



Coming Home

News from The Bishop's Ranch

Welcome, Bishop Austin Rios



We are thrilled to welcome the Rt. Rev. Austin Rios as the ninth Bishop of California and the new Chairman of The Bishop's Ranch Board of Directors. Installed on August 11, 2024, Bishop Rios brings a rich and diverse background to his

role. Born in Texas, he is of Mexican-American heritage on his father's side and of Scottish and English descent on his mother's side. Bishop Rios is the first Latino elected bishop in the Diocese of California. Though English was spoken at home, he embraced his heritage by learning Spanish at an early age and later learned Italian as an adult, becoming fluent in both languages. His proficiency in Italian was honed during his 12-year tenure as rector of St. Paul's Within the Walls Episcopal Church in Rome, Italy.

Bishop Rios earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina, and a Master of Divinity degree from The Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas. He was ordained a priest in 2005. He is married to Maleah Rios and has one child in her first year of college in England

In September, Bishop Rios joined us at The Bishop's Ranch for the DioCal Clergy Retreat, where he spent time connecting with clergy from across the Diocese. Earlier in the summer, he also visited with our youngest group of campers, ages 9-14, participating in morning activities, chapel services, and leading a lively Q&A session. You can read more about this special time on page 4.

We look forward to Bishop Rios's leadership and his contributions to the mission of The Bishop's Ranch as we continue to provide hospitality that nourishes the spirit, mind, and body.

The Legacy of Dr. Martin L. Griffin

Aaron Wright, Executive Director



This year, we bid farewell to a true giant in our community. Dr. Marty Griffin, long-time supporter and Ranch Board member, passed away just shy of his 104th birthday, leaving behind a legacy that has profoundly shaped not only The Bishop's

Ranch, but the landscape of Sonoma County.

Marty's connection to The Ranch began during his medical practice in Marin when he was called to attend to then Bishop Karl Morgan Block. Bishop Block shared with Marty that he had purchased sixty-three acres on Westside Road in Healdsburg that would become The Bishop's Ranch.

Captivated by the area's beauty, Marty became The Ranch's neighbor when he purchased the adjacent property in 1961. He restored the hops-drying barn, registered it as a California Historical Landmark, and established the Hop Kiln Winery. His efforts contributed to the area's designation as a National Historic Trust Agricultural District.

Marty's commitment to environmental conservation included tireless efforts to protect the Russian River from gravel mining and aquifer degradation. In 1990, he donated forty-four acres along the Middle Reach of the river to the Sonoma Land Trust, creating the Griffin Riparian Preserve. This preserve, fed by Griffin Creek flowing from Lower Lake on The Bishop's Ranch, is part of a watershed serving over 600,000 people in Marin and Sonoma counties.

Through a conservation easement Marty gifted the 23 acres known as Gina's Orchard to The Ranch as part of his commitment to preserve and protect our watershed for future generations. Each year The Ranch welcomes local elementary students to experience Gina's Orchard and learn about the importance of environmental stewardship through our watershed education program.

Known as "the doctor with mud on his

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On The Trail Lay Down Your Burdens

A Regular Column by Greta Mesics



Pack it in/ pack it out. We all know that fundamental rule of tromping out into the natural world. Because we do our best to follow that rule at The Bishop's Ranch, there is very little litter on The Ranch's trails. You will find lots of interesting leaf mold, fungi, and scat in the process of constant compost, but not much from humans except footprints.

That is why I was surprised to find a folded note on the side of a trail a few weeks ago. I picked it up and commented to my hiking pal, "Oh, I bet this is either a poem or a grocery list." It was neither.

It was a confession of deep sadness and self loathing, perhaps one of the heaviest burdens a human can carry. I read it and wept.

I did not know what to "do" with it; so I followed the rules and packed it out.

Perhaps I should have left it behind to decay amongst the leaf litter?

I know the writer's burden was too heavy, and they could not pack it out, so perhaps they unburdened themselves to the best of their ability by leaving the note on a trail. I pray that act eased some of their load.

Sometimes, on life's trails, a burden gets too heavy to carry. Sometimes we need to leave that burden behind for someone else to pick up or to just decay into the earth.

