

Mission & Vision Roadmap



Roadmap Purpose Statement

We believe that embracing our God-given Mission & Vision is essential for the motivation of our “Purpose Partners” and its ultimate accomplishment. This roadmap will explain **WHAT** we do, driven by our **MISSION** (our purpose for existence) and **WHY** we do it fueled by our **VISION** (our desired future).

Mission: Our Purpose for Existence

Some brief historical context is needed to fully appreciate why we do what we do today. In the late 1990s, Alliance Redwoods was in a state of disunity and decline. A much-needed turnaround was needed if the ministry was to have a promising future. A search committee was formed out of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the Central Pacific District (CPD) of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) to bring in a new Executive Director. The following criterion was established: the candidate must have a track record of effective leadership, extensive experience in Christian camping and a commitment to the Mission & Vision of the C&MA. The candidate must also meet the requirements for licensure in the C&MA.

In early 1998, Jim Blake was contacted by this search committee. Jim was co-owner of a business he started and was serving at a C&MA church that he and his wife, Christine, had planted in Jackman, Maine. After much dialog and prayer, Jim & Christine responded to God’s call and moved their family across the country in the summer of

1998. During Jim's first year on the job, he worked with the BOT and the CPD to re-craft a relevant mission statement and redefine the core values that would guide the camp prior to the dawn of a new century. While Alliance Redwoods had a rich heritage of fruitful ministry, it would not honor the past by continuing to live in it. After prayerfully trusting God to guide us, the mission statement below was officially adopted in early 1999.

Alliance Redwoods' mission is to be a place of renewal where our guests meet the Creator in His Creation. As an organized camp, we are a facility established for the purpose of providing an outdoor experience with social, spiritual, educational, and recreational objectives.

The first line of our mission statement simply recognizes why generations of guests have been attracted to Alliance Redwoods since 1946. Our spectacular setting under the towering coastal redwoods proclaims the power and majesty of their Creator. Our grounds, set apart for God's purposes, have made Alliance Redwoods a powerful place of renewal for hundreds of thousands of guests!

The second line of our mission statement is easy to gloss over. However, the implications of it are critical for us to comprehend because it provides us with the legal standing to be able to do what we do here today! Author and governance expert, Jim Brown, drove the following point home well in his book *The Imperfect Board Member*:

"Boards are assembled to act as trustees on behalf of the owners they represent be they stockholders or taxpayers in the community. It is easy to identify the owners of for-profit companies – they are shareholders. Identifying the owners of nonprofits can be more difficult. It is helpful to think in terms of purpose-centered ownership".

Trust us; the governmental authorities over ARCG today scrutinize our stated mission (purpose for existence) more than ever before! The second line is what legally qualifies us as an *organized camp* in the State of California with all its privileges and responsibilities. As a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, we are obligated to give back to the taxpayers of our local community by *"providing an outdoor experience with social, spiritual, educational, and recreational objectives."* This is the State of California's exact wording, not ours. The really good news is that this legal mandate fits "hand in glove" with our goal to minister to the whole person. The first thirty years of Jesus' life on earth perfectly illustrated the application of all four of these objectives prior to starting his three-year public ministry:

Luke 2:52 [ARCG notes in brackets]

"And Jesus grew in wisdom [educational] and stature [recreational] and in favor with God [spiritual] and man [social]".

Shared Core Values

What we believe determines what we value and what we value defines what we do organizationally. Two of the seven core values of the C&MA that guided the reinvention process of Alliance Redwoods were:

- Lost people matter to God. He wants them found.
- Achieving God's purposes means taking faith-filled risks. This always involves change.

Alliance Redwoods' unique core values were crafted by the BOT and are summarized as:

- **Developing** aesthetically pleasing and well-maintained retreat facilities
- **Demonstrating** God's love through exceptional Christian hospitality
- **Delivering** relevant programs that make Christ known through His creation

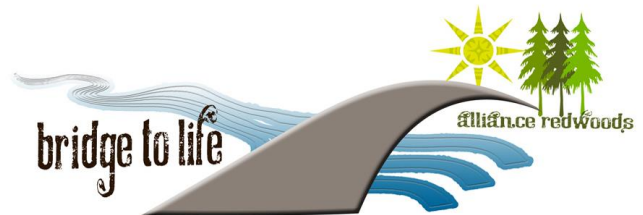
At the time, the BOT concluded that God was calling ARCG to refocus its energies on serving guest groups as its primary focus by excelling in Christian hospitality, which biblically defined means “*loving strangers*” in Jesus’ name. This major shift in mindset ultimately led to the turnover of all but one of the entire camp staff. It also required the discontinuing of many historic programs that had been in decline for many years. The discontinuance of District Family Camp was a prime example. These radical shifts in culture led to a rapid turnaround. Guest Group income that was in decline increased 25% in one year! Had these bold policy changes not been enacted by the BOT, it is doubtful the camp would have had much of a future as we entered the 21st century.

