

# THE RANCH VOICE

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

Winter 2019



Therapy dog, Bailey, comforts a child in residential treatment at the Ranch.



**DAKOTA**  
BOYS AND GIRLS  
**RANCH**

[www.DakotaRanch.org](http://www.DakotaRanch.org)  
1.800.344.0957

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# What are we going to do with you?



Joy Ryan, President/CEO, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, visits with Sierra at the Minot Dakota Memorial School Open House in September. Read more about Sierra on page 2.

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Dearest Friends,

When I was growing up, I was the only little person left at home with my mom and dad. My brother is 12 years older than me and my sisters are 9 and 10 years older. By the time I was past the toddler stage they were young adults. My grandma – who was my best friend – lived with us, too.

We lived on a farm and I played alone a lot... which was fun. But, like most little people, I didn't always have the best judgement. I remember getting into some paint cans and repainting the "special" table my mom had put in my playhouse for me to use. I also remember getting stuck in the mud by the grain bins and having to leave my shoes behind. I showed up back at the house in my socks – which were now pure black and caked with two inches of North Dakota soil.

When my mother confronted me at these times, she would put her hands on her hips, look me straight in the eye, and ask "Joy Kimberly, what am I going to do with you?" This was my cue to say, "Love me and take care of me!" Mom would then cock her head to one side, wrinkle her nose, and figure out how to set right the mess that was me. The first step, always, was a quick hug.

Several weeks ago, I was in the dining center and one of our young residents, who has struggled mightily to move forward with his healing, was sitting on one of the window seats on the side of room. Several Ranch staff were standing beside him, but his posture showed he was feeling very much "alone." I walked over, put my hand on his shoulder and said, "What's up, buddy?" He raised his head, looked me right in the eye and said, "At 2 o'clock we're having a meeting. **We have to figure out what to do with me.**"

His words stopped me in my tracks! The only answer this boy should ever hear is, "Love you and take care of you!" Instead, he had learned that no one looked out for him. No one gave him a hug. He had never lived in a stable home, and his anger and rage had brought him to the Ranch. Each time someone asked the question, "What do we do with you?" they answered it with trauma, fear, and pain.

This boy had worked hard in his time at the Ranch. It wasn't easy. He took one step forward and two steps back for a while. But we never gave up on him. We showed him he was safe, and he could use words, rather than violence, to show his feelings. He developed coping skills, he attended school, and he showed himself and others he could find his better self.

At that 2 p.m. meeting, this young man was told about a well-matched foster family! They are experienced, caring, and smart. They understand the trauma he has experienced and have prepared their lives to take him in. And he is ready.

My prayer is that his time at the Ranch – and now life with an open-hearted family – taught this precious child that "Love me and take care of me" is possible for him, too.

Thank you for reading. Please pray for our kids and staff.

In His love,

Joy

## Jesus—the answer to everything

Young Ranch resident turns abuse and abandonment into authentic joy

Sierra, a 16-year-old on our Minot campus, recently shared her story with other residents during Ranch Life (a twice-monthly event where Ranch kids hear inspirational speakers or participate in a service project). While she talked about her childhood as one of abuse, abandonment, and rejection, she focused on joy and Jesus. She wanted the other residents to know they don't have to be defined by their past.

“After people hear some of what I've been through, they ask how I can be so joyful,” Sierra said. “I laugh and tell them, ‘Jesus! He is the answer to everything.’”

Despite the pain she has suffered, Sierra has learned to trust Jesus. Sierra said that through Jesus she has turned her pain into a desire to be thankful and to show people the good they have inside of them.

“While I'm here at the Ranch, my goal is to be thankful every day. To say thank you to Mrs. DeGree for helping. To thank the teachers because they don't get that thanks often enough. They spend their whole lives helping us, but how often do we appreciate it? I just want to ask them how their day is going, and to let them know how much they are helping.”

### Growing up

When Sierra was five, her mom packed up their belongings and moved Sierra and her two brothers from New York to Kentucky. They moved in with her mom's new boyfriend and his mother.

“It wasn't right from the get-go,” Sierra said. “Soon after we moved, my twin brother and I started getting beat. It became an everyday thing for us.

There were times we'd go for a week without eating. And if we ate, it was a cracker here and there. We knew we had to eat on the sly, and a lot of times we weren't so lucky. My mom's boyfriend's mom beat us for eating.”

Sierra said neighbors called social services a couple times. The first time, social services investigated and said everything was fine. The second time, they came to school to interview Sierra and her brother. Sierra said, “The first thing they saw was multiple bruises on top of bruises on my right temple. They took pictures of the bruising on us. That's basically how we went into foster care.”

Sierra and her brother lived

together in several foster homes—some good, some not so good. Through them all, Sierra's brother took his pain out on her. Violence



Sierra spent time at the Ranch both in Bismarck and Minot. In Minot, she found comfort and peace working in the horse barn. She is shown here with Gonzo.

was the way he coped with the pain, and Sierra got the brunt of it.

On her 12th birthday, she came downstairs in her PJs and two strangers were sitting at the kitchen table.

“I was like, who are these people?” Sierra said. “My foster mom told me these people wanted to adopt me and my brother. They spent two weeks with us in Kentucky and then flew us home to North Dakota.”

## Moving to North Dakota

Living in small town North Dakota with their new family was a positive change from the life they'd been living. When they drove up to the front yard of their new home, a big sign welcomed them home. They went camping and traveling as a family. They were loved. And they had family dinners, something they'd never experienced before.

“But my brother continued to beat me. I can't tell you how many times he almost killed me,” Sierra said. “I tell people this and they think I must hate my brother. But no. I love my brother to death. You can't help how trauma that early on affects you.”

When her adoption day came around, Sierra was adopted without her brother. He had been moved back to Kentucky where he was eventually adopted by another family—a family Sierra says is perfect for him.

That's when things changed for Sierra. “I had been this shining child, and nothing was wrong with me. My brother was the one who had therapy multiple times a week. When I got adopted it was like everything in me kind of bubbled up. I let loose when I realized this was for real. This was permanent. My life wasn't going to be chaos anymore.”

Sierra did everything she could to

push her parents away. “I'd been lied to my entire life, so I didn't believe they were in it for the long haul.”

Sierra's parents took her to therapy, but nothing seemed to help. Eventually, they were able to get her to the Ranch, and she was ready to get help.

“I went to the Ranch with the mindset that I wanted to get better because I was tired of living like this,” Sierra said. “When I got to the Bismarck Ranch, I stopped lying—well, except for white lies when you tell someone they look good and they really don't. The people in Bismarck changed my life. One of my teachers, Mrs. Pokrzywinski, wrote a note in one of my journals, and I still read it to this day. She gave me a lot of inspiration and helped me a lot. She meant a lot to me then and she means a lot to me now.”

Sierra's biggest challenges were anxiety, and her relationship with her parents. Both are improving thanks to her time at the Ranch and her faith in God.

“I've grown so much in my faith, and I believe God is all-healing. He took my anxiety away and I haven't had it for weeks. I had a huge breakthrough in my faith while I was at the Ranch in Bismarck. We watched the movie, “I Can Only Imagine,” and that song is my all-time breakthrough song. I know now there is nothing I can't do without God.”

“As for my parents, I am trying so hard and I know they are too. I didn't realize until very recently that they aren't going anywhere. I can scream and kick and say

anything, and they're still going to be there for me. I'm probably going to be discharging soon and I want to be able to go home and apply everything I've learned here in my daily life. Because if I can do that, then I can do anything right?”

As Sierra begins to believe in herself and her ability to live successfully with her family, she is discovering the joy of helping others.

“Helping gives me joy...doing random things and not expecting anything out of it,” Sierra said. “That's what gives me the most happiness and joy that just fills my heart. It's the little things that help me grow as a person and more insightful. If I hadn't come to the Ranch, I'm not sure where I'd be.

“I like being at the Ranch; it's a second home for me. I consider the staff and teachers as my REAL Ranch family. They helped me believe in myself, and though they may not know it, they helped me grow as a person. And I will never forget how much Pastor Rick and Deaconess Kelly help me to grow in my faith. Even though times can get tough, God gives us a whole support system to get through it.

“Remember this,” Sierra said. “God is here now and forever. You are His child and He will always love you.”

*You may remember meeting Sierra in a recent letter from President/CEO, Joy Ryan. Because we have limited room in a letter and Sierra has so much to share, we shared the rest of her story here.*

# Meaningful memories at Medora

By Hannah Kosloski,  
Communications Intern,  
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

Also, we all jammed out to music we enjoy and talked about so many cool things.”



After the trip, the girls reflected on what the trip, and their time at the Ranch, meant to them.

“My Ranch journey has been so relieving,” Megan said. “It has brought so much light and revival to my life. I think all young men and women, girls and boys, should know that some things are for the better. It may seem bad at the time, but it

This past summer, three Ranch residents, Courtney, Sierra and Megan, traveled to Medora with Amber Benham, Horse Program Coordinator, to hike and look for wild horses.

will always work out in the end. Being here has made me really think about the choices I’ve made and how I can share my experience at the Ranch with everyone.”

The idea for the trip started when the girls were at the horse barn, talking about how they’d love to see wild horses. Amber told them about the wild horses in Medora, and when she learned none of them had been there, she planned the trip. The special outing celebrated the progress the three girls had made at the Ranch, rewarded them for work they did around the horse barn over the summer, and served as a last hurrah for Courtney who was discharging at the end of the week.



“My favorite part was the ride there and back,” Sierra said. “It was filled with so much laughter that sometimes it was heard to breathe.

Sierra told a similar story. “My journey at the Ranch has been very helpful and has given me the ability to start healing from my past. I came to the Ranch so I could work on myself and heal from my past trauma. The Ranch has helped insurmountably.”

## #ShowMeTheHoney

In just a few weeks, you’ll receive your complimentary bottle of Ranch honey. This is our way of saying thank you for your support of the Ranch, and our amazing kids, in 2019. Help us show kids at the Ranch that love and support comes to them from across the United States!



Please post your photo on Facebook and/or Instagram—tag Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch and use the hashtag #ShowMeTheHoney. Or, email your photo, name, and location to [comm-all@dakotaranch.org](mailto:comm-all@dakotaranch.org).



# Ranch Voice Reader Survey

## Win a framed masterpiece created by a Ranch child

Please take a few moments to share your opinions and suggestions so Ranch Voice can be its very best. To be entered in a drawing to receive one of two framed pieces of art (created by a Ranch child), please include your name, address, phone, and email.

### Complete or mail this page to:

Tammy Noteboom  
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch,  
7151 15th St. S., Fargo, ND 58104,

complete online at [DakotaRanch.org/survey](http://DakotaRanch.org/survey),



or use your smart phone camera to connect to the website with the QR code to the left.



1. How do you generally receive information about Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch (check all that apply)?
    - Ranch Voice magazine
    - Emails from the Ranch
    - Ranch Website
    - Mailings from the Ranch
    - Word of mouth
    - Personal contact
    - Local media
  2. How often do you typically read Ranch Voice?
    - Every issue
    - Most issues
    - Occasional issues
    - Never read an issue
  3. How much of each magazine do you read?
    - All of it
    - Most of it
    - Some of it
    - None of it
  4. Please rate the overall quality of Ranch Voice.
    - Excellent
    - Good
    - Average
    - Poor
    - Very Poor
    - No opinion
  5. Ranch Voice magazine strengthens my personal connection to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.
    - True
    - False
  6. How long do you keep each issue of Ranch Voice after you've received it?
    - More than one month
    - Up to one month
    - Up to one week
    - Discard immediately
  7. Have you ever passed your copy of Ranch Voice onto someone else to read?
    - Yes
    - No
  8. Do you have any changes or improvements to suggest? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

# Bee a Buddy, Not a Bully



A survey of the children in our care found that 86% of Ranch kids have been bullied, and 70% have bullied someone else. To make it clear that bullying is not okay, at the Ranch or anywhere, Ranch staff, kids, and friends took a stand against bullying during National Bullying Prevention Month in October. While on the surface it looked like it was all about having fun, ongoing discussions about bullying were taking place all over our campuses.

In Minot, the Student Council presented a Bullying Assembly. Anne Compere, a Ranch Development Officer who attended the assembly, said, “Kids shared their bullying stories with authenticity and without sensationalism. I loved hearing the recurring theme that everyone at Dakota Memorial School can find someone to talk to if they feel marginalized because it is a place where people care for each other and help each other.



On Hat Day, several Dakota Memorial School, Minot, staff and students added a striped twist by dressing up as Waldo from the “Where’s Waldo” books.



Fargo students wrote anonymous apology letters to people they have hurt or bullied and hung them up on a “Bee Buddies, Not Bullies” display in the nutrition center.



Fargo Facilities staff did their part to stomp out bullying by wearing their blue shirts. They also served blue koolaid and cookies!



Kids painted rocks with anti-bullying slogans and distributed them around local parks.



Board member, Jerry Hauff, with his grandchildren.



Board member, Dr. George O'Neill



Board member, Cherie Harms

# Celebrations

## Fence around your heart

Ranch kids recently talked about boundaries in their weekly STAR group. The assignment was to draw a picture of “their fence” to illustrate their boundaries. As she led the activity, Ranch Case Manager, Katelyn Hanson, talked about healthy boundaries and how you can protect yourself while also

letting people in. One of the girls said her fence had a lock, “because it’s hard to let people in and it’s easier to be guarded.” Another said she drew a line of shrubs instead of a fence because she doesn’t have great boundaries, but she wants them to grow and develop.



Seemingly simple activities, like Ranch residents drawing pictures to illustrate their boundaries, often lead to important discussions.

