

# THE RANCH VOICE

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

Summer 2021



Reading stirs the imagination and inspires Ranch kids to dream big for the future.



**DAKOTA BOYS AND GIRLS RANCH**

[www.DakotaRanch.org](http://www.DakotaRanch.org)  
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# Message from the President / CEO

## Gratitude and healing



Joy Ryan stops to visit with therapist Lucas Mitzel, and his therapy dog, Mack.

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DakotaRanch.org

Dear Friends of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch,

When my three children were around 18, 16, and 8 years old, I remember feeling such amazement at them. At that moment, they were all really achieving. One was a math savant. One was a soccer superstar. One was funding her own way to study International Business in Greece. (Just so this doesn't get too over the top, trust me, there were many, many low moments, too. My kids are very definitely human.)

Anyway, I felt proud. Then I thought about the "seven deadly sins." Pride is one of them. Intellectually, I know that the sin of pride is different than the pride we feel in our children, but still. Was I pushing against the edge of it? If I am "dazzled" by their achievements, doesn't that mean I think they may have more value than other kids? Why does being a parent have to be so complicated?

I went to a wise minister who was willing to have this conversation with me. He again talked me through the different types of pride, but I was still unsettled, so I pushed him.

He looked at me and said, "Well then, substitute gratitude." Quite simply, he said that every time I had those feelings of "wow," with my kids or myself or anything I had a hand in, try to stop and be intentionally grateful.

That is one of the most powerful pieces of advice I have ever received. It is hard to get cocky when you remember that everything you are, have, or done happens through the grace of God. And we just cannot thank Him too much, can we?

Learning gratitude is so important to the healing of the kids at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, also. We must have empathy to have true gratitude. For many traumatized children, their lives have been about their own survival. They haven't been able to think outside themselves. When they start to recognize that others are helping, that others also need feedback and support, they begin to open themselves to healthy emotions and relationships.

That is why I celebrate every time I see a thank you note one of the Ranch kids has written. This one, written from one of our kids to a donor couple who had funded some special occupational therapy tools, really shows a child that is on their way to healing.

"Thank you very much! I've always wanted one and now I do have one, because of amazing people like you. I appreciate it and everything you do for kids like me. People like you two help kids like me feel like we matter and feel like we are not alone. Thank you."

Goose bumps... and great gratitude for the kids, the Ranch staff, and you.

In His love,  
Joy

## Fighting for his future

Tre didn't have what most of us think of as a "normal" childhood. Instead, his childhood was complicated and convoluted and gave him a different perspective on how the world works.

Tre was three when his mom went to prison. Before serving her time, she took him to live with his grandmother in Michigan. He remembers seeing his mom again when he was 8 or 9, but then he was removed from his grandmother's home and lost all contact.

From his grandmother's home, Tre went to live with his dad who was unfortunately in a gang and living a life of crime. Tre was forced to deal drugs for his dad or get beaten. He was incarcerated for the first time at age 11.

"I've always been in the system... in and out of lockup, in and out of residential treatment. I remember my dad telling me if I didn't sell drugs for him, he'd beat me and tell my probation officer I got into a fight, so I'd have to go back to lock-up or treatment. He also told me my mom died of a drug overdose."

When Tre was fifteen, he was facing several Class A felonies in Michigan and was known for assaultive behavior and running away. His dad wasn't showing up for his court dates, so in desperation, he called his grandmother from jail. She said someone wanted to talk to him and gave him a phone number.

"I didn't want anyone to know I was in jail, so I didn't want to call



Tre, shown here with Shaina Vanyo, his Ranch aftercare specialist, is getting the support he needs to be successful in the community.

the number. My grandma finally told me it was my mom," Tre said. "My whole life I thought my mom was dead. I thought she went back to drugs and left me to die. And

now here she was alive and wanting to help me."

Tre's mom took a bus from North Dakota to Michigan to show up at

his trial and convinced the judge to release him into her custody. While Tre was thrilled his mom was showing up for him, he had a lot of ingrained patterns to overcome. After about a week with his mom, he ran away from home and spent a couple months living on the street.

When the authorities caught up with him, he went back into residential treatment and eventually landed at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. The combination of knowing his mom was supporting him and would be there for him, and several Ranch staff who were able to reach him, set Tre on a different path.

“JT, my case manager, helped me a lot. He would always talk to me, calm me down, and help me realize that if I messed it up here, I would just have to go somewhere else. Being in Minot [at the Ranch] gave me a different outlook and opened my eyes.”

JT helped Tre realize that he needed to get his act together before he turned 18, because then the consequences of his crimes would be much worse. Tre also built a strong connection with Brady, a Ranch Youth Care Worker.

“Whenever I had a blow up, I’d swing at the person closest to me. But Brady and I grew a bond where he knew if he stood in front of me, I wouldn’t hit him. He could always tell when I was going to have a blow up, so he’d run over, stand in front of me, and talk me down. I just couldn’t bring myself to hit him.”

When Tre left the Ranch and moved back with his mom, he was assigned a Ranch Aftercare

Specialist. Aftercare Specialists are a relatively new position at the Ranch designed to help kids transition back to the community and find the resources they need to continue healing and growing.

Tre said he and his aftercare specialist, Shaina Vanyo, struggled some at first. “I was relapsing, and it took a while for us to get on the same track. But when my six-month period of aftercare was coming to a close, I started getting sober again and I knew I needed her support. I asked for a continuation of services and still see Shaina two or three times a week.”

Tre and Shaina have worked hard to get him the support he needs to stay on the right track and make good decisions. She is arranging for him to have a mentor and connecting him to other resources in the community for trauma therapy and anger management. Tre recently turned 18, so Shaina has been helping him get an ID, finish his GED, find accessible medical care, and get him the prescriptions he needs.

Shaina has learned so much from Tre about the effects of trauma. “Sitting with him and hearing how trauma has affected him day-to-day has been really eye-opening. You learn about it, but to really see it has been very helpful to me.”

“Tre is so resilient,” Shaina said. “He has been through so much and is fighting so hard to take a different path. I hope he can hold onto

the different ideas and mindsets and skills he is learning—that he can hold onto the things that are motivating him, like being sober. He is meeting other people who have been through what he has been through, and they are making a life and doing something positive with their sobriety. That’s what I want for him.”

Now 18, Tre has been sober since April 2020. While he has enjoyed getting to know his mom and is thrilled to have her back in his life, Tre is ready to get his own apartment and start living his adult life.

“I know I’m not ready to hit the world completely on my own

yet, but I’ve matured a lot. All my life I was taught that if you want something, you go get it. If you don’t have the money, you steal it. Shaina has helped me jump over to a different side of the fence.”

“When I started on all of this I was overwhelmed. I pretty much missed three years of my life and I was trying to get everything done at once. I was so worried about getting my ID and social security card, how to finish my GED, do my aftercare, just everything. I’m learning that I can’t fit a whole week’s worth of stuff into one day. Shaina is helping me tackle it one step at a time.”

“And now I have the first legitimate job I’ve ever had, and my mom is very proud of me. I’m not perfect and I still have stuff to work on, but I’m doing pretty well.”

*“I’m not perfect and I still have stuff to work on, but I’m doing pretty well.” —Tre*



# Connecting all the Pieces:

## Case Managers at the Ranch

One of the job titles we have at the Ranch is case manager. Our case managers are highly-trained and educated professionals who do so much more than their title implies.

According to the Case Management Society of America, case management is “a means for achieving client wellness and autonomy through advocacy, communication, education, identification of resources, and service facilitation.”

In practice, Case Managers at

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch are connectors—the glue that holds everything together while a child is in treatment at the Ranch. They bring together the Ranch treatment team, the child and their family, and county or Department of Juvenile Justice caseworkers; to ensure everyone is moving in the same direction and that the children and their families have a voice in their treatment.

Here is a list of what Case Managers really do—which illustrates why Case Manager is too narrow a title.

- Connect with kids;
- Connect with families to update them on their child’s progress, bring their thoughts and suggestions to the treatment team, and alleviate their concerns;
- Connect families with community resources they can access when their child transitions home;
- Participate in treatment team meetings (therapist and psychiatrist, along with representatives from nursing, occupational therapy, spiritual life,



case management, and wellness) to discuss the individual needs of each child;

- Participate in Clinical Case Review Team meetings (which includes the Ranch treatment team, child, parent or guardian, county caseworker, and any other important people in their life) to involve them in creating goals and strategies; and to ensure we are meeting the child's treatment goals;
- Write and update treatment plans;
- Arrange home passes;
- Document everything in the child's electronic health record; and,
- Anything else that comes up during the day!

Because of the nature of each Ranch facility, each case manager's job is a little bit different, especially between case managers working in the different types of residential facilities operated by the Ranch—Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF) and Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP).

Our PRTFs provide the highest level of non-hospital psychiatric residential care available for children and adolescents. Multi-disciplinary teams provide specialized programming and therapy for children with chronic psychiatric and behavioral issues. A relatively new trend is for most of the children at the PRTFs to be parent-referred, so the case managers work very closely with the parents. Note: When you see "family" or "parent" used in this article, know that it includes children's biological families, adoptive families, guardians, foster families, or "fictive kin," (non-

biologically connected people who support and care for the child.)

Our QRTPs are located in Minot and Fargo. The QRTP level of care (also known as group foster care) is for children who need a safe place to live, along with supportive services. Most of the children in the QRTPs are referred by the county (now called zones) or the Division of Juvenile Services, and the kids are less apt to have a stable place to live when they leave the Ranch. In these cases, Case Managers work closely with the child's caseworkers and guardians. Sometimes foster or adoptive parents are involved, so they are encouraged to participate in the child's treatment.

### **Emmi Albrecht Case Manager, Minot**

As one of our newest Case Managers, Emmi Albrecht works in Butt Cottage, caring for girls ages 10-17. She has been working with kids since she was 16 when she had a job in a daycare center. As soon as she was eligible at age 18, she started working with kids with developmental disabilities; and when she completed her bachelor's degree in Social Work and Psychology from the University of Mary, Bismarck, ND, she took a job with the Ranch.

Emmi said the biggest change she sees in kids during their time at the Ranch is their confidence. "These kids have so many emotions they don't know what to do with. Watching them learn those skills is honestly amazing," she said.

While having eight preteen and teenage girls in one place makes for lots of ups and downs, Emmi says the girls are usually able to identify why

they are at the Ranch and are willing to accept they have things they need to work on.

"The hardest part of the job is hearing the kids' stories. "You hear things from these girls that you would never expect to hear from a 12-year-old," Emmi said.

Emmi is the main point of contact with the girls' parents. She sees how hard it is for parents to have their children at the Ranch and wants them to know they can always reach out to her to get the information they need, or to just be reassured that their child is OK.



**Emmi Albrecht  
Case Manager, Minot**

"They are just parents who want what is best for their kids," Emmi said. "We see a lot of parent placements where parents feel like their child is unsafe in their home, or like they can't provide what their child needs. It's hard. A parent told me yesterday that as hard as it was to place her daughter at the Ranch, she is glad she is in a safe place."

"We are doing some amazing work with these kids," Emmi said. "They are struggling, and we are able to help. Getting help for mental health issues is underrated and we don't talk about it enough in our society. It's great these kids are getting help as early as

they are, because not a lot of people get that.”

Emmi lives in New Town, ND, and drives an hour each way to work. When she isn't at work or on the road, she enjoys spending time with her significant other and their families. She also loves animals and has both a dog and a cat.

### **Katie Boucher Case Manager, Bismarck**

The most important thing Katie has learned in her 11 years at the Ranch is that she is not the expert.

