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His Greatest Instrument

BY ASHLEY MEYER

For Nicholas “Nic” Reichert, it was going to be just another summer working at Camp Yavapines in Prescott, Arizona. A native of Berrien Springs, Michigan, and a member of Pioneer Memorial Church, Nic had spent the last four summers working at the camp. When he arrived early to help with the Arizona Conference Camp Meeting held at Camp Yavapines, he had no idea he would soon become involved in a very unique project.

Every year the Arizona Conference Youth Department plans a community project. In the style of ABC’s “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition,” the 2011 project was a home makeover for a local community member. Organizers decided to make a short film chronicling the work. Adam Young, one of Nic’s co-workers, was asked to direct the film. Adam suggested making the film a documentary that could be submitted to the SONscreen and Prescott film festivals.

A senior English and Spanish major at Andrews University, Nic was asked to write the script for the documentary, and he quickly agreed. “I think it is important for the world to be reminded of the satisfaction that comes from helping someone else in need, and the positive effect that reaching out to others can have,” he says.

Titled “His Greatest Instrument,” the documentary details the project while telling the story of homeowner Marie “Ducky” Panzarella. Ducky’s 18-year-old son, Kendall Linne, was found dead in his apartment in 2007. His mother believes he was a victim of a drug trafficking strategy that uses school bullies to pressure students to be used in the drug trade. As a child, Kendall received a closed head injury, causing his emotional age to be younger than his chronological age. His cause of death was initially listed as



Nicholas “Nic” Reichert (highlighted, center), of Berrien Springs, Michigan, and the Youth Empowered to Serve team of the Arizona Conference revitalized the yard and a studio of homeowner Marie “Ducky” Panzarella. Nic wrote the script for a documentary, which chronicled the work.

drug-related, but it was ultimately amended to be the result of a severe, non-drug-related allergic reaction.

Since then, Ducky has fought to make officials aware of the system she believes victimized her son. “I think that it was important to give Marie Panzarella a voice and a medium through which to celebrate her son’s life and to bring a measure of

closure to the events surrounding her son’s death,” says Nic. “To be able to give her a chance to tell her story in a respectable and elevated way was very rewarding.”

During the camp meeting, nearly 100 young adults revitalized Ducky’s yard, renovated Kendall’s studio, and built a memorial representing his love of music. Although the physical effects of the project were clearly visible, to Nic it was the emotional ones that were more important. “The Arizona Youth Department cleaned up her yard and put up a new fence, but she felt something a lot deeper than that,” Nic says of Ducky. “I think it restored her faith in humanity and gave her a positive view of youth in the church, especially the Adventist Church.”

Watch “His Greatest Instrument” at <http://vimeo.com/49105405#>, released in 2012.

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