## Celebrating our thrift stores



The Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors turned out in full force for the ribbon-cutting at the new Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Thrift Store in Fargo.



The Ranch's Minot Thrift Store opened in 1986 to underwrite a portion of the costs to care for the at-risk children living at the Ranch. After a complete remodel in 2019 to create more shelf space and to provide a better shopping experience for customers, we held a Grand Re-Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. The Minot Chamber Ambassadors (sporting their signature red coats) joined us for the ribbon cutting.

## Joyfully Lutheran at LCMS National Convention

Chaplain Rick Jones and Pastor Tom Marcis attended the LCMS National Convention. In addition to manning a Ranch booth, they learned what it means to be #JoyfullyLutheran.





## NALC recognizes Ranch as partner social ministry



At their summer conference, the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) recognized the Ranch as one of the newest NALC Partner Ministries. NALC congregations across the nation are proving to be potent and enthusiastic friends of the Ranch.

## Gone fishing



Rice Lake, south of Minot, was a great spot for a Wildlife Club outing this summer. They “caught” a big Northern Pike that broke the line before they could reel it in—sounds suspiciously like a fish story!

## Pheasants for the future



For the last several years, the Ranch’s Wildlife Club has worked with Pheasants for the Future to preserve and restore the pheasant populations in the Minot area. Each year, the club delivers pheasant chicks to the Ranch, along with some feed. Wildlife Club participants feed, water, and care for the pheasants and then in July, they release them into the wild.

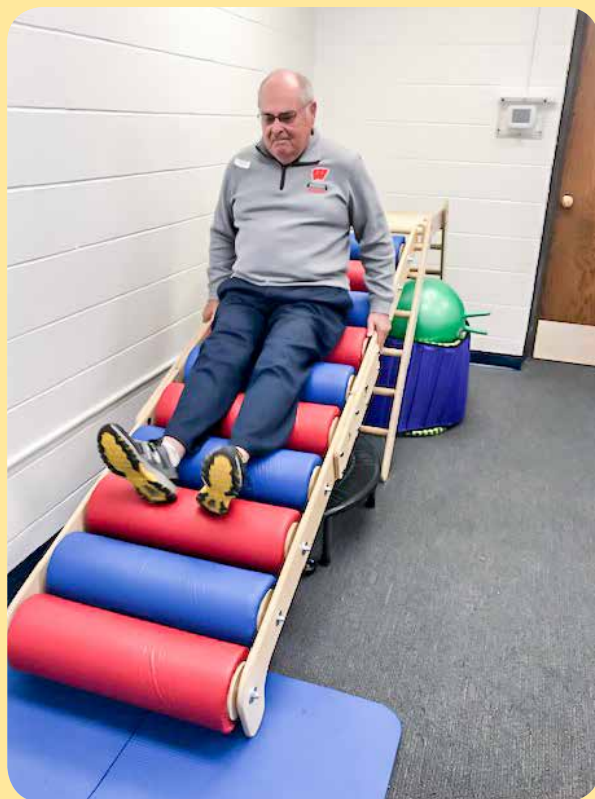


## Kid at heart

When Dr. Norm Sell toured our Minot campus, he tried out the occupational therapy and sensory equipment to get a better idea of the many ways kids can calm their emotions so they can focus on their treatment and education.



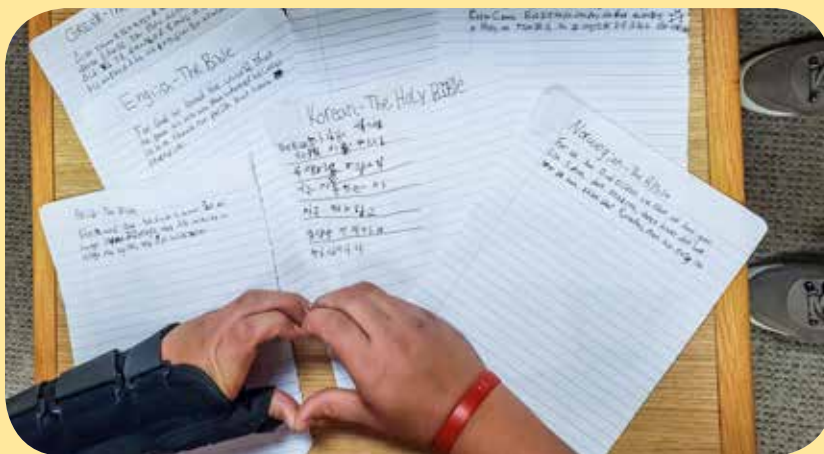
Weighted blankets put pressure on the body, which for some kids creates a sense of calm, well-being, and safety. They can also ease insomnia, reduce anxiety, improve focus, ease pain, and create a calming effect for children and adults with sensory processing disorder.



The Steamroller ramp turns occupational therapy into play by stimulating a child's senses and providing sensory input that can calm and organize the nervous system. The ramp can also create body awareness, provide deep pressure stimulation, and build coordination and motor skills.

## The Lord speaks to us all

A residential student in Bismarck received a multilingual Bible from the Spiritual Life team and quickly put it to good use. While reading his Bible, he had the idea to write his favorite verse in the languages represented in his new Bible. The next day at school, he proudly showed off his efforts in spreading God's message to all who could hear.



Ranch resident translated his favorite verse, "For God so love the world, that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life," (John 3:16) to Russian, Portuguese, Norwegian, Korean, Greek, and Polish.

## Movement gives brains a boost

Brain researchers have found that movement positively affects student academics, behavior, and health. Through a \$5,000 grant from Sanford Health, Fargo DMS staff are learning why and how to infuse movement into their classrooms. Dr. Kristen Ford, Concordia College, and Dr. Jenny Linker, North Dakota State University, co-developers of SchoolsAlive! shared cutting edge research about movement strategies that increase learning, motivation and health.

Ford and Linker developed SchoolsAlive! to train North Dakota and Minnesota teachers in adding movement brain breaks into each day. Teachers will attend additional trainings throughout the school year and create movement lessons for each of their classrooms.

## Yahtzee Queen takes on Ranch students

The “Yahtzee Queen,” a resident of Trinity Lutheran Home, Minot, loves to challenge Ranch kids to her favorite game. She almost always wins. One of the boys got a Yahtzee on his last roll and she still won! Deaconess Kelly Jacobs takes the girls from Challenge cottage and the boys from Thatcher cottage to visit the residents at Trinity every week.



## Ranch kids honor our nation's veterans

Ranch residents made cards for veterans to honor their service on Veteran's Day. We sent their cards to Ranch staff who have been in the military, and to Ranch donors who are veterans. If you are a veteran and didn't receive a card, please let us know ([info@DakotaRanch.org](mailto:info@DakotaRanch.org)) so our kids can honor you next year. Thank you for your service.



## See you at the Pole



Students and staff participated in “See You at the Pole,” an annual gathering of thousands of Christian students. Students prayed for each other, our country and our world.

## W-ELCA National President Visits the Ranch

Lisa Plorin, Executive Board President, Women of the ELCA (W-ELCA), visited Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in Minot this summer.



Lisa, Upham, ND, is serving a three-year term on the national board. Lisa has a long history with the Ranch—she remembers attending the Grand Opening of the Minot Thrift Store with her mother years ago and winning the drawing for a car!

## Quilter Extraordinaire!

Wilma Elsing Wendt, a loyal Ranch friend and lifelong Lutheran, recently donated a Horse-themed Quilt that she lovingly made to adorn a wall at the Ranch. Wilma and her husband, George, who passed away in 2014 after 57 years of marriage, started supporting the Ranch in 1998. They chose the Ranch because Wilma liked supporting an organization in the Dakotas that had a Christian focus. Wilma also has a heart for disadvantaged children, including Native Americans, and after doing extensive fiscal research on various organizations, she determined that the Ranch stewarded its resources wisely.

Wilma grew up in Aberdeen,

SD, area along with her sister, Irma Fuerstenau (Bend, OR) who is also a friend of the Ranch. Wilma graduated from Valparaiso University in Indiana. She and George met at the “Tall Clubs,” an organization for tall singles. They enjoyed a good life together, raising four children who, according to Wilma, “are all above average in height.”

Wilma was one of the first women to break into the kitchen industry in the Chicago area. She formed her own company, Designs by WW, and had a successful career as a kitchen designer.

In addition to making a quilt for the Ranch, Wilma has sewn

and donated the tops and backs for 1,300 quilts for Lutheran World Relief.



## Reaching for the stars

Danielle German, a Ranch Youth Care Worker in Bismarck, is keeping students reaching for the stars. Danielle created constellations in the calming rooms at Dakota Memorial School. The calming classrooms give students a moment for mindfulness and relaxation.



## Engaging for impact

For yet another year, Johnson Eyecare and Eyewear and Cognizant employees helped Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation staff prepare for the busy giving season. On Magic Day of Giving in September, they folded honey boxes, boxed honey, made new donor packets, and stamped receipt envelopes.



Magic Day of Giving is the largest single-day community service event in Minot. Volunteers from across

the community rake, paint, pick up garbage, build shelves, wash windows, improve local parks, and help nonprofits like the Ranch.



## Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child kicked off the holiday season in October with a donation box decorating contest between the Minot cottages. The girls in Challenge cottage won this year's prize for the best-looking, most creative box. They scattered the boxes around campus and asked staff to donate items for Operation Christmas Child.

Deaconess Kelly Jacobs planned a packing party for Nov. 16, where the kids came together to fill 54 Operation Christmas Child boxes. Kelly said, "The kids are excited to be a part of a movement that sends Christmas boxes to millions of kids all over the world!"



Ranch kids wrote notes to the children who would receive the boxes. One note read, "I hope you have fun with your toys. You have a piece in my heart."



In addition to toothbrushes, soap and other personal care items, kids had plenty of toys to choose from in filling their boxes.

## Local Boaters Wake the World

Ranch kids enjoyed a day boating, tubing, and waterskiing on Minnesota's Pelican Lake, thanks to a new local nonprofit, Wake the World. The local chapter of Wake the World (a nationwide charity operating in 28 states) was organized by Dave and Jamie Swenson to share their love of water sports with underserved kids who may not otherwise have the chance to get on the water.

Fifty volunteers, 11 boats, and 35 children from the Ranch and the Becker County Foster and Kinship Programs, spent a beautiful July afternoon on the lake. Some Ranch kids were boating, skiing, and/or tubing for the first time. Christian Kjelland, Wellness Coordinator on the Ranch's Fargo Campus,

and several other staff went with the children to encourage their new experiences and celebrate summer, all while helping them feel safe and supported.

Kids from the Ranch had a great time, and some went way out of their comfort zones. Jamie said they had so much fun they held another event just for Ranch kids later in the summer. This time, in addition to the boats, the kids had access to kayaks, a swim mat, and a paddleboat; and they used them all.

"We were honored to meet the kids," Jamie said. "They may think we did something for them, but I hope they know how much they gave us. The uncountable laughs, smiles, and memories will be cherished by us forever."





# Creating space for learning

School is so much more than a place to learn reading, writing and arithmetic. In school, children learn how to work in teams, how to build relationships with their peers and adults, and how to manage their emotions and feelings when in a bustling and energy-filled environment. If kids in treatment can learn to operate within those environments, rather than isolated from them, they have a better chance of success when they leave treatment. School gives them a place to practice the new skills they are learning in a “normal” environment.

That’s why the Ranch established the Dakota Memorial School District many years ago—to give the children living in residential treatment access to

a quality education. Other residential treatment facilities provided tutoring for residents unable to attend public school, but we wanted more for our kids.

*Lonny\* is one young man who learned a lot about his own abilities while he was in treatment. When Ranch President/CEO, Joy Ryan, asked him what he learned at the Ranch, he said, “I learned I’m pretty smart. I didn’t know that before.” He became an avid reader in his short time at the Ranch and had a special affection for Hemingway. When Lonny completed treatment, he returned to his home school and graduated with his class.*

Then, because DMS was often the

first and only place their child had ever been successful in school, parents and guardians sometimes wanted their children to remain at DMS when they completed their residential treatment program. This led to the creation of a DMS Day Program so, when appropriate, students could continue their education at DMS.

*15-year-old Cain benefited from the specialized services provided at DMS both while in residential treatment and after discharge. Cain had struggled in public school before coming to the Ranch. He didn’t fit in and his school didn’t have the resources they needed to provide Cain with what he needed to*

*be successful. When he discharged from residential treatment, Cain's parents chose to keep him at DMS for another year—even though it was a 71-mile drive from their home. Each day, Cain's mom or dad made the 142-mile trip twice—going home while Cain was at school so they could continue to work.*

Schools, struggling to provide a positive education for a select group of kids, asked DMS to take on additional students—students who had no former tie to the Ranch. Again, the Ranch stepped up to the plate to increase space, add teachers, and seek licensing, giving students with the highest needs a safe place to learn.

*Anthony attended Dakota Memorial School from 5th grade through graduation. His struggles with extreme depression and anxiety didn't result in a need for residential treatment, but they made it difficult for him to connect with his teachers and peers. He couldn't focus on his work and was getting farther and farther behind. It took time for Anthony to be comfortable at DMS, but he eventually built good relationships with several staff and he started to excel. Anthony graduated from DMS in 2019.*

In 2019, we hit another crossroads as our capacity couldn't keep up with the demand. Two years of study and research, along with a constant waiting list led to another expansion of the DMS Day Program.

In Fargo, DMS had an ongoing waiting list for middle school students (grades 6-8). So, during the summer

of 2019, the Ranch created space for two additional balanced learning environments and hired additional teachers and paraprofessionals to make room for an additional seven students in the Day Program.

