

## In Balance Welcomes Landon to the Team!!!



Landon Rush joins the clinical team at In Balance Ranch after a year working in the Intensive Outpatient program in Tucson. During this time he has not only shown us the breadth and depth of work he can do with young people and their families, he has also been a tremendously professional, creative and inspirational member of the IOP team.

Landon is an Arizona native and resides in Tucson. After high school, Landon joined the Active Army component as an artilleryman. He fought on Route Irish, in Baghdad, Iraq in 2003-2004, during the beginning of the Iraq War (OIF 1). After completing his term of enlistment in 2006, Landon left his duty station in Strassburg, Germany and returned stateside to start college. During this time, he joined the Army National Guard and is currently in Officer Candidate School to become a second lieutenant. After OCS, Landon's end-state will be as a psychologist in the Army National Guard.

Landon graduated from Prescott College with a Political Science B.A. He found his calling in psychology when he looked back on his life with the military and some other personal experiences, and realized that help is needed for those who suffer. Landon then

redirected his education and is now in his academia for counseling psychology at Prescott College. He is near completion of his Master's degree and starts his Ph.D. in August of 2013 for clinical psychology, with a neuropsychology concentration. He is creating a psycho-educational based website for war veterans, [www.TheWarIsNotOver.org](http://www.TheWarIsNotOver.org), to help educate about PTSD and the related issues. His human subject research stretches from Equine Facilitated Therapy to Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy (VRET). He prefers a CBT approach with his counseling work, but researches the cognitive neuroscience of behaviors and disorders, as well. As for his personal perspective, Landon believes that building from life experiences, whether negative or positive, to create coping strategies is highly valuable. His philosophy is, "life is the greatest educator of all." Landon is dedicated to his work and believes that helping those who struggle is a necessity as a human being.

As for passions and hobbies, Landon has a history with sprint to ultra distance endurance events. His passions are triathlon, duathlon, running, swimming, cycling (on and off-road), motorcycles, classic cars and nature. Landon was on Team USA in 2011 and competed in Gijon, Spain for the United States in the Duathlon World Championship. He believes that physical fitness is an important part to recovery and life.

"I can understand what these young men are going through. I dropped out of high school and struggled with substance abuse myself. I joined the Army as a teenager and thought my troubles were over, but when I returned from war I found myself struggling again. The Army missions I ran while on deployment and my time on the streets of Baghdad, Iraq changed me forever. After losing my best friend in 2008 to a D.U.I. related motorcycle accident and further reflections of friends that I lost through

combat, substance abuse and suicide, I found myself changing career paths. I originally wanted to be a federal agent and my B.A. was geared towards that. I realized that I do not need to be in the fight anymore, but want to help those who are currently fighting with substance abuse, PTSD, depression and any psychological issues. After seeing myself change through education and self-work, I believe that all the young men in this program can make a change, as well. The lessons of life are there, we just have to realize what they are, and use them to help us.

## Congratulations Graduates!!



All the faculty and staff at In Balance Ranch and San Pedro Academy would like to congratulate the April 2012 graduates.

Colin A	Nadim
Michael C	Alejandro
Zachary C	Ryan
Sam	Jackson
Daniel	Semion
Brandon C	Alex M
Justin	Dalton
Jared	Nicholas
James S	Jeff
Sebastian	Brandon M



La Mariposa Resort provided the perfect, serene setting for eleven San Pedro Valley Academy students to participate in a ceremony commemorating their dream of graduating from high school. Two other students also earned their diplomas, although they were unable to attend the ceremony. Parents, siblings, extended family members and friends joined in the celebration. A gorgeous Tucson sunset provided the perfect backdrop to this important rite of passage for the new graduates.



Each student composed a speech to share with the attendees. Most of the graduates' speeches focused on the struggles they had endured with drug/alcohol addiction, experiences with school failure and resulting low self-esteem. A prevalent theme of the students' presentations was the difficulties they encountered in a traditional high school setting and their reluctance to believe they could successfully graduate and go on to college. Many expressed their satisfaction at achieving high grades and their excitement for their future plans, which they shared with all in

attendance. The following excerpt from one student's remarks exemplifies the difficulties our students typically face and the significance of achieving this important milestone:

*"Behold I do not give lectures or a little charity,  
When I give I give myself"*  
-Walt Whitman

I truly believe this is the only way I can give. Prior to enrollment at In Balance, I was able to see the reality of this. I put my all into acrobatics, and there I strived and reached the top. When I put my effort in to some activity, I would I reach my goal or do all that I could to reach it. My success was in my own hands and due to my determination.