The good news is that today, the majority of our “*Purpose Partners*” (team members) embrace our shared core value to “*demonstrate God’s love and exceed our guests’ expectations by consistently delivering exceptional Christian hospitality.*”

This collective passion led to the adoption of our oft quoted motto, “*Service as Tall as Our Trees*”.

Place - Why is the Setting so Important?

Historically, God has used “place” to connect people to each other and to God (i.e. the Garden of Eden, the Tabernacle, and the Promised Land - to name just a few). Today, we continue to honor the legacy of our predecessors by building on the foundations they laid. Many spiritual giants tirelessly labored



before us here at Alliance Redwoods and as a result, countless life transformations have taken place on these sacred grounds which are set apart for God’s eternal purposes. Since the very beginning, guests crossing the main bridge have commented that they sense “something special” here, which we know to be the presence of almighty God. That is why we call this place the ***Bridge to Life***.

Disney designers Peter & Mel McGowan are both Christ followers and vocal promoters of sacred places. They articulated well how the values of new generations of our guests have shifted.

Builders / Boomers

Big
Excellence
Commodity
Quality-Driven
Cocooning

Generations X & Y

Intimate
Experience
Community
Cause-Defined
Connecting

How has ARCG responded to these shifting values? We have given our grounds, facilities, and activity options a complete makeover! Today when over 50,000 annual guests cross the *Bridge to Life* they are intentionally removed from a state of being a passive, isolated spectators to experience something:

E.P.I.C. - Experiential, Participatory, Immersive, and Connected.

We accomplish this by:

- Removing distractions that prevent our guests from ***connecting*** with each other and their Creator
- Providing them with multiple, high quality, ***experiential*** activities that require ***participation***
- ***Immersing*** them into an outdoor environment that points them to the Creator in His creation

Vision: Our Desired Future

The vision God has given Alliance Redwoods is to impact over one million people worldwide through Christian camping in this “generation” (2010-2050):

- 800,000 locally at our campus in Northern California
- 200,000 globally through international satellite programs

Every year, thousands of guests cross the *Bridge to Life* at Alliance Redwoods and their lives are changed forever. Untold tens of thousands of our guests take next steps in their relationships with Christ, discover God’s direction, meet their mates, save marriages, and overcome addictions. These are just a few examples of the kinds of life changes that happen regularly as our guests experience **re-creation** under the canopy of God’s majestic Redwoods. We intentionally set the stage for life-change by providing world class outdoor adventures in a caring atmosphere of Christian hospitality where our guests arrive as strangers but depart as friends.

Over the decades, surveys consistently indicate that 10% of our guests are spiritually impacted here and that over 5% of them start new relationships with Christ. Therefore, we envision over fifty thousand new friends coming to know Christ as their personal savior when they cross the *Bridge to Life* at Alliance Redwoods during this generation!

Within our cultural context of Christian hospitality, we passionately apply the “Great Commandment”:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). As an application of this verse, ARCG’s ministry primarily exists to come alongside and serve the church. We do this by establishing strong connections with all our guest group leaders and we measure our success by ensuring their retreat goals are met at a level of excellence.

“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:31). As an application of this verse, our Outdoor Education, Zipline and Treehouse Adventure programs primarily serve the unchurched as an extension of the church.

Church Guest Feedback

*“I have been going to Alliance Redwoods since the 1990s when I first stayed there during college retreats with UC Berkeley Intervarsity. I have so many good memories at the site and I am very impressed with all the upgrades and renovations you’ve made to the **place**. Thanks again for providing a fun and safe **place** for people to meet in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless and thank you again for everything,” (return guest).*

How our Vision Spiritually Impacts the Unchurched

Public school Outdoor Education, Sonoma Zipline Adventures, and Sonoma Treehouse Adventures now represent two thirds of our guests. The spiritual objectives for these dynamic and growing programs are to break down barriers and build bridges between the church and the unchurched. We practically apply “the love of strangers” by:

THE 4 ACTS OF LOVE

MODEL DEVELOPED BY THOM & JOANI SCHULTZ



- Seeking to understand
- Authentically welcoming
- Accepting, no matter what
- Enjoy being with people