In Minot, the school was experiencing an increasing enrollment of elementary students. At the same time, the open floor plan of the building was no longer suitable for meeting the needs of kids who were coming to us with increased needs and behaviors.

A team of educators and facilities staff came together with a lofty goal to remodel the school—without creating

content and learning needs, and special services. This provides for less disruption between the upper grade and lower grade students. Walls were built to separate classrooms—which quieted the noise and created calmer spaces for students to learn. This is especially important for Ranch kids who have sensory issues.

The new space also created a transitional program and classroom for elementary and middle school students with a variety of individualized programming needs. And, it allowed for a Day Program-focused area where Day Students are welcomed each morning and staff can hold private meetings with parents and outside agencies.

The Minot remodel allowed us to add an additional five students and created a better-suited learning environment for the 60 students at Minot DMS each day.

In addition to increasing enrollment numbers for Day Students in Minot and



**The school library is one of our kids' favorite spots to engage in learning.**

any interruptions in the school year. The result was a complete remodel of the school and thanks to contractors, Ranch facilities staff, and school staff who all worked tirelessly, it was ready for students when they came back to school.

The remodel created “Learning Neighborhoods” within the building. Every student has a place in the building based on their grade level,

Fargo, leaders worked together to build therapeutic support around each Day Student—to include behavioral health therapy, occupational therapy, and trauma-sensitive learning strategies. The goal of these changes is to help our kids recognize their triggers and offer a variety of brain-based strategies for self-soothing and regulating emotions so they can learn.

## The DMS Difference

What you can't readily see when you walk through any of the DMS locations is the tremendous amount of learning teachers and staff have done over the past several years. Researchers have made significant advances in understanding the brain over the

rather than just 50 minutes of Physical Education class, not only helps children learn, but helps to regulate their emotions.

The biggest difference is in the culture. Becoming a trauma-sensitive learning environment requires teachers and staff to make a major



Thanks to St. Joseph's Community Health Foundation, we were also able to expand our elementary playground, giving our youngest Ranch children and safe and kid-friendly place to play.

past 10 years. For instance, when a student struggles with emotional issues, a biological shift occurs in the brain, which stalls higher order thinking and classroom learning until the brain can recover. We are now aware of new strategies that can help students recover more quickly so they can return to learning. The new spaces give us room to implement these strategies.

Along the same lines, researchers have learned that the part of the brain that processes movement is the same part of the brain that processes learning. Integrating deliberate movement into the classroom throughout the day,

shift away from a traditional punitive behavior management mindset to one where educators assume students would do well if they could. Staff training, collaborations, and many discussions have led DMS educators to an understanding of trauma and its impact on the brain.

If you just focus on behavior, you do not address the student's fears or heal their brains—in other words, you do not get to the root of the problems. This doesn't mean students don't have consequences for their behaviors, but that they are viewed from a place of compassion and understanding.

## Moving Forward

The next step is to create additional learning spaces in Fargo's Dakota Memorial School—which will allow us to accommodate the educational needs of additional students.

We know that with the right people surrounding students, in the right environment, even a deeply wounded boy or girl can achieve academic success. The many changes at DMS will give more young men and women the chance to experience true success.

## Celebration of learning

In September, Dakota Memorial School Minot held a Celebration of Learning to share the new learning spaces created by DMS teachers, administration, and the Ranch Facilities team. The Minot Chamber Ambassadors participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony, students gave tours, local media showed up, and students served snacks in the school store.



The Minot Chamber Ambassadors kicked off the celebration with a ribbon cutting ceremony.





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DakotaRanch.org/legacy



## Four Questions People Ask About Preparing a Will

### 1. DO I HAVE ENOUGH PROPERTY TO MAKE A WILL?

It is easy to look around and feel like your estate is small and does not warrant the time and expense of a will.

The truth is that every day many people die possessing much more than they realize. What may be a modest home today, a small investment portfolio, or just the beginning of a savings account can enjoy significant growth in value before death. If you don't have a will, the state will determine how it is distributed.

### 2. HOW DO I MAKE TIME?

The single biggest reason Americans fail to prepare a will falls into the "life just gets in the way" category. For some it is simply the day-to-day routine that prohibits them from considering a will. For others, it is the reality that no one plans to die, or certainly no one enjoys planning to die. For another group it may be rationalized under the "no one can know the future" reason, thinking that so much could change between today and the time of death. Make time now, especially if you have minor children and need to designate guardianship.

### 3. WON'T IT BE COSTLY?

In many instances, a carefully prepared will does have some attendant costs. This is especially true where complicated or larger estates are involved. However, a few hundred dollars or more pale in comparison to the cost of having no will at all. Without a will, an estate may face the maximum in applicable probate costs and taxes. In the event of any family disagreement over distribution, legal costs skyrocket. By the time settlement occurs, hundreds or even thousands of dollars might have been lost. In some cases, heirs can actually end up bearing the brunt of out-of-pocket costs. Having a will can save you and your family money.

### 4. I DON'T LIKE PAPERWORK. IS IT NECESSARY?

Many Americans have a built-in distrust for legal documents that tend to be long and difficult to understand. A will is easily understood, however, when compared to the legal intricacies that an estate without a will may experience. Attorneys will gladly provide an easy-to-understand summary of the contents of a will to ensure that your objectives are met.



Every year the vast majority of Americans who die, do so without having prepared a valid last will and testament. For the past three decades the numbers hover between 70% and 80%.

This statistic is especially astounding since state and federal laws provide some significant incentives for the preparation of a will. These incentives are designed to make it easy for very personal wishes to be known and followed—wishes that deal with child custody, property distribution and a legacy of values. Not to mention the fact that, in many cases, a carefully planned will serves to actually minimize costs related to settling an estate.

For a Free Wills Kit, call Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation at 1-800-344-0957.

Go to [DakotaRanch.org/Legacy](http://DakotaRanch.org/Legacy) to sign up for a free e-newsletter with valuable estate planning information and updates on the Ranch ministry.

## Finally Family

### One young man's journey to find love and acceptance

Mannie was just an infant when his parents dropped him off at a family friend's and didn't come back. Mannie, now age 16 and wise beyond his years, says matter-of-factly, "They weren't ready, or didn't have the proper parenting to take care of me."

No anger. No resentment. Just calm acceptance of his reality.

But it hasn't always been that way.

Mannie lived with his foster mom (the family friend) for 11 years. And he liked her. "She was a nice person," Mannie said. "But eventually I began to resent her and to not like her and her family."

Mannie was physically abused by his older brother while living in her home. She got the brother out of the house as soon as she found out, but the damage was done. The adorable brown-eyed boy who moved into her house turned into an angry teenager.

Mannie's foster mom took him to see several counselors who tried to help him. "They did what they could," he said. "But I fought against it and didn't embrace the therapy. I thought it was a joke."

At age fourteen, Mannie turned to drugs to block the memories and

pain of the abandonment and abuse he experienced in his early years. "[Marijuana] was easy to get and it became the thing to do when I was depressed or just wanted escape. You're just not really feeling the day, so you go smoke. It becomes hard to kick

He continued to resist the therapy, but something changed along the way.

"There were certain staff who began to understand me," Mannie said. "They understood why I was the way I was and helped me fix the problems. I felt like they really cared. One of my favorite staff, Alex, would stay up with me when I was upset. We would play cards until I calmed down and was ready for bed."

At the same time, Jenean Jessen was on her own journey. Jeannie had a good job, a job she

could retire from in ten years, but she hated it. One day after running the idea past her husband, she walked into work and gave her notice.

Her friend, a teacher at the Ranch, told her there was an opening and she should apply.

"I resisted," Jeannie said. "I thought it was the same thing. I was working with criminals in my old job and they'd be the same, just younger, at the Ranch. But I wasn't doing anything,



**Their first family photos! Pictured left to right: Mannie, Jeannie, Doni, Levi, Mylee, and Tanner.**

after a while because it makes you happy."

For Mannie's foster mom, this was the last straw. She didn't have the energy or the resources to help Mannie get back on the right path. That's when Mannie was admitted to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

"I hated it here," he said. "I resented being here and I got into a lot of fights."

so I thought I'd give it a try. I quickly learned it wasn't the same at all."

Jeannie remembers standing in the hall on one of her first days at the Ranch and witnessing one of the kids having a meltdown.

"I cried and cried. I realized then that these kids are here because of other people. I'd been working with those people all these years, and these kids were the products of their mistakes. It broke my heart. Just a few days in and I already loved it here."

Jeannie and Mannie met at Dakota Memorial School, the on-campus school of the Ranch. One day, Mannie was in the school office, where Jeannie worked, and he said, "People just don't care."

Jeannie responded, "We do care, Mannie."

"Not the way I want them to care," he said. "People care enough to say 'hi' to me. But I want a person like, well, like a parent, I guess. Your teachers care about you, but your parents, they really care about you."

"That was it," Jeannie said. "I went home and told my husband about Mannie and said I wanted to bring

him home."

Jeannie and her husband, Doni, jumped through a lot of hoops to become foster parents so Mannie could spend time with them. At first, he went to church with them, went to their house for a while, and then went back to the Ranch. He and Doni connected.

"Doni is seasoned. Mannie is seasoned. They share that common spice," Jeannie said. "I think Mannie can relate to Doni in that they both came through so much and came out the other side doing so well. It's a God thing. God brought me to the Ranch so we could find our son."



**Jeannie and Mannie share a zest for life and a quirky sense of humor.**

About the same time, Mannie started taking his treatment seriously.

"I started to accept the therapy and talked through all the things that

really bothered me," he said.

Having people in his life like Jeannie and Doni, people who cared like he wanted to be cared about, gave Mannie something to work for. He could picture himself as part of a family and knew he had to work at his therapy to make it possible.

Now that Mannie is living full-time with Jeannie and Doni while they wait for his adoption to be finalized, he can appreciate his time living at the Ranch and reflect on what he learned.

And, Mannie continues to be a "Ranch kid," this time by his own choosing. When Mannie was given the choice to between Dakota Memorial School and public school, he chose DMS. "When you go to regular school it's the same thing year after year. Here, it's different every year. You never know what to expect. It's like a mixed tape—a new experience almost every time and it's great. It's hard at the beginning of the year because it's lots of new kids and you don't know how they'll be. But I make friends easily, so it works out."

"I could have ended up so much worse," he said. "Juvenile Detention. YCC [Youth Correctional Center], Dead. Overdosed. I know people who have done that. I'm definitely more confident. I'm more humorous. I really like living at [Jeannie and Doni's]. I have roots. I have a place to live. I feel safe. I have a place where people like and accept me."

# Our Mission up Close

## Experience Hope

with a visit to a Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch campus

One of the best ways to fully understand the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch mission is to step onto one of our three Ranch campuses. Many people, some who have been donors for decades, say touring the Ranch is an eye-opening experience. Eileen Cornelsen, Allen and Ina Hieber, and Arlene Blihovde all toured the Ranch over the past few months. Here is what they had to say.



**Eileen Cornelsen,  
Houston, TX**

*“Visiting the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch was truly the highlight of my week in this beautiful state. The campus was peaceful yet full of life. The Ranch is a super special place... a harbor of protection, safety, and healing for children who have had to endure very tough, and oftentimes traumatic, situations.*

*“Supporting this amazing organization was important to my late father and two of his brothers. I now have that same desire, having seen firsthand just how the love of Christ can heal the brokenhearted and turn an upside-down life into right life in Christ. Without question, the Ranch is a remarkable place that gives top notch care and*

*love to some very remarkable kids. I have thought about those children and my visit every day since. It was heart changing.”*

If you’ve been following the Ranch, you may recognize the Cornelsen name. Cornelsen cottage, on our Minot campus, houses the psychiatric treatment center for our youngest boys. The cottage was christened “Cornelsen Cottage” in 1994 to honor Eileen’s father and two uncles who had provided remarkable support and leadership to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch through Board Service and gifts of their time and treasures.



**Allen and Ina Hieber,  
Pawleys Island, SC**

*“[Ina and I] toured the Ranch on a Saturday afternoon. I was very impressed. It was a much bigger operation than I thought it would be. I was happy to hear the horses are still used as part of the process to help turn these kids around.*

*“I’ve been contributing to the Ranch since my father died in 1994. He cared about kids who hadn’t been given a real chance in their early lives and planted the seed for me to give. I like that the Ranch is a Lutheran-sponsored charity.*

*I’ve been a Lutheran all my life so there is a connection there.*

*“We toured the Ranch because I wanted to get a little more appreciation for what I was supporting. I didn’t know the Ranch provided the highest level of psychiatric care, that so many kids lived on campus, or that this is a complete operation with schooling for the children. I was struck by the beauty of the place. It is remote, yet close to the city of Minot—the best of both worlds.”*



**Arlene Blihovde,  
Mesa, AZ**

*“During my recent trip to Minot I had the opportunity to visit the [Dakota] Boys and Girls Ranch. As I entered the building I was met with greetings and smiles. The whole place feels like love is all around you! All the remodeling of classrooms was taking place and I was able to see the various equipment being used to adequately create a study environment. The facilities available for the children are first class from the dining hall to the gym to the chapel to the horse barn and everywhere else. Truly there is love and care here and I left feeling miracles are truly made here.”*

# Understanding Our Kids

## Getting some Zzzzzzzzz's

### Helping Ranch kids get good sleep

**By Kira MacKay, RN  
Nursing Coordinator,  
Minot campus**

Imagine what it would be like if you couldn't go home at the end of a long day and crawl into your own safe, comfortable bed. That's what it has been like for many of the kids at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch—their beds, and sleep in general, have not always been a safe, comfortable place. Some didn't have a bed and spent nights on the floor, on the couch, under the kitchen table... wherever they fell asleep. Others hopped from couch to couch with their families—never knowing where they would spend the night. Many see night as scary because that is when bad things happened to them. They come to the Ranch and we expect them to sleep in an unfamiliar place surrounded by people they don't know.