Unfortunately, my focus was not always on what was in my best interests. At first, my priorities in high school were not well focused. I began priorities began to fixate on unhealthy activities, which took its toll on me and all I worked towards.

When I arrived to the Ranch, I remade my determination to achieve my goals in life. San Pedro Valley Academy has given me the opportunity to graduate high school with a GPA that before was slowly diminishing. I have been able to complete my senior year, as well as improve on my previously completed courses. My teachers have provided me with the assistance I needed to finish high school, prepare for college, and continue toward my

goal of higher education. I have also been given the privilege of helping others to achieve similar goals.

I would like to thank my family for supporting me through my education, recovery, and life, all the teachers at San Pedro Valley Academy, and lastly, Patrick Barrasso, for if there was no In Balance, I don't know where I would be today. So, thank you. (Brandon M.)

It is indeed rewarding to be able to help these fine young men rediscover their innate talents and encourage them to follow their hearts and dreams to find their passion in life. While parents and students are thankful for the gift of healing and academic success realized at the ranch, the staff is equally thankful for the gift of working with the students and their families.

Lynda Hendricks, MS Ed.  
Academic Director



**Sam**

*“Knowing things won’t change an addict’s life, doing things differently will.”*

This quotation comes from a book by David Sheff that I’m sure some of you are familiar with. It is called Beautiful Boy. Other than the impact that this quote could have on the life of anyone with dependency problems, it has special sentimental meaning to me. One morning while I was in the woods, afraid to change my unhealthy tendencies, I received a letter from my mom with this quote in it. I think mothers just have this kind of psychic telepathy with their sons, because somehow she knew I needed this. I appreciated the meaning behind it so much that I shared it with the group over dinner, and now I’m sharing it again with all of you. Maybe it wasn’t even the quote itself that I loved so much, maybe I just loved the thought of having a mom who was thinking about me; a mom who cared about me and loved me unconditionally.

I understand the sacrifice of turning over the raising of a son to the care of strangers across the country. I understand the pain behind it, and Mom and Dad, I hope you guys understand how grateful I am for your sacrifice. If I was graduating at home, there is absolutely no way I could stand in front of all of you today and say that I earned my diploma honorably. In Florida, I *knew* how to get good grades without cheating. In Arizona, I still *knew* how to achieve these high marks, but this time something strange happened, *I actually started doing things differently*. There were some things that I didn’t yet know how to do: I didn’t know how to stand up and face life like a man, I didn’t know how to confront my problems, I didn’t know how to connect with God, I didn’t know how to be a real friend, boyfriend, son, grandson, brother, nephew, cousin, or citizen, and I didn’t know how to stop using drugs and alcohol. Through my experiences, I have gained not only all of this knowledge, but also I gained the desire,

honesty, open mindedness, and willingness to start doing things differently and change everything about who I thought I was.

On that note, I’d like to thank you Patrick for your vision of San Pedro Valley Academy, and for allowing me to attend. None of this would be possible without you. I’d like to thank Lynda, Christie, Larry, Wendy, and Jackie. You guys are a very versatile team with a lot to offer to aspiring students. Lastly, I’d like to thank my dad, my mom, and my brother. You guys supported me through the good and the bad, and I am forever indebted to you. Thank you and I love you very much.



**Brandon C**

*A jug fills drop by drop.*  
-Buddha

This quote serves as a constant reminder to live your life, and your change, one step at a time. No one can fix everything overnight. My education, mended family relationships, physical and mental recovery, have all come to me drop by drop...and day by day...filling, me up slowly, changing me into the man I am today.

