

THE RANCH VOICE

Magazine for friends and donors of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

Summer 2018



Police officials from the Fargo Police Department challenged Ranch kids and staff to a soccer game.



www.DakotaRanch.org
1.800.344.0957

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Message from our President/CEO



Joy Ryan
President

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DakotaRanch.org

Dear Friends of the Ranch,

Have you ever pondered why so many people follow in the career footsteps of their parents? Not all of us of course (my parents were excellent farmers), but many. Pastors’ sons become pastors, artists’ children become interior designers or enter the world of fashion. Sons and daughters of attorneys find a love of the law. Carpenters, farmers, grocery store owners, truck drivers, doctors... many families, have “legacy” careers... and not just those with family businesses. Of course, one of the reasons is respect for our parents and their work. Another may be genetic aptitude, or simple familiarity.

But, here’s another thought. Perhaps one of the reasons is because we saw our parents solve real world problems in their work. If our parents were farmers, we saw them till the soil and produce food. If our parents were doctors, we heard how people came in sick and left on the path to healing. Where once was a vacant lot, now stands a home that our carpenter parents built for our neighbors. We saw and heard a real problem, and our parents solved it. Who wouldn’t want to do that?

That is the premise behind project-based learning. The belief (first put forward by John Dewey in 1897!) is that children learn better by putting “expressive or constructive activities at the centre of correlation.” Basically, it’s teaching kids how we can use math, language, science, technology, and hard work to solve the problem put in front of us.

It’s a good concept, and one that may be employed in a school near you. Using this concept at the Ranch provides an exceptional experience for our kids, kids who have not seen a lot of successful problem solving in their families. Some come from homes of generational unemployment, addiction, abuse, poverty. But, these young survivors approach the opportunity to problem solve, to learn by doing, to be part of creating, with earnest effort. It strikes a chord deep within them. They see and hear a real problem, and they solve it. Just like every child. And more than anything, our children want to be ordinary kids and have ordinary experiences.

Please keep our kids and all of us at the Ranch in your prayers. We need God’s help, and yours.

In His love,
Joy



Please help us reach you!

As people move from landline telephones to mobile phones, it is getting more difficult to say “thank you” to our donors. Please call us with your phone number so we can update our files. We would love the opportunity to thank you over the phone or in person—so we can tell you real stories about our kids and make the ministry come alive.

Call 1-800-344-0957.



Save the Date

October 27

9:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch
7151 15th St. S., Fargo



**Don't miss this opportunity
to meet
Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison,
President, Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod**

Also featuring Rob Stadler, author of “The Scientific Approach to Evolution: What They Didn't Teach You in Biology.”

“Mercy is part of the DNA of the church. It was part of Jesus' life. He cared for people in need. He spoke the word of forgiveness and cared. To be intentional about mercy in your congregation is very significant, because there are a lot of hurting people in the world.”

—Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

Go to DakotaRanch.org/mercy for updates on the conference schedule, speakers, and registration.

After the “Honeymoon”

When you meet 14-year-old Emily today, the first things you’ll notice are her wonderful smile and contagious laugh. A very different young woman than the one who walked into Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch last October—who at that time didn’t crack a smile, speak, or look up from the ground.

Emily was suffering from suffocating depression. She sometimes hurt herself on purpose and most days she refused to go to school. She had been in and out of hospitals and treatment facilities for almost five years without any relief. For Emily and her mom, Nora, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch was the last resort.

“Emily was in a really bad place,” Nora said. “My greatest fear was that I’d come home from work one day and she’d be dead. She’d have cut herself and the bleeding wouldn’t stop, or she’d have taken her life while I was gone.”

“I kept telling her, ‘Just stay alive one more day.’”

While dropping Emily off at the Ranch took some of the pressure off Nora to single-handedly keep her daughter alive, it was one of the hardest things she’d ever done.

“Dropping her off at the Ranch was horrifying,” she said. “It literally took me three hours to drive the 111 miles home that day. I kept having to stop because I couldn’t stop crying.”

It wasn’t a great day for Emily either. She clearly remembers her first day at the Ranch.

“I was scared out of my mind,” Emily said. “And, I was very upset. The whole cottage was going to the zoo that weekend and I couldn’t go. I had

trying to find ways to not be part of therapy. The first month she was here, she was the perfect child. She had learned to hide her behaviors, emotions, and issues to prove to everyone she didn’t need treatment, regardless of the history she brought with her.”

For Nora, this careful honeymoon period was familiar. Her daughter had been in many treatment programs – all lasting about 30 days. Nora was terrified the Ranch would discharge her, like all the others, without ever seeing the behaviors that led Emily to the Ranch. “I knew she could pull it together for 30 days because she’d done it before. But, on day 32, the wheels would fall off and it’d start all over again,” she said.

The treatment team at the Ranch listened to Nora and saw the fear behind Emily’s perfection. It took 34 days to see the change in Emily that Nora knew was coming.



This is the Emily Nora always knew was inside.

to wait a week to do any off-campus activities.”

The Honeymoon Period

Like most children when they first come to the Ranch, Emily didn’t embrace treatment whole-heartedly. Katie Boucher, Case Manager at the Ranch, said, “Emily was smart about

The Honeymoon is Over

“When Emily started to struggle she refused to go to school, refused to take her meds, slept all day, refused to talk to anyone, and had no ability to see alternatives to her choices,” Boucher said.

About the same time, Emily started to hurt herself, this time with a simple school eraser. She rubbed her skin with it until she made a wound that bled. She hid what she had done from staff because she was scared. She was always scared. But, when staff saw the damaged skin, they gently cleaned, treated and bandaged it for her, without rebuke or shame. Then, her therapist talked her through the incident with simple questions, like, “How did you feel when you did it?” and “When you have those feelings again, what could you do instead?”

It would be easy, from the outside, to think treatment isn't working when a child hurts themselves, like Emily, or flies into a rage or is aggressive. But, at the Ranch we know those are the windows into the child that give us a place to begin the healing. When kids end the “honeymoon” and start showing the behaviors they have struggled with at home, school, and the community, then we can teach them to recognize the emotions behind their actions. We can teach coping skills and show them they have options. If they never act out, they don't get to learn and practice those new skills.

The Importance of Family Support

In addition to Emily's individual and group treatment, Nora and Emily had family therapy sessions every two weeks—sometimes in person, sometimes via phone. Nora and her partner also did family therapy without Emily, and she saw a therapist in her hometown to work on her own issues.

Nora was very involved in Emily's treatment, and even though she often

worried she was “that annoying mom,” to Ranch staff she was fully engaged, caring, loving parent.

“I talked to Nora sometimes several times a week when she needed to bounce ideas off me, or just hear that she made the right choice in placing Emily. She was such a blessing, and the kind of parent I wish all of our children had. Because she knows Emily so well, she was able to teach us what works for her and what doesn't,” Boucher said.

“We encourage all of our families to remember they are the experts about their kids and that the feedback they give us is invaluable.”

School Success!

School was always a challenge for Emily.

Nora said, “Emily had such bad feelings about school. She avoided school a lot by making up sicknesses. She would even choose going to the hospital over going to school.”

At the Ranch, it was different. “I liked school there a lot,” Emily said. “It had fewer people and the people were nice and not mean.”

Emily thrived in the small classrooms. She worked hard and gained the confidence she needed to ask for help until she understood. Nora said Emily had her best grades ever while at Dakota Memorial School, the Ranch's on-campus school.

Speaking Out

Nora and Emily don't hesitate to tell people Emily was at the Ranch. They

both want everyone to know spending time at the Ranch is nothing to be ashamed about.

“It works,” Nora said. “I can't speak for everybody, but I think with the



These smiles are real!

right family support and the support you get from the Ranch, it really does work. She learned a lot at school. Dr. Martinsen monitored her medications and made adjustments. Her mood picked up, and she learned new tools for coping. Ranch staff were phenomenal.”

Emily has an inspiring story to share, and a promising future.

“She is funny, courageous, and was so kind to everyone she met here,” Boucher said. “In completing treatment, Emily was finally able to put herself first. She chose to battle her demons so her depression didn't control her life anymore. We are so proud of her for working so hard!”

Celebrations

Energy in motion

As a hands-on way to get Ranch kids involved in science, technology, engineering, arts and math, commonly referred to as STEAM, Joshua Hvidsten's science class at Dakota Memorial School, Minot, built a model of a pipeline. To build the model, which transports oil hundreds of miles, students took into account budget constraints and efficiency requirements. All three phases of the project involved realistic efficiency calculations and cost comparisons.