I am glad I was able to help carry some of the note-writer's burden by witnessing it and offering a prayer

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. And, ye shall find rest for your souls."

And I am glad the tended trails of The Bishop's Ranch and others in this world offer a sacred place for those with burdens to leave it all behind.

It is ok. Leave it on the trail.

Key Ranch Updates and Improvements

The Facilities and Land Team and the Housekeeping Team are always working to maintain and improve The Ranch's many spaces. Thanks to the generosity of the Ranch community and the hard work of both teams, we have completed the following repairs and improvements and replacements so far this year:

- Reroofed Cottage Two
- Replaced the boiler in Harrison House
- Hired the Goat Vegetation Management Team
- Reroofed Harrison House and replaced the pool solar heating system
- Repaired the asphalt in the main parking lot
- Patched and improved the pavement transitions on the upper campus
- Updated and re-stripped the ADA parking on the upper campus
- Replaced two work trucks
- Installed two Barn Owl boxes on campus
- Installed 2 new universal EV chargers in the upper parking lot
- Reroofed and made structural repairs to the office behind the Ranch House
- Replaced three large format valves on the main water line
- Carried out extensive tree removal and trimming at Kip Cottage and the Pavilion
- Replaced the Ranch House dining table
- Reupholstered 6 Ranch House dining chairs
- Replaced 4 mattresses in the West Wing
- Updated housekeeping inventory including 100 towels, 25 sets of sheets, one vacuum and various kitchen wares for the Ranch House and Pavilion
- Replaced 8 bed covers around The Ranch with quilts lovingly made through the Ranch Community Quilt Project



Harrison House roof replacement

Twice the Joy at READ Camp

Ellie MacLean, Summer Camp Director

Giggling shrieks, joyous shouts, and the creak of the tire swing score the after-lunch excitement of READ Camp. It's over 95 degrees, but READ campers are unencumbered by the still-rising temperatures. They know that pool time is next and that they'll be able to swim and play in the cool water until the bus arrives to take them home.

The pool is an essential part of READ Camp, but it isn't the focus, at least for those of us who spend the year planning and preparing for camp. As the name implies, READ Camp emphasizes reading and literacy in a joy-filled summer camp environment. Mornings are spent in Reading Rotations that cultivate excitement and confidence in reading aloud and creative writing, while afternoons are filled with pool time and crafts.

It's a formula for day camp that has been honed over the years by camp staff and volunteers, with input and support from Healdsburg Unified School District (HUSD). What began as a collaborative effort between The Bishop's Ranch and HUSD to provide fun-filled afternoons to summer school, students READ has become a fully realized literacy-based day camp program run by The Ranch in partnership with HUSD. READ is provided at no cost to HUSD elementary school students, and we do our best to register campers who will benefit most from the literacy programming and who might not otherwise be able to attend summer camp. The Bishop's Ranch can offer this opportunity to our local community because of the generous financial support of The Guardsmen Foundation, the Maria Kip Orphanage, The Josephine Leiser Foundation and W. Lynn McLaughlin & David L. Webb

This year marked an exciting expansion of READ, as we offered two weeks of camp instead of one. As changes go, it was incredibly successful. We ran two full weeks of camp, with wait lists for both sessions. A full READ Camp consists of 55 campers, many of whom attended both weeks.

In addition to expanding our sessions, we reinvigorated and polished Read Camp's literacy programming by enlisting talented volunteers and staff long before summer began. Greta Mesics, Liam & James Goff, and Diego Gonzalez contributed their considerable gifts and experience to creating intentional programming for our morning Reading Rotations. Those efforts fostered a Read Camp environment where campers felt safe and supported enough to experiment freely with the written word.

These experiments were shared with the entire camp community on the final day of each session

Summer Camp by the Numbers

186	Total Number of Campers
89	Number of New Campers
21	Number of Camp Staff
11	Number of Returning Camp Staff
5	Number of Adult Volunteers
12	Number of Intergenerational Campers under age 12
\$27K	Number of Partnership Funds granted for BREAD / Intergenerational Camp
\$64K	Number of Partnership Funds granted for READ Camps
\$91K	Total Partnership Funds granted

Number of laughs, pool splashes and memories made: Countless



READ campers enjoy the hammock during a rotation

at an open mic/campfire sing-a-long. Burbbling chatter and occasional cutting "shushes" filled each lull as counselors encouraged campers to share their creations from the week. Some kids leaped at the opportunity to read their work aloud, while others slowly arrived at the confidence needed to stand up in front of their peers. Campers read poems on personal identity, losing loved ones, interpersonal drama, and reflections on the natural world. Each reading was received with cheers and claps from peers and occasional emotional whoops from counselors and volunteers.