With the slow passing of time and the ever-changing nature of me, it has sometimes

been difficult for me to see how full I have become. Only when I get tangible proof of the new me do I actually start to realize who now stares back at me in the mirror. I do not always believe what others tell me - I must see with my own eyes. This is the constant battle I have to notice myself and to gain self-recognition; like when I step on the scale and see that I have gained 40 pounds, or get my ACT scores back, and to my surprise, see that I did very well. It is in these moments I step back in awe of my accomplishments, and myself and take a genuine look at the man in the mirror and for the first time in a while, be proud of what I see. This day and this diploma are but another drop poured into me, another tangible reminder of how far I have come - another reminder of what I am able to accomplish. If the road ahead can look half as bright as it has in the last 6 months, my journey through life will be overflowing-drop by drop - and day by day - as it is today and forevermore.

First and foremost I want to begin by thanking both of my parents. You both have been an integral part of my education, inspiring me to do great things. I love you both very much.



Semion

*"Just remember, once you're over the hill you begin to pick up speed."*

Arthur Schopenhauer

I have not had the smoothest journey through the educational system. Throughout the majority of my school career I was unmotivated and distracted. I saw ahead of me a very long and tedious journey, and I never quite had the incentive to complete it. All I could really see were the obstacles and reasons why I shouldn't even try. If I ever had any desire to pursue post-secondary education, then it slowly faded until it disappeared completely. Finally I decided to stop going to school altogether, and I dropped out in the beginning of my sophomore year.

When my family realized I had lost sight of all productive future plans and goals, they decided that I needed help and I was sent to In Balance Ranch. There I began to work to achieve a better life. At first, I was very lazy and still couldn't make myself move forward. Then, not without some external motivation, I decided to go for it. The more I worked, the more my attitude started to change. I started to realize that I *can* get the support that I need, and that I *can* pursue my goals and my dreams in life. The harder I worked, the easier it was to keep going. I pushed myself through the many frustrations and difficulties of learning, and succeeded. At this point, I can stand before you all and say that I have the potential to become whatever I desire. Instead of just hoping or wishing to achieve something, I can actually drive myself to achieve it. Now that I am almost at the top of the hill, I can look down and see for myself all of the obstacles that I have overcome and left behind. I can begin to pick up speed and to continue to conquer my future fears and my shortcomings.

All of these things, however, were by no means accomplished without the help and

support of many different people. I would like to thank Wendy, my proctor, for always pushing me to do my best, regardless of whether or not I agreed with her. I would also like to thank my parents. I can say without hesitation that I would not be standing here today without the care and the love that they have shown me unconditionally. I would also like to thank my older brother, for inspiring me to be the very best I can be, and to never settle for mediocrity.

## Letters from Peru



### Travis

The trip to Peru has changed my life in numerous ways. It has made me realize, and truly appreciate, all of the things I have. Going into this trip I wasn't sure if it was going to impact me at all, but it has made an impact in my life that I could not have imagined.

The first experience was a five-day trek and I honestly was about to give up. The high altitude was killing me, and the non-stop miles didn't help. The hike was full of breath taking scenery and incredible spiritual talks that we had among each of us. I knew the hike was going to be a "bonding" experience but nothing like it actually was. I was able to become more vulnerable and open with people I had absolutely no relationship with, I think the beauty of everything around us had something

to do with that. I will never forget some of the talks I had with the students and the staff. There were times when I was ready to give up because I thought it was too hard. However, I got out of my own head and helped someone that was also struggling with the hike more than I was: which helped me get through it myself. I think we couldn't have started the trip off with a better event; it really brought all of us together. After the hike everyone was exhausted, but we all had no problem getting up incredibly early the next morning for service work.

The service work was the part that changed my outlook on life the most. When working at the orphanage's I felt a sense of guilt for all the things I've taken advantage of. The main thing I was guilty of was taking advantage of my family, especially because I was adopted at birth. I am thankful for not having to be in an orphanage at any point of my life, but I have never shown that. Before coming to In Balance Ranch I was very ungrateful, and I always expected to get everything I wanted handed to me. Now I understand how important it is to show gratitude and work for the things I want to achieve.