The final phase was called "Taking Pipeline 2.0 to New Heights." This phase required the pipeline to span across two desks supported by a cantilever (a beam anchored only at one end). It also had to support the weight of a tennis ball in the center while transferring the "oil." What an awesome class project!



A Zoo-pendous Day



The animals at the Chahinkapa Zoo in Wahpeton delighted Ranch kids from the Fargo campus. As one of them said, "It was awesome! It was the first time in my life I saw an alligator, great horned owl, kangaroo, rhino, and snow leopard!"

This Buggy has Wings

Students in Suzanne Erz's science class at DMS Minot explored a less well-known career—entomology! This activity required a healthy dose of creativity, as the students were asked to design their own bugs using the characteristics necessary to be an insect! Many decisions were involved in the design process—for instance, their insects were required to have six legs, wings, mouth parts, three body parts, a segmented abdomen, and specific habitats and lifespans.

The students encountered a few setbacks in their bug-designing venture, and realized the bodies and parts of insects are much more complex than they thought.

Erz said, "They took so

much pride in this project and are quite protective of their insects."

She was pretty proud of them herself!



Garden Center Field Trip Broadens Knowledge

The Horticulture class at Dakota Memorial School, Minot, took a field trip to Lowe's Garden Center. The students asked owner Phil Lowe lots of great questions. They told him the late spring and lack of sunshine was hampering the growth of their plants, and how some of the plugs arrived frozen and didn't grow at all. They were surprised to learn that Lowe's is having many of the same issues—and that the work they are doing in the Ranch Greenhouses mimics that of other greenhouses in the area.

As they were leaving, Lowe took Marcia Bartok, Superintendent of Dakota Memorial

School and teacher of the Horticulture class, aside and said, "I was very impressed with your students, and would hire any one of them to work here."



Ranch horticulture students learned from one of the experts at Lowe's Garden Center

Sanford Health Donates \$15,000 to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch received \$15,000 from Sanford Health towards the cost of health and wellness programs and classes at Dakota Memorial School (DMS). Health and wellness are important to the healing of children at DMS, and this donation will help fund programs that teach the children lifelong healthy habits.

Dakota Memorial School incorporates physical and emotional health into daily

learning to bolster the children's learning experience. DMS is the place where many children will learn positive health and wellness habits.

Classes offered during the school day include physical and health education (Lifelong Wellness Class), independent living, consumer sciences, family and self, applied topics, and life skills courses.

Serving Together for God

The Ranch was blessed to have several Servant Teams (volunteer groups from all over the country) on its campuses this summer. We put them to work beautifying our campuses—they replaced broken boards and painted the playground fence, repaired and stained our outdoor chapel, weeded flower beds, painted wheelchair ramps, washed windows, and disinfected chairs and tables in the dining room. Some of the teams also sorted donated items at our thrift store warehouses and store fronts.



Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Minot



Messiah Lutheran Church, Lakeville, MN



Lord of the Lakes Lutheran Church, Forest Lake, Minnesota

From Compassion to Action

Lyzzy Harpster, English teacher at the Ranch; Brooke Huss, Youth Care Worker at the Ranch; and six Dakota Memorial School (DMS) students volunteered at Great Plains Food Bank. In just two hours, our students packed approximately 300 backpacks for students who do not have meals on the weekends and between 150 and 200 bags of apples for families who cannot afford to buy fruit.

Ranch kids did a wonderful job of showing they are wonderful young people who want to help others!



Participating in volunteer activities throughout the community builds compassion and shows Ranch kids they can make a difference.

Art and Fire Walking Tour

Every summer, kids at the Ranch participate in Action Changes Things (ACT) summer programming. Thursdays are field trip day. One Thursday, the kids had guided tours of the Plains Art Museum and the Fargo Fire Department.

At the Plains Art Museum, they explored interesting and complex exhibits; and were given a chance to share their thoughts on the art. Many Ranch kids are just discovering their artistic talent while at the Ranch, and some use art to express their feelings. Visiting the region's premiere art museum gave them a great opportunity to view many different styles of art.

Just a short walk down the street, on-duty firefighters showed the kids around the Fargo Fire Department. Their favorite part was the live demonstration of a fire fighter sliding down the pole. Midway through the tour, several of the firefighters had to answer a call and rush off in the fire truck—which added another layer of excitement.



Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch awarded three-year CARF accreditation

The Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities International (CARF) announced that Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch has been accredited for a period of three years. This accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization and shows the organization's substantial conformance to the

CARF standards.

An organization receiving a three-year Accreditation has put itself through a rigorous peer review process and has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit that its programs and services are of the highest quality, measurable, and accountable.



In the accreditation report, CARF reviewers wrote, "It is readily apparent that the organization has adopted and adapted a level of trauma-informed care that is well above what would be considered the national standard or displayed by its peers and counterparts in other states. The organization has consistently engaged in therapeutic approaches that adhere to current practices within the behavioral health field."

Former LWML National President Tours the Ranch

Jan Wendorf, former President of the National Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML), the women's auxiliary of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, recently toured the Ranch's Minot campus. Wendorf, who served a four-year term as National LWML President from 2007-2011, was in North Dakota to speak at the LWML North Dakota District conference about her mission trip to Tanzania and her term as national president of the organization.

Wendorf, who was joined on the tour by current LWML ND District President, Valerie Biberdorf, was impressed by the Ranch and the caliber of services we provide for the most troubled, complicated and troubled children.

"It was truly an honor for me to visit and tour Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch after hearing about the ministry and receiving bottles of honey in several congregations where we have been members," Wendorf said. "The location and programming minister to the needs of God's children in a setting that reflects the beauty of His creation. God's hand of blessing is seen in the people who are committed to the ministry there. God's continued blessings to the entire ministry; thank you for welcoming me, and giving me a private tour."

If you would like a tour of any of the Ranch's three campuses, feel free to contact us at 1-800-344-0957. We'd love to share our campus and our story.



Elden demonstrates how to plant gladiola corms, and explains how they need to be dug, washed, and dried each fall.



John and Barb Meyer give away thousands of gladiolus each summer.

Beauty in Bloom

Elden Lamprecht, a long-time Ranch donor from Oakdale, MN, arranged to have 400 gladiola corms (the underground root you plant) donated to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. The corms were donated by John and Barb Meyer, who retired from the Meyer Certified Seed business to gladiola breeding about 20 years ago on their Elgin, Minnesota farm. The Meyers plant over 100,000 bulbs each year, and give most of the blooms away at hospitals, churches, and nursing homes. They also donate corms to ministries like the Ranch.

Before the gladiola corms arrived at the Ranch, Lamprecht flew to the Minot campus to teach one of our young residents how to plant and care for them. They planted several in front of Seegers cottage, where the boys have been keeping close watch. The first gladiola started blooming the third week of July, and we're confident we'll have 400 more blooming on all three campuses by the end of the summer. Thank you, Elden, for facilitating this beautiful gift—a gift that will keep on blooming.



The first gladiola blooms!

“Go Team” versus “We Da Best!”

In July, officers from the Fargo Police Department surprised Ranch kids with a game of soccer. Kids, Ranch staff, and officers split up into two teams, came up with team names, and the game began. Team “Go Team,” decked out in yellow vests, took on team “We Da Best.”

With temperatures reaching the mid-nineties, the game was surprisingly high energy. Staff who didn't play served as energetic cheerleaders for both sides. By engaging with our kids, Fargo Police Officers hope to foster positive relationships and increase trust. The game ended with a high fives all around and a big tub of watermelon.



A game of soccer between police officers and Ranch kids build relationships and trust.

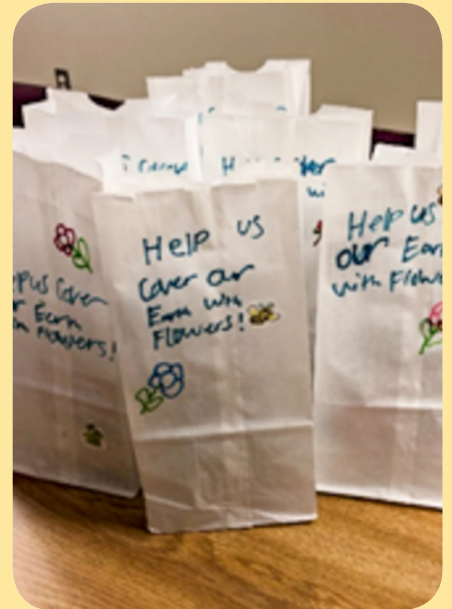
Saving the Bees

Last school year, a young Ranch resident was given a school assignment to “reclaim land that had been damaged; or attempt to fix an issue in nature that had been created by humans.” The students in her class at Horizon Middle School, Bismarck, would have the opportunity to present their proposals to the city commissioner, to represent how a real project would be implemented.

