

THE HUB

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REFINED THROUGH RESIDENCY

Keagan's Story

BY CHELSEA BAILEY



“The residency has absolutely changed my future for the better.”

Ask Keagan Blancke about his background, and you’ll discover that this Minnesota native has traveled an unconventional path to Omaha, Nebraska. As a child, Keagan dreamed of driving a garbage truck. As a preteen, he changed his mind, settling on LEGO® design. And as a college sophomore at the University of Northwestern – St. Paul, he instead started with prayer—a decision that changed everything. “I asked God what I should do for the summer,” said Keagan, now 27.

The next week at chapel, Keagan watched as different camp directors stepped on stage to spread the word about working as a camp counselor. Prayer answered. Keagan spent that summer on staff at a large Christian camp near Brainerd, Minnesota, enjoying the great outdoors with students while sharing the love of Jesus. “That was when I really discovered that I loved ministry,” he said. “It was the toughest, yet most rewarding job. I loved every ninety-hour week of it.”

After graduating with a radio broadcasting degree, Keagan expanded his camp experience, along with working a few other jobs. Before joining CCC Church Residency, he coached men recovering from drug and alcohol abuse. “They were at rock bottom,” he said. “They were desperate for Jesus. I saw that, and it made me want to get desperate for Jesus.”

When Keagan learned about the residency and the opportunity to earn a master’s degree debt-free, he jumped at the chance. Accepted into the program, Keagan and his bride, Britt, moved to Omaha the summer of 2017 while expecting their firstborn, Roman, a few weeks later. It was a leap of faith, but it didn’t take long for them to feel at home.

“I can’t thank CCC enough for the support they’ve given me,” Keagan shared. From hosting a baby shower and delivering meals to offering babysitting, “it really was the Church in action.”

While Keagan was adjusting to fatherhood, he was also learning to juggle graduate coursework with his duties at church. In the months since, he has learned valuable leadership lessons, such as establishing healthy boundaries and empowering team members to excel. “My job is to equip those around me, not just do everything myself,” said Keagan, who has gained hands-on experience in church production as well as middle school and camp ministry. Fortunately, CCC carved out a special spot for him at Camp Rivercrest in Fremont, where he was able to contribute his experience, grow his knowledge, and confirm his passion for camp.

Keagan’s favorite memory is his December 2018 trip to Palm Springs for the Christian Camp and Conference Association (CCCA) national gathering, where he was able to network and enjoy a reprieve from the winter weather. “It’s a conference I’ve known about for years, and I’ve always wanted to go,” he said. “I felt at home in that environment; I felt like these were my people.”

Keagan also appreciates his fellow residents, noting that he always looked forward to their Thursday cohort meetings. “The relationships I’ve made here—they’re going to be lifelong friends.”

Now a few weeks away from finishing the program and his master’s degree in Ministry Leadership, Keagan is looking forward, full of hope. “The residency has absolutely changed my future for the better,”

he said. “It’s put me on a path where I can see the bigger picture and take others along with me. It’s not just about me—it’s God’s economy. Things need to multiply.”

Speaking of multiplication, the Blanckes are expecting a second child this summer. Together, they’re asking God, “What’s next?” Keagan suspects it may be different from what he initially expected. “We’ve grown a family here at CCC,” Keagan says. “As a single person, camp was my calling. But now as a family person, I’m asking, *what is my calling and how does camp fit into that? Where is my family going to thrive?*”

Looking back, Keagan can clearly see a theme: God led him to opportunities where he didn’t immediately feel qualified, whether it was saying yes to serving at his first summer camp or supporting addicts in their quest to get clean.

In many ways, this residency is another example. Keagan pointed out that the program provides a unique “incubator” environment that encourages trial and error. “It’s a really formative time, and it’s also hard,” Keagan shared. “It’s hard to ask for support. It’s hard to balance school work on top of ministry work. As a millennial, it’s hard to stay committed to something for two years.”

Yet Keagan acknowledges the deeper work that happens during hardships. “God has really refined me. Even though it’s hard, every day there is daily bread. He provides.” With faith in God’s provision, Keagan is ready to go wherever God calls his family.

“The glory of God is man fully alive,” he says. “We are trusting God. He’s going to put us in a place where all of us can thrive.” ■

For more info about the CCC Church Residency program, to financially support a current resident, or to apply to become a resident yourself, visit cccredidency.org.

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