Sleep is as vital to life as the air you breathe, the food you eat, and the water you drink. Adolescents ideally need 8-10 hours of sleep each night, and most have poor sleep habits—staying up late and sleeping in when they can. Ranch residents are no different—and their histories of trauma often impact their sleep even further.

Lack of sleep can have severe consequences, including limiting a child's ability to learn, listen, and concentrate. It can also lead to aggression or other inappropriate behaviors. Sleep difficulties can contribute to illness, unhealthy eating habits leading to weight gain, and make a child more prone to acne and

other skin problems. Our residents already have many strikes against them and adding lack of sleep to the list makes it that much more difficult for them to be successful.

Teaching healthy sleep habits, and helping kids work through the trauma they associate with sleep, is an important part of the work we do at the Ranch. We make sleep a priority by helping residents develop sleep schedules and establish consistent bedtime routines. We teach our kids to avoid drinking, exercising, or screens before going to bed; and promote quiet, calm activities that signal to their bodies that it's time to sleep. A healthy bedtime routine might consist of turning the TV off, having a healthy snack, taking a warm shower, and reading a book.

In addition to teaching a healthy bedtime routine, we meet kids where they are at with their sleep habits. For some of our younger residents this might mean we tuck them in and read a bedtime story. We offer them a night light to have in their rooms or a fan to provide white noise. Some residents enjoy listening to music or having their blankets warmed in the dryer before bed. If a resident is agitated prior to bedtime, we sit with them and help them find calming activities that work for them; such as breathing exercises, wrapping themselves in a weighted blanket, or snuggling with a

favorite stuffed animal.

Many of our youth suffer from insomnia, a sleep disorder characterized by difficulty falling



**Kira MacKay, R.N., and other Ranch nurses, help our kids get good sleep.**

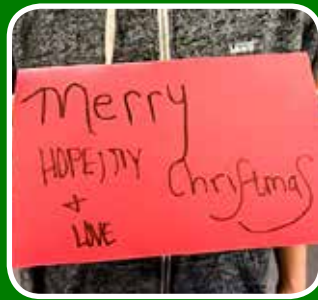
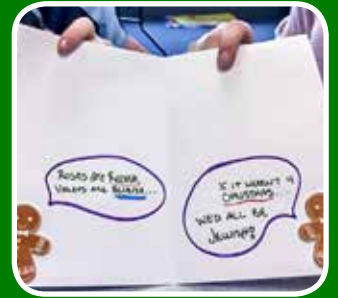
and/or staying asleep. In addition to working with Ranch nurses and youth care workers to develop bedtime routines that promote sleep, kids also talk about sleep with their therapist. They often have kids use a FitBit or complete a sleep log to track their sleep. Our mental health providers use this data to determine if sleep medications are appropriate.

With a combination of a consistent bedtime routine, therapy, and medication, the Ranch helps residents feel safe and comfortable in their beds so they can get the best sleep possible. Paying attention to every part of our kids' lives, 24 hours a day, is all part of helping them heal.

# The Joy of the Holiday Season: Looking Back

Ranch Voice goes to print before many of our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas festivities, so this year we decided to share last year's highlights.

Ranch kids shared the joy of Christmas with their families and local nursing home residents by creating homemade cards.



On the Bismarck campus, students built Christmas sleds for the holiday. Nate Nelson, facilities, cut out all the pieces, and teachers helped students build and decorate their own sleds.



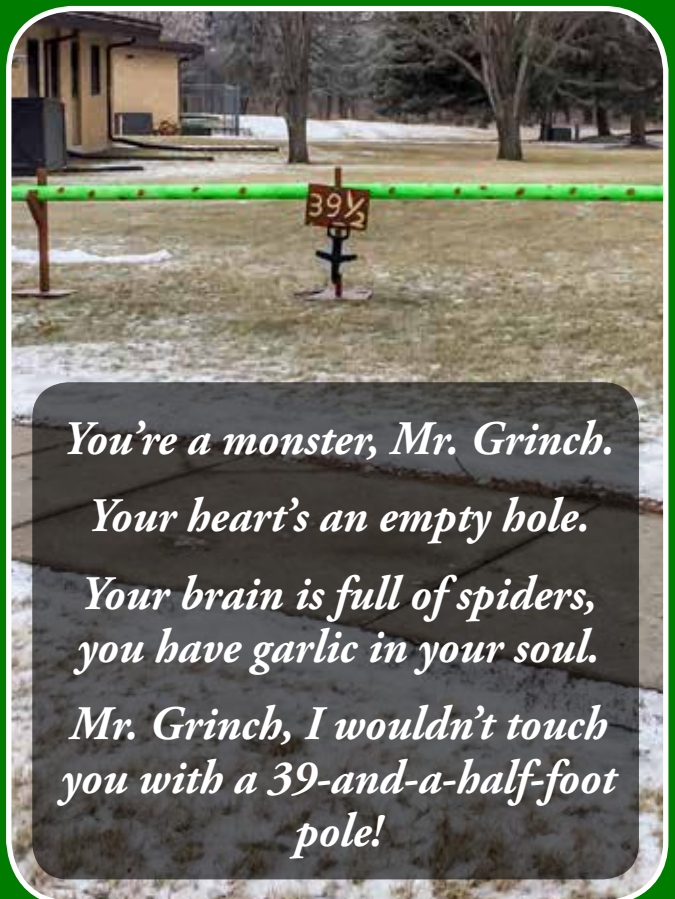
The Student Council at Dakota Memorial School, Minot, paired up with Immanuel Baptist Church to serve an elaborate Thanksgiving meal to the homeless. Lauren Ballantyne, School Counselor and Student Council Advisor, said it was a special day for the givers and receivers.

“As the patrons walked into the soup kitchen area of the church, they expected to see the buffet line like they see every other day they walk through the doors,” Lauren said. “Yesterday was different. As the patrons walked in, many spoke of their excitement to see our students ready and eager to serve them.

“Mrs. Wagner and I were so proud of our students and the amazing job they did. They were so kind, courteous, and respectful to everyone. Other volunteers were extremely pleased about the way the students behaved and their work ethic. The drive home was filled with conversation about the day, holiday cheer, and gratefulness for having had the opportunity to experience the rewarding day.”



Members of St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Fargo, collected Sports balls, books, sketch pads, coloring books, colored pencils, regular pencils, markers, hats, and mittens to give to our kids for Christmas.



*You're a monster, Mr. Grinch.  
Your heart's an empty hole.  
Your brain is full of spiders,  
you have garlic in your soul.  
Mr. Grinch, I wouldn't touch  
you with a 39-and-a-half-foot  
pole!*

Andrew Meier's shop class added a new decoration to the Minot campus last year...a whimsical 39 1/2 foot pole!

## Teachers are learners at Dakota Memorial School

*How do teachers learn to work with the kids at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch?*

**By Damar Brandt,  
Special Education Teacher  
Dakota Memorial School**

To learn, children must be connected to, or engaged with, what's going on in the classroom. It's a challenge for every teacher to make their classroom a place kids want to be. It is even more challenging in classrooms at the Ranch, where students have had year after year of negative school experiences.

Most of our students want to do well in school. But, they can't because of what is going on in their lives. The impact of their trauma, family circumstances, and mental health diagnoses show up in a variety of ways. They tend to avoid anything that seems difficult, are defiant to teachers, seek attention, don't put forth any effort, and so on. These behaviors have served a purpose for our kids—and now it's our job to find other ways to meet their needs. While we don't have a "one-size-fits-all" approach for engaging students in the classroom, some principles do apply to most students.

In September, I attended a conference titled, "The Highly Engaged Classroom." The most interesting and helpful part of the training was the trainer's suggestion to ask questions that pave the way for students to engage in the classroom.

For most of our students, the question, "How do I feel?" is the most pressing question. This is where our kids get stuck. They are depressed,

anxious, and dealing with stressors most of us can't even imagine. When you're worried about your little brother's safety, or don't have a place to call home when you leave treatment or have just learned your parent(s) decided once again NOT to visit, it's no wonder learning is more difficult. Teachers can break down this barrier by addressing a student's emotional well-being.

To do this, teachers must be attentive to a student's words, body language, and behaviors. If a student is struggling to maintain appropriate classroom behavior, teachers can listen to and support them. They can ask them, "How do you feel?" and encourage them to identify their feelings. Then they can ask them, "What do you need?"

Some students can verbalize their feelings and needs. If this is the case, teachers at DMS can acknowledge the feelings and request; and consider whether it is a need they can meet for the child in the moment. Does the child need a movement break? Are they hungry and need a snack?

For students who struggle to communicate their needs, teachers can prompt them by sharing their observations, and suggesting coping skills that may work. With repetition, students can learn to identify their feelings and needs; and make appropriate requests.

Teachers at DMS have an important role in teaching and modeling appropriate ways to handle emotions. Whether they know it or not, teachers

are always "on stage," and students are watching their performance. When teachers are placed in a stressful situation, students notice how they respond. A gracious word or a friendly smile in the middle of a tense situation can teach students that verbal outbursts or aggressive behaviors are not always necessary in stressful situations.



**Special education teacher, Damar Brandt, watches students for cues they are learning.**

Teachers also model appropriate behavior by admitting when they are wrong. When teachers are willing to admit fault and apologize, they model what it looks like to take responsibility in wrong doing, as well as how to correct it. This is a big deal for our students. Many of them have not spent time with adults who apologize when they are wrong. Aside from being the right thing to do, it also shows students that teachers are real people with real faults, just like them. Once a student realizes they are in a safe place with a caring teacher and they feel good emotionally, they are in a much better space to begin learning.



# THERAPY REVIVES HOPE

*As I interviewed Ranch therapists for this article, I was struck by a few common themes. The first was the importance of the relationship between the child and the therapist. Every therapist said the relationship comes first. Without that, nothing the therapist says or does will work. While each therapist has his or her own way of connecting to children, they all stressed that building a trusting relationship is their number one goal.*

*Another theme was the uniqueness of each child and how that plays into therapy. The children who come to the Ranch for residential treatment can't be easily described or put in a box. Every child is different. They have different stories, different personalities, and different dreams. A one-size-fits-all approach to therapy doesn't work. When our therapists meet a child, they aren't trying to figure out which of their three therapy methods to use with this child—they are piecing together individual strategies to work with this child only.*

*Every therapist profiled used the word, “resilience,” when talking about our kids. Most Ranch children have stories that will make your toes curl. Yet they walk and talk and laugh and go to school and function in the world. Yes...they are here because they are struggling, but beneath those struggles are incredible strengths. They are survivors.*

*Finally, when we talked about the kids, their eyes lit up. They love these kids. They see through the behaviors to the awesomeness of each child. When I asked them to tell me about Ranch kids they used words like strong, capable, resilient, awesome, wise, loving, forgiving, and intelligent. Ranch kids are survivors and our therapists put their hearts and souls into helping them move through the world as their best selves.*

*I hope you enjoy learning about each of our therapists as much I did.*

Tammy Noteboom, Vice President, Communications  
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch



**Sara Vetter,  
LPCC  
Clinical Therapist  
Bismarck, ND**

**Sara Vetter has always wanted to work with teenagers.**

She started working in direct care at the Ranch 25 years ago as a graduate student in Fargo. After getting a master’s degree in Counseling, she took a job as a therapist at the Ranch in Minot, and in 2001 she moved with her family to Bismarck to work on that campus.

Sara typically asks children two things when she starts seeing them in treatment. “Why do you think you are in treatment?” and “What can I help you with?”

“Some kids state they have no idea why they are here. Others tell me their diagnoses. ‘I’m here because I have a conduct issue.’ or ‘Because I have ADHD.’ They think they are in treatment because they are a problem. That’s how it’s been—they are always the problem everyone is trying to fix.

“When I ask what they want, some kids say, ‘To be happy. To not be hurt by people.’ Other kids come in really angry and don’t know what they want—except to just be left alone.”

Thanks to years of experience and training, Sara can meet kids where they are at and find ways to connect with them using techniques you wouldn’t think of as traditional therapy. She has a quick wit and uses a lot of humor in her sessions.

“We were struggling to find common ground in an intake with one young man who was really defiant. He was determined to not agree with us on anything. So, just to break it up I stopped and said, ‘Do you like cheese?’

“He’s like, ‘Yes.’ ‘Shredded or sliced,’ I asked. ‘Both,’ he said hesitantly. ‘Oh good,’ I said. ‘I’m glad we can agree on something.’”

“He kind of stopped being defiant for a bit and we were able to have a conversation. You have to find something you can agree on. Sometimes you have to take a bit of a gamble to start building a relationship. It doesn’t always work. I’ve joked with children before they were ready—I thought we had built a trusting relationship and they weren’t there yet. Then I apologize. Apologizing is a big thing. Adults don’t want to apologize. We worry it will shift the power to the child, but I’ve apologized many times and it almost always helps build trust.

It also surprises kids because they’ve rarely had an adult apologize to them.

“Therapy is not just one thing. I came out of school with the mentality that you have very structured therapy sessions. You ask these questions and use these skills. I was surprised by how flexible and adaptive you have to be to work with kids. Sometimes it’s the goofy things you do that start to build trust.”

