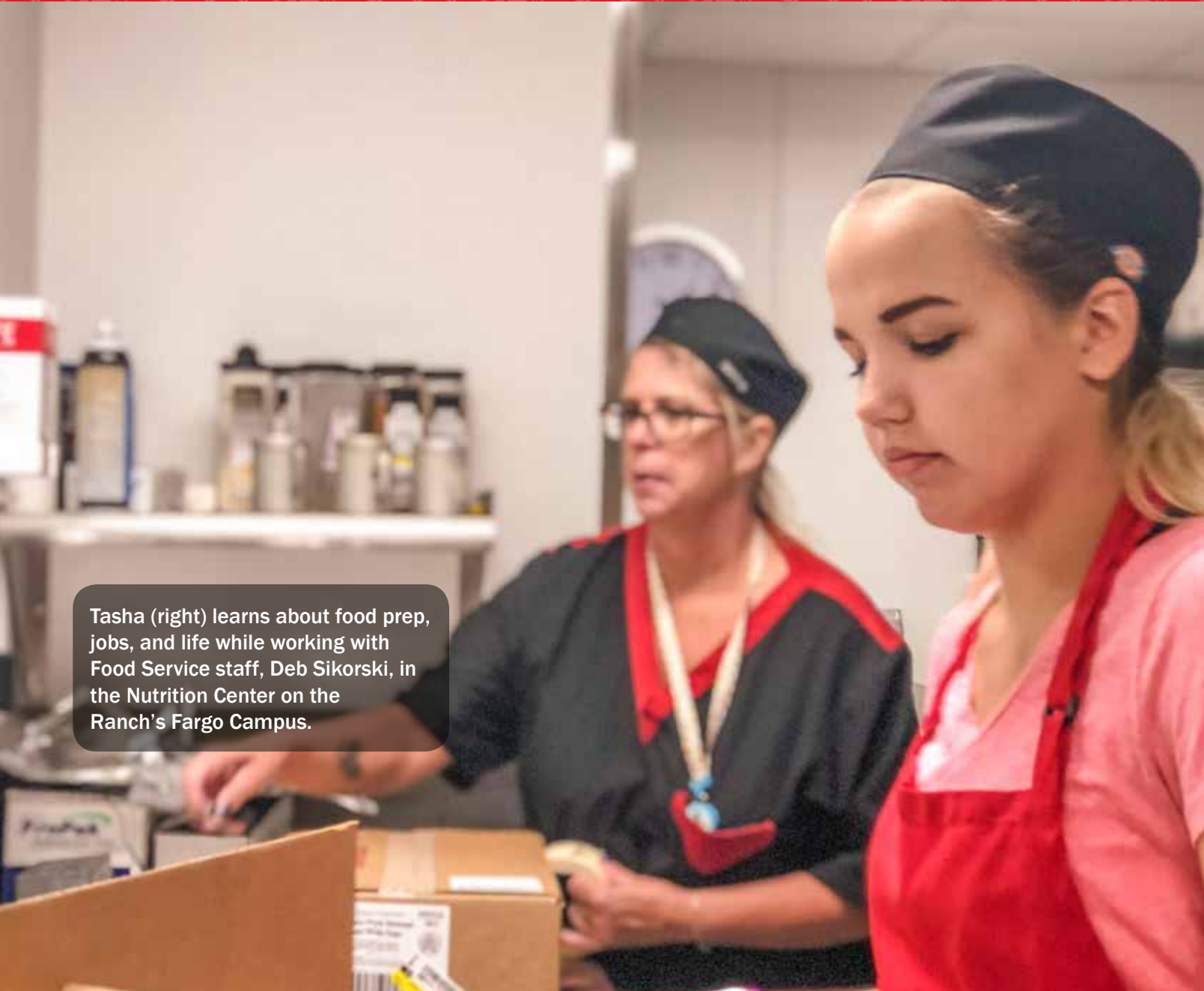


# THE RANCH VOICE

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

Winter 2018



Tasha (right) learns about food prep, jobs, and life while working with Food Service staff, Deb Sikorski, in the Nutrition Center on the Ranch's Fargo Campus.



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

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# Message from our President/CEO



Joy Ryan  
*President*

Joy Ryan, President/CEO

Dear Friends,

I relocated into a different office on campus a few weeks ago. As the need for our services continues to grow, we step up to meet that need and new people join us in our mission. We hired Randi Streff, RN, as Clinic Director for our outpatient clinic, Dakota Family Services. We wanted her to have an office near the therapists, so I moved.

One of the boys living with us likes to drop in and visit with me. He is going to be a large man. Already, at 15, he is around 6 feet tall and built to play football. He has piercing eyes and a very good handshake. He is outspoken and opinionated and has a very good sense of humor. He, like all our kids, has had a challenging life. To protect himself he learned to be brash and confrontational. He has a lot of healing and learning to do. I like him.

He walked into my new office, with his Ranch Youth Care Worker, and looked around. I asked him about a recent home practice he had been on and how it had gone. After that, he put his hands in his pockets, surveyed the 8' X 10' space again and announced, "You have too much religious stuff in here!"

"Really? I replied, Then, I looked around. I am pretty minimal in my "stuff," but I do have a cross on my wall that was given to me by our VP of Spiritual Life, Rick Jones; a Czechoslovakian Bible, printed in the early 1900s, that belonged to my parents; a picture on my wall that shares a quote from Hebrews; and a rock with "Believe" etched into it, which was a gift from Senior Development Officer Janet Zinke.

Not too much at all, and I told him so. "Looks about right to me. Considering God is really at the center of all we do, I kind of think it is OK." He shrugged, but didn't argue, and went on his way.

I had to smile as he left. Whether I have four religious items in my office, or 20, or none, nothing changes. Christ is at our center. God is the hero. We are His hands, healing and bringing hope for a good future to all of our kids. God isn't in the "stuff." He is in our hearts and guides the work of the Ranch. Even though this young man doesn't know it yet, God surrounds him each and every minute. With or without "religious stuff."

Thank you for your kindness and generous support of our work. Please keep our staff and children in your prayers.

In His love,  
Joy

## Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Locations

Minot  
6301 19th Ave. NW  
P.O. Box 5007  
Minot, ND 58702

Fargo  
7151 15th St. S.  
Fargo, ND 58104

Bismarck  
1227 N. 35th St.  
Bismarck, ND 58501

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

**Foundation:**  
1-800-344-0957

DakotaRanch.org

## Logan: A Walking Miracle

“I can’t really remember a lot of that time.”

Those are the words of 14-year-old Logan—a handsome young man with stylish brown hair, a subtle grin, and a twinkle in his eye.

And, according to his mother, him not remembering is a blessing, because it was a very difficult time.



**Logan experienced significant side effects from his medications, including weight gain and constant fatigue. The Ranch psychiatrist, Dr. Wayne Martinsen, took Logan off several medications while closely monitoring him for adverse reactions.**

It all started when Logan was in fourth grade. “Before that he was basically a normal boy,” said Logan’s mom, Michelle. “He loved animals and being outside. He always made us smile.”

In fourth grade, Logan started having attention issues. By fifth grade, anything associated with school caused Logan to experience extreme anxiety. Most days he refused to go.

“He cried and screamed and we couldn’t get him in the car,” Michelle.

Then he started having wild and out-of-control behaviors.

Michelle said, “He would do bizarre, uncontrollable things like crawl on the roof of our house at 6 a.m., or chase after me with various objects in his hand and threaten to attack me. It’s like he would get pleasure out of scaring me and threatening to hurt me. Afterwards, he would drop whatever he was holding and cry. He felt so bad, and had no idea why he had done it.”

During those episodes, Logan’s once-twinkling eyes changed to what his mom called, “weird wild,” and there were times she was terrified of her own child.

“It’s all kind of a blur,” Logan said. “But, I look back on pictures of me then, and I looked and was totally different.”

When he was fine, he was completely fine. People told Michelle and her husband, Brad, he just needed more discipline. Then, Michelle said, a few other people started seeing his episodes and someone suggested residential treatment at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

“We were almost offended,” Michelle said. “How could anyone say that?”

But they had tried everything else they could think of—they had taken him to Mayo Clinic, and he had been in and out of the Bismarck, ND, hospital for mental health

issues several times. Eventually Brad and Michelle realized someone was going to get hurt, and it was time to consider Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. They toured the Ranch, completed all the paperwork, and Logan was accepted for treatment. Now they had to figure out how to tell him.

God and an amazing ER doctor stepped in to make the telling a little easier. Logan and his private tutor

### Erasing the Stigma

Early on in their journey with Logan, Michelle and Brad committed to helping erase the stigma about mental illness.

“We told Logan we were going to tell people the truth because we have nothing to be ashamed of,” Michelle said. “We told him, ‘If you had stomach cancer, we’d tell everyone and have a benefit.’ But when it’s the brain, people don’t want to talk about it. By telling the truth and talking about it, Logan has learned how many people are really struggling.”

“We want kids and parents and families to know THERE IS HOPE.” Michelle said. “And, that it’s OK to step away—to trust God and the professionals to provide the help you need.”

“By telling our story, we are bringing hope to other people.”

# Treatment

were in Bismarck to go to the library, when he lost control and they had to call 911. The ER doctor looked at Logan's history and told his parents there was no way he was sending Logan home.

He said, "I will do whatever I have to do. Logan is going to stay in the hospital in a regular room, with one of you accompanying him 24 hours a day, until he can move into the Ranch."

At the beginning of his seven-day hospital stay, Michelle and Brad told Logan he was going to live at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

Michelle said, "He was devastated, but he had seven days to process it. Friends, family, the doctor, and the nurses all told Logan it was a great opportunity. 'You are going to be a different kid,' the doctor said."

When it came time to take him to the Ranch, Logan was OK and ready to go. Once he got to the Ranch, bedtime was the toughest part of each day for Logan. Michelle was very grateful for the support of Ranch staff during these times.

"We visited nearly every day, and Logan's caregivers were very reassuring and caring and loving. They allowed him to call home, and because I worked just a few blocks from the Ranch, I was sometimes able to stop by to tuck him in," Michelle said.

For the most part, Logan was a model child for the first 30 days of his stay. He was determined to do whatever it took to get in and out of the Ranch in two months. Then the

episodes of wildness returned and the real work began.