“These kids are the experts on their own situations,” Katie said. “Just like everyone, they have that internal drive for power and control. So, we find opportunities to give them control over situations that feel out of their hands. We can never know what it is like to be those kids in that situation. Offering choices is huge. For example, I ask the kids what day/time they want to have their monthly progress meetings and who they want to invite, versus just focusing on what works for the adults on the team.”

Along with all the challenges they bring with them to the Ranch, Katie said the kids also bring so many wonderful attributes. “The kids are crazy wonderful balls of energy. They're so funny and savvy and resilient. There are so many cool things about each individual child. They teach me something new every day.”

Working with the parents is one of Katie's favorite parts of the job. “I think my favorite, favorite part of the Ranch is that we don't just look at the kids who are sleeping in our beds. We involve their whole family, whether that is biological family, foster

family, or the supports throughout the community. Most parents are so receptive to treatment,” Katie said. “We have kids come here whose parents were splitting shifts overnight to keep their eyes on their kid all night long, because they felt like the safety risk was so imminent. I tell parents, ‘Yes, your child will be staying with us, but you are all coming to treatment. You need to understand how to help your child when they get home.’ And for the most part, they are ready to participate.”

In addition to working with the kids and their parents, Katie prides herself on being creative when it comes to looking for services for kids and families after treatment. Services are limited in the state, especially in Bismarck where there is only one child and adolescent psychiatrist in town.



**Katie Boucher  
Case Manager, Bismarck**

“It's lots of calling around,” Katie said. “Who can do telehealth? Is the family able to travel? We work really hard to get services wrapped around a family so when a kid moves on from the Ranch, they have the support and services they need to be successful.”

When asked about a memorable resident, Katie quickly recalls a young

woman who spent a few months at the Ranch several years ago. Katie hears from her every few months. “I think her knowing this is always going to be a soft landing for her is so important, because she doesn't have a lot of supports outside the Ranch. Seeing people reach out with questions or just to let us know how they are doing is huge,” Katie said. “On hard days you can reflect on the people who really took something from their time here and can pull from that years later.”

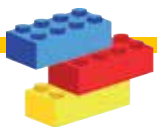
Katie has a bachelor's degree in Social Work from the University of Mary, Bismarck, ND, and has been working at the Ranch for 11 years. Like so many of our Case Managers, she started as a Youth Care Worker right out of college and worked her way up to Case Manager. She is also a Mental Health First Aid trainer, training Ranch employees who are all required to take the 8-hour class.

Katie does a lot of camping; and enjoys spending time with her family, her boyfriend, and their one-year-old Labradoodle, Boston. She wanted to train Boston so he could come to work with her at the Ranch, but he didn't do well in training.

When the trainers told Katie they thought Boston might have a learning disability, she kicked into case manager mode and said, “Well, let's get him on an IEP (individual educational plan). Let's make some modifications and adaptations and get him ready to take the test.”

### **Dawn Byrne Case Manager, Minot**

Dawn Byrne grew up in Massachusetts and made her way to North Dakota through the military. While raising her four children and working as a tutor, Dawn's supervisor



encouraged her to go to college. She started working as a Youth Care Worker at the Ranch while going to school, and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Social Work from Minot State University, Minot, ND.



**Dawn Byrne**  
Case Manager, Minot

One of Dawn's own children went through residential treatment. She said the people who worked with her daughter were amazing and she tries to provide that same level of care for children at the Ranch.

Dawn works in Seegers Cottage, caring for boys ages 12-18. When asked about the parents of these boys, Dawn says they are varied. Some are biological parents, some are foster parents, some are grandparents as parents.

"The one thing they all have in common is that they love their kids and are doing their best," Dawn said. "Everybody's best is different, and we have to meet them where they're at, just like we do with the kids. We tell our boys that what happened to them isn't their fault and it isn't fair. But from here they have to make choices to take control of their lives. Sometimes we have to do the same thing for the parents—teach them to

love themselves despite what might have happened to them and then encourage them to make different choices moving forward."

Dawn said it's always best for parents to be involved in their children's treatment because kids always love their parents. "No matter what happened—even if they were abused or neglected by their parents—kids love their parents," said Dawn. "There is a saying, 'An abused kid doesn't hate the parent. They hate themselves.' We teach parents and kids to love themselves despite what might have happened to them."

As for the kids, Dawn said, "The boys in Seegers Cottage are great kids. You can tell they really want to be loved and they want to do well. They just haven't had a fair shake until now. It is such a joy for me to come to work every day and to spend time with them. They are all very unique in their personalities."

Dawn enjoys watching them make progress. "We had one boy whose dad had custody of him, and he didn't want to even work at building a relationship with his dad," Dawn said. "He discharged and when he came back to the Ranch, through no fault of his own, it was just amazing to see how connected he was now with his dad. Every one of these boys is worth investing our time and money in."

Dawn likes to be outdoors and listen to music. She spends her summer weekends camping.

"I've lived all over, and whenever I move somewhere I like to play tourist. I have a North Dakota map on the wall of my office and when the boys come in, they like to give me ideas of where I should go next."

## **Katelyn Hanson** Case Manager, Fargo

Katelyn Hanson is the girls' Case Manager at the Ranch's Al and Johnne Bierdeman Center for Hope and Healing, the PRTF in Fargo.

Katelyn started at the Ranch seven years ago as a Youth Care Worker. She worked her way up to Case Manager and stays because of the kids.

"Our kids come in with so many challenges. Their trauma stories are just crazy. People think they are here because they are bad and that is just not the case. If these kids could, they'd all do great," Katelyn said. "They just don't have the skills and abilities to do that yet—and that's why they are here. You can see how resilient they are—they are willing to try to overcome all of those things and they can bounce back."



**Katelyn Hanson**  
Case Manager, Fargo

When asked to share a specific story, Katelyn recalls a resident who was at the Ranch a couple years ago. "She was very defiant, very oppositional, and she just didn't want to follow our expectations and rules," Katelyn said. "She could get away with anything at home and didn't like the structure here."

Over time, the young girl realized



that we held her to our structure and rules because we cared about her.

Katelyn said, “One day she was in tears and said to me, ‘Why do you care so much? I’m doing all these things so you’ll get away from me, and you don’t leave.’ I told her, ‘Because I know you don’t mean it. I know you’re telling me that right now, but if I walk away, you’ll think I’m leaving you and that I don’t care. So, I’m staying, and when you want to talk, I’m ready.’ That’s how we show we care.”

Katelyn has a bachelor’s degree in Psychology, with a Criminal Justice minor, from North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND. When she’s not at work, Katelyn likes to spend time outdoors. She and her husband enjoy fishing both in the summer and the winter. She also enjoys coloring, drawing, and arts and crafts. And by the end of 2021, they’ll be enjoying everything that comes with having their first child!

## **Natasha Holwegner Case Manager, Minot**

When Natasha completed her bachelor’s degree in Sociology with a minor in Psychology and Gender Studies at Minot State University, Minot, ND, she worked at a daycare center, and then had the opportunity to take a job at an oil and gas pipeline company. It wasn’t related to her degree, but she made good money and gained some management experience.

“Putting pipelines in the ground wasn’t really fulfilling work for me, so I substitute taught while figuring out what I wanted to do. I needed a summer job, so I came to the Ranch to be a Youth Care Worker, ‘just for the summer.’”

Five years later, Natasha is still at the Ranch, now as a Case Manager in Cornelsen Cottage, caring for boys ages 10-14.

“I fell in love with the Ranch and my Cornelsen boys. I loved it too much to leave,” Natasha said.

As a Case Manager, Natasha works with the Ranch treatment team, parents, guardians, and the kids themselves to create individualized treatment plans for each child.

Natasha said, “When creating treatment plans, we always have the boys put the goals in their own words. If their goal is to have positive peer interactions, they might say, ‘I want to make friends.’ If they have an issue with aggression, they might say, ‘I don’t want to be as angry.’ They get pretty basic. One of my boys said, ‘I won’t punch people with my fists.’”

Once the treatment plan is in place,



**Natasha Holwegner  
Case Manager, Minot**

everyone at the Ranch works together to help the kids meet those goals, and Natasha said the work happens all day every day.

“So much of the work happens through staff interventions,” Natasha said. “Therapy, OT, case management and everything else is huge, but it’s

in the day-to-day interactions with the kids where direct care staff [Youth Care Workers] are helping the kids practice the skills they’ve learned, holding them accountable, and modeling appropriate behavior. They really get the kids to a place where they can comply to the rules and have healthy interactions.”

Natasha’s most memorable resident was a young boy who had Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD), a rare but serious condition in which an infant or young child doesn’t establish healthy attachments with parents or caregivers. RAD may develop in situations of abuse, neglect, or other types of early childhood trauma.

“When this boy came here, he was super aggressive and couldn’t establish any relationships with his peers or staff. He fought us helping him in every way. He went from being a kid who created chaos everywhere, to being one of the most likeable kids we’ve ever had. He got his anger and aggression under control; and he learned to trust us and connect to others. He discharged to a foster home two years ago and is doing well.”

Natasha has a message for Ranch donors. “These are just little boys and they are so down on themselves. With the donations we receive, we give them a second chance so they can start a new page of being healthy, getting their mental health issues under control, and being able to just play.”

Natasha has a 16-year-old daughter, two cats, and a dog. She and her husband enjoy camping and attending their daughter’s track meets and other sports events. She also plays in volleyball and golf leagues to keep herself active and social.



## **Rachael Kary** **Case Manager, Fargo**

Rachael started at the Ranch as an intern while she was in the Social Work Program at Minot State University, Minot, ND. She interned on the Ranch's Bismarck campus and didn't want to leave when she graduated from college.

"I fell in love with the role of case management at the Ranch, but there wasn't an open position when I graduated," Rachael said. "I was really passionate about the kids and wanted to find a way to stay at the Ranch. At that time, the only way to do that was to start as a Youth Care Worker."

When a case manager position opened at the Al and Johnne Bierdeman Center for Hope and Healing, the PRTF in Fargo, she got the job and moved to Fargo where she is the boys' Case Manager.

And now, Rachael says, "I don't see myself working anywhere else."

Rachael wants people to understand the beauty and potential of children at the Ranch.

"People automatically assume the kids who come to the Ranch are naughty, and that's not the case. They have these significant mental health issues and they're not able to advocate for themselves," Rachael said. "We see the individuals underneath this messy exterior—kids who are trying to find out who they are while also overcoming some horrendous things that happened in their lives."

She is also passionate about involving parents in their child's treatment. "I've met some great parents over the years. They are doing everything they can just to manage until we can get their child in the door. One of the most important things I can do is to make

sure the parents feel valued. They are still the parents, and at the end of the day, they need to be involved in every decision about their child."

When asked about specific children, Rachael recalls a boy who had pretty much grown up in hospitals and residential treatment facilities. When he came to the Ranch at age 14, he was very low functioning—he was unable to dress himself, use the bathroom, or build relationships with others.

"Everyone had given up on this kid," Rachael said. "The state was talking about state hospitalization and he wasn't even 18 yet. That just broke my heart. To think that we were already planning for the rest of his life—I just couldn't fathom it."

By the time this young man



**Rachael Kary**  
**Case Manager, Fargo**

discharged, he had left a lasting mark on the Ranch, and everyone involved in his treatment.

"He always brought a smile to everyone's face. He was notorious for his knock-knock jokes and the nicknames he gave everyone. He overcame so much while he was here."

Despite all of his progress, this young man had no options for discharge.

While our typical stay is 4-6 months, he was at the Ranch nearly two years while Rachael, his therapist, and many others worked with the state of North Dakota to find a place for him.

Rachael said, "Towards the end of his stay with us, it was hard not to become defeated. We all just wanted this kid to have a forever home. In the end, we discharged him to a family member, which we never in a million years thought possible.