Hearing camper stories in such an open and joyous setting was a privilege and many of the words I heard still sticks with me weeks later. One piece in particular resonated, as it mirrored my own first experience as a camper at The Bishop's Ranch more than a decade ago. This camper's poem was short but effective, communicating an essential sentiment: "*Stepping off the bus each morning feels like coming home.*"

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Coming Home

A newsletter about life at
The Bishop's Ranch

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your contact info and
communication preferences:
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Camper Q & A with Bishop Rios



Bishop Rios leads a Q & A at BREAD

In June, Bishop Rios and his wife Maleah visited The Ranch for their first visit since Rios was ordained as Bishop of The Diocese of California. They spent the morning with our BREAD Discovers and Adventurers, ages 9-12, and participated in many of the daily activities of Camp. Before lunch, Rios invited the campers to participate in a Q & A session. They were delighted to ask him everything from the silly to the serious. Included here is a portion of the Q & A.

Camper, age 11: How long have you been a Bishop?

Bishop Rios: I was ordained as a Bishop on the 4th of May, so that's two and a half months. I have been a priest for 19 years and a deacon for 19 years.

Adult Volunteer: What is something you wish to leave us with, from your time at BREAD Camp?

Bishops Rios: Well, first, I definitely like camp music, so I have really enjoyed signing with you and learning the specific traditions of this place. I come from a Camp in Western North Carolina where we have similar kinds of special things to us, and I see some nice crossover. I have really enjoyed that larger sense of Camp manifesting here.

I guess Camp is one of the things in my life that has meant so much to me because I experienced Camp as a place where I could be myself and be honest about myself, where I was appreciated, accepted, and encouraged. And I look around the world, and sometimes that's not something the larger world gives to us at different points in our lives. So I think one of the things to do is that if you find your time here is meaningful and it gives you an energy to continue throughout the rest of year, then invite others into this space who might need to be their authentic selves as well.

Camper, age 9: What's your favorite snack?

Bishop Rios: oh, good one, okay? It's really important, though, savory or sweet because I have different ones?

Camper: Sweet!

Bishops Rios: Okay, first, sweet. My favorite sweet is ice cream, (*insert a cacophony of "oh's," "ah's," "me too," and "yum"*) and my favorite savory is popcorn. And, my favorite day is when I combine popcorn with Steen's Ribbon Cane Syrup and make sugary popcorn balls because then I get salt and sugar at the same time, and I'm really happy.

Camper, age 11 Do you speak any other languages?

Bishop Rios: Si!, Claro que si, Espanol y tambien Italiano. So I speak three languages.

Camper, age 13: Where did you used to live and why did you want to become the Bishop here instead of where you were?

Bishop Rios: I was born outside of Houston, Texas. My father's side of the family is from Texas, but also what used to be greater Mexico, so our family history goes back to that Rio Grand Valley on either side of the border. My mother's home base was in northern Louisiana, so I spent a lot of time in my early life in northern Louisiana and east Texas, and thought that was what the world was. Before my 8th grade year, we moved to Wisconsin...it was very different. That was my first cross-cultural experience... I learned a lot from that experience – that different cultures can be ok, it's different but okay. I then moved to North Carolina, which is where Maleah is from. I went to college there and my parents move there and still live there. And, I lived in Rome for 12 years before this. I've lived in Mexico and in Spain as well.

So, in all of that journey, you asked "Why here?" Well, one of the reasons I said yes to potentially becoming the next bishop is because I served in so many parts of the church and I've experienced so many parts of the world, and that large breadth of human beings and the ways in which they are. I felt like the diversity of the Diocese of California specifically was something that was close to my heart. And, I have seen how beautiful the world and the church can be when people who seem like they don't have anything in common discover that they actually do and work together towards something larger than themselves. Seeing that happen in these different churches where I have worked gave me strength and courage to imagine that that's something that would be meaningful to the people of God here in the Diocese of California.