After administering several different tests and getting daily reports from Ranch nurses and youth care workers, Ranch psychiatrist, Dr. Wayne Martinsen, diagnosed Logan with bipolar disorder; and was able to address it and Logan's other mental health issues appropriately.

After much discussion with the family, Martinsen also took



**Logan developed a special bond with his primary Youth Care Worker, Zach, that continues today.**

Logan off a medication that could be harmful to his liver. Michelle said they were very hesitant, but Martinsen reassured them this was the perfect time to try a medication change. The nurses would observe Logan carefully, and Martinsen could quickly address any withdrawal symptoms or adverse effects of discontinuing the medication.

"He was right. There were no side

effects at all and we were able to get Logan off this medication I'd been worried about," Michelle said.

In addition, Logan met regularly with his Ranch therapist, Sara Vetter.

While Logan preferred to ignore his outbursts, Vetter encouraged him to talk or write about them. "What brought this on?" she'd say. "Let's talk about what happened."

Vetter helped Logan think very specifically about the feelings and thoughts he had before he exploded in anger. She asked him to complete sentences like, "I was really feeling anxious when...." and "I knew I was going to blow up when...."

Once Logan could identify the feelings that led to his actions, he and Vetter talked about things he could do instead. She taught him to speak up and advocate for himself. He learned how to ask people for what he needed. For instance, when he started to feel hot or anxious, he'd ask if he could take a break. When he needed to move away from someone who was making him angry or anxious, he learned to ask if he could move to another space in the room.

Michelle and Brad knew the Ranch was a safe place for Logan. "He could no longer run away from himself and his emotions," Michelle said. "He had to face them, but it wasn't easy."

"We learned a lot too," Michelle said. "We learned to make decisions together and then take them to Logan," Michelle said. "To remain calm and keep it simple. To have a



Logan (far right) has the full support of friends and family as he embarks on life “after the Ranch.”

time, Logan got a part-time job where he learned how to operate the till, answer the phone, and work with customers.

“He has so much confidence and gets along with his buddies,”

family. “As we walked through this extremely difficult storm,” Michelle said, “we realized God was our rock. We clung to him for dear life. All three of us are completely changed. We are much better people now than before. We learned to be really, really grateful. Our eyes were opened to how many kids don’t have family support and how lucky we are to have each other.”

“Everyone who knew Logan before the Ranch, and during the tough times, see him as a walking miracle.”

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

routine and more structure, and to always tell Logan what comes next.”

“We don’t fight the battles that don’t matter,” Michelle continued. “For instance, Logan will tell me he wants Chicken Alfredo for supper for the next five nights. I used to fight that, but now I just make a big batch and that’s what he eats. We also changed our morning routine so it is quiet and unrushed.”

Eventually, Logan started spending some weekends at home. These weekends went well, so four months after he arrived at the Ranch, Logan moved home.

Back at his home school, Logan reconnected with friends. He has stayed in touch with Zach, his primary Youth Care Worker at the Ranch, who became like a Big Brother to him. When summer came around, Michelle quit her job in Bismarck and found work that was more flexible so she could be available for Logan. At the same

Michelle said. “It was the best summer we’ve had in years.”

They are now stronger as a



The twinkle is back in Logan’s eyes.

*and their guardians the opportunity to read the story before it goes to print—so they can remove or change anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. When Michelle and Brad read a draft of this article to Logan, it brought tears to his eyes.*

*Michelle said, “It was very difficult for him to hear and remember what it was like. He’s not the same person anymore. None of us are. God is good.”*

## Warmed by the love of the LWML

The Minnesota South District Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) blessed the kids at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch with a full van load of new winter coats, hats, gloves, mittens, and comforters; along with dozens of handmade quilts. The items were collected at the LWML zone rally held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Arlington, MN.

Rev. Gary Ruckman, pastor at St. John's, said the LWML supports Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch because it's a place where youth can get their feet firmly planted on the ground.

Ruckman, who previously served as Chaplain for 2,000 prison inmates and also started an ex-offender ministry in inner-city Milwaukee, WI, said, "Working in prison ministry opened me up to

the ways we're reaching out and helping boys and girls to have a better opportunity for a happy life and a job. I see it as an alternative to ending up on the streets. If the prisoners I knew would have had that kind of intervention in their teenage years, they maybe wouldn't have been in that prison, standing there looking at me."

Ruckman wholeheartedly supports the services the Ranch provides. "I think they're getting the best care in all areas of their lives. The Ranch helps kids deal with what may or may not have happened in their lives, helps them fill the void, and shows them the way to the Lord."

At the Zone Rally, Ruckman described the Ranch as a premier



Minnesota women's group donates quilts, hats, coats, comforters, and more to keep Ranch kids warm.

organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) church body. He encourages LWML and members of his congregation to support the Ranch.

"The Ranch is one of the best places to do our giving," he said.

## Full backpacks. Full stomachs.

Dakota Memorial School (DMS), the on-site school of the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, partners with the Great Plains Food Bank Backpack Program to provide food for DMS day students.

Ranch Day Students are kids who live at home, but attend school at DMS because they benefit from the highly individualized instruction. For many of these Day Students, DMS is the first place they've experienced academic success.

In recent years, teachers discovered that some of our Day Students were going hungry over the weekend. Thanks to the partnership, DMS Day Students all receive a backpack full of food every Friday.

The Great Plains Food Bank Backpack Program aims to ensure that all children are fed, because they believe, "when a child is fed, they are equipped to learn, grow, and imagine a future filled with opportunity."



A simple backpack filled with food gives children access to nutritious and easy-to-make meals for the weekend.

## Red ribbons

Students from Dakota Memorial School (DMS) in Bismarck attended the Substance Abuse Prevention and Education Red Ribbon Event at the Bismarck Event Center. While there, students participated in various activities that taught them about healthy lifestyle choices and ways to cope with issues that come up in their lives.

Students heard from a DJ, a rapper, and a singer who all use their craft to instill messages of hope.

One student said, “My favorite part of the day was the rapper. Not only was he talented, but he was funny. It blew me away when he had us hold up random objects in the air and he free-styled about them. It was a great experience and really inspiring, especially since he was rapping about how we’re not alone and we are loved and worthy.”

Students also watched a mock car crash, which tied together the personal story of Taylor Berhow and how he lost his best friends in a drinking and driving accident. The event was a powerful learning experience for the students who attended. Students walked away with a greater understanding of how these substances can immensely change lives.

“Get help if you’re struggling with something,” one DMS

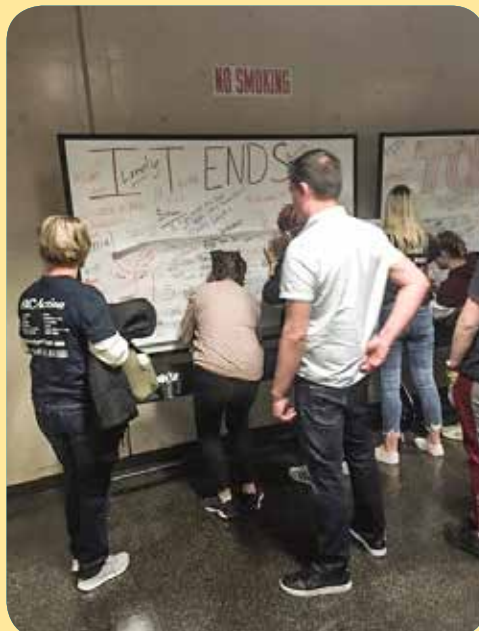
student said after attending the event.

“If you see someone under the influence, take the keys,” chimed in another.

And a lesson one student learned that translates across all ages and stages of life, “Don’t be afraid of getting help.”

The event was hosted by a group called Know the Truth (KTT), a substance use prevention program that uses a peer-to-peer format. Teenagers shared their personal struggles with substance abuse, making it real for the attendees.

The Red Ribbon event was a great opportunity for Ranch kids to not only learn about the risks of substance abuse and some of the root causes of addiction, but to get out into the community to practice the skills they’ve learned at the Ranch.



## Honoring America's Veterans



For Veterans Day this year, Ranch students in Bismarck paid tribute to the special veterans in their lives, as well as Ranch staff and donors who have served in the military. They mailed personalized cards to the veterans and added their names to the Veterans wall in Ms. Barman's classroom.



## Acceptance and understanding

Dakota Memorial School (DMS) students across all three campuses celebrated Native American Day by learning about the Native American culture.

Students in Bismarck had the opportunity to make medicine bags while they visited with Alice from Ft. Yates. She talked to students about her culture while they sewed.

Minot DMS students heard from Tanya Jeanotte, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band Chippewa. They also had the opportunity to participate in a prayer smudge ceremony and watch Tanya's niece, Sophia Morin, perform some Traditional Native American Dances. Tanya also taught the students the history of North Dakota's reservations, and how the circle is an important symbol in the Native American culture.

On the Fargo Campus, students heard from Audra Stonefish, a Program Coordinator at the City of Fargo. Audra shared her personal struggles with race and stereotypes. At just 15 years old, she was told by



**Native American Day at Dakota Memorial School celebrated the ceremonies and traditions of the Native American culture.**

a school principal she was worthless because she was Native American. Audra told the kids that everyone is living under some stereotype, and that we aren't always in control of what happens to us. She encouraged the kids to be mindful that everyone is going through something. When we understand that, we can empathize with the people around us.

What a great opportunity for DMS students on all three campuses to learn about themselves and others, and celebrate diversity and culture!

## Financial Peace University

Dakota Memorial School (DMS) teacher, Todd Fjeldahl, gives students an important tool for succeeding in life. Fjeldahl uses Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University curriculum to teach kids the basics of money management. Many Ranch children haven't had positive financial role models, so it is critical they learn these skills now.

In last spring's class, Fjeldahl had several students who were graduating, turning 18, and moving out on their own. They had real financial decisions to make, like getting a vehicle, renting an apartment, securing a job, and paying for college.

According to a survey done by Ramsey Solutions Research, high school students who had taken a personal finance class were much more capable of managing their finances—94% knew how student loans worked, 86% knew the difference between credit cards and debit cards, and 87% knew how and why to pay income taxes—all important real-life skills for Ranch kids about to take new steps of independence.



**Shawn used his newfound money management skills to strike out on his own after graduation last spring.**



## Rapping for God

First Lady Kathryn Burgum, Rapper David Paul Brooks (DPB), and several Fargo police officers visited the Fargo campus in early November.