"An aunt came forward and said she'd love to have him. When we told her about his needs, she said, 'I'll do what I have to do.' We started having collaborative meetings with her and his county worker, set up aftercare services and supports, and he discharged to her home. We heard a few weeks ago that he continues to do well."

When Rachael isn't at work, she watches movies, reads books, travels, and surrounds herself with friends and family. She feels very supported in her role as Case Manager, both by her family and by the Ranch.

"I know so many people who just work to work," Rachael said. "I'm so lucky because this is something I'm truly passionate about. Yes, it's challenging and heartbreaking, but it's also so rewarding and brings me joy."

## **Tammy Moreno** **Case Manager, Fargo**

Tammy Moreno is the Case Manager at the Fargo Youth Home.

While attending Minot State University, Minot, ND, Tammy interned at the Ranch. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, she moved to the east coast where she worked in a similar facility. Now, after 17 years

at the Fargo Youth Home (as Youth Care Worker, Supervisor, and now Case Manager), she says, “There’s just nothing like the Ranch. We’re just one big family. I enjoy the people I work with, and I love the kids. That’s what brings me back every day.”

Tammy sees her job as being a voice for the children in our care. “Most of our kids have gone through a lot of trauma and they don’t have anyone on their side. I am there to support them, advocate for them, and help them get to a positive place in life.”

Working at the QRTP level is much



**Tammy Moreno**  
Case Manager, Fargo

different than the PRTE, in that there are fewer parents involved in their child’s treatment. “A lot of them had their parental rights terminated. And many times, it happened at such a young age that these kids don’t know their parents,” Tammy said. “In other cases, the parents have limited contact due to their life circumstances.”

When parents are involved, Tammy does everything she can to make sure they are engaged and part of the treatment process. “Sometimes the families just don’t have the tools to help their child because they, too, have gone through so much,” Tammy said.

“In other cases, we are working with adoptive parents who want the best for their children and are willing to do whatever they can to get them on the right path and back in the home. We provide the families with knowledge and tools to help them with their child once they are back in the home.”

Tammy recalls one resident who spent time at three Ranch facilities—Minot, Fargo PRTE, and the Youth Home.

“He didn’t have anyone,” Tammy said. “He was pretty quiet and didn’t really like talking to staff. He was very angry, he didn’t trust anyone, and he didn’t like to do much. When he transitioned from Minot, they told us he was suicidal and that he had given up all hope.”

Tammy said they went through a lot with this young man while he waited for a foster home. Slowly he began to open up and learned how to deal with his anger.

The young man, who is now 16 years old, says it was because people at the Ranch cared. “When I first came here, they instantly showed that they cared. They were happy to see me,” he said.

“He was just all around in a better space,” Tammy said. “Finally, a foster home became available and even just thinking about it now is so exciting. We’d been waiting so long for this home, and it was ‘the one!’”

Tammy and her husband have three children, two dogs, and three cats. They enjoy spending time as a family—going on drives and walks, watching movies, and playing games.

## **Angela Schon** Case Manager, Bismarck

Angela Schon started working at the Ranch in 2004 as a part-time Youth Care Worker. Within a year, she moved into the case management role and has been there ever since.

“I can’t imagine working with a different population,” Angela said. “And I can’t imagine having better coworkers. It is a great environment. I also like that the Ranch is a Christian-based organization. That was one of the things that first drew me here.”

She stays because the kids are always put first. “Every decision is made with the kids at the forefront. For example, our air conditioning isn’t working right now and it’s really hot in the building. Yesterday some of us were talking about wanting to work from home. Jim Vetter [Vice President of Treatment Services and Government Relations], reminded us that the kids are here and still living in it, so we can too. No matter your position, you’re at the same level here, and the kids always come first.”



**Angela Schon**  
Case Manager, Bismarck

Working with parents takes up a lot of Angela’s time; and she said the Bismarck facility has more parent referrals than ever before. “Lately, we



rarely have a social services referral. When parents bring their kids here, we are really upfront with them. They're expected to participate. For the most part, they go to family therapy, reach out to us, and give their input. It's really fun to see that."

"The kids are resourceful and creative, and full of energy. Sometimes it gets chaotic, but they bring it back around. They want to learn, even when they don't realize it. They want to do better. They want to be home. We just need to tap into that energy, reframe it, and make it positive."

Angela recalls a young boy at the Ranch who was really struggling at home, but when he got to the Ranch, he didn't have a lot of negative behaviors.

"We gave him that structured environment he wasn't used to, and he just blossomed," Angela said. "His mom was really involved, and he transitioned back home after only two months. He was doing so well he didn't need to be here. Mom followed up and said she is so thankful for everything. She feels like their family, as a whole, is better. We've had a lot of cases lately where the families have made lots of changes."

Angela grew up on a farm in Mercer, ND, majored in Social Work at Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead, MN, and now lives in Bismarck, ND. She likes traveling, playing volleyball, attending professional sporting events, and spending time with her many nieces and nephews. Angela is also a volunteer with Special Olympics. Before COVID put their events on hold, she was on the Special Olympics Bismarck area management team and coached volleyball, basketball, and soccer.

## Monica Witmer Case Manager, Minot

Monica Witmer came to North Dakota from Los Angeles, CA, to play softball at Minot State University, Minot, ND. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Psychology, found her dream job at the Ranch, and now she and her husband call North Dakota home.

According to Monica, the most important part of her job is advocating for the kids.

"I'm working with a team of so many people," Monica said. "I pass messages along and make sure we are all meeting the kids' needs; and that we are really hearing their voices and



Monica Witmer (right)  
Case Manager, Minot

advocating for them."

Despite loving the work and the kids, some days Monica gets discouraged.

"On a day-to-day basis, you don't always see the fruit of what you're doing," Monica said. "But then something happens to make you feel like you do make a difference. It just happened recently. One of my girls graduated from Dakota Memorial School (the Ranch's on-campus school) in May, and none of her

family showed up. She was crying the entire time. All she wanted was her family's support. I love this young lady and was at her table to support her. She gave me the rose that all the kids give to their parents. That was very special."

In her work in Challenge Cottage, which provides care for girls ages 12-18, Monica sees kids who have very involved parents, and kids who have no parents or family in their lives.

"Some kids have both parents fighting for them and wanting them back home. Having parents involved makes a huge difference. The kid wants to achieve more, wants to strive. I've been impressed by parents who will do anything and take any advice to get their kid back home. It's good to have parents on the same team."

On the other side of the spectrum are the kids whose parents are unknown, deceased, or whose rights have been terminated. "For these kids, the discharge option is usually a foster home," said Monica, "which is unfortunate because there aren't enough foster homes. So, then they are just jumping from placement to placement, and they aren't very motivated."

"When I see those kids come through, I try my hardest to be that support for them, and look them in the eyes and tell them, 'You can do it. You can make it.' Sometimes they've never heard that before. It's very difficult and heartbreaking."

Monica wants people to know that everyone at the Ranch genuinely cares for these kids. "We want them to have successful lives."

Monica and her husband just purchased their first house, where they live with their two dogs. Church is also a very big part of their lives.

# Our Graduates

## Into the world with courage

Dakota Memorial School (DMS), the on-campus school of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, is specially designed for children with trauma histories (see related article on page 32.)

One of the unique elements of the school is that children transfer in and out of the school in the individualized ways that meet their needs. While in residential treatment at the Ranch, some children attend DMS and others attend public school. Some do a great deal of “credit recovery” at DMS, putting them back on track to graduate. Some leave DMS when they leave treatment, while others stay as day students after completing care. Some come to DMS as day students without ever having been in treatment at the Ranch. Some choose to return to their home school just in time to graduate with their home school class. And, every year, several choose to celebrate to their High School Graduation with us. Here are the stories of three of this year’s Dakota Memorial School graduates.

### Blake



Blake came to Dakota Memorial School as a freshman after struggling in public school. “I was trying to be the class clown and always got kicked out of class or sent to the principal’s office.”

The large classes made it difficult for Blake to get the individualized help he needed to be successful. He struggled with confidence and anxiety and needed additional support to get through each day.

“There were a thousand kids at my school, and 30 kids in a classroom was too much for me,” Blake said. “I

think my biggest class at DMS had 7 or 8 students. The teachers get to know you better and you get that one-on-one attention. You just know the teachers and kids better, so you feel more comfortable in school.”

At DMS, Blake learned to be more responsible with his time. He says the teachers have inspired him to work hard and to be himself.

Another benefit of being at DMS was easy access to a therapist. Blake worked with Ranch therapist, Christy Wilkie, his entire time at DMS. “I was kind of down and Christy taught me coping skills. She also got me through some tough times and helped me learn who I am as a person.”

In his graduation speech, Blake thanked everyone at DMS for caring and for always wanting him to do his best. He had a special thank you for

his social studies teacher, Matt Kuebler.

“Mr. Kuebler. Thank you for being a good role model to me. I really look up to you. Thank you for pushing me hard to become a better person and to treat people fairly. Most of all, thank you for being someone I could always talk to and that I felt had my back.”

*“Thank you for pushing me hard to become a better person.” —Blake*

### Kylee



The last thing Kylee’s grandpa told her before he died from cancer in October 2020 was that he wanted her to graduate from high school. “He told me all he wanted was for me to live a better life and to graduate from high school. After he passed away, that was my goal. I wanted to finish high school.”

When Kylee came to the Ranch, she had very few credits towards graduation, so her goal of graduating wasn’t going to be easy.

Her first days and weeks at the Ranch were difficult. “I hated the structure at the Ranch. I wasn’t used to people telling me what to do or

where to be. In my home life I didn't have structure. My parents were never around, and I was with my grandma and grandpa most of the time. They just let me ding around and do whatever I wanted."

But in the end, structure was what made the difference. "I found out the people here really cared and wanted what was best for me. They showed that every day by being there for me."

This was Kylee's second time at the Ranch. "I wasn't ready to change the first time around," Kylee said. "But this time I'm doing a lot of things differently."

Kylee said her growing faith also made a difference. "I met Monica Witmer, my cottage Case Manager," Kylee said, "and she helped me find God again. That's what drastically changed a lot of things. I just had a different outlook on life after that. I've had bumpy roads everywhere, but the path I'm on now is really smooth. I have more stability with God because I just know that everything He has planned for me is for the best."

Kylee, with the help and encouragement of her teachers and DMS principal, Tina DeGree, completed the credits she needed to graduate; walked proudly down into the gym on graduation day as the first person from her mother's side of the family to ever graduate from high school. She received an educational scholarship from the Ranch's Knutson Scholarship Fund and is now attending Lynnes Welding School.

Where would Kylee be without the

Ranch? "I didn't think I'd live to be 18, and I never thought I'd graduate. But now I'm going to welding school. My goal is to simply move in a positive direction, knowing that major strides often begin with very small steps."

*"I found out the people here really cared and wanted what was best for me. They showed that every day by being there for me." —Kylee*

## Ethan



Ethan came to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch at the beginning of his junior year. While at the Ranch he attended Dakota Memorial School, and he benefited so much from the one-on-one instruction, that he stayed at DMS once he completed residential treatment and moved home.

"I didn't do well in school before coming to the Ranch. Even though my school was small, it was still too

big for me. I didn't get my work done," Ethan said.

Ethan also benefited from the therapy he received at the Ranch. "I'm super anxious and I learned a lot of ways to deal with the anxiety and with

my dad. I learned how to not make him mad. I also learned about myself and how to be comfortable with who I am."

Ethan doesn't think he would have graduated without Dakota Memorial School. "The teachers worked with me one-on-one. I took several classes from Mr. Meier in the shop, and he took me under his wing. And Mrs. Ballantyne helped me figure out all my college stuff. Now I'm super excited to attend Williston State College to be a diesel mechanic."

The staff and teachers are proud of Ethan and the changes he has made.