Another main thing I have never thought about before was just to be grateful to be able to walk on my own, and be able to do things on my own. When we were at the construction site building the school, I was able to see how hard people work for things that won't even benefit

them. They do it because it will benefit someone else in the future. I have had a problem for a long time where I won't do anything unless it benefits me. If I didn't get something out of it, then I wouldn't do it. Now my perspective has changed. It was inspiring to see fathers and random neighbors helping build the school even if their children weren't going to go there, or if they didn't even have children. All of the hard labor that they were doing really inspired me to get out of myself and actually help someone else for once in my life, whether I get something out of it or not.



On our journey to Lake Titicaca I got to see what life is like completely excluded from the rest of the world. Staying with the families on an island in the middle of the lake was incredible. It was awesome to see how they still literally live off of what they can grow, and making the farming tools out of the trees and other resources they have around them. Some of the families had solar panels, but others used candles to light their homes when it got dark out. The islanders did almost everything they needed to with anything they could find around them.

I will never forget the things I saw, heard, and experienced on this trip. It has forever changed my life.



## Tucker

When I first made the decision to go on the international trip to Peru I did it for all the wrong reasons. My main motive for going on the trip was to get off the Ranch for a little while. With that attitude, I wasn't really expecting to get anything out of it. Well boy was I wrong.

Prior to this trip I had never been out of the country so when we landed in Lima it was like a whole different world. All the smells and sounds were so different than anything I had ever experienced. In fact this whole trip was unlike anything I had ever done. My whole life I have all ways been very uncomfortable around kids with disabilities, and when I discovered that we were going to be volunteering at an orphanage for kids with disability's I became very fearful. The day that we arrived at the orphanage I had lots of anxiety about what I was getting into, and before I know it I was put in a classroom. When I saw all of the children I was amazed. Most of these kids had no family and on top of that they suffered from a disability. Even though they had so many obstacles in front of them they were so happy. Seeing that a human being could be in that situation and still have happiness really taught a lesson. The lesson is that no matter what life has thrown at you that you can still have happiness.



Another life changing experience that took place was the AA meeting that we regularly attended during the trip. Going into this I thought the recovery in Peru was going to be completely different than the recovery in the U.S. When we went to the meeting for the first time it was strange. The whole time I had been in Peru everything was so strange to me and when I walked in the door of the AA club house in Cusco everything started to feel different. As I walked in and saw the pictures of Bill W. and Doctor Bob, I felt at home. We made our way up stairs and sat down in the room where the meeting takes place. As I looked around I saw all these foreign faces but what was not foreign is what they have gone through because I know that we have all been through the exact same thing. As the meeting started they welcomed us and people started to share their stories in their language and then the translators recite it in English. I start to hear something so familiar. These people were talking about the same steps that we talk about in the U.S. They have gone



through the same things and are experiencing

the same recovery that we have. What I realized is that the fellowship is the same, no matter if you are in a meeting in Tucson or one in Cusco Peru it's the exact same.

This whole experience changed a lot of things for me. It has caused me to be grateful for the things I have in life. It has also changed my recovery as a whole. Seeing that the fellowship of AA has made an impact around the globe it has given me hope for my own personal recovery. I came into this trip with skewed motives and left a changed person, and I will be forever thankful for this opportunity.

## Tour of Southern Arizona

Nadim



Every few months, the ranch dedicates a week to learning about subjects that the students are interested in. These are called intensives. These intensives include music, art, culinary, equine, and the tour of Southern Arizona. This time around, I decided that I wanted to learn a little more about the state that I'm living in. Each day, we went to a different place in the area to see what it had to offer.

On Tuesday, we went to Tombstone. First, we took a tour of one of the mines. We learned about the history of Tombstone, why



and how it came to be, and what it had become over the years. After the tour of the mines, we spent a short while walking the streets of town, while Larry told us more of the history and all of the cowboy stories and such. We had a good laugh with the locals when strangers began to notice Dietrich's neon orange, traffic cone-like shoes. Those things were brighter than the sun, and provided a source of entertainment throughout the week. We continued on to see a live reenactment of the O.K. Corral gunfight. The acting was much better than expected, and it turned out to be a lot of fun. We then headed back to the ranch after a lunch in the park and some frozen treats.