- Seeking to understand
- Listening before speaking
- Asking good questions
- Offering nonjudgmental responses

- Learning from others with different beliefs
- Learning from people of different ages
- Free from “churchy”, insider language
- Putting people first

- Grasping for God’s power
- Being relevant and realizing that God is relevant
- Expecting God to show up
- Trusting that God will do what only God can do

We passionately believe that God has provided ARCG with a unique setting and calling to be “*salt and light*” to our guests. Our programs are very popular and effective “*pre-evangelism*” tools. When it comes to evangelism opportunities, we need to realize that the population in the Bay Area is estimated to be like the Islamic Middle East. As a result, we invest significant resources into reaching out to our unchurched neighbors!

Unchurched Guest Feedback

“My girlfriend treated us both to a ziplining experience as a birthday present to me. We had two great guides that day. We had never done ziplining, so it was a ton of fun for us. Patricia was in stage four metastatic breast cancer that had spread to her lungs, but she wanted us to do something exhilarating together before she succumbed to the cancer. After fighting this horrible disease for a year, Patricia lost her battle. I miss her greatly. I truly want to thank our guides for doing such a great job - very professional but caring at the same time! This letter is two-fold; it is to thank Sonoma Canopy Tours [now Sonoma Zipline Adventures] for providing this type of fun, but also to commend your employees on a job well done! This company and your guides were part of Patricia’s last fun on this earth and for that I am eternally grateful.”



Our Vision’s Biblical Foundation and Applications

The Sonoma Zipline Adventures’ guest experience was intentionally designed to challenge any false perception there may be about who God is and what His message of HOPE is for them based on the scriptures below and their pertinent applications.

1 Peter 3:15

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

Team member applications:

1. **DON’T** answer the questions no one is asking.
2. **DO** offer every SZA guest a “Why Sonoma Canopy Tours?” brochure.
3. **DO** encourage them to walk the “Redwood Trail” designed to challenge them spiritually.
4. **DO** point out the wonders of God’s creation in divine anticipation that God will do what He promises to do.

Romans 1:20

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse”.

Amos 4:13

“He who forms the mountains creates the wind and reveals His thoughts to man, He who turns dawn to darkness and treads the high places of the earth – the Lord God Almighty is His name”

Our Vision Includes Significant Community Impact

As we sought the Lord for His vision for Alliance Redwoods, we considered the following well-known passage:

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’.”

BUT prior to claiming this promise, we also consider the context where this promise is found! Israel was in captivity in pagan Babylon at the time and God instructed them to do the following:

Jeremiah 29:7

“Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

As an application of this truth, Alliance Redwoods has been diligent to give back to our community in tangible ways that have transformed our community’s perceptions of who we are and what we care about. We are now viewed in a positive light and considered a valuable asset to our local community and economy! A few years ago, when seeking assistance from our county supervisor, he stated, *“I went to every church in the community and asked if they would help me address the significant at-risk youth problem in our community, but no one responded.”* This may not have been a reasonable request of the church, but Alliance Redwoods pledged to take action and has followed through in a big way as a representative and **extension of the church.**

Tangible Benefits to our Local Community and Economy

- **Job Creation** - Alliance Redwoods’ payroll now pumps over \$5 Million annually into the local economy.
- **At-risk Youth Donations** - To date, we have given over half a million dollars’ worth of zipline tours to local, at-risk youth organizations such as Social Advocates for Youth, Our House, California Youth Outreach, foster care agencies and alternative schools (pictured right) that use this experience as an incentive and recognition for accomplishing their program goals (improved attendance, avoiding substance abuse, and increasing grade point averages). We also donate zipline tours to local nonprofits for fundraising purposes.
- **Enhanced Tourism** - We are members of Sonoma County Tourism’s Visitor Center and the Chamber of Commerce for several regional cities. Tourism professionals who promote Sonoma County all over the world frequently share that Sonoma Zipline Adventures is one of the leading attractions to Sonoma County.
- **Support Local Businesses** - We have been told that our zipline tours have revitalized Occidental’s economy. We were a charter member of **BEST (Building Economic Success Together)** - a business and county government partnership established during the “great recession”, to enhance the economic climate for new and existing business developments in Sonoma County.
- **Emergency Evacuation Center** – In recent years, Alliance Redwoods has served as a base of operation during devastating local wildfires serving over 4,000 fire fighters and first responders. We also provided a place of temporary refuge for hundreds of county residents evacuated by these wildfires. During COVID-19 Alliance Redwoods served hundreds of people experiencing homelessness for well over a year.