Principal Tina DeGree said, "Ethan has worked hard to complete his high school requirements and has transformed into a young man with visible self-worth and determination to meet his future goals."

We are so proud of our graduates and are excited to see where they go from here.

**We take great care to guard the privacy of our children. The pictures you see of Ranch children are only used with the permission of the children themselves and the written permission of their guardians.**

*"I was super anxious and I learned a lot of ways to deal with the anxiety." —Ethan*

# Celebrations

## A fresh coat of paint

Volunteers from Enbridge, Inc., an energy company operating in western North Dakota, painted the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch horse barn. In addition to their hard work, Enbridge made a monetary donation for the purchase of the paint and supplies.

Thank you, Enbridge, for your support of the Ranch Horse Program.



Thanks to volunteers from Enbridge, our horse barn has a bright red coat of paint!

## In His Wakes—Get Off the Dock!

The kids in Fargo spent a day on the lake with “In His Wakes,” a national ministry that uses water sports to share Christ’s love. A couple of our kids overcame their fear of water. We can’t share their smiling faces due to confidentiality, BUT the pictures from the day show faces filled with joy and delight. It was a great day for our kids!



## Books, books, and more books

The Kiwanis Club of Minot granted \$300 to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch to purchase library books for Dakota Memorial School, the on-campus school of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. Reading offers children at the Ranch the chance to expand their horizons beyond the tough and often traumatizing lives they’ve lived. It stirs the imagination, stimulates creativity, gives freedom to the soul, and inspires kids to dream big for the future.

Marcia Bartok, Superintendent, Dakota Memorial School, said books often become a healing strategy. “For some of the kids, this might be the first time they’ve ever owned a book—so when they discharge, we let them take books that they love,” Bartok said.



Libraries on each Ranch campus expand our kids’ worlds.

# Celebrations

## “You are a hero.”



During a Chapel service on our Bismarck Campus, Vicar Ben showed Ranch kids how they can be heroes. After the service, Vicar Ben Ramthun led an activity with the kids, making cards for people in local nursing homes, as an opportunity for them to be heroes to others and give back to their community.

Ranch kids bring light to others through home-made, uplifting cards.

## Transitioning to the future

The “Transition 2 Life” program gives Ranch kids in grades 8-12, or in a GED program, opportunities to explore their strengths and interests as they transition from teenage to adult life. Ranch kids can imagine their future possibilities, from continuing higher education, starting their own business, learning what makes a great employee and what employers look for when hiring, and exploring individual creativity as a life-long activity.



Members of the Transition 2 Life group toured Minot State University and Margie’s Art Studio.

## Keeping Ranch kids and staff safe

The Ranch was blessed by a large donation of masks, thermometers, and hand sanitizer from Lowe’s in Bismarck!





## Learning to nurture nature

Raising pheasants has been a long-time tradition on the Minot campus. Each spring, dozens of pheasant chicks arrive at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, delighting children and staff alike. They then fall under the careful and attentive care of the Ranch Wildlife Club.

Raising pheasants gives Ranch kids the opportunity to experience new things, care for another living thing, and work toward healing.



Pheasant chicks are supplied by Pheasants for the Future and lovingly cared for by the Wildlife Club on our Minot campus.



## Updated IT systems enables healing to continue for Ranch kids

A special thank you to the Tom and Frances Leach Foundation, the Kiwanis Club of Fargo, and the North Dakota Community Foundation for providing funds for necessary network updates across all three of our campuses.

Switches are the core of any organization's network. They are what connect all IP devices to a network and allow for traffic to route to its proper location. As an organization grows both physically and within their technologies, their infrastructure must be able to keep up.

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch has been growing both in size and in the technology we utilize to take the best care possible of our kids. By updating all our switches in Minot, Fargo, and Bismarck, we can provide greater bandwidth for staff to efficiently access the systems and applications they utilize daily; and still provide those we care for the bandwidth necessary for their needs without the added stress of having a network that isn't able to handle the load.

## Cultural learning in the community

Kids at the Ranch are always busy learning! In Minot, some of our kids attended a tipi teaching at Minot State University. One of the girls in Challenge Cottage helped build a tipi for the event.

And in Bismarck, Ms. Barman took a student from her North Dakota Studies class to explore a tipi erected at Bismarck High School. Great opportunities for our kids to be learning in the community.



# Celebrations

## Horses help us all

Members of the Residential Treatment Team on our Fargo campus took a field trip to the “That’s the Dream Farm,” in Glyndon, MN, where they bonded as a team as they experienced the healing power of horses. This trip was made possible by the owners of the Farm, who wanted to help fill our staff’s buckets after the challenges of the past year.

**Tom Kopp, Director of Residential Services, bonds with his horse.**



## Engaging students through STEM

Middle school students on the Minot campus have been building and flying their own drones. When the School Improvement Team at Dakota Memorial School—Minot was looking for ways to implement STEM activities within the classroom, the drones seemed like a wonderful hands-on experience for the kids.

In the coming years, Science Teacher Taylor Lakoduk hopes to do some cross-curriculum planning with the Physical Education teachers to build an obstacle course for the drones.



**STEM is a teaching philosophy that integrates all four disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineer, and Mathematics into a single, cross-disciplinary program, with an emphasis on hands-on projects.**

## Sparkles, and cupcakes, and leprechauns, oh my!

To celebrate St. Patrick’s Day, kids on the Minot campus got busy baking and crafting! The girls in Challenge Cottage had a bake-off where each of the two teams were given three St. Patrick’s Day themed recipes. The girls had to work together to get the desserts done in a timely manner, as well as making them look pretty and taste delicious! Some kids also made leprechaun traps in the hopes of catching a leprechaun and his gold!



**Delicious St. Patrick’s Day themed treats made by the girls in Challenge Cottage.**



**When you’re trying to catch a leprechaun, the more sparkles the better!**

## Becoming our best for our kids

At Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, staff across all departments are committed to learning and growing to provide the best education and services to the kids we serve. The teachers and staff at Dakota Memorial School are committed to providing a quality education in a safe and secure environment, while focusing on student needs and helping students achieve academic success.



During professional development days, the teachers and staff at Dakota Memorial School—Minot work and learn together to learn more about themselves and the best ways to serve our kids.

## Showing appreciation for our teachers

During Teacher Appreciation Week in May 2021, students at Dakota Memorial School—Fargo surprised each of their teachers with a uniquely decorated door. Mr. Brandt, who teaches our middle schoolers, had his door decorated with dad jokes!



## Building self-esteem through positivity

During a therapy group on the Bismarck campus, our kids did a fun activity with sidewalk chalk and messages of positivity to build peer relationships and self-esteem. Each child outlined their body, filled it in with positive words and drawings about themselves, and then went to each drawing and added words about each other. Sharing positive messages about themselves and others helps our kids on their path to healing and becoming their best selves.



These colorful drawings added some fun and positivity to our Bismarck campus basketball court.

## Flying sky high

Over Memorial Day weekend, kids and staff in Minot went to Sky Fest, an annual North Dakota kite festival, in Garrison, ND. Kids went fishing and swimming; made and flew kites; played football; and went on hikes. It was a great way to kick off a summer of fun!



## Honoring our student workers

On Graduation Day in May, Blake was presented a “Dishwashing Expert” award for his years of service with our Kitchen and Facilities staff on the Fargo campus. He was a huge asset to the team and will be greatly missed by the team.

To prepare our kids for life after the Ranch—for life as adults who contribute to their families, neighborhoods, and communities—we work with them to build independent living and basic life skills. Some kids even interview for jobs right at the Ranch, typically working with our Facilities and/or Kitchen staff.



Fargo Facilities team members (from left): Chris, Mat, Blake, Bryan, Ariel, Autumn; (not pictured: Tara)

## GROW Day returns!

After taking a year off due to the pandemic, the 2021 GROW (God Rewards Our Work) Day Garden Sale took place on Saturday, May 8th at our Minot Thrift Store. The annual plant and student project sale is put on by students and staff at Dakota Memorial School. Kids work hard in our greenhouses and shop classes to get products ready to sell.

Gardening at the Ranch helps kids build confidence, practical life skills, and relationships with peers. Throughout the entire process of preparing for the GROW Day Sale, from growing plants in the greenhouse; to building planters and garden signs in the shop; to preparing the items for sale; to being present at the Minot Thrift Store on the day of the sale, kids at the Ranch have numerous opportunities to build skills and confidence, as they find success in their community.



Kids and staff from across the Ranch came together for the GROW Day Garden Sale at our Minot Thrift Store.



Plants grown for the sale included various flowers; tomatoes; cucumbers; green and red peppers; butternut squash; zucchini; herb gardens; lettuce bowls; succulents; and black hills spruce trees.

# Celebrations

## Earth Day: Cleaning up today, for a better tomorrow

In celebration of Earth Day, kids and staff across the Ranch joined together to clean up and beautify our campuses. The effort was spearheaded by the Facilities teams on each of our three campuses.



Health and safety come first at the Ranch. Each staff and student were given a pair of gloves as they picked up trash, dead leaves, and sticks around campus.



Working side-by-side, kids and staff came together to make the Ranch a more beautiful place.



Ranch staff displayed our Culture of Caring as they took care of their environment, to make the Ranch a cleaner and safer place for our kids, staff members, and the community.

## Art and healing

Dakota Memorial School—Minot received a grant from the ND Afterschool Network and the South East Education Cooperative to host an Afterschool Art Club. Dan Mathis, a local Minot artist, provided in-person art classes for interested students.

Throughout the classes, Dan focused on the fundamentals of art and how it can be used as a coping skill. The kids had a blast expanding their art knowledge, learning new skills, and creating some really beautiful artwork.



Art gives our kids an alternative way to communicate their thoughts and feelings, when words aren't accessible to them.



Dan's wife, Roxy, a local artist and author, attended the last day of Art Club to show the process of completing a painting.

## Getting the most out of summer

Summer at the Ranch is filled with fun activities that engage our kids, help them heal, and provide a bit of the “normalcy” they have missed out on. From fishing and water sports to NYPUM (National Youth Program Using Minibikes) and field trips to local attractions, summertime gives kids at the Ranch the chance to have new experiences and build friendships with peers.

Across our three campuses, kids also participate in Summer Programming classes including Gardening; Food and Fun; Sports History; Pop Culture; Horsemanship; Independent Living/Life Skills; Creative Arts; Music; and much more!



Kids in Fargo took a trip to the Red River Zoo.

Therapeutic gardening is the perfect summer activity for kids across our three campuses.

## Going for gold



During the 2021 Summer Cottage Olympics on the Ranch's Minot campus, Seegers Cottage won both the Sand Volleyball and Basketball Championships. Thatcher Cottage won best t-shirts, and Butt Cottage won the Team Spirit Award!



You won't find Sumo Wrestling in the 2020 Olympics, but you sure will in our Summer Cottage Olympics!



Cottage champs received trophies, kids who placed in individual events received medals, and all participants received a special treat.



Kids in each cottage competed in a relay race around the Bremer building.



An impromptu staff race around the Bremer building had the kids cheering! Seegers staff, Cole, came in first, floating all the way to the finish line!



## Horses everywhere

*“My horse, Teddy, taught me how to love him and love other people. Just like Teddy, people are going to be stubborn. You have to compromise with them. You gotta give in a little bit and take a little back. I’ve learned so much from Teddy.”*  
—Megan, former Ranch resident

At the Ranch, we have known for years that horses help kids heal. Horses are highly sensitive and have a unique ability to read human emotions. Sometimes they provide comfort to a child who is anxious or depressed. Other times they mirror the child’s emotions by backing away or becoming skittish if the child is feeling anxious or angry. This cues the child to identify their emotions, and to discover what they might be doing to make the horse feel unsafe.