Sara believes in Ranch kids and their abilities. “People may think our kids aren’t bright enough to do the work they need to heal. I believe they can. They need positive supports, nurturing relationships, and a little help figuring out a realistic definition of success for them. We are a starting point for some to learn skills they can use in the future, if they aren’t ready to now.”

**Taylor Keller works with our youngest children in Cornelsen and Butt cottages on the Minot campus.**

Taylor, who earned her master’s degree in Counseling said some Ranch kids come from loving families, yet something just isn’t working. Maybe there has been a crisis or a death in the family that triggered the behavior issues. Maybe the child has underlying

behavioral health issues like bipolar disorder—things loving parents can’t always address on their own.

“Sometimes just loving your child isn’t enough,” Taylor said.

On the other end of the spectrum, Taylor said we have kids who have endured severe sexual and physical abuse, trauma, neglect, and abandonment.

“These kids often don’t have any family



**Taylor Keller,  
LADC  
Clinical Therapist,  
Minot**

or anyone who cares about them. I've been seeing a lot of kids with severe psychiatric issues... psychosis, disassociation, attachment issues, and lots of trauma."

In either case, "treatment begins the moment a child steps on campus. A therapist meets with each kiddo within an hour

of admission. Therapists need to get a good grasp of where they are at and create a safety plan. Taylor tells kids, "We want to make your world on this campus as large and as full and as meaningful as possible, while also keeping you safe."

One of the boys Taylor is working with now has been abandoned by virtually everyone. His dad chose to terminate parental rights and told him it was because he was a bad kid.

"At the beginning of therapy, I spent a lot of time learning about this young boy. What kind of trauma is he bringing with him? What are the underlying family issues? What is he good at? With this child, there is a lot of suspected abuse. He came to us in a very antagonistic place and was in constant fight or flight mode. This is a kid who has had no safety, no security and no nurturance. We spent a lot of time getting to know him and showing him we cared. We gave him the space he needed to trust us.

"Most people think about therapy as talk therapy but talking about feelings is hard and it's not natural for a ten-year-old. Interacting through games and art, that's a very ten-year-old thing to do. Now we are at the point where we can have some of those higher-level conversations. You can see that the safety and security the Ranch was able to provide gave him what he needed to make positive changes in his life.

"Our goal for most kids is to stabilize them, start the therapy process, and get them into a home setting where they can continue treatment. While

we are building trust, we have lots of things to work on—social skills, identifying their feelings, relating with others...

"Really small things, like making

eye contact, can be difficult when you've experienced a lot of trauma. So, we practice making eye contact. We also do a lot of frustration tolerance through games and art. If they get frustrated because they are losing or something isn't turning out the way they'd like, we start building coping skills.

"We want kids to succeed at home and in the community. When we start talking about discharge, some of our kids start acting out because they don't want to leave. This is their home. It may be the best home they've ever known.

"The difficulties we're helping kids overcome are really, really hard. But the kids are worth it. It's really fun to show kids they are able to provide joy to other people, and that they can experience joy in a way they haven't before."

**Jesse Lamm loves trauma work.** "I don't think we understand how much trauma affects people," Jesse said. "When you look at anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues, so many of those things can be traced back to a trauma of some sort. I love being able to go in and

process the trauma and help kids make connections between the trauma and the way they feel and behave now. You can see a slow progressive change in kids when they start to work through some of that stuff."

Before joining the Ranch, Jesse earned his master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

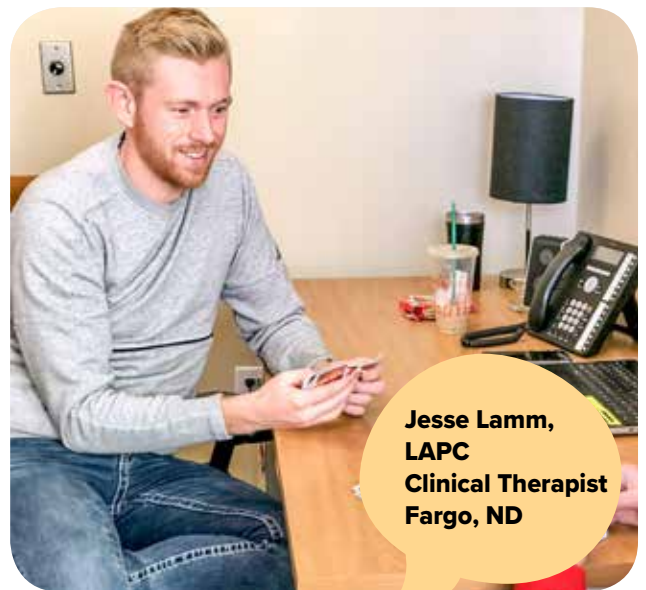
As a fairly new Ranch therapist, Jesse has been most surprised by the resilience of the kids.

"If I went through what they have, I don't know if I could continue doing my everyday activities. But these kids, they still go to school, they still do their normal stuff. They still put a smile on their face. They still have friends. Just seeing the resiliency of these kids every day is pretty incredible."

One of the kids Jesse counsels now avoids talking about his trauma. When Jesse asked him why he is so resistant to talking about it, the 15-year-old

*"Sometimes just loving your child isn't enough."*

*—Taylor Keller*



**Jesse Lamm,  
LAPC  
Clinical Therapist  
Fargo, ND**

said he wants to hold onto the bad memories so he can avoid those types of situations in the future.

"He wants them as a defense mechanism or reminder," Jesse said. "If a child is resistant to therapy and resistant to change, it's going to be hard to go through the therapy

process with them. To be successful in therapy, you have to try. You have to implement some of the things we talk about. “I’ve told him, ‘If you keep going this way, you’re probably going to end up in jail. If that isn’t what you want, what can we do to change things?’”

“I suggested he could have those memories without such a harsh negative reaction.”

Like this young man, many of our kids are pretty quick to anger. One way we can help is to tap into the root of the aggression. Where does that aggression come from? Past experiences? Family history? We also teach kids body awareness. We help them notice little signs like clenching their fists, getting hot, having a knot in their stomach. Jesse pairs the new awareness of their bodies with coping skills. Hopefully with time and patience and with Jesse’s guidance, this child can overcome his own resistance and healing will come.

Jesse said a parent told him the other day that other therapists have said her son’s mental age will never progress past 15. “That really irritated her,” Jesse said, “so she was asking my opinion. I told her I don’t know. I don’t know how far he can get. But I do know there is a special place in this world for every one of these kids—a place where they can succeed, where they can thrive, and where they can be happy.”

### **Monica Olson believes faith is a critical piece of healing.**

“A lot of places minimize the importance of faith. The fact that the Ranch is a Christian organization

made it a good fit for me. Clients ask, ‘Why me?’ ‘Why is this happening to me?’ They often say they hate God, but as they process through their experiences, coming to a belief in something greater than themselves gives their experiences meaning.”

Monica, who earned a master’s degree in Clinical Counseling, feels as though God brought her to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. She was working in Denver when the Ranch posted the therapist opportunity in Minot. She felt led to apply and accept the position.

One of the things Monica likes about residential work is the team

successful.”

The “teams” Monica refers to are the “Core Teams.” Every Ranch cottage has a Core Team that meets weekly. The Team includes the therapist, along with staff from direct care, nursing, occupational therapy, education, wellness and spiritual life.

The therapist and cottage coordinator complete a Child

and Adolescent Needs Assessment (CANS) at the beginning of treatment.

“The assessment consists of several different modules to assess things like life functioning, family functioning, strengths, culture issues, developmental needs, risk behaviors, barriers, caregiver support and more,” Monica said.

After they complete the CANS, they meet with the Core Team, the child, and the family if possible, to create treatment plan goals.

“One of our young women, she is 15, endured years of physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse by a family member. She struggles with flashbacks and becomes dysregulated when memories surface. Her initial CANS assessment showed so much to overcome. So many people who have experienced significant trauma in their youth block those memories and then don’t know why they are acting the way they are. But this young woman can recall these memories, make the connections between her past and her behaviors, and still remain in the room with me. There is something inside of her that is so strong. I see her on a path towards healing because she is addressing, not running, from her past.

“Ranch kids are survivors. Some of

*“These kids are the best. They are sometimes the most wise and loving and caring and forgiving people you will ever meet.”*

*—Lucas Mitzel*



approach. “Therapy doesn’t stop once a child leaves my office. It continues in their interactions in the cottage and at school. We have regular meetings where we all get on the same page. Everyone comes in with their own set of expertise and perspective and that can help in terms of these kids being

them are so incredibly insightful and wise beyond their years. They may not even realize how intelligent and strong they are. I hope I can help them see that so they can realize the depth of their strength and resilience; and then



**Lucas Mitzel,  
LMSW  
Clinical Therapist  
Fargo**

use those strengths to move forward.”

### **Lucas Mitzel counsels Ranch kids from a foundation of honesty.**

“I don’t lie to kids, ever, and I will always be a straight shooter. If they ask me a question, no matter how uncomfortable the answer is going to be for me to share, I’m going to share with them. If it’s something I can’t answer, I tell them that. If a child can trust me with every word I am saying, then they’re going to trust me a little more when I ask them to try something.”

Lucas, who earned a master’s degree in Social Work, knows he must prove himself to kids—prove to them he’s not going to leave them or judge them.

“One of our recent residents had been lied to over and over,” Lucas said. People told him he was going to have a foster home, but it never turned out. He didn’t trust anything. If I’d have made even a hint of a fib with him, we’d have lost everything.

“One day he got super upset in my office. He started to tear my office apart, throwing things. I just sat there and watched it happen. And then I remember sitting on the floor with him while he is in tears and he told me his story.

“His mom and dad were both abusive. He’d had tables thrown at him, been hit at and screamed at, and been locked out of the house. He reported it and nobody believed him. He reported it again and he was placed in a treatment center where he wasn’t understood. From there he bounced through foster homes—15 in all.

“That moment on the floor in my office was the moment he changed things. He was still mad at the world, but he was handling it. Once he shared what happened in his childhood, he could work through it. He worked hard and he got to a new home because of it.”

Lucas fights hard for all Ranch kids, and once a client, always a client. “I give kids my office number when they leave and tell them they can always call if they want to say hi or to share an update. Even if they don’t call, they know they can.

“These kids are the best. They are sometimes the most wise and loving and caring and forgiving people you will ever meet. I’ve worked with kids who’ve had awful things done to them who then turn around and give that person a hug and say, ‘I forgive you.’ I

learn more from these kids than they’ll ever learn from me. The fact that any of them can get up and go to school, be in therapy for an hour, go back to school, do occupational therapy, have groups every single day, and still get up and smile is amazing to me.

“I just love seeing these kids every day and can’t imagine myself any other place.”

### **Boni Simonson starts talking to kids about discharge as soon as they arrive at the Ranch.**

“Preparing for discharge is different for every child, but I want them to tell me what they are worried about,” Boni said. “What are they going to struggle with? How will they answer when people ask where they’ve been? I show them ways they can be honest without getting specific. ‘I was having a hard time. I made some bad choices.’ There might be rumors about why they left, so it’s important for them to have a return plan.”

Boni, who earned her master’s degree in Clinical Counseling, has learned and applied many therapeutic techniques in her 28 years at the Ranch. With discharge planning, she likes to walk kids through potential situations. “I throw out scenarios and



**Boni Simonson  
Clinical Therapist  
Minot**

then we brainstorm.”

“Part of preparing a child to leave is getting them adjusted to being back in the family, if they are returning. And the family adjusting to having them back.” Surprisingly to some, when kids start getting close to leaving the Ranch, they often start to sabotage their treatment by acting out and regressing.

“I believe it’s because they’ve developed close connections with staff and other kids and don’t want to leave,” Boni said. “I really don’t think it’s related to not loving their family, or not appreciating their new foster parents. They are just torn about leaving. If they’ve been successful here, it must be as terrifying to leave as it was to arrive.”

While they are at the Ranch, Boni sees the kids individually at least once a week. They also have group three times a week. One of Boni’s groups is at the barn so they use the horses to work out problems.



“Most of the time we do a problem-solving activity in group. This week we had an activity called Life’s Little Obstacles. The barn was set up as a huge obstacle course that looked impossible for a horse to get through. Their instructions were to get their

horse through the obstacle course without touching them or using a rope. Eventually they figured out I hadn’t said anything about not re-arranging or changing the obstacles, and they were able to get through the course. The obstacles represented bullies and bullying. We

discussed how problems like being bullied can look so big, but if they take it apart, step-by-step, they can get through it.”

First and foremost, Boni focuses on her relationship with the child. “The research shows that the relationship you build with them is the biggest factor in change and success. The more I’ve done this work and the older I am, the more I believe that is true.”

**Ally Rust said, “So many kids come in with the inability to feel something and manage that feeling without making the situation worse.** If they can’t learn to manage their emotions, they’ll never get to the space where they can engage in a relationship and learn people can be trusted. Each time they have a blow up, people back off or react—which furthers the child’s belief that people aren’t good. Learning to regulate

their emotions is the core issue for most Ranch kids.”

In her role as therapist, Ally also works with families. In some cases, the family engagement begins the day their child is admitted. In other cases, families need a break and take a few

months to engage.

“In family therapy, I try to look at the things that aren’t working. Whether it be communication that tears another person down, not enough affection, or lying to get attention. And then I send families home with

***“It’s my role to make sure they know they are strong enough and smart enough to be their best selves when they leave the Ranch.”***

***—Ally Rust***

some specific things to try. I use a family therapy technique based on the analogy of infection and antidotes.

We start with, ‘How are we treating this undercurrent of infection that is making your family not work.’