Burgum shared her inspirational story of resilience and strength with our kids, telling them, “When I look out at all of you, I see the faces of hope and courage.”

DPB, a positive rap artist, songwriter, actor, and motivational speaker, put on a great concert full of hope and the Word of God. His high energy rap music and dance (performed with his son, Dave, Jr.) speaks to youth about painful issues like peer pressure, drugs, bullying, and making best choices.

Most importantly, Burgum and DPB both shared stories of how their faith in God gave them the

courage and strength they needed to turn their lives around.

Following the concert, one of our girls said, “I had a God moment in there!”

And, when asked if he liked DPB, one of our 7th grade boys



Dave, Jr., and DPB share God’s message of hope through rap and dance.



First Lady of North Dakota, Kathryn Burgum, right, is a living example of how you can turn your life around. After telling her story, she posed for photos with Dakota Memorial School students like MaKenna.

thoughtfully responded, “I cried...because I haven’t prayed in a long time. It felt really good.”

Thank you Fargo Police Department for bringing messages of hope to our kids through this amazing event. To see DPB and the Fargo Police Department in “It’s Time,” their new music video, search “David Brooks Fargo Police” on YouTube.

## Pumpkins of Kindness



Student council members at Dakota Memorial School, Fargo, decorated “Pumpkins of Kindness,” for the school hallway—and plastered them with inspirational messages printed on Post-it Notes. They then encouraged kids and staff to take a Post-it for themselves or to share with someone else who needed a little boost.

## Camping out at the Fargo Youth Home

The basement at the Fargo Youth Home began to show some very forest-like characteristics one weekend this summer. The girls took advantage of the mountainous boulders and trees by camping out to a “crackling fire,” with lots of snacks and s’mores.

The amazing thing about this particular forest was that it never rained so they could sleep



under the glow-in-the-dark stars; and it had a TV so they could have an all-night movie marathon. The girls had a great time and were super excited to have a sleepover, a typical teenage girl activity.



The Youth Home girls enjoyed a night “sleeping under the stars,” although sleep was probably in short supply.



## Crikey! It's Fall Festival

Residents at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in Minot held their annual Fall Festival celebration in early November. This year's Fall Festival theme was “Around the World.” The Cornelsen Cottage boys won the 1st annual Lip Sync Battle with their performance of “Fireworks” by Katie Perry.

The girls in Challenge won the cottage-decorating contest with their adventure through many different countries: Mexico, England, Australia, and Hollywood (yes, we do know Hollywood isn't a country!). In Australia, they

had a swamp of wild Crocs, and in Hollywood, Oprah and her friend Gayle put on a show to give away Oprah's favorite things.

Amber Marquardt, Director of Residential Services, Minot, said, “The talent of the youth, the dedication from the staff, and our mission really shine during events like this! Everyone on campus came together to make Fall Festival 2018 a very special event.”



“Watch out for the black and white crocs!”



The Challenge Cottage airline took visitors around the world.

## MAFB 5th Munitions Squad brought Christmas Cheer

Last Christmas, the Minot Air Force Base (MAFB) 5th Munitions Squadron set up an Angel Tree to collect Christmas gifts for Ranch kids on the Minot campus. The day they delivered the gifts was a snowless and cold December day, but they brought their own Christmas cheer with them. Sargent Robert Hawkins of the Munitions Squadron worked for weeks to collect gifts from the kids' wish lists. He worked diligently to make sure each gift went to the right child, and bunched them together by cottage so we could easily find each child's gifts.

Members of the squadron personally delivered the gifts

to our kids. Gift-opening day is always special at the Ranch, but watching our men and women in uniform hand gifts to our precious children made it even better.



## Well-noted love and prayers for Ranch kids

Every Christmas, hundreds of Ranch donors send cards to our kids—many with personal notes, prayers, and comforting words.

Last Christmas, Jay Schaefer, the Ranch's Spiritual Life Specialist in Fargo, spread the cards out on the floor so the kids could see the huge pile, and said, "I know treatment can feel like a lonely thing. You're away from your normal surroundings and living with people who are new to you. It really can feel like you are on your own. But this pile of cards came from people who are thinking and praying for you. They don't know who you are

and probably will never meet you, but they took the time to sign and send back these cards to let you know you are important. They want you to be successful and are praying for you. Many of them even wrote notes. Let's take a look."

They then went through the pile, looked at the names, found the ones with notes, and read them out loud.




Schaefer said, "Some of the notes were very powerful and summarized what I wanted them to know very beautifully."

Being in treatment or away from family can be a hard time for Ranch kids, and they are so blessed to read messages of support from caring strangers they will probably never meet.

Please keep the Ranch kids and staff in your prayers as the Christmas season approaches!

THE  
VALUE  
OF  
GOOD  
WORK

A hand holding a pencil is shown in the bottom left corner, pointing towards the word 'WORK' in the title. The pencil is yellow with a black eraser and a sharpened lead tip. The hand is holding the pencil in a tripod grip. The title itself is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font with a hatched or shaded texture. The words are arranged in five lines: 'THE', 'VALUE', 'OF', 'GOOD', and 'WORK'. The 'OF' is smaller than the other words. The 'WORK' is the largest word in the title.

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

I grew up on a dairy farm and “doing chores” was so much a part of my childhood I don’t remember a time when I didn’t work in the barn. The first job I remember is sweeping mud off the floor when the cows came in from outside, although I’m sure my parents assigned me other little tasks long before that first memory.

From that, I moved onto bigger chores. I threw straw bales down from the loft, used a pitchfork to shake out clean bedding for the cows, fastened their stanchions when they came in from outside, fed them, and did the milking. By the time I graduated from high school, my brother and I were accomplished enough for our parents to leave us alone for a couple days—responsible for feeding and milking the cows all on our own.

Most of my friends lived in town, but they had chores too. And our chores weren’t something to do “when or if we felt like it.” Someone would often miss out on a play or movie date because they hadn’t finished their chores.

When we were little, chores were fun and we could hardly contain our excitement when it came time to show off our work. The novelty wore off quickly, and as teenagers, we all thought our parents were mean to make us work.

### **Work and worth**

By assigning chores, parents give children valuable tools necessary to become independent and ready to move into adulthood. Through childhood chores and later on, high

school jobs, children gain skills they need to be successful in the world. Things like getting to work on time, following orders, teamwork, time management, showing respect, and most importantly, a sense of belonging and contributing to something bigger than themselves.

Some of our Ranch kids come from great families who do all of these things. They give their kids chores, show them the value of work, and encourage them to find a job—even just a couple hours a week mowing the neighbor’s lawn, when they are ready. But, that’s not typical.

Most of our kids haven’t had those same work experiences. Sometimes



Jay learns to work the till at the Fargo South Thrift Store.

they were transient, moving from place to place with parents or guardians who didn’t have the time or energy to give them chores. Others lived in foster care, and while they sometimes had chores, by the time they started feeling like a part of the family, they were moved onto the next place.

When kids get to the Ranch, they’ve had an average of nine other out-of-

home placements. Nine! And that doesn’t count the many times they moved to a different apartment, town, or state. It’s difficult to develop a chore list or routine when you are never in one place, or even with the same people, for more than a few months at a time.

According to Dr. Wayne Martinsen, Medical Director and Psychiatrist at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, our kids missed out. “Kids who grow up in unstable environments miss out on the sense of connection and fitting in that comes from being in a family and contributing to its well-being.”

If a child is doing well in school, they can get those things in school. “But if school is hard for you, and you work your tail off for Cs and Ds,” Martinsen said, “it’s hard to feel proud of what you’ve accomplished, and it’s hard to feel like you belong anywhere.”

“If we send kids out into the world without having experienced work, it’s going to be too overwhelming to find a job, be there on time, and cope with grumpy coworkers,” he said. “If a kid has never observed work or been a part of it, the anxiety of doing what it takes to find and keep a job will be too much—and they’ll settle for homelessness.”

### **We give kids jobs**

To give our kids these important work experiences and a sense of belonging, we give them jobs.

Tasha, who grew up in a family with lots of yelling, drugs, and unemployment, came to the Ranch at age 15. “After my dad died, my mom shut out all of our family. She just shut them out because they all

knew what was going on with her. She allowed a lot of bad stuff to go on in our house,” Tasha said.

“I started using drugs and running away a lot. I was under a lot of stress and just wanted to get out of the house. I was really angry—I would just yell at people for no reason and I didn’t even know why.”

After several months of treatment at the Ranch, Tasha, her therapist, and Dr. Martinsen, thought she might be ready for a job. Debbie and Judy, the cooks at the Fargo campus, gave her a job in the kitchen.

“It’s really fun,” Tasha said. “I love cooking and cleaning and hanging out with Debbie and Judy. They’re really awesome people. I thought they just served us our food every day, but it’s a lot more than that. And you have to have a good heart and be very caring to put up with everyone here.”

At the Ranch, we start all of our kids out with jobs on campus or at one of our thrift stores.

Many of them have had difficulty controlling their emotions and behaviors. Even if they are doing really well, we want them to have good coaching and supervising before we allow them to work off-campus.

Martinsen said, “If they are here on campus with us, it is like a sheltered or supported employment. If they make a mistake, we sit down with them and work through it. Generally, after

a period of time, if the child seems sincere, they get another chance.”

Working on campus with employers who understand them gives our kids a place to practice and fail, with our support to work through it and do better the next time.

“Think about your own kids,” Martinsen said. “If we look at our own kids who didn’t struggle and weren’t traumatized, how many times did we send them up to clean their room or do something for us and they got it



**Tasha learned about large scale food preparation and nutrition working in the Fargo campus Food Service Department.**

totally right? Growing up in a healthy family is like job coaching.”

On-campus jobs recreate that family experience. In addition to providing job coaching, Ranch employees serve as role models.

“Most of these kids are here without any family connection and they don’t have role models for anything. We get kids who not only haven’t had good work role models, it’s like they don’t

have parents at all. I mean, they are just gone.” Martinsen said.

### **Role models**

Sandy Thiel, manager of the Fargo South Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Thrift Store, is one of those role models. Boys and girls who live at the Fargo Youth Home often work with Thiel and she loves having them there.