Horses have grazed the pastures at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch since the first six boys moved into the donated farm in Tolley, ND. Donors often ask if we have horses on every campus—the answer is “yes” and “no.” We don’t have our own horses on every campus, but we do make sure every child can benefit from their healing.

In Minot, we have our own 20-horse herd, while in Fargo and Bismarck, the Ranch contracts with local stables to provide riding lessons and equine-assisted therapy. Our Fargo Horse Program is through Jubilee Equine.

Fallon Ryan, an instructor at Jubilee, provides eight-week lessons for the children at the Ranch in Fargo. She works closely with the Occupational Therapist and Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants to provide a positive experience for Ranch kids.

“They learn everything from start to finish—going out to catch their own horse, grooming their horse, leading their horse around the arena, putting on the saddle and bridle, mounting the horse, and finally, riding.”

Throughout the eight weeks of lessons, Fallon works with the kids to not only get comfortable with their horse and learn the appropriate skills, but to identify both their and their horse’s emotions.

“My goal for each one of these kids,” Fallon said, “is for them to be able to learn more empathy and to take responsibility. I teach them signs that indicate the horse isn’t feeling well. As they begin to observe and respond to the horse’s emotions, they can start applying some of the things they learn to identify their own emotions.”

Fallon said the children also benefit from a sense of accomplishment when they learn to be more self-sufficient in caring for and riding their horse. “By the end of our sessions, they are riding in multiple speeds and gates, and doing several different maneuvers—all

by themselves.”

According to Fallon, who teaches about 25 lessons right now, Ranch kids are unique. “They are really special,” Fallon said. “They’re more willing and excited to learn than most of my other students. They are appreciative and caring. And they really understand where a horse is

coming from if they are scared or a little stubborn that day.”

“Ranch kids are some of the most amazing people I’ve ever met.”

At the last session of one of Fallon’s most recent groups of Ranch kids, she gave each child a painting of their horse and a tiny lock of their horse’s tail.

“That way they’d always have a piece of their horse. I had such a great time with this last group of kids,” Fallon said. “They all learned so much and came so far. I’m just really proud of them.”



**Under Fallon’s careful guidance, Ranch kids learn empathy and responsibility from the horses at Jubilee Equine.**



**Fallon painted a picture of their horse for each of her Ranch students and gave them a lock of their horses’ tail.**

# Understanding Our Kids

## Not one-size-fits-all



**Tracey Watson,  
MS, Program  
Manager, Minot  
Campus**

People often ask what makes the Ranch special. What do we do differently at the Ranch that helps kids heal?

The truth is that there is not one answer to that question. We focus on every child individually and find ways to meet their specific needs. Our goal is to help our children heal and grow so they can become successful members of their families and communities—and we do that by working with them one-by-one to determine their strengths and challenges, and to find strategies that will work for them.

As residents arrive at our facility, we identify their developmental level and determine their greatest needs so we can map out the skills they need to reach future goals. As a Program Manager, my focus is on the time our kids are in the cottages without scheduled “treatment activities.” As with any family, the moments between activities make space for meeting kids where they are at and helping them heal.

This is not a comprehensive list of what we do in the cottages to help kids reach their treatment goals, and not everything listed works for every child. But, it does give you an idea of how treatment at the Ranch is not one-size-fits-all.

**Involving families in the child’s treatment.** Our kids make the greatest improvements when families are involved in their treatment (“family” means something different for every child and includes birth families, grandparents, foster families, or the family to whom the child will discharge.) We wrap services around the entire family and give them a voice in creating and implementing the treatment plan. We regularly bring together everyone involved with the child—including the family, child, and their entire Ranch treatment team—to discuss the child’s progress, identify anything getting in the way of their success, and find ways to help them be successful. We work cooperatively with each other to create an environment based on open communication. Resident’s participation in the program gives them an opportunity to develop skills to advocate for themselves. It also shows them that their future isn’t based solely on their past and that the choices and decisions they make now can change their trajectory.

**Teaching independent living skills.** Often, our kids are lacking in basic living skills. To recover some

of the skills, we hold Independent Living Groups. We ask residents what they want to learn and plan our group sessions around those specific skills. Some of the topics we’ve covered include banking, filing taxes, budgeting, getting a driver’s license, maintaining a car, and finding a job. We invite people from the community to teach the basic skills, and then give the kids time to practice. For instance, if they want to learn how to find a job, we walk them through the process of determining the type of job they



**Ranch residents learn to prepare meals in the cottages.**

are looking for, show them how to research the opportunities, help them complete an application, and teach them how to prepare for an interview. Last spring, we scheduled mock interviews with people throughout the Ranch acting as “interviewers.”

It was a great way for our kids to get more comfortable with the process.

**Learning from other professionals as the needs of our children change.**

As a team, we expand our skills to better fulfill our mission. For example, we identified the need for extra training to broaden our foundational knowledge about cognitive delays. We reached out to our Occupational Therapy team, as well as worked with an outside Applied Behavior Analysis therapist and an Autism Consultant,

# Ways to give

to make recommendations for improving programming for residents who are on the autism spectrum. The most noticeable change in the cottages are the visual aids we use to meet residents at their cognitive level.

**Creating sensory rooms in the cottages.** Our residents work with Occupational Therapists throughout the day to discover their behavior triggers and find ways to address the behaviors they want to change. Because they need to practice the skills they learn, we created sensory rooms in our cottages where the kids can go to regulate their emotions. They practice building relationships and handling conflict in the cottages when they have free time to interact with each other. The cottages are the best place for them to practice the calming and emotional regulation skills they are learning in school, in therapy, and in OT.

**Creating incentive plans.** Some kids need incentives to manage their behaviors and expectations in the cottage setting. We include clear expectations and rewards in our children's behavior modification plans. Each child's incentive plan is geared to the things that motivate them—and the incentives are more than material rewards. Our goal is for residents to understand the importance of making human connections, making memories, and developing skills for a healthier lifestyle.

What differentiates the Ranch is our knowledge and practice of finding the right tools and strategies for every single child. We meet each child where they are at to discover what they need to be successful.

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 a Development Officer 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.

## Amazon Smile

If you shop online at 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.

## Through Thick and Thin

You may remember Cain Kaiser. We featured him in the Winter 2016 issue of Ranch Voice, and he spoke at one of our Arizona luncheons about his Ranch experience.

Cain and his mother, Dawn, recently stopped by with treats to celebrate his five-year anniversary from the day he was admitted to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. It's always delightful to visit with Cain because he is such a direct communicator.

Cain came to the Ranch in 2016 after spending some time in a Minot psychiatric hospital. When he completed treatment and was able to go home, his parents enrolled him in the Day Program so he could continue his education at Dakota Memorial School. For an entire school year, Cain's parents, Dawn and Kevin, drove him 70 miles (one way) to school, because at DMS he experienced the only success he'd ever had in school.

In 2016, Cain said, "My experience at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch was really interesting. They have nice residents, nice staff, and nice teachers at Dakota Memorial School. This school is the best school I've ever been to. The teachers are nice, and I got good grades. Actually, I never really liked school, but Dakota Memorial School changed my life."

After Cain's freshman year at Dakota Memorial School, he transitioned back to public school, graduating in

2020 from Beulah High School. The social skills he learned at the Ranch, and the constant support of his parents, helped significantly at his new school.



**Dawn and Kevin Kaiser visited Cain every day but one while he was at the Ranch in 2016, despite the 140-mile round trip.**

really helped me in high school. In Beulah, I videotaped the football games so they could analyze plays, and let me tell you, the guys definitely counted me as a part of the team. And man, it's not very often I get to be considered part of the team."

Cain did well in high school, made friends, and learned to advocate for himself. When the pandemic hit and graduations moved online, Cain was asked to introduce the governor on the statewide virtual graduation ceremony.

"They were looking for someone with some type of disability," Cain said.

"Even though autism isn't a disability, they saw it as a special need, so they picked me. I got my graduation robe and cap on, and we ended up doing it in just four takes."

After graduation, Cain enrolled at Bismarck State College. Like every new college student this last year, he didn't have the typical freshman experience. For Cain, who had worked so hard to hone his social skills and make friends, hybrid learning was a real setback. He is moving into the dorms in September and is a little concerned about making friends, as the social skills he learned at the Ranch, and practiced in high school, are a little rusty.

"I'm worried about making friends. I'm not as open as I was in high school," Cain said. "I've kept in touch with a bunch of the people I knew in high school through social media, but it's not the same. I hardly ever actually talk to them."

But as Cain remembers his dad telling him many years ago, "Hang in there because things will work out no matter what."

Cain will go back to the basics he learned at the Ranch and is confident he will make friends, just like he did at the Ranch.

"My dad is a really smart man," Cain said. "He is right. It will all work out."

When asked why he stays in touch with the people he met at the Ranch, Cain said, "Because I'm a part of the Ranch family. The Ranch made a difference. Thank you for giving me a life-changing experience. The staff at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch have helped me through thick and thin."



**Now in college, Cain still feels like a part of the Ranch family.**

# HONEY SUNDAY



For decades, congregations across the U.S. have held Honey Sundays for Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. You can bring God's love to a child, and support your own ministry, by organizing a Honey Sunday (or Honey Wednesday) fundraiser for your congregation.

**Choose your Honey Sunday (or Honey Wednesday) in October or November. We will send you a Honey Kit, which includes:**

- Posters
- Bulletin inserts
- Order forms
- Labels

We suggest you charge \$10 per bottle. Keep 30 percent of the money collected for your group, and send the remainder to us. In return, we'll send an 11-ounce squeeze bottle of Ranch honey to each purchaser.



Request materials

*Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is a Christian residential treatment and educational center for children. We help the most troubled, complicated and amazing kids by providing best-in-class psychiatric therapy and trauma-informed care.*



1-800-344-0957 • [DakotaRanch.org](http://DakotaRanch.org)

For more information, contact Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation at

## 1-800-344-0957



Larry Knutson and his son, Dr. Jim Knutson

## Larry Knutson

### “The Ranch was my life”

Twenty-three years after his retirement, Larry Knutson continues to impact the children at the Ranch—not only through the strong organization he left behind, but through his donations and his relentless sharing of the Ranch mission.

Over the last couple years, Larry has been recognizing people who walked beside him during his time at the Ranch—sharing their knowledge and helping him be successful—by purchasing acorns and leaves on the Ranch’s Tree of Life in their honor.

“I was purchasing Memorial acorns when it occurred to me that they are for the family and friends, not the departed. Why not honor the people while they are still here? You’ve got some people at the Ranch who have contributed so much, and many who have been there over 30 years.

I wanted them to know they are appreciated.”

Why does he continue to support the Ranch?

“Because the Ranch was my life,” he said.

As a fundraiser for Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Larry Knutson was decades ahead of his time. In his 32 years at the Ranch, Larry not only led the ministry operations during a period of great growth,

but built a sophisticated fundraising department and a network of Ranch donors across the United States.

After a stint in the Navy, Larry attended the University of Minnesota while his future wife, Mickey, completed her nursing degree. They got married the summer after she graduated and moved to Grand Forks, where he finished his Social Work degree at the University of North Dakota. He worked at Catholic Family Services in foster care and adoption and completed his master’s degree in Social Work in Seattle, WA. In 1966, he moved to Minot where he was hired as a Social Worker at the Ranch—the same year he and Mickey adopted their son, Jim.

Just three months later, the Executive Director left, and Larry was named Director of the entire organization.

“I was a social worker. I didn’t know anything about running an organization or raising money. It was all new to me,” Larry said.

By necessity, he was a quick learner. The Ranch had sold bonds to underwrite operating costs, and they were coming due.