“And then I give the family little antidotes (or skills) they can build upon so by the time their child moves home it won’t be such a big transition. A lot of times parents feel bad because they are afraid to have their child come home. Of course, they are afraid—the last time their child lived at home, it was scary and hard.

The transition from treatment to home is difficult for the kids too.

“Sometimes kids think, ‘All of these people are proud of me and I don’t want to let them down.’ In other cases, kids have been in the ‘sick role’ so long, they don’t know who they are when that is no longer their identity. It can feel safer to go back to the person they were. Other times it’s just the pure anxiety of the changes. They can’t handle the emotions coming with the upcoming changes, so they slip back into old patterns of behavior. It’s my role to make sure they know they are strong enough and smart enough to be their best selves when they leave the Ranch.”

Ally, who earned her master’s degree in Counselor Education chooses to work at the Ranch because of the kids

and the culture.

“I like the holistic way we look at kids, and the ways we, as coworkers, can challenge each other and say, ‘I don’t think that’s what is going on.’ We all have different perspectives and view things so differently; sharing those views and ideas means we have a whole team of people working to help a child heal. I get a lot of support here. I am comfortable asking for help if I’m struggling or stuck. Talking it through with someone else on the team often provides new zest and motivation.”

**Christy Wilkie believes kids don’t want to hurt.** And she believes with her whole heart that every one of them has the capacity to move beyond the pain.

Christy, who earned her master’s degree in Social Work sees the resiliency of Ranch kids first hand.

“That’s why I do this work,” Christy said. “Everyone has the potential and the power to heal. I am privy to seeing the capacity of the human spirit in a way that I don’t think other people have glimpses into.

“Ranch kids are often defined by the things that happened to them and that’s part of their story. But it doesn’t have to be who they are. I have a kid right now who at her very heart and soul is an artist. Art embraced her and makes her who she is. I could choose to see her as an abused and traumatized kid, or I could choose to see her as an artist. I’d rather see her as an artist and then help her use her art as an outlet for all the stuff that happened to her.”

“People forget our kids are all sorts of



**Christy Wilkie,  
LCSW  
Clinical Therapist  
Fargo**

people. They are video game players, artists, friends, daughters, musicians, Christian kids who love to go to youth group. They are bright and creative and athletic. They’re like every other kid who, most of the time, have just had the worst circumstances. But they are outrageously amazing kids. Every single one of them.”

“I tell kids it’s my job to take some of their burden and carry it around for them because I’m in a better space to do it than they are. Sometimes just downloading that and putting it on me to carry makes them feel a little lighter. Eventually they learn to let more and more of that go and the road is a little bit easier than it was before.”

One of Christy’s clients was in treatment at the Ranch before moving into a foster home. The foster family adopted her, “but as you know, adoption doesn’t undo childhood trauma,” Christy said.

“She ended up at [the psychiatric hospital] and Tom, our treatment

manager, and I were the only people she’d talk to. We went there and she was yelling at us and calling us every name in the book. She was a very angry kid and I adored her.”

This young woman worked hard to heal, and her parents did a lot of family therapy with her. Now, at age 19, she is a high school graduate and a college student. Through it all she continued to see Christy through Dakota Family Services, the outpatient clinic founded by the Ranch.

“She is one of those kids who likes to touch base and know the Ranch is here,” Christy said. “I think a lot of our kids feel that way. When they leave, they know this is always a place they can come back to. There is a comforting feeling for kids who know that this was the place they healed.”

**Dr. Alyssa Weber said most Ranch residents have complicated histories.**

They come to us with a multitude of symptoms or behaviors and it’s sometimes hard to figure out what is going on. For instance, if they struggle



**Dr. Alyssa Weber  
Clinical  
Psychologist  
Minot**

to pay attention in class—do they have ADHD, are they distracted because they are experiencing flashbacks of a traumatic event, or maybe they have

some psychosis and are distracted by voices.

Because symptoms often overlap and conflict, many Ranch residents are referred for psychological testing. Dr. Weber, who has a doctorate in Clinical Psychology, administers and interprets psychological testing for residents on the Minot campus.

“Testing can help clarify what diagnoses might be best so we can help determine what might be the most helpful way to approach things in treatment. We have some kids who behaviorally look aggressive or oppositional, but if you address the underlying trauma, those things kind of work themselves out. If we are only addressing the behaviors, we may be missing the trauma or an underlying mental health piece.

One of Dr. Weber’s young clients was very aggressive when she first arrived at the Ranch. She had been abused by her father, and her mother had ongoing substance abuse issues.

“A few days into her stay she said she was trying to get kicked out,” Dr. Weber recalled. “I told her we were going to stick with her. She started noticing that she could say something mean or be dysregulated and staff stayed. Knowing we weren’t going to give up on her allowed her to feel safe enough to do the deeper work of addressing her trauma. She did amazing work while she was here and took with her coping skills she needed.”

Coping skills vary from child to child.

“It’d be great if we had one coping skill that was effective for every child,

but it doesn’t work that way.” Dr. Weber said. “A lot of our kids use music—whether that’s writing their own music or just listening to music. Other kids draw, play a game, go



**Connie Rod,  
LAC  
Addiction Therapist  
Minot**

for a walk, or use other distraction techniques just to get them through the moment until they can be a little calmer and respond to their emotions.

“We teach them deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and different ways to work out the emotions in their bodies. We also teach them how to identify the thoughts they associate with certain emotions and challenge thoughts that are not helpful or realistic.

“For instance, a child might think if someone gets mad, that means they hate him, he deserves it, he’s not worth anything, and he should stay by himself and not talk to anyone. We can help him recognize that people can be angry without hating him or abusing

him. Then we can role model ways to communicate with that person to see what went wrong and how they can

move forward in the relationship.”

### **Connie Rod said many children come to the Ranch with both mental health and addiction**

**issues.** Some have a direct history of use, and some have never touched a drug but have been exposed to it in their families. She starts working with kids who have a history of use by discussing when they started, why they started, and what other factors came into play.

“We are starting to see substance abuse start earlier and earlier,” Connie said. “We’re talking five, six, seven years old as the first time

they used. In those cases, it’s always a family issue. They’re exposed to it in the house or their caregivers are encouraging them to use. At the same time, kids with trauma in their past, look for something to help them cope. Drugs and alcohol are an easy way to check out and not deal with stuff for a bit—especially when they are readily available.”

Connie, who earned her master’s degree in Counseling with a focus on Family Therapy and Addiction, works with kids to develop other coping skills to deal with their emotions.

“These are young kids in little bodies with big emotions, and they’re not able to work around them. I teach them to sit with their emotions. ‘It’s okay that you’re angry. It’s okay that you’re sad. Sit with it for a minute. What does it feel like? What sensations do you feel in your body?’ Once they start to recognize their emotions, they can get better at coping with them.”

She also helps kids create refusal skills and escape plans. If a child feels like

*“A lot of our kids come here very angry with God. I’ve seen quite a few kids repair that relationship while they are here.”*

*—Amber Nelson*



they are in danger, who are they going to call? What can they do if a family member is using in front of them?

One of Connie's most unique techniques is to let kids interview her. "We ask them so many questions, so I flip it and ask what they want to know about me. The girl I saw earlier today asked me, 'What made you want to come to the Ranch and work with kids like me?' Isn't that a great question? I told her the Ranch has been on my radar since I moved to North Dakota in 2015. The more I learned about the kids who come to the Ranch, the more I felt my heart was being pulled here. I love teenagers. I love listening to them. These kids are in their formative years. This is our chance to take what's happened to them and change it into something they move on with."

"Addiction is such a major issue right now," Connie said. "We glorify opioids and other drugs. Now we need to glorify treatment. We need to shine

the Ranch. When kiddos come back to visit or call and we ask them, 'What are some of the biggest things you took away from your time at the Ranch?' It always comes back to the relationship they built with someone here. When you have that connection with a kid, they'll do the work."

**Amber Nelson said the most difficult part of her work is seeing kids come to the Ranch with no outside support.**

"I have two kids on my caseload right now who have no family support. One has some contact with his siblings, but the other child has no one."

In these cases, Amber asks questions to find someone in the child's life who has been supportive. Did they have a favorite teacher, a favorite youth group mentor, a pastor they felt comfortable with? She tries to find someone they can reconnect with, creating their own definition of "family", so they have a support

system when they leave the Ranch. Sometimes it is a new foster family.

Amber says family therapy, however "family" is defined for each child, is so important to a child's healing.

"We do lots of really cool things with families. We'll bring the family in and

***"We glorify opioids and other drugs. Now we need to glorify treatment. We need to shine a light on the people who are getting help and on this younger population that is completely under the radar."***

**—Connie Rod**

help them process through issues with their child right in the cottage. If they struggle at home, we'll go to the home and do a walk-through to point out things they can change in the home environment to be more supportive and less chaotic for the child. We try to be creative with the family by using the whole team approach. We've had some

families that visit their kids daily and just hang out with them. We welcome families that want to be involved to the best of their abilities. The more we can join with the family, the better."

Amber, who earned her master's degree in Addiction Studies, said, "Part of being able to be with others, and with the people we care about, is about handling our own emotions. Much of the work kids do in therapy is related to emotional regulation and distress tolerance. Emotional regulation focuses on changing the emotion. Distress tolerance is being able to accept that in this moment you can't change your situation."

One of the techniques Amber teaches kids is "Wise Mind ACCEPTS." ACCEPTS stands for Activities, Contributing, Comparisons, Emotions, Pushing Away, Thoughts, and Sensations—all tools kids can use to distract themselves from the reality of a situation they can't change, and to cope with it.

Another important aspect of a child's healing is spirituality. Amber said, "A lot of our kids come here very angry with God. I've seen quite a few kids repair that relationship while they are here. Spirituality is an extra source of support for kids."



**Amber Nelson,  
MS/LAC, LPCC  
Clinical Therapist/  
Addiction Counselor  
Bismarck**

a light on the people who are getting help and on this younger population that is completely under the radar."

"Connection and relationship are so important in motivating kids in therapy—both connection with outside supports and with people at

**Matthew Baumgartner wants to be part of the solution.** He was working in Criminal Justice and saw what happens when people don't get the help they need.

"I've seen a bit of that darker side. When people don't learn social skills and how to regulate their emotions, things can go bad quickly. I wanted to be part of the intervention with kids—getting them the help they need to live better lives."

So, Matthew returned to school where he earned a master's degree in Clinical Counseling and is the newest member of the Ranch therapy team.

At the Ranch, he quickly discovered that our kids come to us with a wide range of experiences. "We've all got histories and different ways of looking at things," Matthew said. "Especially our kids...they have so many life experiences and so much complexity. They are such a diverse population.

"Sure, there are some common threads," Matthew continued. "We see a lot of depression, anxiety and trauma. But that's not who they are. It's something they are working through right now."

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) is one of the techniques Matthew uses. Using CBT, Matthew helps kids discover unhelpful thoughts. Once they discover their unhelpful thoughts, they can learn to counter them with more realistic ones.

"For instance, maybe they got really angry at someone and when I ask them why they are angry, they say, 'Because they are messing with me.' We can challenge those thoughts. 'Are they really messing with you or are they just doing their job? Maybe you are taking things out of context.' We help them go deeper where they may eventually realize that not everyone is out to get them."

When residents start examining their emotions and the trauma they've faced,



**Matthew Baumgartner, LAPC, Clinical Therapist Minot**

it often gets worse before it gets better. "These guys have relied on aggression to get rid of some of their emotions. Now we are taking them to a deeper level. With a trauma-focused model like we have at the Ranch, we often work on building their coping skills before we touch any of the deeper stuff," Matthew said.

One of these coping skills is deep breathing, which Matthew likes to call tactical breathing. "The gentlemen I

work with in Seeger's cottage can latch onto that better than when we call it mindfulness. I talk to them about how focusing on their breathing can help them bring down their respiration rate and heart rate. When the body slows down, they are able to think more clearly in those moments."

Sometimes kids come to the Ranch with little or no hope. "A lot of our kids are already burnt out, and they are so young. I want to give them hope for the future.

"Therapy is never going to be 100% effective," Matthew said. "But it is cumulative. Even if we don't see a lot of change in a kid while he is here, down the road if they're getting therapy or making life decisions, they can build on the work they did here. Eventually you're part of the solution. Maybe not right away, but there is always hope."

## Bring the Ranch mission to your congregation or organization.

You can share your passion for Ranch kids with your congregation or organization by inviting someone from the Ranch to speak at your meeting, event, church service, or Bible Study. We are available to speak to your group, and would love to tell you more about the Ranch and the amazing children we serve.

Contact Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch at 1-800-344-0957 to request a speaker. We will do everything we can to accommodate your request. Having a Ranch speaker allows you to provide hope and healing for even more children as we reach more people with their stories and needs.

## Living Generously

Ranch donor shares her motivation for giving through Thrivent Choice



“I have been participating in the Thrivent Choice Program for quite some time,” says Linda Hill, a loyal Ranch friend.

“It is so easy to use, and I love that all these dollars support the Spiritual Life Program at the Ranch. I simply log in to my Thrivent® account on a regular basis to check for available dollars waiting to be directed. Thrivent does all the calculations and posts the dollar amounts as they become available. Then just a few clicks of the computer mouse and the dollars are on their way. That’s all there is to it. The online option is my choice, but I know the program is available by phone as well. Sounds simple and it is.

“What a huge impact for the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Spiritual Life Program. Praise God for these small blessings that turn into great ones!”

Thrivent, a nonprofit financial services organization for Christians, has a longstanding commitment and connection to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. For years, the Ranch has been an enrolled charity in Thrivent Choice®, a program that allows eligible members to recommend where Thrivent should donate portions of its charitable outreach funds each year.