“Jay, the young man we have now wants to do everything. He wants to learn everything and do everything. If he has to miss his shift, he asks to come a different day,” Thiel said. “He wanted to work the till so we taught him how.”

“I think they learn to work well with others and be a team player. She said, “They learn new skills. For most of these kids, this is their first job.”

Thiel feels like she is their mother. They talk to her when they have troubles, and when they move on, she thinks about them a lot and wonders how they are doing. A few of the kids who have worked with her stop by a couple times a year to check in and let Thiel know how they are doing.

“It doesn’t always work out,” Thiel said, “but for the most part Ranch kids work hard. They acclimate quickly because they are so young, and because they’ve dealt with such difficult things in their lives.”

Beth Slaton, Hilary Sorenson, and Hannah Thom also employ student workers in the Minot Foundation Office. Sixteen-year-old Aaliyah worked in the office after school and during the summer.

Aaliyah said, “We have certain objectives like participating in therapy and doing our homework. I was getting high scores so I asked if I could get a job. I wanted to increase my independent living. I can walk to and from appointments on campus by

myself so I thought a job was a good next step.”

“I was nervous at first because I didn’t know how this all worked. But the foundation ladies were so nice to me. They told me I was a really good worker. They just kind of boosted my energy. Their positivity made me feel like I was something, like I mattered.”

### It’s not about the money

Kids who have on-campus jobs earn minimum wage. Our agreement with them is that they are required to save half (which we keep in a special account to give them when they leave the Ranch), but the rest they can spend how they choose (within reason, of course). If they want to spend some of the money they’ve earned, we take them shopping.

But Martinsen said it’s not really about the money. “Our kids who have jobs will show you the headphones they bought, and then they’ll always tell you they bought them with money they earned. They are proud of having worked.” Martinsen said, “I don’t know that having money makes them happy, but having earned money

makes them feel like they’ve accomplished something.”

### Working to belong

Aaliyah now has a job in town, but she still stops to visit Beth, Hilary, and Hannah at the foundation office when she can. When she made the Honor Roll at Minot High School, she invited them to attend the induction ceremony. When Tasha left the Ranch and moved out of state, she said she was surprised how much she was going to miss everyone at the Ranch, especially Debbie and Judy.

And that, Martinsen said, is exactly what it’s all about. To build those relationships suggests that Aaliyah and Tasha both saw themselves as a part of the organization.



**Aaliyah (left) and Development Associate, Hannah Thom, work together to figure out how to work the old-fashioned typewriter—both of them too young to have taken typing class in school!**

Work is a huge part of your identity. As adults, we identify ourselves by our values, our religion, our relationships, and our work. People who are satisfied with work see what they do as being part of a bigger whole. In hiring our kids, we are giving them a chance to be a part of that—we exhibit our trust in them, we teach them good work habits, we help them build connections, and we give them a chance to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

Martinsen said, “The more we can help our kids see how their role cleaning or repairing or feeding is linked to other people’s lives, to their workplace, and to a larger mission, the better off they will be.”

*We take great care to protect the privacy of our children. Pictures and identifying information are only used with the permission of the kids and their guardians.*



**Aaliyah built strong connections with her coworkers at the foundation office.**

# Lifting kids up with art

By Alana Wilhelm, Art Teacher  
Dakota Memorial School, Fargo

**“You can look at a painting for a week and never think of it again. You can also look at a picture for a second and think of it all your life.”**

Joan Miro (painter, sculptor, ceramist)



Your voice, Your perspective, Your ideas matter.

“You matter” is a theme heavily discussed in the art world, and one I bring to my students at Dakota Memorial School (DMS). Art has the power to create change, inspire, advocate, and heal.

Many of our kids are able to express their perspective, ideas, and feelings through visual metaphors and concepts in color, shape, and line—even when they are unable to express those feelings in words.

They voice their reality in images. Marks made on paper can help children voice feelings they are unable to uncover with just words. After experiencing a significant loss, one of my students drew a bird trapped in a cage. In her piece, she placed the cage inside a person’s chest. When we talked about what her image meant to her, she said the cage symbolized the feeling of being trapped, and the bird a symbol of her desire to be free.

Dakota Family Services therapist, Christy Wilkie, confirms the importance of art in therapy. “Art is such a powerful medium for healing,” Wilkie said. “Sometimes it’s just too difficult for our kids to access words to describe the hurt they feel inside. Art gives them an alternative way to communicate their thoughts and feelings that is less threatening and easier to access. Art

is a way to open up a conversation in a non-confrontational manner. That is what Alana did with her student. She was able to open up a deeper and more open conversation by discussing her art.”

A blend of art therapy and art education can truly reach and benefit the precious group of kids who come to the Ranch. Art therapy focuses on the creative process psychologically through self-expression; where art education focuses on art criticism, history, techniques, concepts and aesthetics.

At the beginning of this school year, we began a project that combines art therapy and art education in a beautiful way. DMS students created 200 feathers that have become an interactive mural titled, “What Lifts You?” On the backs of the feathers, they wrote their answers to the questions, “What lifts you?” “How do you lift others up?” “What sights, sounds, and smells make you happy?”

After I taught them about symmetry,



One DMS student seeks to impact people and create change through his photography.



An art exhibit created by DMS students gives people a chance to interact with public art. Many teachers and students have posed for photos in front of the wings while answering the question, “What Lifts You?”

color, and public response to public art, they painted the feathers in a value scale using watercolors, and drew symmetrical line designs. We hung the feathers in the shape of wings—on the wall in our school. The mural is a positive visual to remind all of the students in our school of the things that lift them.

Public art (which this is because we hung it in the hallway) often creates an emotional response. Students, teachers, staff, and visitors interact with the art by posing for photos in front of the wings, and talking about the things that lift them.

Another great way to blend art therapy and art education is through ceramics and use of a pottery wheel. Clay is malleable and can be tossed, pounded,

# Understanding Our Kids

carved, and recycled. When you make a mistake in clay, it's pretty forgiving. Physical movement and tactile projects, such as throwing on the wheel, provide a sensory stimulus, and an opportunity for mindful learning.

Students are present in the moment when they are throwing on the wheel. To create a container, they need to



**Sharpie marker drawing builds confidence by allowing students to create without the fear of failure.**

pay attention to their senses. They use touch to analyze the appropriate moisture level in the clay—is it too wet or too dry? They use the sound of the pottery wheel buzzing to determine if the wheel is moving too fast or too slow. They use sight to watch their hand positions so they can mold the clay into the desired form.

“Art is an excellent coping skill for kids,” Wilkie said. “It can provide a temporary distraction from the pain and intrusive thoughts many of our kids have going in their brains. That’s invaluable, even if it’s just for a moment.”

Functional art is especially therapeutic for our children. Functional art has a literal function or use, aside from appearance or beauty. Literal function comes from making small bowls and mugs they can eat or

drink from. An example of psychological function is when they are able to practice working through frustrations, concept designs, and failures as they create pottery. They develop grit and learn resiliency skills with every piece they throw.

One of my former ceramics students said, “I love throwing on the wheel. I didn’t like it at first because it was hard, but I kept trying. Now it is easier. You just have to keep going. I like that I can actually use the mug I made.”

For some kids, art is a place of strength. Wilkie said, “Many times, kids find they have a strength in art skills. Identifying something they are really good at can facilitate the building of positive self-esteem and identity.

I stress the importance of word choice during the creation and growth process. Students may say “I can’t do this,” or “I am not good at this,” I ask them to add the word, “yet,” to their statement. “I cannot do this YET.” The addition of this one tiny word validates their frustrations and encourages them to keep moving forward.

My goal is to help our students discover they are capable of more than they know. That their voices can create change...they belong to a community...they are cared for and listened to. They matter.

As one DMS photography student



**Creating pottery requires students to use all of their senses, which helps them to focus their minds on the moment.**

wrote in his artist statement, “I can create an impact on people with my art. How exactly I will create that impact...that is yet to be discovered, but I’m ready and willing to find out how I might be able to make a change.”

Art moves, heals, inspires, and connects people. Art is important in our kids lives.



*Alana Wilhelm grew up in Wheaton, MN, and graduated from Minnesota State University Moorhead with bachelor’s degrees in art education*

*and photography. She encourages her students to use art for coping, influencing change, and bridging connections between students and the community.*

## Frequently Asked Questions



***Are we doing enough to help these kids?***  
**By Jim Vetter,**  
**Vice President**  
**of Partner and**  
**Community**  
**Relations**

As a 30-year employee of the Ranch, newer staff often come to me to talk about the hard work we do. When a new staff person first hears the back story of one of our children... sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, domestic violence... they ask themselves (as would any normal, caring person), “Am I doing enough? Are we doing enough?”

I answer them, first, with a question, “What did you do with this child in the last three days?” Inevitably, the list is long... woke them up, got them to school, sat through some classes with them to ensure they felt safe, ate lunch with them, played basketball, went to chapel, ate dinner, read them a bedtime story, dried their tears, and told them they were worthwhile and brave.

And that doesn't include all the sophisticated and best-in-class treatments we provide—psychiatric care, medication management, psychological testing, gene testing, trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy, play therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, structured psychotherapy for adolescents responding to chronic stress, motivational interviewing, occupational therapy, equine-assisted psychotherapy, nursing care, wellness and recreation activities, group

therapy, substance use treatment, spiritual life activities, and more.

So...are we doing enough? Depends on who you mean by “we.”

*Are we doing enough at the Ranch?*  
For the kids who make it to our doors, we relentlessly pursue healing. We do everything on that long list, plus we give every child a chance to know God, we love them, we discover their strengths, and we give them hope.

*Are we doing enough as individuals?*  
Can any of us ever really do “enough?” I prefer to focus on what we can do. As individuals, we can get involved in so many ways. We can support the Ranch and other youth-based organizations. We can pray for our kids, our families, and the leaders who make decisions about their care. We can get involved in politics. We can volunteer. Maybe most importantly, we can take care of ourselves and be visible in our neighborhoods, so when

a child looks to us for love and hope, we are ready to be there for them.

At the Ranch, we believe that every small thing matters. You never know what moment will change the life of a child. You never know how much your donations or prayers or words will make a difference.

*Are we doing enough as a society?*  
That is a difficult question. I know we can't fix every problem and heal every child, but I won't stop trying. I can't say “we're doing enough,” until every child, in every state and country, is given the opportunity to be their best self.