Sarah* learned that bees were dying at an alarming rate and took it upon herself to create a wildflower planting campaign to combat the problem.

She researched easily grown wildflower species through NDSU's Extension Services and Jan took her to purchase the seeds. Sarah typed up the instructions along with her call to action, portioned the seeds into seed packets, and decorated bags to hold the seeds and instructions.

She then gave a fun and engaging presentation to her class and the city commission,



Sarah, a young Ranch resident, creates wildflower starter kits to save the bees in her community.

implored teachers to take home the wildflower starter kits. She increased awareness of the problem and gave everyone involved an easy way to make a beautiful and lasting impact on Bismarck's bee population.

**Name changed to protect confidentiality.*

Jim Vetter Appointed to Governor's Council

Jim Vetter, Vice President of Partner and Community Relations at the Ranch was appointed to the Governor's Prevention Advisory Council on Drugs and Alcohol by North Dakota Governor Doug

Burgum. The role of the Council is to explore the interrelationships between substance abuse prevention, education, and enforcement programs; address traffic safety issues involving driving under the influence;

and develop policies that promote safe, stable families and communities. Jim has been named as the Advocate Representative Appointee and will ensure our kids have a voice at the table.

Philadelphia Insurance Employees Wear Blue Jeans for the Ranch



Brent Mattson, Philadelphia's Preferred Agency, First Western Insurance, presented Joy Ryan, President/CEO, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, with a check for \$7,204.

Philadelphia Insurance, one of the largest providers of financial products for nonprofits in America, chose Dakota Boys Ranch as the national beneficiary of their Blue Jeans Friday initiative. Employees wearing jeans that day donate \$1, which goes to the designated nonprofit of the month.

ELI Leadership Institute

Christina Hemmer, Vice President of Clinical Services, and Sheila Miller, Vice President of Finance and Facilities, recently attended the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) at the University of Michigan. ELI is a collaborative effort of the University of Michigan and the Alliance for Children and Families to develop the leadership skills of emerging nonprofit leaders.

ELI is a two-year commitment that ends with a Certification in Executive Leadership. Miller completed her certification this year, and Hemmer was a first-year attendee.

The Ranch is committed to developing leaders at every level of the organization, striving to move Ranch staff forward in their competencies and skills

Better managers, supervisors, directors, Vice Presidents and CEOs leads to a better workplace

and ultimately, a better environment for our kids to live, learn, heal and find hope.



(from left) Christina Hemmer and Sheila Miller enhance their leadership skills to better meet the needs of the troubled, complicated and amazing kids who come to the Ranch.

"The Nicest Place I've Ever Lived!"

After two years of planning and remodeling, the Home Builder's Association of F-M, and its charity, Home Builders Care of F-M Foundation, partnered with Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch to hold a ribbon-cutting and press conference to celebrate the completed remodel.

In 2017, HBA members remodeled the basement and earlier this year, the group completed a remodel of the kitchen and living room space. HBA members donated time and materials to complete much of the project. Additional project support came from Cass County Electric, who gave the Ranch a \$5,000 grant to purchase new appliances, and

Kiwanis of FM who donated to replace all the Youth Home mattresses. Over 100 hundred people attended the celebration, and several local media outlets aired or printed stories about the project.

One of the Youth Home kids said, "This is the nicest place I've ever lived!"



The remodel of the Fargo Youth Home was supported by several community organizations

Ranch Kids Rock Kindness

As part of the #MinotRocks Kindness Project, Ranch girls painted rocks and placed them in random spots throughout Oak Park.

Butt cottage staff and girls made a day of it by gathering rocks, and then painting them with bright colors and positive sayings. Finally, they all went to Oak Park to place the rocks throughout the park—all to brighten the day of each person who finds a happy rock! One of the girls even found a rock someone else had painted and left at the park!

One of our goals at the Ranch is to create a community around each of our kids. We all need a place to belong, and one of the best ways to feel part of a community is to give back. By participating in this city-wide project, our young girls are learning how it feels to contribute to and participate in a community. Many of them have been on the receiving end of people's generosity, but haven't felt like they had anything to give. Simple community projects like #MinotRocks show our kids they do, in fact, have something worthwhile to share.



Ranch girls show off their painted rocks before placing them throughout Minot's Oak Park.

Ranch Cook Wins State Award



Judy Gibbons-Long receives state nutrition award for going above and beyond at the Ranch.

Judy Gibbons-Long is much more than a Cook, or as the kids call her, “the Lunch Lady.” She is a smiling and supportive face for the kids at the Ranch's Fargo campus. In addition to meeting all safety and nutrition standards, Judy makes it her mission to provide healthy foods the kids will eat.

She was recently awarded the Employee of the Year by the North Dakota School Nutrition Association, a prestigious award for school nutrition professionals. Judy is passionate about helping Ranch kids. Last spring, one of our young girls asked her if she would make a Norwegian Blotkaka. Judy

said, “Of course. But only if you'll decorate it for me.” The young woman joined Judy in the kitchen and carefully went through the many steps to spread the jam between the layers and decorate the cake.

Judy Gibbons-Long, cook at the Ranch, made this Norwegian Blotkaka Cake at the special request of one of our residents.



Quilting for God

In 2011, the pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Algona, Iowa, gave a sermon on the importance of adults connecting with youth and helping them grow in their faith. The sermon inspired a group of church women to make quilts for every child confirmed at the church. The color palette (blue, gold and red) was inspired by the water of baptism, the blood shed for them, and the Holy Spirit within each of them.

Their ministry grew and expanded far beyond the doors of the church and their local community. They now create several styles of quilts, Kids Komfort Pillows, Cuddle Blankets, Mighty Moses Monkeys, Noah and Rebekah Bears, and more. Kids at the Ranch are the lucky recipients of some TLC Quilters' handiwork and compassion. They recently donated a variety of handmade items, including an entire family of Mighty Moses Monkeys!

Each Mighty Moses Monkey comes with a note that reads, "Hi! My name is Mighty Moses, but you can call me by your favorite name. I was named that because every little boy needs a friend, and in the Bible, Moses was a mighty man. You can talk to me because I'm a good listener. Did you know you can talk to Jesus too? He's a good listener too. By the way, did you know that he loves YOU? He does. Let's be best friends—Jesus, you, and me! Your friend, Mighty Moses and all the quilters at Trinity Lutheran Church."

Thank you, TLC Quilters, for this amazing ministry that touches the lives of so many.



Mighty Moses Monkeys on their way to Dakota Boys and Ranch.



Barb Bitterman, coordinator of the TLC quilters, shows off some of their creations.

Crafty Kindness for Animal Friends

One of our Bismarck residents had some one-on-one time with Jan Nelson, Youth Advocate at the Ranch, and wanted to do something nice for animals at the Humane Society. They found scraps of fleece and made fuzzy cat and dog toys. Several of the girls asked to join in and they soon had six girls tying fleece into toys. The kids with pets at home each selected a toy for their pet, and they bagged up the rest to donate to the Bismarck Humane Society. What a wonderful way to spend a Sunday evening and show compassion for homeless animals in the community.



Ranch kids share the love by making toys for furry friends.

Adventures in Gardening

Gardening was a big event this summer on all three campuses. Kids planted, weeded and watched the plants grow. Now, they are looking forward to harvesting the vegetables so our cooks can serve fresh produce, grown by our kids!



A Tale of Two Graduates

This year, nine students graduated from Dakota Memorial School—eight in Minot and one in Fargo.

Their stories are inspiring—how they came to the Ranch, the barriers that got in their way, their ultimate success, and their plans.

Two of our graduates asked us to share their stories—hoping to inspire both the students who come after them, and the Ranch donors who made their success possible. Here are their stories of courage and perseverance.

Shawn's Story



Intense coursework, culminating in his graduation, proved to Shawn he had perseverance and grit.

When Shawn and his twin brother were only three years old, they were removed from the custody of their parents, who were good people struggling with the demon of alcoholism. They were placed with a relative, who filed first for guardianship and then adoption.

Their adoptive mom moved them from home to home, and when the boys were school-aged, from school to school. Sam and his brother spent their time in front of the television, were often hungry, and their clothes were too small and filthy.

“My adoptive mom always treated my twin brother and me differently than she treated her children,” Shawn said. “We were abused and beaten, and they got a little lecture once in a while. When I was old enough to work, I worked two jobs to help her pay the bills, and I still got treated differently.”