On Wednesday, we drove out to Kartchner Caverns. Kartchner Caverns, for those who don't know, is an enormous cave system underneath a hill off the highway. It's full of crazy natural formations, including the 54-foot column deep within. Some of the formations were so strange and pretty that they seemed unreal. It was my second time going to the caverns, but it was just as exciting. The tour guide really jumped on the band wagon with the shoe jokes, which was great. We all had a lot of fun. Afterwards, we had a quick lunch and headed home.



On Thursday, we drove out to Tucson to check out the Pima Air and Space Museum. I don't really have much to say about it, other

than that the tour guide spoke about a lot combinations of random numbers and letters that I didn't understand, such as a 'pk81937j' or something. Meli and Steven tried to make it fun though, and there were a couple of cool exhibits. I really enjoyed the planes that were painted by artists, rather than the planes themselves. I guess I fancy art over aviation.

Friday was the day I'd been looking forward to all week: a trip to Reid Park Zoo in Tucson. As we were walking in, I made a joke about it being so small, and that they probably have a duck exhibit. I found it absolutely hilarious when we actually ran into a duck exhibit inside the zoo. Well, it was a duck and flamingo exhibit, but I thought it was funny. There were some cool animals to check out, like the tigers and jaguars, and it was a good day. We had a lot of fun, and a lot of laughs. After a hot day walking around in the sun, we stopped for some ice cream on the way back. Marlon and Christie make a good team for off campus trips. It was probably my favorite trip of the week.



Overall, the tour was breath of fresh air, and a nice break from the usual schedule of the ranch. I had a great time with my friends and learned some new stuff, too. I'm grateful for the opportunities to go off campus and check out the area we live in, and I would highly recommend it.

## Equine

Max

During the week of intensives the opportunity arises for a few members of the campus to participate in equestrian activities. The partakers in this option were Max, Collin, Alex, Sebastian, and Drew. On the first day the riders traversed a spectacular canyon outside of the historic town of Tombstone AZ. The day began with much like any other; the riders caught their horses and loaded them into a trailer to be transported. The culinary class prepared a wonderful lunch for the riders to eat. With the vast amount of equine skill that they had developed at the ranch, the riders navigated the at times difficult terrain. They crossed a river; which is a body of water the size of which these horses had never seen. The confidence of the riders allowed the horses to endure and ultimately overcome their fears and, in a show of the trust that these horses put in their riders, cross the river. The day was not over until the horses and riders got to unwind in a fun game of tag in which Sebastian (Horse: Boomer) and Alex (Horse: Sugar) displayed their skill by winning the game.



On the second day they went to the Tombstone Livery, a stable that specializes in mounted shooting. They went on a trail ride to the historic and final resting place of the man

who founded Tombstone. They on the trail ride they came across a rock wall up on which were ancient petro glyphs left behind by a tribe of Native Americans a few hundred years ago. On their return from the trail ride they were taught how to run (ride through) a mounted shooting course. They ate burgers prepared for them by the gracious owners of the stables, and finished the day by learning some cowboy history.

Day three was spent riding at the J6 ranch, an equine center with amazing gymkhana (horse competition) facilities which the riders took full advantage of. With the assistance of Denise the riders practiced jumping first which Collin (Horse: Lady) and Drew (Horse: Sophie) excelled in. Next was barrel racing in which Max (Horse: Joy) and Alex (Horse: Sugar) did very well. Once again the day included a game of tag that Sebastian and Drew won. They ended by learning about and riding in a horse drawn chariot.

The final day was spent on a trail ride to the San Pedro River. The riders explored the ruins of a two century old Spanish fort that was abandoned due to issues with the neighboring Apache tribes. Along the river they also saw the ruins that were formerly the town of Contention, the town in which the movie 3 10 to Yuma took place in. The day ended with a fantastic game of tag to wrap up an amazing week with the horses.

## Culinary

David W

Every few months or so In Balance does what they call "Intensives". During these intensive classes you learn about a certain subject you may have a certain interest for. On Tuesday morning I found myself walking into the kitchen with fellow classmates ready to get down and dirty with some cooking alongside

the master chef himself, Aaron He assigned us a task of the utmost importance: making salsa. The kitchen instantly broke into a beautiful harmony of chopping, smashing, and processing, and as we were being blinded by the acidic haze of onions we came to create a thing of magnificence. Then as good farmers we feasted upon what we have come to know and love as salsa.