If healing every child is our yardstick for “enough,” no, we're not doing enough. But doing something is far greater than doing nothing. If thousands of people “do enough” today, tomorrow, next week, and next year, we will get closer and closer to ENOUGH.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram to stay up-to-date on Ranch happenings and stories.



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## God's People in Action

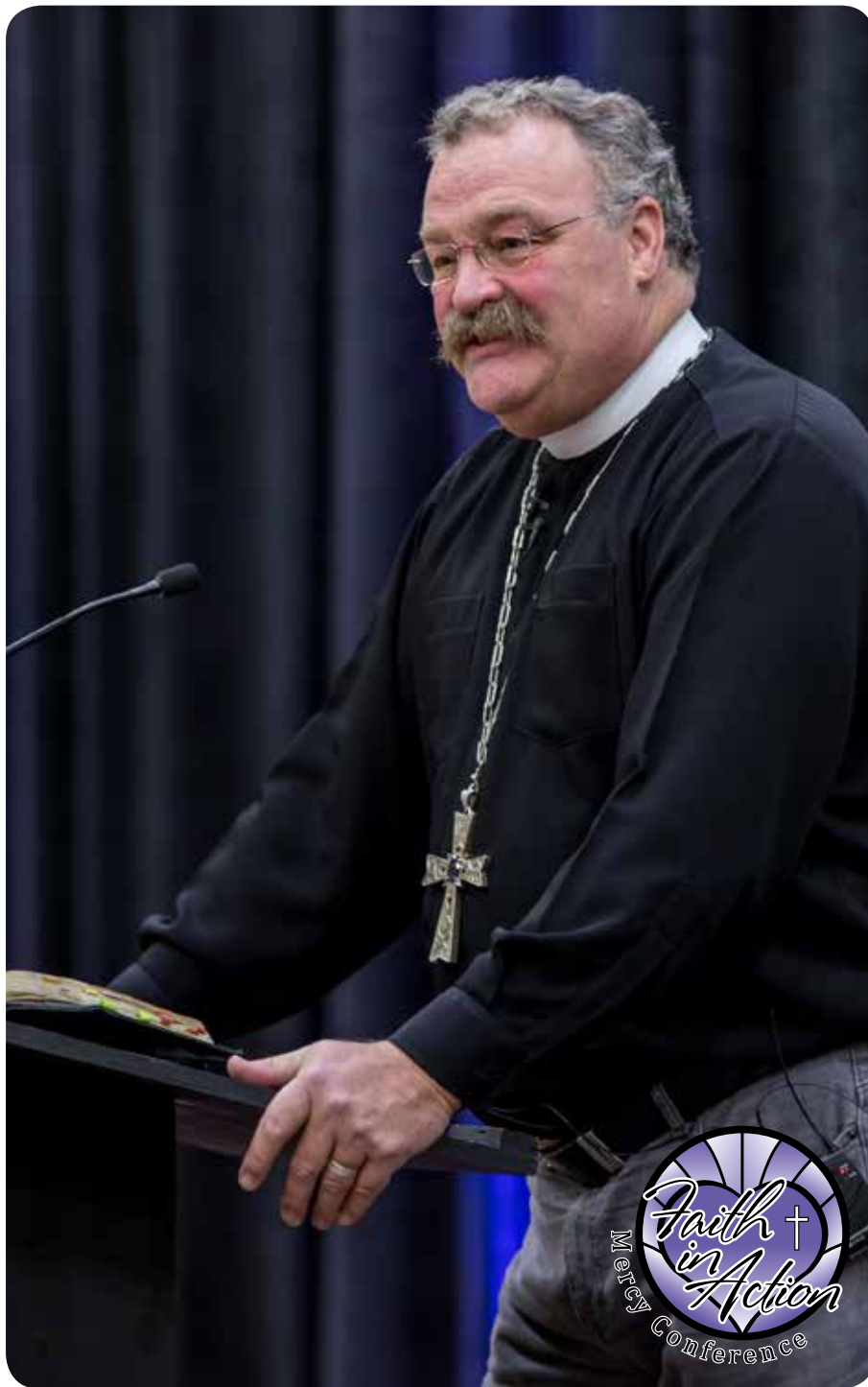
In late October, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch hosted a Faith in Action Mercy Conference on its Fargo campus. Attendees were inspired and energized to be a part of God's mission to bring hope and healing to the world.

They packaged 1,662 meals for people in Africa, rekindled their passion to help people in need, learned about more than 20 ministries of care, and experienced healing and release with Eddie the Comfort the Dog. Conference attendees also learned about ministries that are building boarding schools in Africa, feeding and clothing underprivileged people on all continents, healing and educating children in North Dakota, and more.

The engaging keynote speakers, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison and Dr. Rob Stadler, opened participant's eyes to new possibilities for Christ-centered compassion and drew hearts toward practical ways to make a difference in the lives of others.

Harrison, President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and author of several books, spoke of the role of mercy in the church. With more hurting people around us than ever before, God's people are called to get off the sidelines and lend compassionate care to those who are hurting. That is what Jesus did, and it is what followers of Christ are called to do today. Harrison cited Scripture to illustrate how Jesus walked toward people in need, while everyone else was walking away.

From the time of the early church



**The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison is the 13th man to serve as president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod since its founding in 1847. Before being elected to this role in 2010, Harrison served as Executive Director of the LCMS' former World Relief and Human Care ministry. He is an accomplished author and a lifelong servant who has provided mercy care all over the world.**

until now, mercy has been a part of the church. Harrison encouraged Christians to rediscover ministries of mercy for a new generation.

Stadler, author of “The Scientific Approach to Evolution,” recognizes that our focus on providing mercy can be inhibited when the foundation of our faith is attacked. The growing conflict between science and faith, centered upon evolution, has turned many away from God. Stadler explained his approach to resolving this conflict, which is to appreciate different levels of confidence in scientific evidence. When evidence that provides high confidence (evidence that is repeatable and obtained through planned experiments) is properly prioritized over weak evidence (evidence that is not repeatable and relates to singular events in the distant past), the theory of evolution breaks down. With high confidence evidence, science and the Christian faith are in full agreement. By resolving this conflict, our faith in God’s Word and our focus on mercy can be restored.

A forum to discuss how society cares for its most vulnerable citizens



**Christians come together at the Mercy Conference to learn, laugh, and serve.**



seems to be more important now than ever. The Ranch is grateful for the opportunity to bring people together to explore ways we can all be the hands and feet of Christ.

“Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is just one part of a much larger call to care for the needs of people around us,” said Chaplain Rick Jones, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. “We are not alone, and the work of all ministries represented at the conference is important and valued.”



**Dr. Stadler shares his compelling approach to determining the level of confidence of scientific evidence; and applies it to the commonly cited evidence for evolution.**



**Rev. Bernie Seder, who led the Bible Study, visits with President Harrison and Dr. Stadler, the conference keynote speakers.**

As a faithful Christian, Dr. Rob Stadler wants to share his approach to resolving the conflict between science and faith. For a copy of his book or to invite him to speak at your next event, contact Stadler at [scientificrevolution@gmail.com](mailto:scientificrevolution@gmail.com) or visit the website, [www.scientificevolution.com](http://www.scientificevolution.com).

## STARS in our eyes

Several years ago, Lucas Mitzel, LCSW, co-created the Ranch's STAR group, with STAR standing for Social Skills, Thinking flexibility, Anger control, and Resiliency. The group is now a tradition on the Fargo campus, and it has been successful in building the emotional intelligence of our kids, and in interjecting positive messages into daily life at the Ranch.

**How does it work?** Case managers choose a STAR topic each week, and find activities to reinforce the topics—which have included morality, black and white thinking, communication, etc. On Sundays, direct care staff introduce the topic and the daily goal. Every evening before bedtime, staff and kids gather in their cottage to talk about how they met their goal that day and to share examples.

One night a week in STAR group (Tuesdays for girls and Wednesday for boys), kids participate in activities and games to make the learning interactive.

For instance, one week the topic was “morality” and the goal was to do something nice each day. Every evening, kids had the chance to tell the group about a kindness they did for someone that day—preferably when that person wasn't looking! During their weekly STAR group, they practiced kindness by writing something positive and putting it in a peer or staff's bag. This activity not only taught them to practice kindness, but gave each of them a bag of positive thoughts they could look back on when they needed a boost.

Another week, Beach Ball Toss reinforced communication and teamwork skills, Anger Volcanoes (as shown below) reinforced teachings about recognizing and controlling anger.

STAR group has been a great addition to our kids' daily schedule.



During “morality week,” the girls practiced kindness by decorating kindness bags and filling each others bags with positive thoughts.



Residents made Anger Volcanoes during one STAR group. They colored their volcanoes to look realistic, or in colors they felt described them. Then they wrote the things that frustrate or anger them on strips of paper. As they placed the strips inside their volcano, Katelyn Hanson, Case Manager, talked about the importance of expressing our frustrations and anger appropriately. “If we keep inside all of the things that upset or anger us, they can build up and explode like a volcano.” The group wrapped up by discussing ways to express anger appropriately.

# Lower Your Taxes with the New Tax Law



**For smart taxpayers, the new law provides easy opportunities to lower taxes even more.**

The most significant opportunity for you is probably the standard deduction.

It can be used instead of itemizing your deductions, where in the past you might have claimed a deduction for mortgage interest, state and local taxes and charitable giving.

Congress doubled the standard deduction to: \$12,000 for single filers and \$24,000 for married filers.

Whether you typically itemize or take the standard deduction, there are some strategies you can use to receive new tax savings as well as other non-tax benefits.

Call or email us to learn how you can use the new law to its fullest advantage.



**Fund a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder unitrust**

Either strategy provides you with annual income, a charitable income tax deduction and potentially favorable capital gains treatment while allowing you to support the causes that matter most to you. Your specific benefits will be affected based on whether you itemize or take the standard deduction.



**Make an outright gift of an appreciated asset to charity**

This strategy allows you to support the causes that matter most to you while generating a charitable tax deduction and potentially capital gains tax savings. This strategy provides tax benefits to itemizers and non-itemizers.



**Give from your pre-tax assets by making an IRA rollover gift**

If you are 70½ or older, this strategy allows you to give up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA rather than take the required distribution from your IRA. This strategy does not result in a charitable deduction but will help you avoid tax on the distribution. This strategy works for both itemizers and non-itemizers.