When they moved to North Dakota, Shawn said he and his brother were home-schooled. “She kept telling me I was going to get my diploma, but all we did is watch TV and play video games all day.”

In an unconscious attempt to get himself out of a bad situation, Shawn started acting out. He became belligerent, non-compliant, sometimes violent. After being placed in several out-of-home placements, he came to the Ranch as “incorrigible” and way behind in school. He was old enough to be a junior but had only enough credits to qualify as a freshman.

In his time at the Ranch, Shawn grew (literally – he’s now 6’2”), and studied, and went to chapel. He listened, learned, and laughed. He applied for, and received, an on-

campus job, then an off-campus job. He went to therapy and Wildlife Club and studied some more. In

just one year, Shawn earned enough credits to graduate from high school.

“You know how people do full-time school,” Shawn said. “Well, I did overtime school. The hardest class I took was anatomy.

“I wanted to quit that class so bad. I was raised to be a quitter. If I had a job I didn’t like, I just quit because that’s what I was told to do. I tried to do that here, but the teachers and Mrs. DeGree [Dakota Memorial School-Minot,

Principal] wouldn’t let me. That was the hardest class in the school and I made a C in it. I’m proud of that!”

Shawn graduated from Dakota Memorial School in May—on time and having truly earned it. In his graduation speech, he said, through tears, his only regret for the day was that his brother didn’t have the opportunity to come to the Ranch, and so is not graduating from high school.

While at the Ranch, Shawn reconnected with his birth father, who is now sober and doing well. His father drove from Oklahoma to North Dakota to be with Shawn on his big day—and they are starting a new and exciting chapter in their father-son



At the Ranch, Shawn discovered a love of nature through the Horticulture class and Wildlife Club.

relationship—a relationship filled with love and support.

“I grew up with people shutting down my dreams,” Shawn said. “Here I learned if I work hard I can reach them.”

Maddie’s Story



Maddie conquered addiction and depression, and graduated.

Maddie grew up around drugs—they were always around when she visited her dad. Because she saw him try to quit many times, and fail, she remembers telling herself she was never going to try drugs or alcohol. But, then it started to look normal.

“I started hanging out with the wrong people. First, I smoked pot, and then I moved to alcohol. And then I got depressed,” Maddie said.

Maddie started getting in trouble at school and at home, and eventually social services got involved. She was hospitalized a couple times for depression, spent time in juvenile detention, lived with a foster family, her grandma, an aunt, a family friend, and several times moved back home with her mom.

She spent seven months at the Ranch in 2015. “When I moved back home I stayed clean and sober for a while,” Maddie said. “It was hard to find friends, so I didn’t have anybody to hang out with. I went back to my

old friends and got in trouble again.”

After a couple of difficult years, Maddie decided she was ready to live the life she learned about at the Ranch. She returned to the Ranch in March 2017 and graduated from Dakota Memorial School in 2017.

“I like it here. I’m doing way better than ever. I’ve been clean for a whole year now. And when I’m here, my relationships with my family are so much stronger,” Maddie said.

“In school, I get the support I need. I learn differently than others, and the teachers here teach to my understanding. If I don’t understand something, I’m not afraid to ask questions. At my old school, they just handed me the assignment and told me to figure it out.”

One of the most valuable lessons Maddie learned at the Ranch was to trust. She learned how to trust others, especially adult men.

“I struggle with trusting adult males because of my dad. I saw him abuse his girlfriend. Then he moved away, and I didn’t see him for several years,” Maddie said. “It’s like I’m afraid of men and it was hard for me to be next to them. Mr. [Jim] Miller [long-time Ranch English teacher] proved to me I can trust him. He’s always been kind, and I really trust him. That’s something I definitely needed in my life.”

As for graduation, Maddie was thrilled to prove to her family and friends she could do it. She never expected to graduate, thinking she would drop out and work the rest of her life. “Now I’m actually going to miss school, and the fun times I had here,” Maddie said. “Honestly, without the Ranch, I’d probably be dead from using drugs or suicide. I think about that some days—if it wasn’t for this place, I would not be alive.”

These are stories from just two of our strong, smart, and amazing kids.



Now in her own apartment, Maddie is applying the independent living skills she learned at the Ranch.

The financial support and prayers of our Ranch friends make it possible for children like Shawn and Maddie to take part in this great achievement. High school graduation—something many of our kids never expected to experience.

We take great care to guard the privacy of our children. Pictures and identifying information are only used with permission of the children themselves and the written permission of their guardians.

PROJECT:

Featuring

Barn

Baggett's

C. Baggett

BARN

- 1 You may
- 2 Do not S
- 3 Everyt
Stay cle
- 4 Ask que

CLASSROOMS COME ALIVE

Cher Baggett’s classroom was a barnyard... literally. Hay, pine chips, heat lamps, and chickens. The 4th-8th graders in her classroom spent several months last spring hatching chicks.

On the other side of Dakota Memorial School (DMS), the on-campus school of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, high school students were reading “The Old Man and the Sea,” by Ernest Hemingway, learning the math and science behind boat design and flotation, and ultimately, building a wooden boat!

Hatching chicks and building boats are both examples of project-based learning, a teaching technique that prepares students for the real world by going beyond traditional lectures, instructions, memorization, and tests. Teachers engage students in solving a problem, answering a complex question, or creating a tangible product (like chickens and boats!).

CLASSROOMS COME ALIVE



Project-based learning brought Hemingway’s boat to life.

CLASSROOMS COME ALIVE



Teacher Andrew Meier oversees a student as he learns to use power tools.

Tina DeGree, Principal at DMS-Minot, said, “Project-based learning gives students the opportunity to connect ‘what’ they learn, to ‘why’ they learn it. They learn 21st century skills such as collaboration, creative problem-solving, and team work.”

While many schools incorporate project-based learning into their curriculum, it’s especially important for students at the Ranch. “Our kids usually lack problem-solving and collaboration,” DeGree said. “They weren’t the kids anyone wanted to collaborate with; and truancy and behavior issues often took them out of class, so they

didn’t get to participate in the hands-on activities.”

Ranch kids also haven’t had much of a chance to belong to something. They haven’t usually been involved in extra-curricular activities before coming to us, and many have been moved around a lot—they live with families that move often, are passed between family members, or move in and out of foster care homes and treatment centers.

“Working on a project from beginning to end, especially one that involves many students and teachers, builds a sense of belonging, and gives kids a chance to be proud of something they’ve done, and of their school,” DeGree said.

Building a Wooden Boat

The DMS boat project involved multiple classrooms and teachers working together. English teacher, Jim

Miller, introduced the project with the novel, “The Old Man and the Sea,” by Ernest Hemingway. As students read the novel, they took note of any details about the boat and discussed the setting of the story. For instance, they determined Santiago (the old man in the story) had a flat-bottomed wooden boat called a skiff, approximately 16 feet long.

In Occupational Math class, Teacher Raye Genre guided students as they calculated area, volume, and the measurements of irregular shapes—all concepts involved in boat building. They then created a model of the boat matching the proportions written in the novel.

Science teacher, Josh Hvidsten, taught and demonstrated the concepts necessary to make a boat seaworthy—surface tension, flotation, and displacement. Students took part in a variety of experiments to learn and understand the principles, so they could build a boat that would float.

At the same time, students in Andrew Meier’s Facilities Management class learned woodworking techniques and practiced with the tools they would need to build the boat. Once they had the boat designed, they created a materials list, and everyone came together to cut, hammer, sand, and drill.

At the end of the school year, the boat sat outside of the school where everyone on campus could celebrate its completion.

Hatching Chicks

Baggett, who teaches reading and math intervention to DMS middle schoolers, hatched chicks in her classroom. As they started the eggs in the incubators and watched them develop, they embarked on a comprehensive study of multiple subjects. They calculated the hatch rate (Math); discussed who raises chickens, where they are raised, and various poultry-related jobs (Social Studies); wrote two newsletters, haikus, and cinquains (English); and researched (Reading).

“The students have run the show from the beginning,” Baggett said. “They were aware that temperature and humidity were critical, so they were in constant observation. They documented the growth of the embryo, took pictures of what they saw when they looked through the ova scope at the egg, and researched like crazy.”

Students watched and waited; and wrote about

CLASSROOMS COME ALIVE



Ranch kids gave the at-risk chicks special care.

everything they saw, heard, felt, and discovered. After nearly three weeks of waiting, they watched for pips, tiny cracks on the surface of the shell. The first pip launched a wave of visitors as students screamed, flapped with excitement, and told everyone in school the chicks were hatching!