“We didn’t have any money to pay them off so that got me into a little bit of fundraising,” Larry said. “I started writing letters asking people for money. When I asked the bond holders if we could pay just the interest until we raised the money to pay them off, over half told us to tear them up.”

Larry found out he was pretty good at writing fundraising letters, so he started writing to Lutherans throughout the U.S.



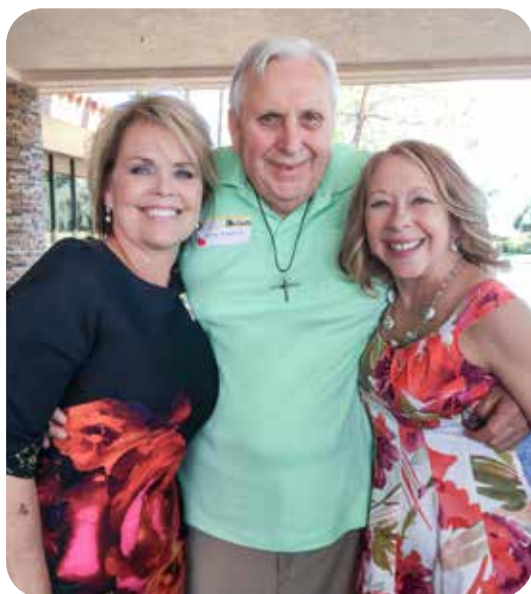
On a visit to the Ranch’s Minot campus, Larry took a moment to pray in the chapel.

He instinctively believed that personalizing the letters was important, so he hired typists. This was before word processing, so they worked year-round, typing letters one by one.

At the same time, Larry started building connections through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). He attended LCMS conferences across the United States where he networked with pastors, congregation members, and women involved in the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League. He developed personal friendships with Rupert Dunklau of the Dunklau Foundation, Dr. Oswald C.J. Hoffman of the Lutheran Hour, and other leaders in the LCMS. And he traveled the United States speaking at churches and visiting with people interested in supporting the Ranch ministry.

Much of Larry’s success as a fundraiser was based in his willingness to take risks, his love of people and Christ, and his complete dedication to the Ranch’s mission of helping at-risk children and their families succeed in the name of Christ.

As for running the organization’s operations, Larry was instrumental in adding treatment and educational services.



**Larry attended a Donor Appreciation Luncheon in Arizona, and reconnected with two long-time Ranchers, Lisa Cole (left) and Laurie Dannewitz (right).**

teachers to teach our kids during the summer, and we were able to raise them an entire grade level in Math and English.”

During Larry’s tenure as Director, the Ranch expanded to serve more boys, and the growing needs of the children coming to the Ranch, which led to the construction of many buildings on the Minot campus—including a chapel, gymnasium, greenhouses, dining center, an on-campus school, several cottages where

the children lived, and a triplex of apartments for off-duty house parents. Larry used his extraordinary fundraising skills to build every one of these buildings without borrowing a dollar.

Larry also established the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation to give donors the opportunity to provide financially for the needs of tomorrow—at a time when few organizations were creating foundations. In 1985, he moved from his position as Director of the Ranch to Director of the Foundation.

As Director of the Foundation, Larry established the Honey Sunday Program, involving churches across the United States, and opened thrift stores to underwrite the services provided by the Ranch.

Larry continues to share the Ranch story with his friends and neighbors and invites them to become involved.

“The boys were sent to the Ranch because they were ‘delinquents,’ but all of them had other issue and needed more than a place to live,” Larry said. “Then I noticed that our kids were way behind in school.

I got some of the Minot State University



**Larry (left) visited Ranch friends across the U.S. Here he is with Mr. and Mrs. William Luebbe in Nebraska.**

“When you’re involved in something, it’s like a child,” Larry said. “You see it grow and prosper after you leave, and you feel proud. I’m

very pleased with where the Ranch is now. I want to see the Ranch grow and do even better. I give because I still want to help kids.”

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Building a trauma-sensitive school



**Tina DeGree,**  
**Principal**  
**Dakota Memorial**  
**School, Minot**

### ***How do you run a school where every child is a trauma survivor?"***

Most of us remember school as Math, Science, Social Studies, PE, and other classes where we sat down, listened to a teacher give a lecture, and waited for the bell to ring so we could walk out the door for our next class period. School days were full of routine, had few disruptions, and most days were similar. We had teachers who inspired us, helped us determine our future path, and provided critical feedback as we navigated the world.

Dakota Memorial School (DMS) does all of this with a significant difference; every student in our building is a trauma survivor. Trauma takes a considerable toll on children, taking away hope, and making every day seem overwhelming and unstable. The trauma faced by Ranch children is unique to each child, but can include serious neglect or physical abuse, sexual trauma, hunger, domestic violence, and exposure to community/family violence.

Every day, students who have little hope, confidence, or self-worth walk through our doors. At DMS, we know and understand that while trauma impacts so many aspects of a child's life, it doesn't have to determine their future. Each child is created and loved by Christ, and deserves our care, love,

and support as they journey past their trauma.

Providing the support our students need to become more than their traumatic pasts takes a lot of hard work. It starts with professional learning for our teachers and staff. In reading and discussing the book, *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for a Creating Trauma-Sensitive Classroom*, by Kristin Sours with Pete Hall, teachers and staff at DMS have all learned it is essential to acknowledge these fundamental truths:

1. Trauma is real.
2. Trauma is prevalent. In fact, it is likely much more common than we care to admit.
3. Trauma is toxic to the brain and can affect development and learning in many ways.
4. In our schools, we need to be prepared to support students who have experienced trauma.
5. Children are resilient, and they can grow, learn, and succeed within positive learning environments.

Ours is a culture where we trust each other as professionals, believe in these fundamental truths, and meet each child where they are by asking, "What do you need right now?" instead of "What's wrong with you?"

Human brains are wired for survival first, and then learning. When humans sense danger, our brains go into survival mode, triggering a fight, flight, or freeze response. Each student perceives danger differently, and it is not the same for everyone. Danger

could be an inability to communicate frustration, anxiety in social situations, an upcoming meeting, or a math test. If a student experiences any thoughts of past trauma, the brain automatically shifts into the limbic area or "downstairs" brain. Learning cannot occur at this time.

At DMS, we are all trained to help our students shift back to the "upstairs" brain, where they can focus on more than their trauma and pain and get back to learning. It starts by building individual relationships with our students and being present with them; and continues with us teaching them the skills they need to get back to a place where they can learn.

Sours and Hall's fundamental truths provide a lens for us to model the value of learning and personal relationships with each student. Positive and authentic relationships are the difference for the students at Dakota Memorial School.

This professional learning, our foundation of Christ, and collaboration with therapists, nurses, occupational therapists, and other Ranch professionals all enable us to provide a school where students who have all experienced significant trauma can learn, grow, and thrive.

**Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to stay up-to-date on Ranch happenings and stories.**



[facebook.com/dakotaranch1952](https://facebook.com/dakotaranch1952)



[Instagram.com/dbgr52](https://Instagram.com/dbgr52)



## Investing in the future



### Meagan Gelinske

Meagan Gelinske comes from a generous family, and the importance of giving back was instilled in her at an early age.

“I learned early on to share what I had. Several of my family members are very generous and I quickly realized that giving to help others is a good way to live,” Meagan said. “My Christian faith plays a large part, too.”

Meagan began supporting Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch about 10 years ago. She wanted to support a North Dakota charity that would impact children. Born and raised in Southeast North Dakota, Meagan had always known about the Ranch and was interested in learning more; as in many ways, the Ranch ministry intersected with her interest in science and brain research.

As a scientist at Aldevron, a biotechnology company based in Fargo, ND, Meagan provides technical advisement for internal teams and

clients working with Aldevron’s DNA products.

“Our DNA, RNA and protein products, both off-the-shelf and customized, are used primarily in research and clinical trials for cell and gene therapy applications,” Meagan said.

Aldevron has also been in the news lately for the company’s work supporting mRNA vaccines—the technology behind many of the current COVID vaccines. “When we first started supporting the development of mRNA therapeutics several years ago, it was a niche area of the biotech space, but now everybody knows about it.”

While at work, Meagan focuses on biotechnology, but her scientific interests have expanded to brain health and the developmental component of being able to shape lives early on.

“Brain research focused on neuroplasticity is a very interesting and emerging field. I think it’s really important to understand how previous traumas or previous adverse events can be reshaped for people,” Meagan said. “I’ve met with some of the people leading those activities at the Ranch and am impressed

with the work the Ranch is doing with children. The Ranch continues to learn how trauma can physically change your brain and how to reverse that.”

Last year, Meagan became a Honeycomb Partner, meaning she makes an automated monthly donation to support the work of the Ranch. “Previous to that I’d been giving a little more ad hoc,” Meagan said. “This program is really helpful because it allows me to automate my gifts and provide more continuity for the Ranch.”

Meagan likes that she is investing in the long-term health of children. “The Ranch’s work has a lasting community impact. This work is an investment in individuals for whom this can change the trajectory of their lives. It is very gratifying personally to think about that and how I can help partner in this investment through my financial support.”



Meagan donated Gospel Cubes and Chocolate Crosses to include in Easter bags for the kids on the Fargo campus.

## Goodness and mercy prevail



**By Dennis Aune,  
Development  
Officer**

Howdy pardner!

I've always had a secret desire to be a rancher. Really! When I was much younger, I would get up early every Saturday morning to watch Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. Two of my favorite television shows were "The Lone Ranger and Tonto" and "Bonanza." I liked that the good guys always won. Oh, they took some bumps and bruises along the way, but no matter what the odds or how hopeless the situation appeared, goodness and righteousness always prevailed. (The fact that I was around to watch those shows, and from the picture of me above, you can tell working for the Ranch is not my first rodeo.)

I joined the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Mission Advancement Team as a Development Officer last April. I came to the Ranch with 36 years of advancement experience in the areas of annual giving, major and planned gifts, and capital campaigns. During that time, I have had the pleasure of working in the development programs at Minnesota State University Moorhead, Oak Grove Lutheran High School, and Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota.

One of the things that impressed me so much when I started my new position was the thousands of friends and donors who support the children served by Dakota Boys and

Girls Ranch. While it is common for a charitable organization to be supported by people in their surrounding communities and throughout their home state, the number of friends who support the Ranch both in and outside of North Dakota is simply amazing. One might guess that the out-of-state support from our supporters comes from the fact that the Ranch has helped children from every state in the country and many foreign countries. But I think it is more than that.

As a new rancher on the Mission Advancement Team, I work with a great group of colleagues who are truly dedicated to helping the children at the Ranch. They are big believers in the idea that if we go the extra mile in taking care of our donors, like handwritten thank you cards, personal visits, and calling to wish them a happy birthday, our donors will take care of the Ranch. And the response from you, our donors, has been fantastic, particularly this past year as we recover from the COVID pandemic.

I consider myself very fortunate to have a position where I can visit with friends and supporters of the Ranch and learn from them. Recently I drove to Nebraska to visit with several friends of the Ranch. One woman told me that when she was growing up, her family didn't always have much, but she and her four siblings always knew they were loved. She gives to the Ranch to help children who aren't as fortunate. Another couple said their parents gave to the

Ranch ministry, and they wanted to carry on that legacy of giving.

I look forward to future visits with friends of the Ranch who partner with us in helping children. Friends who care about young people, who through no fault of their own, have experienced trauma and/or suffer from a behavioral health issue. Friends who understand that with their help, these young people can find hope and healing at the Ranch. Friends who out of the goodness of their heart and with a generous spirit, choose to help the children come out of their darkness and feel God's arms wrap around them. Thank you so much for being our friend and for your support in helping the children at the Ranch.

*"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."*

—2 Corinthians 9:1

With your continued support, our amazing, complicated, and resilient kids will always be the winners—just like the good guys in those western TV shows. Oh, they'll experience some ups and downs along the way, but no matter what the odds, or how hopeless the situation appears, goodness and mercy will prevail in the name of Christ.