As Linda says, all Choice Dollars donated to the Ranch by Thrivent support the Spiritual Life Program at the Ranch—a program funded entirely by individuals, churches, and organizations. From January – November 2019 alone, the Ranch received over \$41,000 of Thrivent Choice member-directed dollars towards the annual budget of our

Spiritual Life Program of \$365,000.

While children at the Ranch have always been pointed to faith in Christ, with the help of Thrivent members we have been able to expand and enrich our campus ministry. In 2018, the Ranch called a Deaconess to join Chaplain Jones on the Minot campus. In 2019, the Spiritual Life Specialist in Fargo took on an expanded role, and together, the entire Spiritual Life team was able to reach children with the Gospel message. With your help, we are changing lives.

Just as Thrivent encourages its members to “Live Generously,” Ranch Spiritual Life staff help our kids experience the joy of giving back. Over the past year, Ranch kids have visited residents in nursing homes, made cards for veterans on Veteran’s Day, packed Operation Christmas Child boxes, volunteered at the pet shelter, sent letters to young women at a school in Nigeria, packed meals for Orphan Grain Train and Feed the Children, and more. Ranch children, many who have only been on the receiving end of the community’s generosity, learn how they too have much to share.

If you are a Thrivent Financial

member, you may have Thrivent Choice Dollars® available to direct to your favorite enrolled charity. To recommend the Ranch as the recipient of all or a portion of your Choice Dollars®, go to the Thrivent Choice website at [Thrivent.com/](http://Thrivent.com/)



**Linda Hill, a former Ranch employee who retired several years ago, lives generously by directing Thrivent Choice Dollars to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.**

ThriventChoice, login, and choose Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. To direct Choice Dollars® over the phone, call 1-800-847-4836 and say “Thrivent Choice” after the prompt.

Directing Choice Dollars® to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch helps us teach Christian values to the amazing children at the Ranch—values that aid in their healing, provide a foundation of hope, and help them be successful in their treatment. As a Thrivent member who has Choice Dollars® to direct, you can help precious children rise above their struggles and point them to faith in Christ.

## “I made a good investment”

“I grew up looking at the south end of a draft horse,” said Iowa native, Gilbert Grienke. “I was driving a team of horses behind farm equipment when I was hardly old enough to walk. You love every horse you’ve ever driven.”

Horses are what attracted Gilbert to the Ranch. “You use horses to calm the kids and that was something I hadn’t seen before. There is something about horses—their honest, forgiving and calming demeanor somehow helped raise this old man and keep him out of trouble. They are wonderful around kids.”

Gilbert Grienke learned about the Ranch many years ago when “a young fella came to our church and proposed giving money to this outfit in the Dakotas,” Gilbert said. “I kind of forgot about it, and then a few years ago a woman from the Ranch spoke at our Bible Study.”

At that time, Gilbert and his wife, Arlene, acted on their daily thought, “Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah” by making a donation to the Ranch. They’ve continued to send donations several times a year.

Gilbert and Arlene are a delightful couple who fell in love in a boat. Gilbert is Arlene’s second husband—she was widowed after 40 years of marriage and she and her first husband had three children. Gilbert had never married and knew Arlene from the bank in Aurelia, IA, where she worked.

“I knew Gilbert for a long time. In a small town everybody knows

everybody. We both like to fish so we started going fishing,” Arlene said.

They both retired (Arlene from the bank and Gilbert from his career as rural mail carrier), got married, and a year ago they celebrated 25 years of marriage—years spent fishing, traveling, going downtown for coffee, playing cards, and spending time with Arlene’s children and grandchildren. Gilbert broke his hip last March so he hasn’t been able to get in and out of the boat, but he is confident they’ll be back to fishing by next summer.

In October, Gilbert (90) and Arlene (93) hopped in a van with their “fishing friends,” Rev. Larry and Margie Lemke, and visited the Ranch campuses in Fargo, Bismarck and Minot.

“I was impressed by the cheerful staff we met,” Gilbert said. “They were so proud of their facilities and their jobs. When someone enjoys their job, they are successful at it. The children were friendly and respectful of the staff too.”



In October, Gilbert and Arlene Grienke checked an item off their bucket lists—touring the Ranch campuses in Fargo, Bismarck, and Minot, ND. They are shown here with friends who accompanied them on their tour. From left: Rev. Larry Lemke, Arlene Grienke, Margie Lemke, Gilbert Grienke.



## Gilbert and Arlene Grienke



Arlene was especially impressed by the school. “You can just feel the love for the children. Loving teachers surrounded by positive posters and quotes all over the walls and hallways. You left there knowing you were helping some kids that really needed help.”

They were both touched by the stories. “There are some pretty rotten stories there you know. It’s an awesome task to save these kids,” said Gilbert. “The staff love the children and the kids were so appreciative. They were happy and they had good facilities. The kids were busy when they wanted to be busy and could rest when they wanted to rest.”

Arlene took a bottle of honey home for each of her grandchildren and plans to tell them about their trip to North Dakota. “I want them to know how much we enjoyed the trip and why we give money to the Ranch. We just think these children are in a very good place. They are very lucky to be where they are so they can receive the help they need.”

Gilbert and Arlene recently completed a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) for the Ranch. A CGA involves a transfer of assets to the charity in exchange for a partial tax deduction and a lifetime stream of annual income. Gilbert said, “there is some interest coming back on it. I guess that is the main thing.” Gilbert has also included the Ranch in his will.

“I didn’t have any of my own kids, so maybe the Ranch kids can sort of be mine,” Gilbert said. “I’m proud to support such a good cause. I made a good investment.”

# Ways to Give

Thanks to gifts from our generous donors, the Ranch helps the most troubled, complicated, and amazing kids by providing best-in-class psychiatric therapy and trauma-informed care. If you would like to provide hope and healing for a child at the Ranch, you can give several different ways.

## Give Now

You can give now to meet the needs of our precious children in one of two ways. Give online at [DakotaRanch.org/donate](http://DakotaRanch.org/donate), or mail a check to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, PO Box 5007, Minot, ND 58702.

## Memorials and Honorariums

When you make a donation in memory or in honor of a loved one, they will live on through programs that provide much-needed care for the hurting children who come to the Ranch. You can make your donation in one of the following ways:

### Online at [DakotaRanch.org](http://DakotaRanch.org):

Select Memorial/Honorarium when completing the donation form.

**Phone:** Call 1-800-344-0957.

## Planned and Estate Gifts

Naming Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch as a beneficiary in your will is one way to leave a legacy that serves God’s Kingdom. But, it’s not the only way. Other legacy giving options include Charitable Gift Annuities, naming the Ranch as a beneficiary of your retirement plan assets or a life insurance policy, leaving real estate to the Ranch, and more. To learn more, contact one of our Development Officers at 1-800-344-0957. Or, visit our legacy giving website at [DakotaRanch.org/legacy](http://DakotaRanch.org/legacy) for tools and information you can use to maximize your philanthropic goals.

## Tree of Life

You can honor or remember a loved one by purchasing a leaf, acorn, or rock on one of our Trees of Life. For a Tree of Life order form, go to [DakotaRanch.org](http://DakotaRanch.org) and choose “Many Ways to Give” from the dropdown menu. Or call 1-800-344-0957—we can send you an order form or take your information over the phone.

## Direct Thrivent Choice Dollars to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

If you are a Thrivent Financial member, you may have Thrivent Choice Dollars® available to direct to your favorite enrolled charity. Directing Choice Dollars® to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch helps us teach Christian values to the amazing children at the Ranch—values that aid in their healing, provide a foundation of hope, and help them be successful in their treatment. Learn more about Thrivent Choice on page 34.

## Amazon Smile

If you shop online at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way to support the Ranch every time you shop, at no extra cost to you. Simply go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and select “Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch” as your charity.

## The promise of life above the sun



**By Anne Compere,**  
**Development Officer**  
**Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch**

King Solomon, known as the wisest man who has ever lived, was discouraged. He possessed enormous wealth, unlimited power, and unending knowledge. If he were alive today, King Solomon would probably be verified on Twitter, posting enviable vacation shots on Instagram, and Snapchatting about his purposeful work. Yet, he was dissatisfied and disillusioned to the point of calling life “meaningless or all vanity.”

Twenty-six times in the Bible, Solomon writes about the meaninglessness of finding happiness and contentment through earthly pursuits “under the sun.” He clearly distinguishes between finding meaning solely in the things here on earth and finding meaning in the things above the earth.

Paul reiterates Solomon’s wisdom in Colossians when he writes, “Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.” Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount, adds a promise to this wisdom, “Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you.”

The verses surrounding this promise show that “all” refers to the material needs of life here under the sun.

At the Ranch, our mission of helping at-risk kids and their families succeed in the name of Christ is intrinsically tied to these sentiments. Without an

“above the sun” mentality, our kids are stuck in harmful, hurtful, devastating circumstances. But, with love and compassion, Ranch staff help our kids find a life of purpose and hope because of the work God can and will do in their lives.

You, precious donor, make this possible. We are extremely grateful for your role in the mission of helping children and families in the name of Christ. A truly beautiful development is that you are not simply giving one or two gifts for now but creating legacies for the future. You are sharing with your children and grandchildren your love for the Ranch. You are creating gifts in your wills to not only keep the work of the Ranch going for the future but also as a testimony to friends and family about what you value. You are creating generational givers within your families. You are giving family legacy gifts to fund large projects.

For all of that and so much more, we say, “Thank you.” Thank you for being a champion for our kids. Thank you for the example you are setting for future generations of donors.

Because of you, we know the kids in our care at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch will experience the promise God gives in the book of Joel when He said, “And I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten.”

Thank you for your prayers and gifts that create an “above the sun” focus for our amazing kids.

Your prayers for our kids are a source of healing and hope. Thank you for loving our children. If you have any questions about the Ranch or would like to schedule a tour, contact Anne Compere, or any of the people shown here, at 1-800-344-0957 or [info@dakotaranch.org](mailto:info@dakotaranch.org)



**Lisa Cole**  
Mission Advancement Officer



**Laurie Dannewitz**  
Development Officer



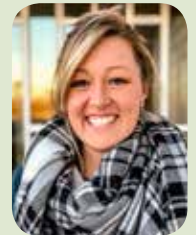
**Janet Zinke**  
Senior Development Officer



**Paul Krueger**  
Senior Development Officer



**Linda Medhus**  
Senior Development Officer



**Kris Ryan**  
Mission Advancement Officer



**Tim Unsinn**  
Senior Development Officer



**Jim Vetter**  
VP/Development Officer

## Foundation and Corporate Grants

### Elmer & Kaya Berg Foundation;

\$1,000; Programs, Fargo

**Kiwanis Club of Minot;**  
\$750; DMS Minot (MP3  
players and headphones)

### Robert E. Herman Charitable Trust;

\$41,000; DFS Marketing and  
Retention

### Sanford Health;

\$5,000; DMS Wellness  
Program, Fargo

### Verendrye Electric Cooperative;

\$2,500; Cottage Furniture,  
Minot

### St. Joseph's Community Health Foundation;

\$5,000 match; DMS Minot  
Sensory Rooms

**Martha Beckenholdt  
Charitable Endowment Fund;**  
\$2,693.93

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or Instagram to stay up-to-date  
on Ranch happenings and stories.



facebook.com/  
dakotaranch1952



Instagram.com/  
dbgr52

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### Ranch Voice Editor

Tammy Noteboom,  
Vice President,  
Communications

# 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](mailto:info@DakotaRanch.org).

## Memorials

July 13, 2019– November 19, 2019

ADAMS, CATHERINE

Lyle & Becky Hangsleben

ALLEN, DOROTHEA

Edgar Allen

AMUNDSON, GERALD

Don & Arlene Schumacher

ANDERSON, DEREK

David & Margaret Hall

ANDERSON, KEVIN

Lauren & Mavis Larson

ANDERSON, LEILAH

Bruce White

ANDERSON, MALCOLM

Douglas Anderson

BAUER, ROBERT

Jeffrey Givens

BECK, ANGELA

Martin & Shirley Hannemann

BERGDAHL, KARIN

Sandra Brockmann

BETTIN, WALTER

Mr. Steve Salzman

BLACKSTONE, BABY CHARLIE

Vernon & Elizabeth Keune

BOHRER, BARBARA

Maxine Beckwith

BOHRER, DANIEL

Marilyn Kipp

BOYNTON, PAULINE

Family of Pauline Boynton

BRAATEN, ELEANOR

Arllys Torgerson

BRATVOLD, KIRSTEN

Adelaide Johnson

BRENDSEL, MATTHEW

Bruce & Norine Johnson

BRODY, ALLAN

Elizabeth Ravenscroft

BRUCE, DAVID

Sharon Grondahl

BUCHL, ART

Linda & Karen Fjellanger

BUCK, ALIDA

Jennie Lee Rodlund

BUHRDOHE, MELVA M.

Patricia Kitchen

BUNKOWSKI, DONALD

George Fick

CARLSON, DON

Linda Thomas

CARTER, RAMONA

Mrs. Juanell Roever & Family

CAVE, JIM

Lorraine Cave

CLARK, JOLENE

Albert & Eleanor Griffith

CLOETER, RICHARD

Muriel Juers

CONNOLLY, JOSEPH

Elizabeth J. Tuma

COOLEY, DAVID

Robert & Judy Rice

CORNELSEN, DAVID

Eileen Cornelsen

CRAW, YVONNE

Carol Kleinschmidt

DAVIS, RUTH

George Fick

DEGREE, COURTNEY

Kevin & Tina Degree

DENNING, ARLON

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DIETRICH, MAX

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DRIESSNER, DOROTHY

Karen Daugherty

EBERSVILLER, RODNEY S.