**For more information about making the new tax law work for you, contact Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation.**

6301 19th Ave. N.W.,  
Minot, ND 58702-5007  
1-800-344-0957  
info@DakotaRanch.org  
DakotaRanch.org



## “I am happier than I ever thought I could be!”

The children who come to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch are all trauma survivors. When besieged by trauma, some kids push back at the people around them. Others turn inward.

Haysel was one of those kids who turned her pain inward. She was quiet and introspective, and very focused on school and school activities. She was a cheerleader, a gymnast, and a good student. She was beautiful, had good friends, and presented a positive face to the world. On the outside, Haysel looked like she had it all together. Inside, however, Haysel was suffering from severe emotional pain caused by depression and anxiety.

Kids like Haysel don't always get help because they hide their struggles and use quieter and more hidden “survival tools,” like bulimia and cutting. Haysel dulled her emotional pain by cutting herself. Fortunately, her mom recognized the extent of her daughter's pain and found help for her at the Ranch.

“I was depressed. I was upset and angry all the time. I just stopped talking and starting cutting myself a lot,” Haysel said. “My Mom and I are like the same person. She was kind of troubled when she was younger too, so she knew what was going on.”

“Haysel entered [Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch] looking pretty down and

defeated,” said her Ranch therapist, Sara Vetter. “She was respectful, but didn't share much information. She spoke very little the first few days she was here.”

After about a week, Haysel started talking to staff and other residents. Vetter said she quickly adjusted to the routine, and became engaged, talkative, and positive to be around.

Determination was her biggest strength. She was just as determined to succeed in treatment as she was to succeed in school, gymnastics, and anything else she tried.

Vetter said, “Haysel was very focused on keeping herself busy with positive activities, in spite of fluctuations with her mood and bouts of depression.”

In spite of the help Haysel needed, she was able to be a part of the community while she was undergoing treatment at the Ranch. Because she was trustworthy and dependable, her treatment team decided it would be appropriate and helpful for her to attend public school and continue her involvement in gymnastics and cheerleading. As long as she was able to keep up with Ranch programming expectations, which she was, Haysel could stay involved at her home school.

While at the Ranch, Haysel learned a lot about herself. Rather than cutting

herself to release the painful thoughts and feelings, Haysel learned to face them head on. “I used the quiet room. It was nice to take some time by myself when things got hard. I learned how to step back and look at what was going on in my mind and body.”

Identifying her negative thoughts and feelings gave Haysel the opportunity to challenge them.

“I was at the Ranch about five months,” Haysel said. “I didn't completely change, but I found different coping skills. I'm glad I was there. It's nice to see there are places for people who are struggling to get help.”

### Pursuing her dream

The Ranch helped Haysel turn her life around in more ways than one. When Haysel left the Ranch, someone told her about a scholarship for kids who had gone through treatment at the Ranch. The Ranch's scholarship fund is 100% donor supported and available to children who have completed high school, have completed treatment at the Ranch, and are furthering their education.

Haysel wanted to go to cosmetology school. She checked into the scholarship, applied, and completed her degree, thanks to a student scholarship from the Ranch.

“The scholarship is paying for almost my whole schooling, and helped me a ton,” Haysel said. “I learned hair, skin, and nails; and I love it. I am now working at a full service salon and recently got married.”

While she steps into the next chapter



Haysel, former resident



of her life, Haysel remains focused on the things she needs to do to stay healthy. “I stop by the Ranch to see Sara every now and then. She is very easy to talk to and has been very nice. I’m really grateful for everyone there,” she said.

Is Haysel’s life perfect now? Of course not, she says. “Everyone has struggles in life, but you have to step back and take a look at the whole picture. It’s easy to focus on the one bad thing, but there are always lots of other good things going on too. I am happier than I ever thought I could be.”

Great wisdom for a young woman who just turned 20 years old!

### What is “Cutting?”

Cutting (or self-harm) is when a person purposely scratches, cuts, or rubs somewhere on their body until they break the skin. It usually starts in the early teenage years and can continue into adulthood.

While difficult to understand, cutting is a way some cope with the pain of strong emotions. They may not have learned positive ways to cope with their intense feelings. When emotions aren’t expressed in a healthy way, they can build up inside until the tension seems unbearable. Cutting is often an attempt to relieve that pressure—or to create physical pain that gives them a momentary escape from the emotional pain. Sara Vetter, Ranch therapist, said a common misperception of cutting is that it is a suicide attempt, or a precursor to an attempt. This is usually not the case.

Therapists at the Ranch work with children to examine the reasons they harm themselves, and to find other, more positive, coping skills that work for them.

## Provide a Spiritual Foundation for Children at the Ranch



*Join hundreds of other donors who provide for the spiritual needs of Ranch children through the Thrivent Choice® program.*

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. At the Ranch, we use all Thrivent Choice® funding to support our Spiritual Life Program.

Go to [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice), login, and choose Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. To direct Choice Dollars over the phone, call 1-800-847-4836 and say “Thrivent Choice” after the prompt.



DakotaRanch.org  
1-800-344-0957

## Donating IRA assets to Charity: What you need to know



**By Janet Zinke, Senior Development Officer, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch**

When I talk to people about their estate plans, I often recommend they consider using their Individual Retirement Accounts for their charitable gifting. These include qualified pension plans, profit sharing plans, 401(k)s, 403(b) tax sheltered annuities, SEP, Keoghs, IRAs and stock option plans. These assets are considered “income in respect of decedent (IRD).”

When you leave these assets to someone other than your spouse, you may subject them to significant taxes. Even if you do not have a taxable estate, the tax rate on an IRD can exceed well over fifty percent.

If you plan to include charitable gifts in your estate plans, consider leaving your cash and other investment assets to your heirs, while naming a charity like Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch as the beneficiary of your IRD assets. Why? Charities are tax exempt and, unlike your heirs, will not pay taxes on retirement plan assets. While other assets, like your home and stocks, can be sold by your heirs with little or no tax due.

Naming a charity as the beneficiary of your IRD is easy. Contact your plan administrator for a beneficiary designation form you can complete and return. It's as simple as that!

Another planning option for IRA

assets is to fund a testamentary charitable gift annuity that leaves your heirs fixed payments. This type of gift is appropriate when your heirs would benefit from payments that never change. A gift annuity is a simple contract so it is very cost effective to establish. It also may be funded with a smaller amount than a typical charitable trust.



If your IRAs have significant value, you may be interested in a Charitable Remainder Trust, sometimes called a “Give it Twice Trust.” Funding a charitable remainder trust with your retirement assets will pay your loved ones income over a number of years, with income tax paid over time, as opposed to facing a large tax bill all at once. At the end of the trust, any remaining principal will go to the charity you name. By choosing

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch as the beneficiary of a charitable remainder trust, you can leave a legacy of loving care for the troubled, complicated, and amazing children who walk through our doors.

If you are 70½ or older, you can make a gift of up to \$100,000 from your IRA this year to help our

ministry. Making direct charitable gifts from your IRA is one of the best ways to give, and it is simple to do! Gifts from your IRA are not reportable as taxable income and, therefore, are not included in your adjusted gross income. Contact your IRA administrator to make a gift from your

IRA, or contact us to learn more.

If you are interested in an illustration of how any of these options would work for you, please contact the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation at 1-800-344-0957.

We aren't tax experts, but we can provide you with examples and information to share with your most trusted financial advisor.

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

If you have any questions about the Ranch, feel free to contact Janet Zinke, or any of the people shown below, at 1-800-344-0957 or [info@DakotaRanch.org](mailto:info@DakotaRanch.org).



**Lisa Cole**  
Development Officer



**Anne Compere**  
Development Officer



**Laurie Dannewitz**  
Development Officer



**Paul Krueger**  
Senior Development Officer



**Linda Medhus**  
Senior Development Officer



**Kris Ryan**  
Mission Advancement Officer



**Tim Unsinn**  
Senior Development Officer



**Jim Vetter**  
VP/Development Officer

Former resident, Carrie, sent this in November 2018, and asked that we share it as broadly as possible. When she thanks, “anyone and everyone” at the bottom of her letter, know that includes you.

To Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch,

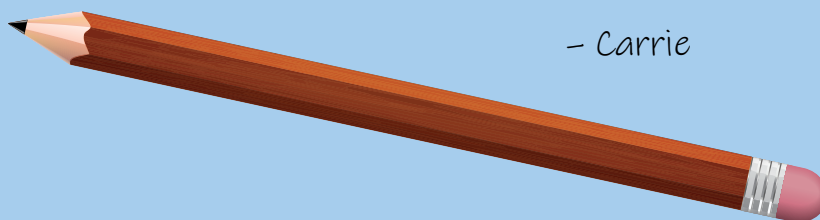
I first came into the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch family when I was fourteen years old. I was in a very dark and broken place, both mentally and spiritually. I didn't know if I would make it out alive. The direct care staff on the Fargo campus had the patience and the love to help me see the light again.

I came back to the Ranch when I was seventeen, this time to the Fargo Youth Home. The Youth Home was, and remains to be, one of the only places in the world where I felt at home. They knew me from my stay at the treatment center, but not once did any of those staff speak of any of my negatives from back then. If it were not for the Youth Home, I don't think I would have graduated from high school.

Life has been incredibly tough since leaving the Ranch. I take all of the knowledge and experience I learned from both my stays in the loving hands of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch with me whenever I go. It helps to have all of that in my back pocket. So, when I don't think I can continue, I can turn back to it.

Thank you to anyone and everyone that helps make the Ranch such a wonderful place. I hope one day I can work for the Ranch, and make this kind of impact in another child's life!

- Carrie





## Benji & Katherine Dick

### Bountiful Harvest: Farmers Gift Commodities to the Ranch

Benji Dick, a 48-year-old North Dakota farmer, uses his head, as well as his heart, to make decisions about giving. He takes advantage of an often-overlooked giving tool for farmers—gifting farm commodities, including grain and legumes, directly to charity.

Giving crops directly to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, rather than selling the crop and giving the Ranch the proceeds, means he isn't taxed on that income at all. The result is a 100% deduction.

“Until we sell that crop and get a check for it, we're not taxed on the income,” Benji said. “The first dollar up to the last dollar you give in grain or beans is tax-exempt.”