Once the chicks hatched (12-18 hours after the first pip), the students took on a whole new level of responsibility as they cared for the baby chicks. Each student had the opportunity to maintain the brooder—feed and water the chicks, watch the temperature, and clean out the living quarters.

Throughout the whole project, Baggett’s students stopped by the classroom several times a day to make sure the eggs, then the chicks, were being properly cared for.

“The most beautiful thing about the chicks in our classroom is that many of our students have faced a lot of trauma in their young lives,” Baggett said.

CLASSROOMS COME ALIVE



Watching for pips in the shells took focused attention.

“The moments students share with the baby chicks is precious. It is pure, simple, and tender. Most of them would never have this opportunity to watch life begin and grow. They absolutely adore the chicks.”

DeGree tells of one young man who was really struggling in school and close to shutting down. “You wouldn’t think you’d want to set something as fragile as a baby chick next to an angry child. But I watched Ms. Baggett put the chick down beside him and it was just like flipping a switch. Having something to care for turned his mood around,” she said. “Sometimes it’s hard to see the gentle side of our kids because they are so enraged. But, that underlying love of others is always there. Sometimes all it takes is for someone to show them they are worthy of being trusted.”

Does project-based learning work?

Studies find that project-based learning can improve student scores on standardized tests, especially for children in high-poverty schools. Michigan researchers studied a group of second-grade students in high-poverty schools—randomly assigning project-based social studies units to half of the participating teachers, while the others taught social studies lessons as they normally did.

The initiative, “Project Place,” found significant differences in social studies and reading scores—gains in the project-based learning group were 63 percent higher for social studies and 23 percent higher for informational reading than in the control group.

The key, according to Marcia Bartok, Superintendent at DMS, is developing the

project so the students are solving some sort of problem, working both individually and in teams towards a common goal, and making sure the learning ties back to state and federal education standards.

“Kids like to see relevancy to the things they do and learn. At the simplest level, they learn how math relates to science and how what they are learning matters in the real world,” Bartok said.

On a more complicated level, project-based learning develops executive functioning, a set of mental skills that help you get things done by managing time, paying attention, and working together. Executive functioning is all based in the frontal lobe of the brain, which is often under-developed in children who have faced severe or repeated trauma.

CLASSROOMS COME ALIVE



Hatching chicks made learning fun!

CLASSROOMS COME ALIVE



Teacher Cher Baggett models gentleness and compassion.

Education experts at the Buck Institute for Education say, “Too many students, especially those furthest from opportunity, are unprepared for the modern economy and the challenges of the 21st century.”

Incorporating chicks, boats, and other project-based learning opportunities into the DMS curriculum prepares Ranch kids for academic, personal, and career success in the modern economy. It builds confidence and shows them they can work together to accomplish something authentic and meaningful.

Most importantly, “It’s just fun!” DeGree said. “Learning should be fun. It’s not supposed to be torture. Finding ways to build fun into learning is one of the greatest hooks to getting kids passionate about education.”



Responsibility is the key to getting to the starting line in this special Ranch program.

Taking Mentoring for a Ride

By Maddie Harvala, Communications Intern

You might think putting at-risk youth and speedy mini-bikes together, then sending them riding on Ranch trails, is a dangerous combination. Yet that is exactly what Todd Fjeldahl, NYPUM Program Director at the Ranch, does.

NYPUM (National Youth Program Using Minibikes), a nationwide network of nearly 50 programs sponsored by the American Honda Motor Company, is an innovative way to engage at-risk youth. Throughout the United States, and at the Ranch, NYPUM has consistently proven to

positively affect the youth participant's social, emotional and psychological development.

The core idea of NYPUM is to put kids together with caring adults and a minibike, teaching them how to ride safely and care for the bikes, then giving them opportunity to ride on off-road trails.

Ranch kids love NYPUM

Ranch kids ordinarily take their time

“I wish everyone could have a chance to do NYPUM. It’s my favorite thing I’ve gotten to do at the Ranch.”

--Ranch resident

warming up to activities and the people attached to them. That is not the case with NYPUM—the quotes on this page are from children only 1 ½ weeks into the program. Most kids love the program instantly, which opens them up to develop positive relationships with Ranch staff. In

addition to building relationships with staff, NYPUM helps kids connect to each other through a common experience.

“I’m saving up my money so that when I go home, I can buy a motorbike of my own.”

--Ranch resident

In addition to the riding, children care for the equipment. Some take it very seriously. They take great pride in making sure the minibikes are properly maintained, and all the equipment is put back in its proper place.

One of the most important benefits of NYPUM, from Fjeldahl’s perspective, is that it builds self-confidence. Some of the kids are afraid at first, but with practice, riding becomes like second nature—showing them they can learn and accomplish new things.

One child said, “You get to show yourself you can do things you never thought you could do.”

Finally, NYPUM holds children accountable for their decisions. NYPUM ties the attractiveness of riding a motor bike to the progress they are making on their treatment goals. Kids earn 15 minutes of riding for every goal they meet. One of the goals must be education-related, and the other three are personal goals related to the child’s individual circumstances; for instance, treatment, behavior, or family goals. The child and their team assess their goals each week to determine if they’ve been met and how long they can ride.

Safety First

The Ranch, and all NYPUM programs, take safety very seriously. All Ranch staff involved with the program complete instructor certification courses approved by the Motorcycle Safety



Point One—eager.
Point Two—focus.
Point Three—relationships.



Foundation, and are CPR and First Aid certified. The kids also complete 12 hours of comprehensive safety training before riding.

Before each ride, they inspect the bike using the TCLOCK procedure, which stands for Tires and wheels, Control levers, Lights and battery, Oil levels, Chassis, and Kickstand. The acronym helps kids remember to check all the functionality of the equipment before they start riding.

Participants must wear full safety gear—helmets, gloves, long sleeve shirts, long pants, and boots—and the Ranch maintains a three-to-one child to staff ratio during all NYPUM activities.

The NYPUM Triangle

Fjeldahl explained the idea of the NYPUM triangle. The first point of the triangle is the eager phase. When they start the program, children are willing to do anything and sign anything to get on the motorbike. Their primary focus is the thrilling freedom they anticipate when they step on the bike.

The second point of the triangle is when children start focusing on more than just themselves. They begin to care for the bike and the program in more lasting ways, noticing the oil needs to be changed and helping trim trees so the trails are more accessible.

“The last point of the triangle is where it all comes together,” Fjeldahl said.

In this last stage, participants develop meaningful relationships with staff and others in the program. Most importantly, they start transferring the experience into other areas of their lives.

One child said, “The most important thing I learned through NYPUM is how to stay calm when you can’t overcome something right away.”

The Ranch offers NYPUM on its Minot and Bismarck campuses. Adam Miller, certified NYPUM instructor, directs the program in Bismarck. Todd Fjeldahl, certified NYPUM instructor, directs the program in Minot, and is assisted by Marilyn Ternes, also a certified instructor, in training staff and residents.

Ranch “Girlz” Take on Tech

By Maddie Harvala, Communications Intern



Microsoft welcomes Ranch techies.

For an exciting three days, Microsoft welcomed nearly 100 girls to its Fargo campus (Fargo hosts the 2nd largest Microsoft campus in the world) for an experience of a lifetime. DigiGirlz is a high-tech camp that gives middle and high school girls an in-depth look at Microsoft and careers in technology. Among those young women were five girls from the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

The leaders and speakers took a similar approach, in many ways, to the one we have at the Ranch. They targeted their message to girls who were skeptical about their skills or new to the subjects; and instilled self-worth and confidence by sharing their stories of both success and failure.

From this, the young girls learned they don't have to perfect everything the first time around. When they try something and don't succeed, that's just a first attempt at learning. With a little help, support, and perseverance,

they can try time after time until they reach their goals.

In the past, girls were not always encouraged to think they have the talent or skills necessary for success in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) fields.

Research cited by many of the DigiGirlz speakers proves they do. Women and girls can have the skills they need for the tech world.

Speakers encouraged the participants to develop these skills by learning to FAIL (First

Attempt in Learning)—plan, test, try a different way, reach out for help, and always know every attempt is one step closer to achieving the goal. Curiosity, bravery and persistence help people thrive in STEM fields. The girls were told over and over to try, and try again.

Speakers also conveyed the importance of relationships. “You can have great ideas, but without great relationships, those ideas die,” Todd Beard, a teacher and coding advocate from Michigan, said.

In addition to changing their mindset, the camp highlighted the girls' STEAM skills through hands-on activities. They learned to code using easily code-able micro:bits, and Microsoft gave every participant a micro:bit to take home so they could practice the coding they learned.

