolutely beautiful. When we descended back down, we decided to climb an even bigger mountain as an entrée. I complained at the thought of it, but once I was climbing the switchbacks and trails with my brothers who were joking around, it wasn't so bad. Getting to the top and eating lunch was awesome, too. After we

made it to the top, took some pictures and made it back down, we were all exhausted. We gathered around the fire, ate dinner, and we listened to a story. We shared about how we could relate to the story and started to think about our own stories and what they would look like. Upon getting some rest and waking up the next morning, it was the big day. This day was the day we would hike through the river narrows and make it to the waterfall. We rented special waterproof shoes and suits and even got some walking sticks. We took the bus to the waterfront and set out on our trek. We spent hours hiking through the miles of very cold narrows. At some places the water went deeper than my height and the current was strong. We stopped halfway and ate lunch on a big boulder in the middle of the river. We continued on until we reached the waterfall. It wasn't very big, nor was it much of a sight, but the sense of accomplishment

was more important. When we got back to camp, of course we started a fire and ate some food. We had been working on writing our own life stories and how they relate to the one we heard earlier in little notebooks that we were given. We finished up our stories and ended the night with s'mores like always. We packed up camp the next morning and headed off to Flagstaff. We set up camp on a little trail and headed off into town. We stopped at a landmark with lots of tourists. We climbed to the top and had a group where we all shared our stories. We ate dinner at this amazing brick oven pizza place where we demolished 75 chicken wings. We returned to camp and had an early night. We woke up very early in the morning and headed back to the Ranch. Overall, this was my favorite level retreat by far. It was definitely the most fun out of all of them. I really enjoyed spending time with the therapist Matt and the TL staff Austin. They are such fun guys to hang around with and share laughs with. This was also a very small trip of kids which made the brotherhood and connections very strong. We all got along very easily and just had a chance, as upper levels, to kick back, relax, and have some fun together. We also got to share our vulnerabilities through sharing our stories, and I gained some deeper relationships with people I didn't know too well before. And of course, the best part was eating some great food throughout the entire weekend!





# Adventure Gallery







## Level 3 Retreat



L to R: Puma P, Gordon S, Alex G, Karsten H, Kyle R, Henry F, Max C, Jack S, Gavin K, Eric M, Nick M

By: Alex G

While loading into the van on Friday, I was a bit skeptical about what the weekend would bring. I knew little about the trip besides knowing that we were going to have a very long group after a very long car ride. Since this trip was my third time up at the cabin, I was already quite familiar with Pinetop, AZ. This time of year, it is beautiful up there. I love to see the juxtaposition of the evergreens and the changing colors



of the deciduous trees.

I learned so much about myself on this trip. Sarah's groups, while very long, kept us on the edge of our seats while she pulled information from the depths of our minds. She included activities in each group to keep all types of learners engaged. Ather, a staff member who has taken this trip with Sarah before, told us about his experience and brought a lot to our groups. Jess, a relatively new therapist here, went through the experience for the first time with us. It was empowering to see. Saturday evening, we ventured into town for some authentic Mexican food. We dined on massive burritos in a brilliant, colorful restaurant. Sunday, we were given some time for introspection and meditation by a pond where I was engulfed by the sweet butterscotch smell common to the sky-high ponderosa pines that dominate this region.

In our free time, some watched ro-



mance movies or relaxed in the hot tub, while others played basketball, worked out, or slept. This trip brought us closer because we made ourselves vulnerable with what we shared about ourselves, and we did a lot of fun activities together. On Monday morning, we drove back to the Ranch and shared our experience with the campus. This opportunity fortified in me the desire to become a better person and help others.



# Getting Ready for: Kenya

By: Jackson R

This year for the international trip we will be going to Kenya. We will be doing service, climbing Mt. Kenya and much more. To prepare for the trip, there is a lot of learning and exercising. Every month for the past three, we've been doing hikes around Arizona. The first hike we went



on wasn't easy, it got cold and windy but sunny at some parts. It was a lot of climbing up obviously, but it felt good once we made it to the top. Not a lot of people went on the first one because most of us were sick. On the second hike, it wasn't as bad, everyone went this time, and we



filled up one and a half vans. We hiked Finger Rock in Tucson. It was colder because we got there in the morning, but as the day went on it got warmer and windier. Just like the last hike, it was very uphill, but the very little flat parts we had were rewarding. When we reached the top, everyone was exhausted and ready to get dinner. We haven't been on the last hike yet. I've heard that it won't be as bad or as long. We've also been preparing for the trip academically. Wendy prepared a class where we do assignments to get to know more about Kenya, the culture, and the food. If we complete the class, we earn half a credit for either Social Studies or English. I think the classes have been very interesting and we get to know what

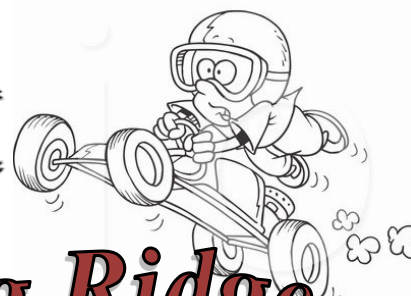
it's like, knowing the environment, the food, and the climb we're doing. I think all the preparation we've been doing is worth it and has prepared us for the challenges and the fun ahead of us.





# CRACKERJAX

## with Spring Ridge



By: Connor C

Early in the morning, 12 students, including myself, embarked on a long drive up to Phoenix. We were on our way to meet up with some of the girls from the Spring Ridge in Prescott. After the long drive, we met up at this fun park called Cracker Jax. We introduced ourselves to all the girls and then set off to have fun. We did activities like go-karting, playing mini golf, doing bumper boats, and much more. My favorite was the go-karts and getting to ride with some of the girls and just have fun and share some laughs. It was definitely a blast to race and compete



with everyone else. After we ran out of all our tickets, we went to the tables that were reserved for us, and we shared some pizza together. After we finished our food, we said our goodbyes which were sad, but we all knew we'd see them again on another outing. In the past, I had gone on previous events like this and even went to prom. A lot of the guys were nervous, including me, since they haven't really talked to any girls sober in such a long time. It's a very nerve-racking and uncomfortable situation at first, but you feel so much better and stronger after pushing yourself. Getting to know some of the girls there was honestly so cool. I hung out with a handful of them, and it was probably one of the first times in my life where I was interested in our conversations and in their lives. It was also really cool to relate and connect to them about what you're going through right now in this stage of life. This opportunity to make these connections with girls while you're sober is super important. It really sets you up for life in recovery

after the Ranch. A few weeks after this event, I received some letters from some of the girls. On my most recent home visits when I had my phone, I even stayed in contact with a girl I met at this event. The connections and friendships you build with these girls while sober are everlasting and really help you overcome your obstacles and insecurities. Like I said before, getting to hang out with these girls sober and just have fun is such a relief and important experience for us boys to have. Overall, this was my favorite Spring Ridge outing and I had a blast.







# Carving Creativity







# Fowl Play



*Nick M*  
11-8

*William A*  
11-17

*Kyle R*  
11-28

*Jasiah W*  
12-4

*Max C*  
12-11

*Sean C*  
12-12

*Eric M*  
12-13

*Toby G*  
12-15

*Sean G*  
12-22

*Phineas J*  
12-27

*Ryan L*  
1-20

*Jack C*  
1-22

*Chuck K*  
2-1

*Sage W*  
2-25





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