George Fick

EDGCOMBE, RYAN

Carol Wardin

EHRICH, ELDON & JANICE

David & Liz Ehrich

ENGSTROM, RUDOLPH

"RUDY"

Thomas & Julia Reaman

FABER, KARL

Rudolph Faber

FANNIK, LILA

Marlys Opheim

FATLAND, SYLVIA & JAN

Dean Fatland

FAUGHT, ROY

Carol Greiger

FICK, RALPH

George Fick

FIELD, MILTON

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GAUL, AUDREY

Don & Ratchani Trageser

GARRY, DOROTHY

Joseph Hladky

GAST, DONNA

Mrs. Anita L. Petersen

GERRY, BUD

Sheila Gerry

GLANNER, GLENDA

Ardis Horn

GOHMAN, DOUGLAS

Rodger & Marilyn Fischer

GRAGE, ARLENE

Dolores Simdorn

GRANGE, FRANCES

William & Della Hefter

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Genevieve Kirmis

GRIESBACH, ESTHER

Carol Grieger

GRIESMANN, ELAINE

Mrs. Carol Urbach

GRIFFITH, TIM

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Flechsig

Rolland & Janet Reinhart

GUERICKE, MARTIN

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JoAnn DeVries

Heidi, Christophe, Sebastian &

Juliette Domergue

Lilas Green

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Gil & Carol Guericke

Harold & Sharon Guericke

Alice Holzworth

Carolynn Huber

Johnathan Jones

Mary Neumann

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Karin Roelf

Milton & Chris Rose

Rose Schultz

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Muriel Juers

HAKES, REV. DAVID E.

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Anna DuRussel

Tim Hakes

Mark & Pat Hambaum

Dale & Vicki Heinlein

Mr. Ervin Kuch

Doug & Joanna McDowell

Stuart & Paula Soper

HANSEN, BOB

Bill & Joan Ferguson

HARMS, DARLENE

Joy Ryan

HAYER, HAROLD

June Hayer

HELGESON, TOBY

Armand & Judy Barbot

HINDS, LEE W.

Bernice Hinds

HINTZ, JEFF

Elsie Buchmann & Family

Diane Heagle

HOENKE, CHARLES

Ardis Horn

HOWARD, ROCHELLE

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HUBER, LLOYD

Elsie Buchmann

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HURLEY, CLIFTON WAYNE

Jerry & Sharon Busch

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Oasis Human Resources

JACKSON, IRENE I.

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Helen Foss-Bohm

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Nancy Smith

JOHNSON, ALTHA

Arlys Torgerson

JOHNSON, ROD

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JORGENSEN, MARTIN

Bill & Joan Ferguson

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Orlan & Sharon Schenfisch

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Nolan & Eileen Bode

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KELLY, GARY

Robert & Judy Rice

KEMP, BENNET "BEN"

Mrs. Genevieve Kirmis

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George Fick

KITTELSON, BRIAN

MinKo Construction

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David & Sharon Miller

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Marlene Snetting

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Joanna Waddell

Jerry & Jolynn Yenne

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Chris & Jean Hansen

LEONARD, GARRY

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LINK, KAYE

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LOFSTEDT, SHARON

Don & Arlene Schumacher

LOM, JON

Nick & Judy Lom

LONG, KEVIN

Bill & Joan Ferguson

LOONEY, DAN

George Fick

LORETH, SHAWN

Merle Henke

LUND, RAMONA

Doug & Mary Modine

LUNDGREN, KATHY

Elizabeth Tuma

MAAS, MIM

Muriel M. Juers

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MAY, JONATHAN

Linda Hill

MCKENNA, MARY ANN

Tracey & Don DeMorett

Ann Erickson

Ruth Ann Karty

Roland & Patricia Lackmann

Douglas & Teresa Morris

MCLARNON MARILYN

Bill & Jean Murray

Susan Murray

MEYER, DOUGLAS & ELLA

Wilhelm O. Meyer

MILLER, DORRIS

Sharon Grondahl

MILLER, WILLIAM & ADELIN

Donald & Eleanor Miller

MOATS, MYRON

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MUELLER, JUDITH A.

Dorothy Mueller

MUNDER, VERNON (TEX)

Millie Bueligen

Keith & Roberta Hoesel

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Dick & Jane McCabe

NELSON, LOIS

Linda Creighton

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NORMAN, DORIS

Evelyn Montgomery

NOVAK, DOROTHY

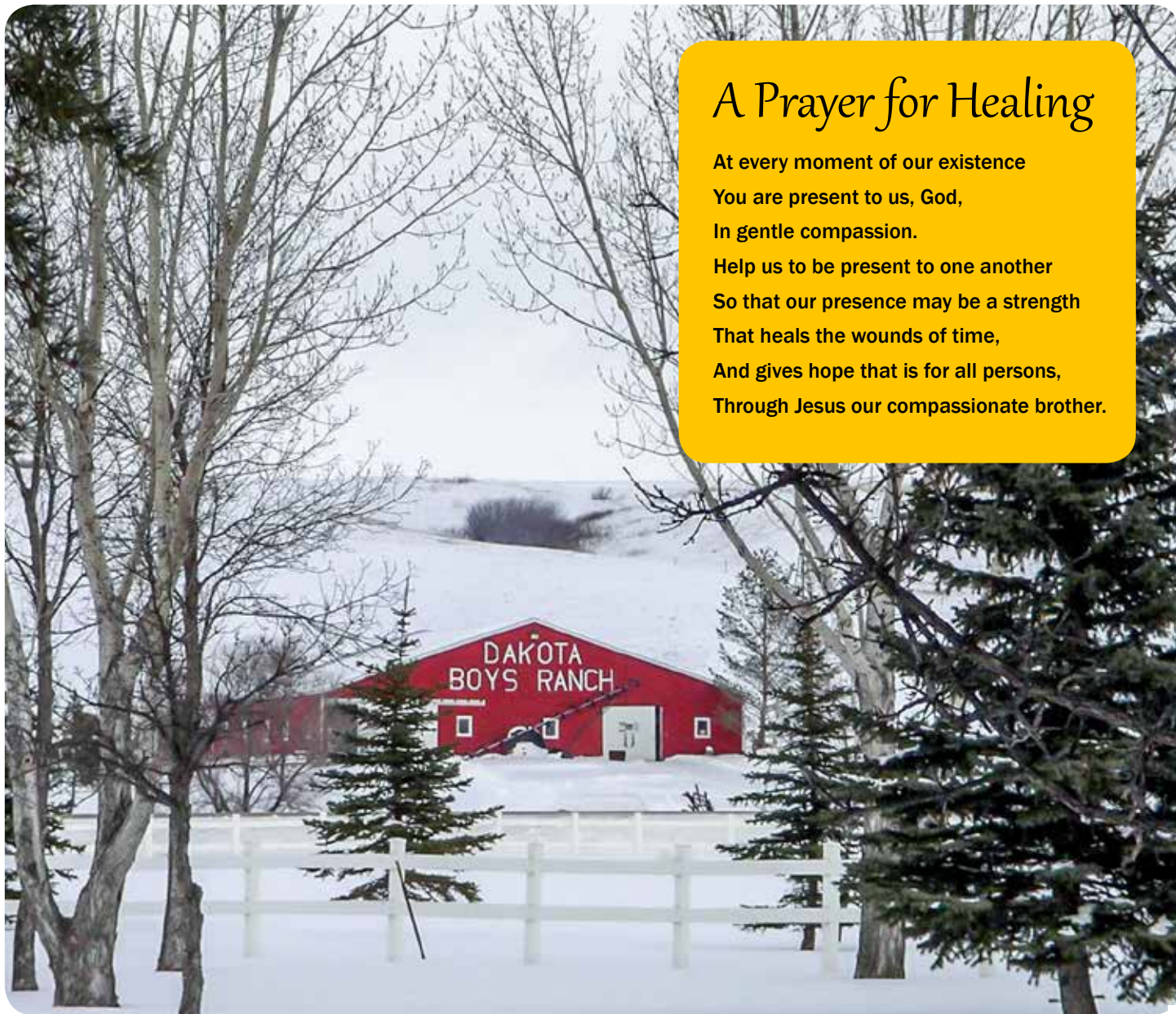
Gary & Lenae Askim

# Memorials/Honorariums

- O'KEEFFE, JASON  
Kevin & Penny Hoesel
- OLESON, KENNETH  
Betty Oleson
- OLSON, NICK  
Joe & Geri Olson
- O'MEARA, JAMES  
Elizabeth J. Tuma
- OSTER, TERESA  
Ella Oster
- OTTEN, LOIS K.  
Mateo Cadavid
- PAUL, LOREN D.  
Violet Podenski  
Lelia Schardin
- PEDERSON, CANDACE JOY  
Ilene Bussler
- PERRY, JR., JON. W  
George Fick
- PETERSON, TERRI  
Jackie & Dottie Nelson
- PINKALL, EARL  
Darleen Klemp
- PROUTY, DONALD  
Maynard & Joan Dahl
- QUINNILD, CLAYTON  
Sherry Colehour
- RAPSAVAGE, DOUG  
Millie Bueligen
- RAVENSROFT, NICK "HESA DANDY WES"  
Elizabeth Ravenscroft
- REDMANN, AMBER  
Jackie & Dottie Nelson
- RENNER, IVAN  
Sarah Richau
- JACINTA RING  
Gerald & Mary Meyer
- ROBILLARD, ARCHIE  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Carlson
- ROEVER, ROBERT  
Hayley Tappan
- ROLLER, JOSEPH "BUD"  
Clayton & Zona Pearson
- RON MERRINGER'S SISTER  
Ethel Mae Kopischke
- ROTH, DONALD  
Elsie Buchmann
- RUBBERT, JEAN  
Richard & Lucille Gust
- RUDOLPH, ANNA FAY  
Patricia Bahr  
Andrew Brantley
- RUDESILL, DORIS  
Bruce Wagner
- SABROWSKY, MILFORD  
Eleanor Sabrowsky
- SAMPSON, RONALD R.  
Kenneth Sampson
- SAUTER, ROXANN  
Marvin & Laverne Schulz
- SCALPCANE, KEESHAWN  
Margaret Sonsalla
- SCHOUSEK, NATHANIEL & ZACHARY  
Howard & Carole Schmidt
- SCHROEDER, JOHN  
Anita Peterson
- SCHUMACHER, BERT  
Chris & Jean Hansen
- SENN, REV. ARTHUR  
Kathryn Davies  
Friends of Arthur Senn  
Daniel & Carol Harmsen  
William Haskey  
Barbara Janke  
Erlinda Nienaas  
Thomas & Robbie Paulus  
Redeemer Lutheran Church  
John Seifert  
Thomas & Judy Shear  
Carol Van Beek  
Joan Warwick
- SCOTT, BOB  
Wayne & Linda Visocsky
- SINGER, GENE  
Evelyn Montgomery
- SMAGLIK, HAZEL  
Patsy Moerke
- SMITH, HAROLD  
Sandra Giese
- SORENSEN, MARVIN & IRIS  
Larry & Bonnie Thronson
- SPIEKERMEIER, THOMAS L.  
Doris Oeder
- SUHR, ALFRED & ERMA  
Jennell Suhr
- STRIDEN, DR. DEAN  
David & Bridget Kjorstad
- STUDT, ROGER DEAN  
Bill & Joan Ferguson
- SWANHORST, JOHN  
The John Swanhorst Family
- THOMPSON, JOY  
Margaret Heglie
- THORSEN, LILY  
Rachel Dancy
- THRONSON, ORVILLE & GWEN  
Larry & Bonnie Thronson
- TILLMAN, ANGELA  
Mrs. Caroline Letzring
- TORGERSON, BARBARA  
Arlys Torgerson
- TUMA, ROBERT F.  
Elizabeth J. Tuma
- TVEIT, RUSS  
Steve & Cyndi Richter
- TYSON, DOROTHY  
Dawn Tyson
- VANCE, MARIE  
Mon Dak Quarter Horse Association
- VOSSEN, ELMER  
Steve & TyLynn Theis
- WALDE, BETTY  
George Fick
- WALLENDER, ALBERT  
Maxine Beckwith
- WARNS, BEV  
Bud & Sheila Gerry
- WASHINGTON, HENRY  
Phyllis Loftsgard
- WEBER, KENNETH  
Ardella Butler
- WEIGEL, VICTOR  
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Carow
- WERNER, JOHN L.  
George Fick
- WIELER, MARIE  
Kathleen Nelson
- WILKE, BERNARD  
Carol Kleinschmidt
- WOLD, MARGARET  
Duane Kurtz
- WOLFSTELLER, ALICE  
LaMae Pettit
- Honorariums**  
**July 13, 2019– November 19, 2019**
- BLAINE CHARLES JOHNER  
Susan Miller
- BRIAN PETERS & FAMILY  
Susan Miller
- GEORGIA FEIST  
John & Inez Larson
- JOY RYAN  
Quin & Kole Seiler
- LARA BEEKS  
Mary Ann Beeks
- MICHAEL SALAMON  
Mary Ann Beeks
- PAUL KRUEGER  
Faith Community Lutheran Church

## 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](mailto:info@DakotaRanch.org). When we receive your request, we will distribute it to our pastors and spiritual life specialists who will pray for you during our chapel services on all three campuses.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please pray for \_\_\_\_\_

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

Change Service Requested



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](http://www.DakotaRanch.org)

Main: 1-800-593-3098

Foundation: 1-800-344-0957