Another speaker, Professor Adam Goyt from Minnesota State University

Moorhead, had the kids stack and sort objects to determine the number of possible permutations (a permutation is a list of numbers, words, objects, etc., where order matters.) “Ainsley,” a Ranch resident who loves math, especially enjoyed this activity.

A winning team

In one of the icebreakers, teams of girls built catapults out of popsicle

sticks and rubber bands—and then competed to see which team could use their catapult to launch Swedish fish



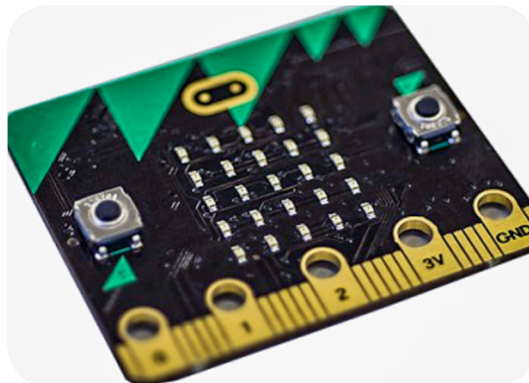
Ranch team's Swedish Fish catapult was a winner!

the farthest distance. Morgan* and Ainsley,* two young women from the Ranch, took third place!

Morgan, age 15, plans to use her impressive skills to train as a graphic designer, a career that combines computers and art. She has been teaching herself to code since age 12, and DigiGirlz gave her the opportunity to see how her skills can be applied to the real world.

Ainsley is interested in a cosmetology career—cosmetology isn't recognized by all as a STEAM profession, but many understand the complicated and precise science and technology required to achieve the correct looks and hairstyles for clients.

"I love to solve problems, and it's fun!" Ainsley said.



Micro:bits make programming learnable.

DigiGirlz encouraged that kind of thinking.

Thank you so much to Microsoft, Taya Spelhaug of Microsoft, and the Ranch staff who made it possible for our kids to share in this great experience.

What is a micro:bit?

A micro:bit is a tiny programmable computer designed to make learning the basics of programming and computer science fun. It has 25 individually-programmable LED lights, as well as light, temperature and motion sensors students can program. Micro:bits also "talk" to each other through radio and Bluetooth wireless communication features.

Go to facebook.com/dbgr52 for a firsthand look at a micro:bit; and see how the Ranch girls programmed a micro:bit to say thank you to Microsoft's Taya Spelhaug, who made this all possible.

**Names changed to protect the confidentiality of our kids.*



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DakotaRanch.org

Frequently Asked Questions about the Ranch

What is attachment disorder?

**Sara Vetter, LPCC, Therapist
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch,
Bismarck**

Attachment disorder is a group of psychiatric conditions where individuals have difficulty forming healthy emotional connections with others. Symptoms of attachment disorders can appear in children as young as infants, and may include failure to gain weight, poor eye contact, severe colic, being detached or unresponsive, defiant behaviors (ex. lying, stealing, cruelty, aggression), difficulty accepting comfort, or getting “too close too quickly” with strangers. Children with attachment disorders may also have difficulty self-monitoring and self-soothing when they are distressed.

When children are raised in a consistent environment with a pattern of being cared for appropriately, they start to learn that the world, and the people who care for them, can be trusted. If children are not cared for appropriately or experience serious or chronic abuse or neglect, they learn early on that adults cannot be trusted.

Over 40% of our kids have either a primary or secondary diagnosis of attachment disorder, usually because of severe problems in early relationships, including a history of abuse or neglect. Other possible causes of attachment issues are receiving inadequate care in out-of-home placements (ex. orphanage), multiple out-of-home placements, multiple tragic losses, or several changes in primary caregivers.

When children with attachment

issues enter residential treatment at the Ranch, we can help them form attachments and trust by providing consistent care, routine, and clear expectations. Ranch Youth Care Workers, the staff who are with our residents 24 hours a day, play a vital role in their healing by developing relationships, role modeling, and mentoring.

Adhering to pre-defined limits and boundaries, remaining calm when dealing with misbehavior, and maintaining predictable routines are all important tools for building trust with kids affected by attachment issues. In addition to 24 hour/day care, the Ranch provides a variety of therapy resources to meet the needs of each child; including occupational therapy, psychotherapy, addiction counseling, and equine-assisted therapy. We provide family therapy as well to educate parents and suggest interventions they can use to help them build trust and healthy attachments with their children.

John* is one example of a child with attachment disorder who found hope and healing at the Ranch. John came to North Dakota through international adoption when he was six years old—before his adoption he had lived in an orphanage. John’s parents did their best to form a secure attachment with him, but their relationships with him became more difficult the older John got, and he became more and more violent. When they started to fear for both John’s safety and their own, they placed him at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Bismarck.

As Ranch staff stayed true to the routines and rules, and reacted to his outbursts with calm acceptance, John started to trust the adults who cared for him. He learned more about attachment disorder, which helped him understand and control his anger. When he went home on pass, John continued to buck the rules and limits, but he was no longer violent.

When he discharged from the Ranch at age 17, John went to Job Corps. He enrolled in the Culinary Arts Program and did so well, he was transferred to Job Corps in another state to learn advanced culinary skills. The last I heard he was cooking on a cruise ship and doing well.

Although he didn’t return home to live with his parents upon discharge, their relationship improved, and they started to make amends.

Regardless of their age, children with attachment issues can learn to build trusting relationships and live successful lives.

**Name changed to protect confidentiality.*

Sara Vetter has been working at the Ranch for 24 years. She has a bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Addiction Studies from Minot State University, Minot, ND, and a master’s degree in Education and Counseling from University of Minnesota, Moorhead. Vetter said, “The kids in our care come from all walks of life. We work at making meaningful connections with them and their families by focusing on their strengths and resiliencies.”

A Modern Pioneer Spirit

Some people have the incredible ability to turn grief into generosity. That is certainly the case with long-time Ranch donor, Marlys Lindgren, from Hutchinson, MN.

In the late 1960s, Marlys Lindgren's brother, Wallace, was in a fatal car accident. He had been living with Marlys and her husband and they were all quite close. She wanted to honor his memory by donating to a worthy charity, and that's when she discovered the work of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. She made her first donation, in Wallace's memory, in 1969, and has given to the Ranch every year since.

Her involvement with the Ranch started a lifetime of giving for Marlys—at age 85, she is full of energy and enthusiasm; and continues to give of her time, talents, and riches. She makes quilts for the Ranch and many other organizations, sews quilts for veterans, volunteers at the hospital gift shop, and serves dinners at the local senior center.

In addition to her Ranch family, Marlys and her husband, Henry, had two children of their own. He worked for a sewer and water contractor until his retirement in 1990, and died in 2013. She was a pioneer at 3M, where she worked for 31 years in traditionally male-dominated jobs.

Marlys Lindgren

“I held several different positions—mechanic, quality control inspector, and loading trucks,” Marlys said. “For my last job, between the ages of 50 to 60, I loaded trucks. We made cassettes, scotch tape, filters, and things like that. Anything we made, I loaded on trucks. I enjoyed that job the most because I could be self-motivated and independent.”

She is proud to say that two of her grandsons, and a son-in-law, have followed in her footsteps and now work at 3M.

Marlys has visited the Ranch's Fargo campus on several occasions, and said, “The Ranch does such a marvelous job for the kids. It's just so heartwarming to see that you are helping all these boys and girls, and that you inspire the kids to turn towards Christ.”

She also attends the Ranch luncheon in Arizona each February, and is on the Arizona Steering Committee that plans the event. “I hear testimonies [of Ranch children] at the Arizona luncheon, and I know my money is doing wonders for the kids.”

Marlys' lifelong commitment to the Ranch and her gratitude for the life she has been given led her to include the Ranch in her will.

“God has been very good to me. It's very important to live my life for God,” Marlys said. “I try to be patient, kind and considerate with everyone. And I very much want the Ranch to have a portion of my estate.”



Marlys with some of her beautiful quilt creations.

Compassionate Care: Medicine and Healing

A woman called recently to ask how we use medications at the Ranch. She said, “I recently learned that most of the kids at the Ranch are on medication. Is that true?”

According to Dr. Wayne Martinsen, Medical Director at the Ranch, and Heathyr Haugeberg, Director of Nursing at the Ranch, she is correct. About 90% of our children are on a psychotropic medication at any given time.

This is not surprising when you remember that the Ranch is a psychiatric residential treatment facility, providing hope and healing

for the most troubled children in our communities—children who have experienced chronic stress and trauma.