The critical step in making this work is to literally donate the crop to the charity.

For example, this year Benji donated kidney beans. Other years he has donated corn and soybeans. After delivering the beans, Benji called the elevator and designated a certain number of bushels to the Ranch.

A Ranch representative, in this case Linda Medhus, the Senior Development Officer who works with Benji and his wife, Katherine (Kat), called the elevator to direct the sale of the beans.

Benji keeps track of what he transfers to the Ranch and how much it was worth, but he doesn't have to report

it as income or complete any special IRS form; and he can still deduct the production expenses. In turn, Medhus credits Benji for the gift, but she doesn't send him a receipt because the Ranch owned the commodity at the time of the sale.

It's a brilliant way to make a difference!

Benji and Kat have definitely made a difference in the ten years they have been giving to the Ranch. Because his parents gave to the Ranch, Benji feels as if he's always known about the ministry. It wasn't until he and Kat got “older and wiser,” that they became aware of the challenges faced by troubled children and how much it takes to help them overcome tough situations.

“Mental health issues have become so much more prominent. It just seems like the problem is getting bigger all the time. The Ranch has a chance to reach kids at such a critical time in their lives,” Benji said. “Every kid ‘saved’ will touch others' lives going forward. You can't even measure the impact of kids getting their life straightened out and becoming happy, healthy adults. It will pay dividends down the road in the many lives they touch in a positive way.”

As Christians, Benji and Kat give because it's the right thing to do. “One of the major tenets of Christianity is to help people. And there is a lot of need out there,” Benji said.

“We don’t have the wherewithal or the training to help those kids. And now that we have a child, and another on the way, we don’t have a lot of time. But we do have the ability to give money. And when you give to the Ranch, you know it is directly helping the kids.”

If Benji had the chance to sit down with a Ranch child, what would he say?

“That I can’t even understand how tough your life has been, but I can tell you a lot of people care about you. People you have never met, people like Kat and I, care about you and pray for you. Accept the help. It really can change your life.”

### First Snow Fall

It’s snowing real heavy  
For the first time  
I watch from my window  
I feel my heart flying

Millions of snowflakes  
Pile up down below  
I leap and I dance  
To the sound of the snow

Oh, how my soul rejoices  
How my eyes stare in awe  
I’d forgotten how I loved it  
That snow without flaw.

–Dakota Memorial  
School Student

## Smart Giving Through Gifts of Commodities

Farmers who use cash basis accounting\* can benefit from significant tax savings by donating farm commodities, including grains, legumes, and livestock, directly to their favorite charity. (For ease of reading, let’s use “grain” as an example.)

Giving the grain to the charity, rather than the proceeds from the sale of the grain, allows farmers to exclude the sale from their taxable income, which can result in a triple tax savings. The tax savings can include federal income tax savings, state income tax savings, and self-employment tax savings. In addition, most farmers are still

For grain stored on the farm, the farmer delivers a notarized letter of transfer to the charity.

2. The charity must direct the sale, and the original sales invoice must list the charity as the seller.
3. After the transfer, the charity assumes the full costs of storage, transportation, and marketing, and bears the risk of any loss.

If you are interested in gifting a portion of your harvest to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, please contact us. We can help you determine the best way to give that will benefit you and Ranch kids the most. We will also encourage you to consult with your professional tax



able to deduct their production expenses.

### How does it work?

1. The farmer puts the grain into the name of the charity when it is delivered to the elevator and asks the elevator to issue a warehouse receipt in the name of the charity.

and/or legal advisors to determine the tax implications specific to your situation.

*\*Crop share landlords are ineligible. A crop share landlord’s portion of the crop is considered rental income, which must be reported on their tax return.*

## Foundation and Corporate Grants

### **BNSF Foundation**

\$5,000, HOME Program  
Startup, Minot

### **Floy L. and Paul F. Cornelsen Foundation**

\$25,000, Cornelsen Cottage  
Education, Minot

### **Hancock County Community Foundation, Martha Beckenholdt Charitable Endowment Fund**

\$2,468, General Operating

### **Midco Foundation**

\$1,000, Audiometer,  
Bismarck

### **North Dakota Community Foundation**

\$3,200, Mental Health  
First Aid Training

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

\$5,000, Cornelsen Cottage  
Playground, Minot

## Arizona Donor Appreciation Luncheons

Thursday, Feb. 14  
Apache Wells Country Club,  
Mesa, AZ

Friday, Feb. 15  
Briarwood Country Club,  
Sun City West, AZ

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CEO Emeritus, retired  
Larry D. Knutson,  
President Emeritus, retired

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# Legacy

GIFTING STRATEGIES FOR

# FARMERS AND RANCHERS

Please consider how you can make a significant difference in the lives of children at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.



FP-2015-16-1-sr



**As** a farmer or rancher, you know the value of cultivating your resources. Your assets place you in a unique position to accomplish your financial, tax and charitable goals.

Please contact us to learn about gift strategies that can help you make the most of your resources, while leaving a

legacy to continue the work of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. You can make a major gift with livestock or grain. Your land, farm, and other resources can fund the following gift options:

- charitable life estate
- gift and sale
- charitable remainder trust
- charitable remainder trust and sale

For more information about ways you can leave a legacy, call the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation at 1-800-344-0957.



6301 19th Ave. NW, Minot  
DakotaRanch.org

# Memorials/Honorariums

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

## Memorials

July 15, 2018– September 30, 2018

BARRICK, CHARLES "CHUCK"

Marlys Lindgren

BAUER, HAROLD

Rev. Erhart & Anita Bauer

Ms. Martha Becker

Elsie Buchmann

Marian Kitzmann

Evelyn Schwagler

Gene & Marlene Toepke

BAUNE, SHIRLEY

Richard & Lucille Gust

BECKMAN, CLARENCE

Mrs. Anita Petersen

BEGGIN, NANCY

Jean Turcotte

BELL, RAY

Lloyd & Karen Koestler

BERENTSON, RUBY

Joyce & Sharon Knudsvig

BILLING, ROBERT

Bruce & Pam Smith

BIRDSALL, IRMA

Jim & Karen Bonnet

BLEND, VALORIE

Steve Bittermann

Wilbert & Delores Kunz

BOSAK, GREG

Minko Construction

BRANDT, LENA

Resurrection Contemporary Ensemble

BRAUDT, ELEANOR

Ray Braudt

BROCK, ODELIA

Mr. & Mrs. William Ferguson

BUBACH, LEONARD

Delores M Maier

BULLINGER, SHIRLEY

Richard & Lucille Gust

CASE, JAMES

Melva Smith

CHRISTENSON, IVAN

Richard & Lucille Gust

CHRISTIANSON, MANDIUS

Lilia M. Christianson

COHEN, ALVIN

Elizabeth Ravenscroft

COONRAD, RONALD

Judy Barbot

COUNELIS, JUSTIN

Robert & Grace Ann Swanson

"Reading my new Action Bible gives me peace. I'm glad it is so long so I have a lot more to read. "

-10-year-old boy,  
Ranch resident

DAGGETT, DR. JIM

Ruth Holtkamp

DENNERT, ELINOR

Paul & Barbara Weismantel

DETLAFF, A.A.

Dorene Richart

DETLAFF, ROBERT H.

Dorene Richart

DEUTZ, ERNA

Marilyn J. Baumann

EISENBRAUN, MOE

Sharon Patterson

FABER, KARL

Rudolph & Bonnie Faber

FATLAND, JAN

Dean Fatland

FATLAND, SYLVIA

Dean Fatland

FIEDLER, VERNON "BUSTER"

George Fick

FITZLOFF, FERN

Loren & Lucy Larson

GAIL NELSON'S MOTHER

Joy Ryan

GANGL, JAMES

Steve Bittermann

GARCHOW, PASTOR PAUL

Gerald & Shirley Peterson

GIERTZ, LORRAINE

Arleen Bohlmann & Family

David & Linda Giertz

GLANNER, GLENDA HOENKE

Marilyn J. Baumann

GOETSCH, WILBUR

Elizabeth Ravenscroft

GREGG, GLENN H.

Don & Sopida Trageser

GUSTAFSON, MILDRED "MILLIE"

Merle & Patricia Nylander

HANSON, MARIE

Keith & Roberta Hoesel

Wilbert & Delores Kunz

HAGEN, RYER

Kimberly Herman

HAMILTON, LAVERNE

Arlon E. Fuchs

HAUF, JEFF

St. Matthews LWMC

HECK, GOTTFRIED & IRENE

Norman & Doris Steiner

HECKMAN, KEN

Bob & Linda Tetrault

HEIDENREICH, JEANNE

Linda Hansen

HENKE, AUDREY

Hank & Jan Albers

Steve Bittermann

Merle Henke

Marian Kitzmann

Wilbert & Delores Kunz

Marvin & Laverne Schulz

HERMANSON, MAE

Jon & Ardys Horner

HINTZ, HERBERT

Allen & Bernice Scherer



HOENKE, CHARLES

Marilyn J. Baumann

HOMMERDING, JULIE

Bonnie Schlecht

HUBER, MELVIN

Caroline Titze

“I haven’t prayed in a long time.  
It felt really good.”

–14-year-old boy,  
Ranch resident

HUSO, JOHN R.

Mary Anne & Richard Rehbock

HUSS, ARDIS (ARDIE)

David & Karen Rasmusson

Dick & Judy Winje

JACOBS, KELLY

Julie Mills

JAEGER, ALICE LARSON

Sylvia Iverson

JAEGER, TINA M.

Helen M. Foss-Bohm

JENSEN, JAMES

Gerald & Aileen Behm

Robert & Geraldine Cogdill

Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

Rhonda Demakis

Family & Friends of Jim Jensen

Gary & Laurie Gathman

Linda Hill

Mike & Kim Humphreys

Karen Jenson

Albert & Ann Jundt

Larry Knutson

Bruce & Jackie Krebsbach

Evertt & Mary Olson

Thomas Petz

Milton & Bonnie Rolle

Edward & Betty Schall

Brian & Becky Stroh

JENSON, DYLAN

Nancy Stevenson

JERGENS, DEBBIE

Don & Arlene Schumacher

JOHNSON, BETTY

Wyaneta Timm

JOHNSTON, MAXINE

Roger & Colleen Holm

Tessa Nesheim

Sue and Alan Pederson

Colleen Weffen

KARU, HAROLD & ILVY

Gilda Karu

KELLER, RALPH

Delores M. Maier

KILICHOWSKI, DORIS

Clarice Mosolf

KIMMEL, PAULINE

Joel Erickson

KIRKLAND, JOHN DARBY

Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

KRUKENBERG, JACK

Bonnie Schlecht

LAKE, ANN

Barbara Rude

LARSON, JEAN E.