Aaron then proceeded to show us the ropes of culinary beauty, and how his nimble little fingers prepare the delicacies we devour on a daily basis. Although I would have to say for me and my fellow counterpart, Jackson Hayes, the highlight of the culinary intensive would have to be the empanadas we prepared for the beautiful graduation ceremony we attended on the Wednesday, April 25. This delicate creation needs swift and steady hands to create the precise and deadly form that is the empanada. It is an art. The end result of the preparations I would have to say at first was a mystery, although the final result was majestic. Nothing would have satisfied me more that night than to know that my fellows in the community had a warm and succulent empanada in their belly. For all these experiences I have had the privilege to be handed to me I thank the In Balance Ranch Community and the master himself, Chef Aaron.



## Art

Alejandro

As some of you know, every once in a while, the students get to choose an activity to participate in “intensively”. It lasts an entire school week for about four to five hours a day. This article regards the art intensives participants, a pretty free-based and relaxing class where we can take our art skills in many different directions. This last group of guys was of about thirteen students, all of which seemed to have had a lot of fun. Mostly, people painted, drew, wood crafted and worked with leather; we had the openness to do whatever we wanted, with the great artist and adoptive Grandfather Tom Moxley guiding us and helping us through our work. Tom is still involved with the art world today; he still has a couple of galleries running in Arizona, having had many in the past when his work was being showed around the U.S. Three years ago Tom arrived at the ranch scheduled to work only for the summer, but after that short time he realized he didn’t want to leave all the boys. He’s been here ever since, contributing to the great team of staff we have.

The week looked like listening to some jazz tunes in the art room, setting a jolly vibe, while we all worked on our different pieces rigorously. There was no drama when we all commented on each other’s work offering advice and props inside the artsy haze of the job. Some great work came out of it all like Brandon C’s oil painting of his childhood in a neat and forestry Michigan cascade, or Mike L’s nice and colorful landscapes, and Matt Dr.’s cool belts and leatherwork. Everyone came out with a good piece or two satisfied by the awesome week.



In all, the art intensives are always really fun and entertaining. It is a free and relaxed class like I said, but the freedom has to be earned by mutual respect and diligent work. It was a week to forget about all the stress and school and to focus on the simple and joyous things in life.



## Music

Jack Hay. & Kevin

I have always had a deep love and appreciation for music. However, I never thought I was very musically talented. When I signed up for music intensive I wasn't quite sure what to expect with the entire week. My goals for the week were to start learning how to play the guitar and learn about all different types of music. This was exactly the experience I had.



Casey was our first instructor. I never knew how much knowledge Casey had about music. He showed us a very ethnical video about music in Nigeria. In Nigeria music is not only for pure entertainment but it highly effects the government as well. After watching the video we were all amazed at the influence that music could have. Now, it was time for me to start playing some guitar. Casey was an excellent musician and he was willing to help us with whatever instrument we wanted to learn. We all were interested in the guitar and some with the vocals too. This was my first time actually trying to play the guitar and I felt it went fairly well. We started with some few basic chords. We all started to grasp it pretty fast. It was fantastic to start to see it all coming together.



Later in the Intensive, Rudy began to take over. He worked hard to press upon us the importance of guitar cleanliness and technique, as well as some basic history. We learned

practical things such as changing strings that can trip up most beginning guitarists. It was good to overcome that stump in the road. We watched a video on the guitarists from Led Zeppelin, The White Stripes, and U2. It was cool to see the different guitar styles that each guitarist exhibited. It made it easier for me to think of what style I will choose to adapt to and discover. Overall I loved the music intensive and learned a lot that I hoped to learn, and accomplished very much.

**Sam**



## Students of the Month

**Semion**



**Congratulations & Good Luck to:**

Mike C  
Colin A  
Luke

**Jared**



**A Warm Welcome to:**

Alex D  
Andrew S  
Braden  
Garrett  
Jack  
Jake  
Logan  
Owen

**Words of Wisdom**

Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it. – Confucius