Camper, age 14: How long can you be our Bishop?

Bishop Rios: Great question! Ok, so as in most things there are multiple answers but I will give you one. Technically you can serve in our church right now until you are 72 years old, that's what it says on paper, right? But, I would say my own sense of serving in this position is I would like to serve in this position as long as it is helpful to the larger diocese. So, there may come a time in which someone else's vision and energy is more important that what I am called to right now. And I hope, with God's help, I'll be able to discern that and be able to make a transition like we just did.

After the Q & A, Bishop Rios and Maleah joined campers for Lunch in The Refectory.



Bishop Rios and wife, Maleah enjoy lunch with several BREAD Campers

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Late Fall & Winter Programs at The Bishop's

Quiet Days in Advent December 6-9, 2024

Join us for our annual contemplative Advent retreat amidst the beauty, peace, and hospitality of The Bishop's Ranch. Curated and overseen by our Chaplain, Fr. Brendan E. Williams, CMR, and other lay leaders, this retreat will offer teaching, guided meditations, spiritual direction, and communal Liturgy. Anne Blanton will offer prayerful movement sessions, and massages will be available by Anya for an additional fee. We invite you to nourish your soul in the depth and contemplative quietude of Advent at the Ranch.

The Wisdom of the Heart December 13-15, 2024

Kaleen Asbo and Robin O'Brien host this annual contemplative advent Retreat where you can experience the ancient treasures of contemplative practices that can nourish your spirit. Days will consist of silent reflections with music, art, nature meditation and poetry as we draw on the wisdom of the mystical traditions. There will be a feast of chanting and singing, Lectio Divina, Visio Divina, a candlelit Taizé service, and the creation of Earth Art mandalas. Deepen your journey during free time by playing in the art room, walking the labyrinth, hiking or reading in front of the fire.



Spirit Guides and Guardian Angels January 17-19, 2025

Former Artist in Residence Lisa Thorpe returns to The Ranch for this much anticipated retreat. Create your own custom icon, imaginary saint or spirit guide in this two-day mixed media workshop that is great for all skill levels. Come express yourself, meet new friends and go home with a custom work of art created on an 11x14 canvas panel.

Ranch Quilt Retreat February 2-6, 2025

Make time for those unfinished projects or new endeavors at a four-night quilt retreat. With all meals provided and no chores in sight, you can truly focus on your passion. This retreat is intended to give you the time you need for yourself without formal instruction or sales pitches and is intended for all skill levels. Come be with old friends, make new ones and share your creativity with other participants.

The Great Search 3 February 11-13, 2025

Led by Celtic teacher, John Philip Newell and his colleague, Cami Twilling, *The Great Search 3: The Quest for Healing and Home*, is the third in a three part series of annual retreats which explore the search for wisdom, meaning and faith. The teachings of this retreat are based on Newell's forthcoming book *The Great Search: Turning to Earth and Soul in the Quest for Healing and Home*.

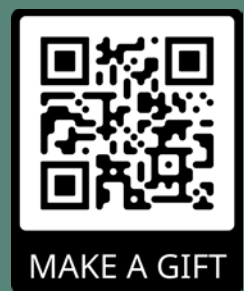
New Wine and New Wineskins: Easter with the Aramaic Jesus April 17-20, 2025

Led by Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz this retreat will follow themes of Easter which include the origins of our embodied life and self in our large, eternal, breathing soul (ruha), the crucifixion felt by our small self (naphsha), and its healing and resurrection through re-discovering its purpose in life. This is a process done not once, but many times, in our lives. The experiential side of the retreat will focus on chant, body prayer, body awareness meditation, and contemplative prayer from the Aramaic Jesus tradition. Teachings will come from Neil's forthcoming book *The Aramaic Jesus Book of Days* (Feb. 2025) as well as his book *Revelations of the Aramaic Jesus*.

Register for any program at:
bishopsranch.org/events/programs/

Donate to the Annual Fund!