Several in-depth studies, using neuroimaging technology to map the brains of trauma sufferers, have outlined dramatic changes in brain structures and functions. They have also found that medication can change brain structure and function in a positive way. Combined with effective therapies and healthy experiences, medication can rewire the brains of children who have experienced significant trauma.

One of the most compelling reasons to use medication in treatment is to reduce pain. All children who come to the Ranch are experiencing significant emotional pain. That pain can be displayed in anxiety, loss of control, anger, depression, or destructive behaviors. Dr. Martinsen sees it as an act of compassion to treat their emotional and physical pain. He likened it to someone experiencing physical pain, and asks, “How much physical pain would you allow someone to be in before you treated their pain with medication?”

As hard as national and local organizations are trying to change it, mental health diagnoses and medications carry a stigma. We don’t think twice about taking insulin for diabetes, chemotherapy for cancer, or a statin for heart disease, but start talking about medication for psychiatric disorders and people

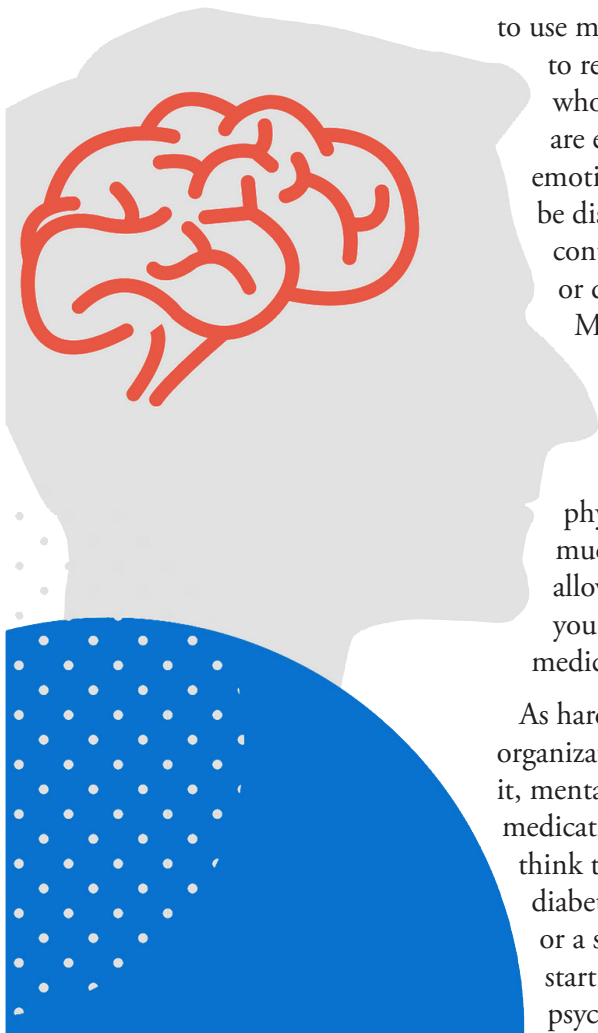
have very strong opinions.

Unfortunately, some still hold negative attitudes and stereotypes towards people with mental illness—thinking medication is the easy way out, that it changes people’s identities, or that it’s different than taking medication for a physical illness.

Many of our children are experiencing so much emotional pain they think they’d be better off dead. North Dakota’s suicide rate has increased 57% since 2000, and the state has one of the highest adolescent suicide rates in the nation. If we can alleviate some of this intense pain and despair with medication—if we can keep kids alive—Dr. Martinsen believes we are obligated to do so.

Another reason to prescribe medication is to stabilize their conditions so kids can go home to their families as healthy and quickly as possible. Taking kids from their families is hard on them, and adds yet another trauma to their already traumatic lives. Medication works in conjunction with therapy so kids can heal and return home more quickly.

Dr. Martinsen, and his colleague, Tammy Uleberg, Family Nurse Practitioner at the Ranch, put a lot of thought and expertise into medication decisions. Every decision is based on the individualized needs of the child and a variety of factors, including psychological testing and GeneSight testing. GeneSight is a sophisticated genetic testing tool that helps providers know and understand which medications will be the most effective for the child with the least amount of side effects. All we need



for sending a sample to Genesight is a simple swab in the mouth.

Ranch children are placed on medication only with the permission of the child, the child's guardian, and the child's parents. At the Ranch, we go above and beyond what is required by getting permission from parents, even if the child has been placed by the court and the parent doesn't have custody. Dr. Martinsen gets a signed release from the parents allowing him to prescribe medication (except in the very rare case where the parent is significantly impaired and unable to make a decision). Another exception to this rule is for those kids who don't have parents—approximately one out of six children at the Ranch have no parents or family involved in their lives.

Dr. Martinsen follows children closely, often seeing them weekly to determine the effectiveness of the medication and evaluate any side effects. After every single appointment, he attempts to reach the parents to let them know he saw their child, if they are having a side effects from the medication, and what he recommends moving forward.

The use of medication for psychiatric disorders is complicated and we do not take it lightly. To provide the most effective care to our kids, we continually stay on top of scientific advancements in brain research and the effectiveness of medications. All of our efforts are centered around what we can do to provide compassion and healing to these troubled, complicated and amazing kids.



Dr. Martinsen is a compassionate teacher and healer.

Normal Day

Normal day, let me be aware
of the treasure that you are.
let me learn from you, love you,
bless you before we depart.
Let me not pass you by in quest
of some rare and perfect tomorrow.
let me hold you while I may,
for it may not be always so. One day
I shall dig my nails into the earth,
or bury my face in the pillow,
or stretch myself tart,
or raise my hands
to the sky and want, more
than all the world, your return.

Author: Mary Jean Irion

Generational Giving to Secure the Future



By Laurie Dannewitz,
Development Officer

“We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.” - Psalm 78:4

I began working for President Larry D. Knutson of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in 1976. We had 40 staff and

36 boys on campus. Since then, we have grown to over 500 staff at three campuses and eight thrift stores, all because of the wonderful mission of serving boys, girls, and families in the name of Christ.

In 2019, we will begin our 67th year of ministry blessed by generations of supporters from throughout the United States.

I love hearing how our donors have passed their support of the Ranch ministry down through the generations. They often learned about the Ranch from their parents. Why and how do generations of families give to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch? It is simple. The

Lord bountifully blessed them with grace, love, and mercy and they want to give back.

One lady gave \$2 because it was all she had, and another left the Ranch her entire estate because long ago she received a bottle of Ranch honey and wanted to learn more. Each of these gifts is valued and appreciated.

“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” - 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

The prayers and faith of donors like you are a source of healing and hope—transforming those of us here now, and the thousands who will come after us. He blesses us so that we might be a blessing to others. Thank you for your love of our children.

Your prayers, questions, and ideas are important to us. If you are ever in Minot, Fargo or Bismarck, please let us know. We would love to give you a tour! The coffee is always on.

Laurie Dannewitz is just one of the caring professionals who works one-by-one with Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch donors—helping them find the means to make an impact on the world in a way that best suits their values and wishes. If you have any questions about the Ranch, feel free to contact any of the people shown here at 1-800-344-0957 or info@DakotaRanch.org.



Lisa Cole
Development Officer



Linda Medhus
Senior Development Officer



Jim Vetter
VP/Development Officer



Kris Ryan
Mission Advancement Officer



Janet Zinke
Senior Development Officer



Anne Compere
Development Officer



Paul Krueger
Senior Development Officer

Foundation and Corporate Grants

Capital Electric Co-op

\$2,000, Bismarck Greenhouse

Elmer and Kaya Berg Foundation

\$1,000, General Operating

Fred W. and Leopoldine Pardau Memorial Fund

\$10,470, General Operating

Harold H. and Mary T. Berg Fund

\$4,731, General Operating

Fargo Kiwanis

\$5,000, Mattresses for Fargo
Youth Home

Fargo Moorhead Area Foundation

\$7,500, STEM equipment and
supplies, Fargo

Fargo Moorhead Area Foundation Disaster Ready Fund

\$1,300, AED for Fargo Gym

Lutheran Women's Missionary League—North Dakota

\$5,000, Spiritual Life

Minot Area Community Foundation

\$15,000, HOME Program
Start-up Funds

Minot Community Endowment Fund

\$4,000, HOME Program Startup
Costs

School Sisters of Notre Dame

\$1,000, Library Books for Girls

Verendrye Operation Round Up

\$2,500, Science Equipment

Walmart Community Grant Fund

\$2,500, Dakota Memorial School
Balanced Learning Environments

Walter Ray Meyer Endowment— LCMS Foundation

\$1,500, Greenhouse Program,
Minot

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Memorials/Honorariums

Unless otherwise designated, donations you give in memory or in honor of your loved ones will be used to help build, maintain, and upkeep chapel facilities on all Ranch campuses. Your gift to the Ranch will live on through the children at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, by helping us teach them about Jesus' unending love. For more information about making memorial and honorarium gifts to the Ranch, contact Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch at 1-800-344-0957 or info@DakotaRanch.org.