And as Roy Rogers would say at the end of every show: "Goodbye, good luck, and may the good Lord take a liking to you."

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, contact Dennis Aune, or any member of our team, at 1-800-344-0957 or [info@dakotaranch.org](mailto:info@dakotaranch.org). We would love to visit with you about the many ways you can support the children and families served by the Ranch.



**Lisa Cole**  
Mission Advancement  
Officer



**Anne Compere**  
Director of Mission  
Advancement



**Paul Krueger**  
Senior Development Officer



**Laurie Dannewitz**  
Senior Development Officer



**Linda Medhus**  
Senior Development Officer



**Tim Unsinn**  
Senior Development Officer



**Laurie Wigtil**  
Development Officer

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# As Dependable as the Sunrise

There are few things in life as dependable as the sunrise. Did you know we can give you something that may be just as reliable and give you benefits today, tomorrow and the rest of your life? Let's shed some light on the amazing benefits of a charitable gift annuity. And like the sun rising each morning, your gift annuity payments will return to you day after day, year after year, your whole life.

Here is how it works.

- You fund a gift annuity by giving cash or transferring stock to us.
- We pay you back at a high fixed annual rate of your funding amount.
- You receive an income tax deduction this year.
- If funded with stock, you also receive capital gains benefits.

The payment you receive will never change no matter what the economy does, or how long you live.


Want some extra warmth with your gift annuity? Add a spouse or friend when you fund it, and the two-life payment will continue as long as either of you live. If you want a higher rate, you can delay the first payment and a great payment rate becomes greater.

One-Life Gift Annuity		Two-Life Gift Annuity		
Age	Rate	1 <sup>st</sup> Annuitant Age (Same age or younger)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Annuitant Age (Same age or older)	Rate
60	3.7%	60	60-62	3.1%
75	5.4%	75	75	4.6%
90+	8.6%	90	91-95	8.4%

If your life could use a little more sunshine, call or email us to learn how a gift annuity can fit into your plans. We can tell you your exact payment rate and tax benefits with no obligation, and of course, it is at no cost to you.

Would you like a little more reliability this year? For a personal analysis of a charitable gift annuity, contact us today at 1-800-344-0957 or [info@DakotaRanch.org](mailto:info@DakotaRanch.org).

You can't beat the predictable, reliable benefits of a gift annuity.



## Grants and corporate donations

**Sam's Club Fargo; CPR Training Equipment;**  
\$500, Fargo

**Great River Energy; Sensory Room Materials;**  
\$1,000; Bismarck

**Verendrye Electric; Door Locks for Seegers;**  
\$1,850, Minot

**FM Area Foundation; Fargo Wellness Program;**  
\$3,500, Fargo

**Kiwanis Club of Minot; DMS Library Books;**  
\$300, Minot

**Lutheran Women's Missionary League; Deaconess Ministry;**  
\$81,680, Minot

## RSO status renewed

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch was one of the first Recognized Service Organizations (RSO) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), and been an RSO every since. The national office of the LCMS recently conducted a review of the Ranch and we are excited to announce that they renewed our RSO status.

In addition to our connection with the LCMS, the Ranch is an Affiliated

Social Ministry Organization of the Evangelical Church in America (ELCA), a Mission Partner of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), a Partner Ministry of the North American Lutheran Churches (NALC), and a founding member of Lutheran Services in America (LSA).

We are blessed by the support of churches and congregations across the United States.



## MONTHLY GIVING MATTERS

**Change a child's life through your faithful, monthly support!**

Make your giving an even greater blessing when you join the Ranch as a *Honeycomb Partner*.

With each monthly gift, you'll share HEALING and HOPE with boys and girls who have endured unspeakable pain, crushing academic failure, abandonment, and abuse. But most important, you'll give them the chance to meet Jesus and know His love and forgiveness.

It's easy to join. Just complete both sides of your reply form and return it, along with your first monthly gift, in the envelope provided. Or visit [DakotaRanch.org/MonthlySupport](https://DakotaRanch.org/MonthlySupport)



# Memorials/Honorariums

Unless otherwise designated, donations you in memory or in honor of your loved ones will be used to help build and maintain 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 the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation at 1-800-344-0957 or [info@DakotaRanch.org](mailto:info@DakotaRanch.org).

## Memorials

February 16, 2021 - June 30, 2021

AKOVENKO, KARLA

Jim & Karen Bonnet

ALWIN, REX

Betsy Alwin

AMAN, ELEANOR

Kevin & Penny Hoesel

AMBROSE, CATHERINE "CATHY"

Arlin & Harriet Buchholz

ARON, MICHAEL G.

Nolan & Eileen Bode

ATKINSON, KATHRYN B.

(CHORBA)

Richard & Sandra Atkinson

AYOTTE, JEAN

Ian Luisignan

BAILEY, MARGIE

Robert Bailey

BATTIEST, SAMUEL

Sylvia Robichaud

BAUER, BERNICE

Evelyn Schwagler

BAUER, BETTY

Wilbur & Mavis Pfennig

BAUER, ROBERT

Jeff Givens

BAUMANN, DIANE

Donald & Sharon Alloy

Scott & Lori Althoff

Brad & Brenda Baumann

Marilyn Baumann

Paul Baumann

Walter Baumann

James G. Berndt

Karen Bornsen

Dale & Stacy Boyer

Ruth Brown

CarolAnne Crossan

Karl & Judy DeRooy

Linda Dettmann

Sandra Fultz

Wayne & Ginny Hankins

Ken & Ginny Krums

Martin & Martha Lazar

Jesse & Jenna Lee, Ryleigh & Payton

Holly Lemons

Rudy & Mary Beth Marohl

Bill & Becky McPherson

Tom & Amy Milbrandt & Girls

Verna Moore

Berniece Olson

Jan Penland

Jason & Stacy Peterson,

Michael & Nicholas

Lila Pollard

Ron & Janet Prochnow

Beth M. Rood & Jeff Houg

Kristi A. Rood & Shawn

Eugene & Victoria Rosentreter

Wallace & Carol Simdorn

Charles & Gerry Sparks

Kathryn Sumpter

Adam & Lani Wahler

Beckie Wahlin

Charlie & Kari Warring,

Maggie, Matthew & Eli

Lowell & Maxine Wegener

Terry & Ramah Wieser

Woolston Family

BECK, GREG

Elizabeth Ravenscroft

BELLIN, KAY

Genevieve Kirmis

BENSON, BABE

Richard Gust

BERNHAGEN, CARRIE

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Carow

BETHKE, GARY

Dottie & Jackie Nelson

BIERDEMAN, PATRICIA

Al & Johnne Bierdeman

BLADA, MARVIN

Richard Gust

BLAIR, DOROTHY

Robert & Doris Hedlund

Gene & Lyla Himmelpach

Merle & Patricia Nylander

BLAISDELL, VERA

Wilbur & Mavis Pfennig

BLUME, HAROLD ARTHUR

Richard Gust

BOCK, MAURENE

Bob & Karen Huether

BOEKELHEIDE, DEAN

The Boekelheide Family

BOSS, LUELLA

Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

BOWEN, SONJA

William Bowen

BOX, GARY

Patricia G. Box

BRAATEN, BEVERLY

Barbara Rude

BRECKENFELDER, MARGA

Ann Burnett

Jeanine Conner

Robert & Karen Dirmish

Alison Ford

Matt & Jan Ford

Sandy Glassman

John & Hillary Gurley

Rick & Carolyn Kaup

David McLinden

Rebecca Miller

Gregg & Kathryn Stedronsky

Debra VonArx

BROOKS, JEANETTE M.

Christopher Kasal  
Gary & Lois Kienitz  
Don & Rose Smith

BROWN, JR. ROBERT "BOB"

Don & Ratchani Trageser

BROWNLIE, REUBEN

Marilyn J. Frank

BRUNNER, JOE

JoAnn Peterson & Children

BUECHLER, RUBEN

Lorene Hornig  
Stan & Paulette Vetter

BUSSLER, DELMAR

Ilene Bussler

CALL, MARGARET

Aaron Call

CHRISTENSEN, SHIRLEY

Juliana Johnson

CLAUSSNER, INGRID

Ebby Claussner  
Karl & Mary Claussner  
Lisa M. Cole  
Robert & Lisa Lehnhardt  
Dennis & Susan Nordeen  
Tim Unsinn

CLINE, HARRY

Bob & Karen Huether,  
Robbie, Debra, Scott & Mike

CORCORAN, BILL

Al & Johnne Bierdeman

CORNELSEN, DAVID

Eileen Cornelsen

CROATT, MARDELLE

Gary & Lois Brehmer

DANKE, PATRICIA

Darleen Klemp

DEGREE, COURTNEY

Kevin & Tina DeGree

DEGREE, DONALD

Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

DETERLING, MARLYS

Ilene Bussler

DOLEZAL, ALLEN

John & Judith Mittelstadt

EATON, LARRY

Anne Compere  
Dale & Laurie Dannewitz  
Linda Hill

Jeff Johnson

Nancy Manske

Jared Marske & Carmen Dargel

Clarence & Carolyn Olson

Joy Ryan

EDWARDS, JERROD

Charlotte Price

EHLERS, NORMA

Brenda Pedersen

Molly Weigel

FATLAND, SYLVIA & JAN

Dean Fatland

FATUM, MARLENE

Robert & Grace Swanson

FERG, RUTH

Christopher Schaar

FISCHER, DR. BART

Jennifer Fischer

FRANK, ELMER H.

Dorothy Entzel

Marilyn J. Frank

FREY MICHELE

John Grey

FRIEDRICH, EVELYN

John & Patricia Sebastian

GAGNIER, NANCY

Robert & Grace Ann Swanson

GAST, ELROY

Ms. Anita L. Petersen

GAY, CECILE

Jeff & Mona Pithan

GERMERTH, RALPH R.

Rodney & Denise Germeroth

Montgomery, Little & Soran, PC

GLASNAPP, ROGER

Marlene Glasnapp

Harold & Sue Peyton

Willis & Janene Shuey

GLASSER, ROBERT

Jan Filibeck

GLASSER, TONY

Jan Filibeck

GOLDHAMMER, PAUL

Mr. & Mrs. Bill Ferguson

GORDON, KEN

Mark & Jane Solseng

GRAY, LOIS

Dianne Maddy

GRIFFITH, ALBERT "SKIP"

Jon & LaVerna Fenner

Eleanor Griffith

GRONDHAL, SHANE

Tammy Adams

Sharon Grondahl

Julie Hall

Lori LaHaise

Heidi Llewellyn

Susan Millang

Miller Family

Kevin Miller

Steven & Debra Sink

Branden & Amanda Stephenson

Wayne & Linda Visocsky

GUERICKE, CAROL

Mrs. Ladeen Guericke

GULLICKSON, RICHARD

Les & Correne Henke

Keith & Roberta Hoesel

HAENSEL, ROBERT

Dorothy Haensel

HAGEROTT, REV. ALVIN

Lyla Helmenstein

HANGSLEBEN, BARB

Lyle & Becky Hangsleben

HANSON, MARY

Delores Maier

HAWLEY, LUELLA

David & Lisa Olson

Joy Ryan

HAWORTH, NANCY

Daniel Duckworth

HAYER, HARRY

June Hayer

HECK, GOTTFRIED & IRENE

Norman & Doris Steiner

# Memorials/Honorariums

HEGSTAD, KEVIN

Lisa M. Cole  
Dale & Laurie Dannewitz  
Joy Ryan

HENKE, SELMA

Keith & Roberta Hoesel

HERRERA, HELEN HECTOR-

Francis Haynes-Herrera

HINKELMAN, BRIANA

Steve Bittermann

HOERER, RANDY

Lynda Neuman

HOFFMANN, JUDY

Steve Bittermann

HOBBEIN, MARIAN

Irene Heid

Wilbert & Delores Kunz

Marvin & Laverne Schulz

HOVLAND II, GEORGE

Linda Medhus

HUFT, RICHARD

Jack Huft

HUFT, ROGER, LYNETTE &

RICHARD

Jack Huft

HUMPHREY, THERESA

Marlene McGaughey

ISZLER, NORMAN

Doris Iszler

JAEGER, TINA

Charles & Helen M. Foss-Bohm

JOHNSON, DENNIS S.