Your gift to the Annual Fund helps close the gap between revenue and expenses and helps us carry out the mission of The Bishops Ranch. Scan the QR code or visit bishopsranch.org/support-us



MAKE A GIFT

Marty Griffin Cont.

shoes,” Marty uniquely blended his medical practice with environmental awareness. He prescribed nature walks to his patients and conducted field assessments to understand ecological factors affecting human health. Marty firmly believed that wildlife presence was a key indicator of environmental health, emphasizing that “Preserving the natural world is the true foundation for health.”

Just last year, Marty’s lifetime of protecting watersheds and wildlife and his distinguished career in Public Health were recognized at the NorCal Public Media Food and Wine Awards. I watched Marty receive a standing ovation as he approached the microphone to remind us how important it is to preserve the Russian River watershed and all our natural resources.

During my time at The Ranch, Marty never missed a celebration. I often found him on the dance floor at an Acorn Society weekend or sharing stories, wisdom, and laughter over a meal in the Refectory. I distinctly remember a recent Acorn Society weekend when we were told a few days in advance by his daughter, Joanie, that Marty was having some serious heart issues, was not doing well at all, and would need to stay home. Imagine our surprise when he showed up at the party with a huge grin on his face. Marty’s zest for life was encapsulated in his words to me that day, “I thought I was going to die yesterday, but I would’ve died happy. I feel better today, and I didn’t want to miss the party.” He believed in changing the world “one party at a time,” making celebration an integral part of his impact and philanthropy.

In honor of Marty’s vibrant spirit and enduring legacy it seems only fitting to celebrate his life with a party and continue his legacy by investing in the stewardship of Gina’s Orchard. We plan to celebrate his life and impact on The Ranch and The Russian River Watershed during our Acorn Society weekend June 13-15,



Marty Griffin with Canon for the Environment, Rev. Sally Bingham and his wife, Joyce

2025. Mark your calendars! We are also fund raising in his honor to complete a necessary replacement of “Marty’s Crossing,” the redwood bridge that grants access to Gina’s Orchard. Heavy rains and erosion have compromised the existing bridge, so we have an ambitious goal of replacing it by May of 2025 in order to continue to safely offer watershed education to local elementary students. Join us in making a gift in Marty’s honor to complete this work and continue our stewardship of the watershed he worked so hard to protect. You can donate now at bishopsranch.org/marty-griffin

As we bid farewell to Dr. Marty Griffin, we honor not only the incredible legacy he left behind but also the joy and determination with which he lived. His love for nature, his devotion to protecting the land, and his belief in the power of community are gifts we will continue to carry forward. Marty’s impact on The Ranch, on the watershed, and on all who knew him is immeasurable. Though he is no longer with us, I still picture him smiling and dancing as we all continue his legacy of environmental stewardship.

We Have a New Website

After completing the strategic vision process and adopting a revised mission statement for The Ranch in 2023, we knew it was time to tackle our website, which was nearly 20 years old.

Our goals for the new site were for it to be more user friendly with easy access to the information you, the user, seek: lodging information, camp and program details, donation links, and more.

We also wanted the site to reflect the beauty of this special place with new images, drone footage and an updated color palette.

Special thanks goes out to our photographer Dan Quinones of Pine Photo and Video, Board Member Ryan Robinett who helped with all things technical and especially to our web designer and developer Bronwyn Austin.

Bronwyn offered her services free of charge and dedicated countless hours collaborating with our Marketing and Communications Manager, Brooke Wright to create a website that truly reflects The Bishop’s Ranch.



of the Episcopal Diocese of California

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Coming Home Fall 2024

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Recipes from the Ranch

Black Magic Cake

Makes one 9 x 12 cake or 32 cupcakes

Ingredients:

2 cups sugar
3/4 cup high quality cocoa powder
1 3/4 cups flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
2 eggs
1 cup cold coffee
1 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup vegetable or canola Oil
1 tsp. Vanilla

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. Butter and flour baking pans
3. Sift together sugar and cocoa powder, then mix in remaining dry ingredients
4. In a second bowl mix together the coffee, buttermilk, eggs and vanilla. Whisk until smooth
5. Add dry ingredients to wet mixture and whisk until smooth
6. Pour into prepared pans and bake for 35-45 min. for cake or 20-25 minutes for cupcakes or until a toothpick inserted into center comes out clean.