Memorials

March 1, 2018–July 14, 2018

AHO, JOHN

Mary Jane Colombino

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ALME, MADELYN

Jim Goodman

ALSLEBEN, BERNETTA

Ilene Bussler

ANDERSON, BRANDON

Hank & Jan Albers

Lyla Helmenstein

ANDERSON, DEE

Paula & Doug Pfau

ANDERSON, DELORES

Lyle & Becky Hangsleben

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BECKER, GLADYS

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Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

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Loren & Lucy Larson

BORK, ISABELLE

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Carow

BRAND, MICHAEL

Don & Arlene Schumacher

“After working in a variety of settings, I can say without a doubt that working at this school has been the most rewarding and enlightening experience, both personally and professionally. I will always be in awe of the unconditional commitment and compassion each one of you has for each student. Thank you. Thank you for reminding of my passion and the reason I first was drawn to this field.”

-Ciara Duffy-Gideon,
former paraprofessional,
Dakota Memorial School

BRAUER, JUDITH

Richard Brauer

BREWSTER, VIVIAN

Wilbur & Mavis Pfennig

BROTSCHUL, FRED

Nolan Bode

BROWN, LEROY

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 LaMae Pettit
 GHIOTPO, ANNA MARIE
 Mary Jane Colombino
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 Ann Hursh
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"Because of [our donors], we have been able to partner with local community animal shelters with our photography, knit beanies for ourselves, donate hats we made for premature babies at Sanford, and explore our emotions through painting and other mediums. Our students can work on hope and healing through the arts."

-Alana Wilhelm,
Visual Arts Instructor,
Dakota Memorial School

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Gerald & Marian Olson
Tom & Marlene Sagaser
Kenneth & Mary Schmidt
John Sheldon
Wayne Vance
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Mitzie Nay
VENZKE, CHARLES
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LaMae Pettit
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WYLLIE, JOHN
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YOUNG, KENNY
Patty Seward
The Family of Kenny Young
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Irene Young
ZABEL, MERVIN
Linda Medhus
Joy Ryan
Sandy Schmidt
Zona Schmidt
ZURCHER, FAYE
Sharon Grondahl
Myrlin & Shirley Hall
Jean & Jan Rubbert

Honorariums

March 1, 2018 - July 14, 2018

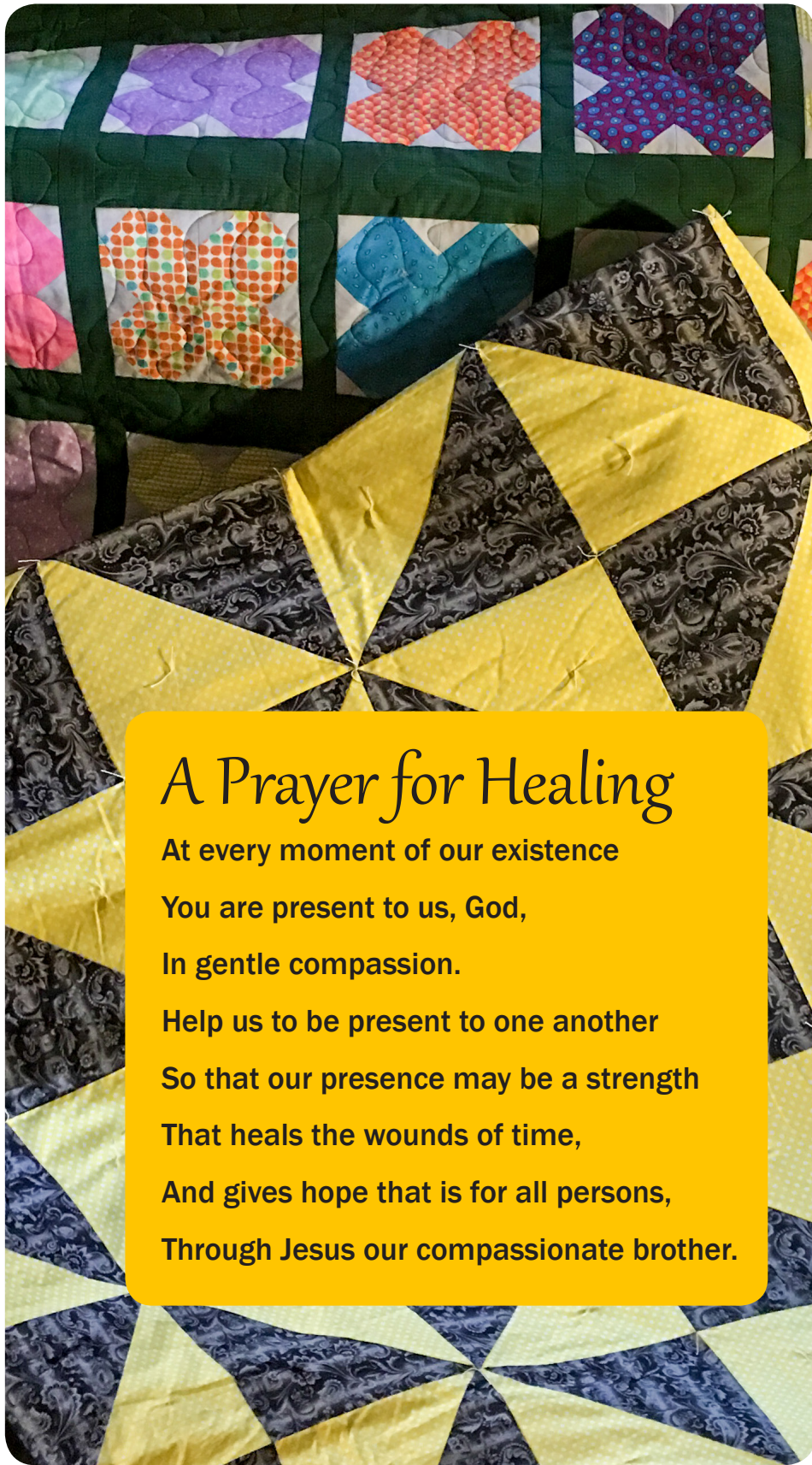
ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL
Father Neil Pfeifer
ALL PEOPLE IN NEED
Leroy E. Riemer
ALL THE RANCH STAFF
Joy Ryan
BARB ANTON
Kirk Anton
KATIE BOUCHER
Kaiser Family
SHAYDORA CASAVANT
Sue Casavant
EMMA MARIE COLE
Roger & Lisa Cole
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DAKOTA MEMORIAL SCHOOL –
MINOT
Tina DeGree
BILL & JAN FIELDS
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JAKE
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WALTER LEMMERMANN
Suzanne Hough
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AMANDA NELSON
Jan Nelson
LONNA OLSON
Anonymous
OUR REDEEMER'S LUTHERAN
CHURCH WELCA- NEW
ENGLAND ND
Bonietta Bohlman

“You all shaped me in ways you
can't begin to imagine. I miss
you all so much.”

-Former Resident

POWER OF 100
Elizabeth Worth
JOY RYAN
Adam & O'Mara Dunnigan
Quin & Kole Seiler
KRIS RYAN
Taisa Haluszka
ST PETER LC – MESA AZ
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STAFF AT THE RANCH
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AMANDA THOMAS
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James & Barbara Winston



A Prayer for Healing
At every moment of our existence
You are present to us, God,
In gentle compassion.
Help us to be present to one another
So that our presence may be a strength
That heals the wounds of time,
And gives hope that is for all persons,
Through Jesus our compassionate brother.

We keep all donors, kids, and Ranch staff in our prayers. If you have a special intention or prayer request, please contact us at 1-800-344-0957 or info@DakotaRanch.org. When we receive your request, we will distribute it to our pastors and spiritual life specialists to pray for you during our chapel services on all three campuses.

We also write your prayer in a special Prayer Book that we keep in the Foundation office in Minot. If you are ever in the area and stop by, we'd love to help you find your prayer in our Prayer Book.

Your Name

Your Address

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please pray for



Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch
P.O. Box 5007
Minot, ND 58702-5007

Change Service Requested



Coffee art painted by Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch resident.

The mission of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is to help at-risk children and their families succeed in the name of Christ.

www.DakotaRanch.org

Main Switchboard:

1-800-593-3098

Foundation:

1-800-344-0957