Ronald & Rita St. Croix

JOHNSON, LYLE

Shelia Gerry

KASPER, DONALD "DON"

Joyce & Sharon Knudsvig

KASPER, MARK

Joyce & Sharon Knudsvig

KAUER, MARTHA

Janet L. Routson

KAUL, AL

Robert & Luana Lehmann

KITZMANN, MARIAN

Delores Maier  
Evelyn Schwagler

KLEIN, PAUL

Jan Filibeck

KNOLL, GARY

Allison Adkins

Darlene Amundson

Tim & Kathy Emhaltz

Bryan & Ann Gulden

Lauren & Linda Jallen

Patrick & Janell Haugen

Dwayne Kirkvold

Stan & Sue Malecek

Janice Renner

Sandra Rothausen

KOTALIK, DOROTHY

Henry & Ora Meyer

KRATZKE, ELDON

Dolores Simdorn

KREHLIK, BRANDON

Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

KROGSTAD, ADOLPH

Lyle & Becky Hangsleben

KRUEGER, HERB

George & Eleanor Krueger

KUNZ, ELAINE

Steve Bittermann

LAFFEN, LONNIE

Gordon & Gail Bischoff

LAMBERT, STEVE

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Carow

LANGER, PAUL

Sharon Langer Rowe

LE CLERC, RAY

Gene & Marilyn Anderson

James & Leslie Becker

Sue Callahan

Kenneth & Maureen Drees

Gerri Eck

Cathi Heuchert

Dennis & Kim LeClerc

Clarice Mosolf

Dottie & Jackie Nelson

James & Rosalie Ringstrom

Miles & Jane Rodacker

James & Jean Schieffer

Don Schumacher

Marlys Tong

Fred & Mary Lou Wittmann

Kimberly Young

LEGREID, LINDA

Al & Johnne Bierdeman

LEMMERMAN, REV. WALTER

Tom & Suzanne Hough

LEPPERT, INEZ

Violet Podebski

Lelia Mae Schardin

LEPPERT, MILDRED

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Carow

LUEDTKE, WAYNE

Don & Arlene Schumacher

William & Doris Wegner

MAC DONALD, COLIN

Ilene Bussler

MARQUARDT, BRADLEY

Gerald & Mary Meyer

MARTIN, MICHAEL

STEPHANSEN-

Bill & Kris Heller

MAUS, CLIFFORD

Dorothy Maus

MERBACH, DALE

Gerald & Mary Meyer

MEYERS, EUGENE "GENE"

Loren & Lori Hoffman

MC PHEE, NATHAN

Mr. & Mrs. Bill Ferguson

MILLER, TIMOTHY

Virginia Miller

MILLER, WILLIAM & ADELIN

Donald & Eleanor Miller

MILLIREN, JOYCE E.

Anne Compere

Joy Ryan

MOORE, HARRY

Rick & Katherine Hadland

NEISEN, KAYLA

Don & Arlene Schumacher



NELSON, ELIZABETH  
Jim & Judith Mittelstadt

NELSON, GLORIA  
Marilyn Baumann

NELSON, LAURELL  
Tim & Elise Meyer

NELSON, MARGARET  
Roger & Lori Wachter

NEUHAUSER, JOAN  
Alfred Neuhauser

NOLAN, STEVE  
Wyaneta Timm

NORD, JOHN  
Hamre Family (Karen, Shannon,  
Allie, Ashley & Steve)

NORDSTROM, DALE  
David & Sharon Miller

NORDSVEN, ELMER  
Jim & Judith Mittelstadt

NOVAK, PAUL  
Darlene Rheingans

OLDRE, DORIS  
Don & Arlene Schumacher

OLOFSON, LEONARD  
Delores Maier

OLSON, ARLEN B.  
Mr. & Mrs. Louis Hass

ONSTOTT, EDD  
Sue Hylland

OPPEDAHL, GRANT DAVID  
David & Janice Oppedahl

ORNE, RICHARD "DICK"  
Wilbur & Mavis Pfennig

PANGERL, CAROL JEAN  
Wyaneta Timm

PARENTS, RISCHE-WIESEHAN  
Henry & Marian Rische

PATRICK, MAJOR JAMES  
Margot Patrick

PAULSON, WAYNE  
Lyle & Becky Hangsleben

PETERSON, CAROL  
Al & Johnne Bierdeman

PFENNIG, WILMA  
Weldon & Eunice Wagner

PFENNING, MARVIN W.  
Senator Karen Krebsbach

PHILIPP, GERTRUDE  
Gary Lichau

PIERCE, ELYZABETH  
Marisa Knudson

RAMBEL, KELLY  
Donelle Radzus

REDITSCH, LEIF  
Marlyne Olson

REIMANN, ARVID  
David & Sharon Miller

RENTZ, GEORGIA A.  
Shelia Gerry

RICE, JEROME  
Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

RIEGER, LESLIE  
Barbara Rude

ROMERO, CHRISTOPHER L.  
Kenneth & Maria Haas

ROSSOW, REV. E.J.  
John & Irene Berkley

RUSTAD, DON  
Arlys Torgerson

SADLER, NANCY  
Douglas & Mary Anderson

SAMBORSKI, FRANK  
Robert & Grace Swanson

SAVILLE, JULIE  
Elda Kastner

SCHAFFER, DONALD  
Steve Bittermann

SCHANTZ, POLLY  
Jan Filibeck

SCHATKIN, SIDNEY B.  
Margaret Schatkin

SCHEFFER, BETTY  
Jackie & Dottie Nelson

SCHIMMELPFENNIG, BENNIE &  
MARIAN  
Robert & Judith Rice

SCHMIDT, CLIFFORD  
Caroline Letzring

SCHULTZ, ELMER & JOYCE  
Robert & Melody Schultz

SCHULTZ, GERALD  
Marcella "Marcie" Schultz

SCHULTZ, MARY LYNN  
(SCHILBERG)  
Ladeen Guericke

SCHULZ, HILDA E.  
Irene Held  
Wes & Marlys Kunz

SCHUMANN, KEN  
Don & Arlene Schumacher

SCHWANDT, WAYNE  
Mrs. Rosella Debele

SENECHAL, DEBBIE  
Linda Hill

SEVERLIN, CHET  
Rebecca Palmgren

SHERECK, DARRE  
Cynthia Shereck

SIMKINS, STANLEY  
Garvin & Patsey Carstens

SIMKINS, STANLEY & LINDA  
Ann Fitch

SINCLAIR, LORETTA  
Jan Filibeck

SHASKY, WILLIS "WILL"  
Russ Shasky

SKAGER, RUTH  
Robert & Judith Rice

SLAATEN, DORIS  
Nancy Adele  
Jill DeGree

SHERECK, DARREL  
Cynthia Shereck

SPRECHER, HELEN  
Shelia Gerry

SPRINGER, GARY  
Patricia Bahr

STEPHANSEN-MARTIN, MICHAEL  
Bill & Kris Heller

STEVENS, ARDETH  
Lloyd & Jackie Freeman

STOHLMANN, REV. DR. STEPHEN  
Ayoka Adeyinka  
Eric & Dianna Anderson  
Janet Bowman

# Memorials/Honorariums

Patricia Ciapciak  
Jim & Cheryl Gaylock  
George & Celeste Gifford  
Jerry & Marilyn Litschke  
Kathy Lystig  
Eugene & Lois Marxhausen  
Robert Rozmarynowski  
Luerna Sawyer  
Kathryn Schenk  
Jeanette Stohlmann  
David Vinz  
Roger & Loretta Wachter  
June Warren  
STROH, ANTON "TONY"  
Gwen Roffler  
STURN, MARGARET  
Delores Maier  
SWEARSON, BILL & AGNES  
Mr. Brad C. Hofmann  
TEGTMEIER, FERN V.  
Rev. Victor D. Tegtmeier  
THEIL, MARK  
Steve Bittermann  
TOPPEN, VIOLA  
Barbara Rude  
TORRES, LOIS  
Donald & Caroline Mauer  
VANDERHOEF, AIDAN  
Dennis & Mitzie Nay  
VOLDING, MERLE J.  
Roy & Joyce Weiland  
VOORHEES, WEBB & JOYCE  
Rev. Jack L. & Joneen Richards  
VREEMAN, BUD  
Marlene Eilts  
WALLACE, CHRIS  
Dale & Laurie Dannewitz  
Robert & Luana Lehmann  
Nenette Loftsgaarden  
WALLIN, HARRIET  
Irene Held  
WARD, DONALD  
Tim Ward  
WEISS, JIMMY  
Norma Von Osterheldt

WELLS, ROGER  
Kay Stoterau  
WICKMAN, HAZEL  
Ms. Beverly L. Olson  
WOLLMUTH, DELORES  
Roger & Lori Wachter  
WOOTEN, ERIN  
Steve Bittermann  
ZELTINGER, FABIAN  
John & Barbara Piatz  
ZENTNER, HARLAN  
Family of Harlan Zentner  
ZURCHER, ELMER & CONNIE  
Carol Townsend

## Honorariums

February 16, 2021 - June 30, 2021

60th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF  
RICHARD & BETTY JEAN CAROW  
Violet Podenski  
Lelia Mae Schardin  
70TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY  
OFDON & ARLENE  
SCHUMACHER  
Gwen Dahl  
Sharon Haberkamp  
Don & Arlene Schumacher  
ADAM MAITLAND  
Linda Rowe  
ALL ABUSED CHILDREN  
Janet Riley-Dalton  
BRAEDEN BEULKE  
Darrell & Kris Olson  
CECILIA PODCZERWINSKI  
Janet Podczerwinski  
CYNTHIA SHERECK  
Margaret Hagler  
DORIS BEETZ  
Lauren Beetz  
DOROTHY ROMEO  
Bob James  
ERIKA TUCKER  
Sue-Anna Tucker

GINNY MOORE  
Virginia Reed  
GRANDSON, LUKE'S 18TH  
BIRTHDAY  
James & Mary Brooke  
JAMES SANDIFER  
Summer Standifer  
JEANNE GIAMUSSO  
Deborah Yeager  
JOY RYAN  
Quin & Kole Seiler  
JANINE MC CLUSKEY  
Marika Porter  
JESSICA WOOD  
Dale & Joyce Grenz  
MARIE FRYE  
Larry D. Knutson  
MARRIAGE OF  
FLETCHER & JENNIFER  
MORRISON, III  
Rev. John & Deanna Schmidt  
NICHOLAS BRAUN  
Theodore & Julie Novetzke  
OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS  
CHRIST  
Janet Dowd  
ROBERT A. LENZ  
Kenneth & Carol Lenz  
ROBERT C. LONANO  
Deborah Graziano  
SARA PEARCE  
Karen Pearce  
STUDENTS OF ST. JOHN'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH SCHOOL  
Jean Gonzales  
THE KING'S RANCH  
Sue Heim  
VICTORIA OGUNMEFUN  
Adetunji Ogunmefun  
VIOLET DEUSCHLE  
Aaron Deuschle



## *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 Switchboard: 1-800-593-3098

Foundation: 1-800-344-0957