Laurence & Jean Charbonneau

LARSON, MARILYN

Robert & Ilene Meyer

LEE, BEVERLEE

Anne Compere

Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

Linda Medhus

Joy Ryan

Kris Ryan

Sandra Schmidt

Beth Slaton

Hilary Sorenson

Hannah Thom

LEE JR, GEORGE

Harold & Elaine Weisbrook

LEER, JEROME

Patricia Shepard

LETZRING, REV. THEODORE

Caroline Letzring

LINK, RUTH

Tom Link

LINSMEIER, CARMELA

Martin & Ladeen Guericke

LOCHTHOWE, JOHN W.

George Fick

LOWE, JAMES

Harold & Marie Mathisen

MAHLUM, MICHAEL

Wayne & Mary Jane Sanstead

MATHIAS, ROGER

Patsy Moerke

MATZINGER, LILA

Elaine Bening

MCCONN, DEAN & CHARLOTTE

Robert Muhs

MCCUTCHAN, MARTHA

Wilbert & Delores Kunz

MCFARLAND, LORNA

Clarice Mosolf

MELCHER, LEONARD

Phyllis Poss

MIRANDA WAGNER’S

GRANDMOTHER

Mavis Zahursky

MONSON, ALBERT “AL”

Norma Schultz

MONSON, GAYLIN “BUD”

Judy Barbot

NOLTE, JOHN

Laurence & Jean Charbonneau

ODENS, KAREN AMANDA

Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

OFSTEDAHL, DOROTHY

Dorothy’s Family and Friends

Rolf & Gertrude Olson

Mary Ver Steegt

“Thank you for teaching about  
God in a way that I understand.”

–Former resident

OLESON, KENNETH

Mrs. Betty Oleson

OLIN, RAYMONT “SHORTY”

Joel Erickson

OLSON, ERNEST

Harley & Cheryl Haug

Minko Construction

ORLOWSKI, DALE

Chuck & Susan Coffey

Robert & Marlys Harp

Carroll & Alice Holl

Lillian Hudson

Michael & Cynthia Hunzeker

Gary Lieske

Margaret Orlovski

# Memorials/Honorariums

Natalie Timm  
Timothy Walenter  
ORN, LESTER  
Gerald Gerntholz  
OTTERSON, NORMA  
Barbara Rude  
PALMER, WALLACE "WALLY"  
Joann Palmer

"I'm graduating. Without the Ranch, I would be in another juvenile center or treatment facility. Keep doing what you are doing, because it helps, A LOT."

-17-year-old girl,  
former resident

PATTERSON, LARRY  
Sharon Patterson  
PAULSON, LLOYD  
Harley & Cheryl Haug  
Minko Construction  
PEDERSON, KAREN  
Herman Pederson  
PETERSON JR, CARL  
Linda O. Hansen  
REIBLE, RUTH  
Elizabeth Ravenscroft  
REUTHER, VERNA  
Elsie & Lonny Buchmann  
ROSSOW, REV. E.J.  
Mr & Mrs John W Berkley  
ROWE, KEITH  
William & Joan Ferguson  
RUSCH, CLINTON  
Irene Heid  
Keith & Roberta Hoesel  
SAGASER, PAUL  
Dale & Laurie Dannewitz  
SATROM, PAUL J  
Roger Paulson  
SCHLEY, MELVIN  
Betty Tuma  
SCHMALTZ, K.J. "KLEM"  
Richard and Lucille Gust  
Sharon Grondahl

SCHOENEFELD, LLOYD  
Bud & Shelia Gerry  
SCHUH, CHARLENE  
Steve Bittermann  
SHOMENTO, BERT  
Janice Dill  
SIEVERS, LAVONE  
LaVone Sievers Estate  
SKRAMSTAD, NORMA  
Donna Lannoye  
SNOW, MYRNA  
Darleen F. Klemp  
STEADMAN, MILT  
Nolan & Eileen Bode  
SUMPTER, MARGARET  
Evan & Marie Moe  
Barbara Rude  
SWEGARDEN, JOE E.  
Dale & Laurie Dannewitz  
THOMPSON, EARL  
Joyce & Sharon Knudsvig  
THORSON, RAYMOND "SHORTY"  
Joel Erickson  
THURLOW, DONALD  
Steve Bittermann  
TIMM, MIKE  
Donna Lannoye  
TOLLEFSON, MARLENE  
Donna Lannoye

"When I first got here I was rude and disrespectful because of how I'd been mistreated. Now that have been here awhile, I feel respected and loved. I love it here so much."

-15-year-old  
Day Student

TOMAC, BOB  
Chris Hanson  
VASSEN, DOUGLAS  
Laurie & Dale Dannewitz  
VENDZAL, JEAN  
Sharon Grondahl

VON BERGE, GARY F.  
Don & Arlene Schumacher  
WEGSCHEID, JOEL  
Bonnie Schlecht

"I struggled with learning to use my coping skills, but with Ranch staff, I feel like I can overcome anything."

-Ranch resident

WEIDINGER, ROBERT  
James & Betty Sommerer  
WINKELS, MARGARET  
George Fick  
WIRTA, MILDRED  
Muriel M. Juers  
WITTMAYER, YVONNE  
Carol Podoll  
YEAGER, GRACE  
Bruce & Pam Smith  
YOUNG, CHRIS  
Bob & Jaunell Roevers  
ZACCHEA, MARY  
Kevin Zacchea  
ZARAMBO, LORETTA  
Judith Buegel  
Joy Ryan  
Bonnie Schlecht  
Amanda Thomas  
ZUERN, CLARENCE  
Lorina Zuern

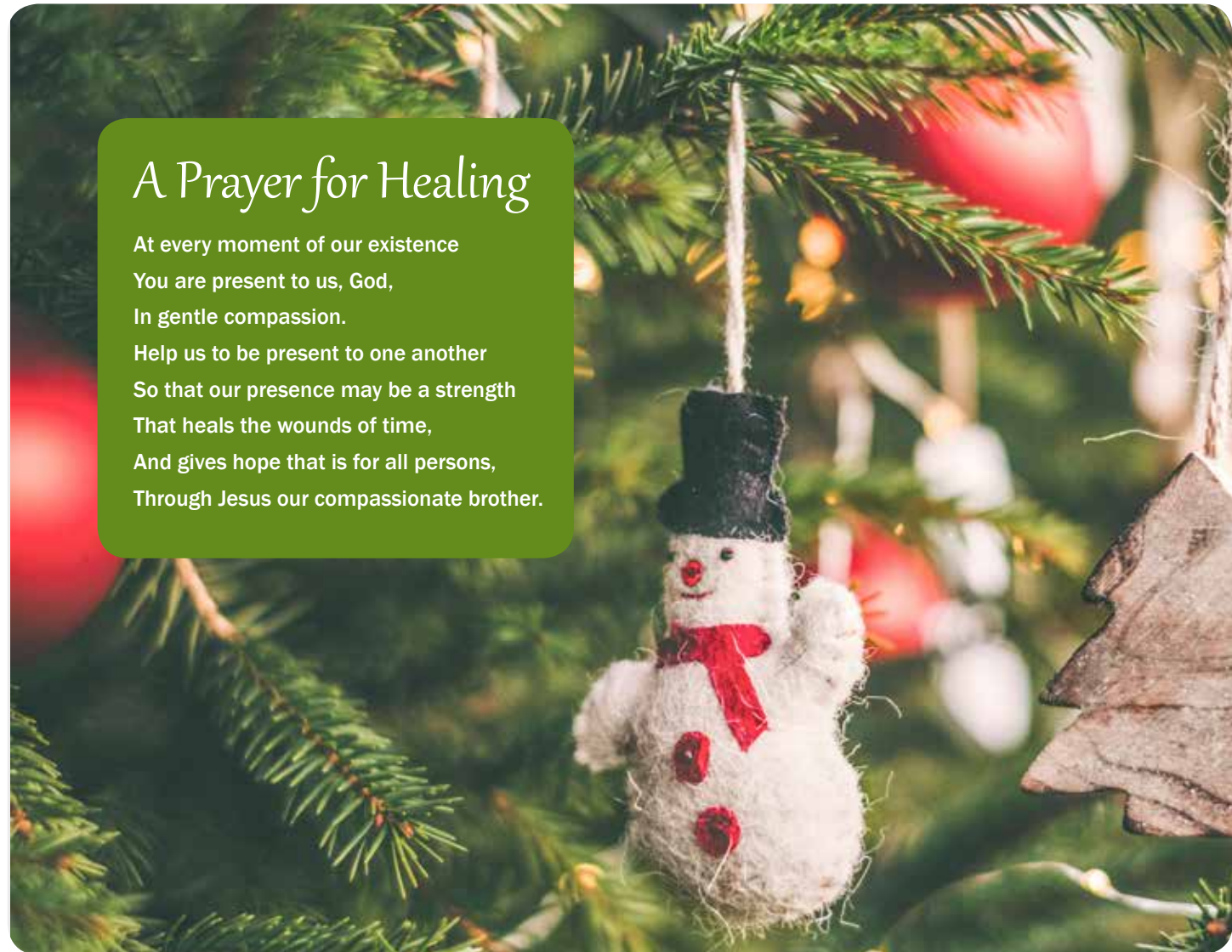
## Honorariums

July 15, 2018 - Sept. 30, 2018

KRUEGER, PAUL  
The Oregon District LWML  
MEDENWALDT, KAREN  
Lisa Olson  
RIES, REV. DR. THOMAS  
Rev Robert Cordes  
RYAN, JOY  
Quin & Kole Seiler  
SCHMIDT, DONNA (86TH  
BIRTHDAY)  
Sandy Schmidt

## 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.

We also write your prayer in a special Prayer Book we keep in the Foundation office in Minot. If you are ever in the area, stop by.

We'd love to help you find your prayer in our Prayer Book.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please pray for

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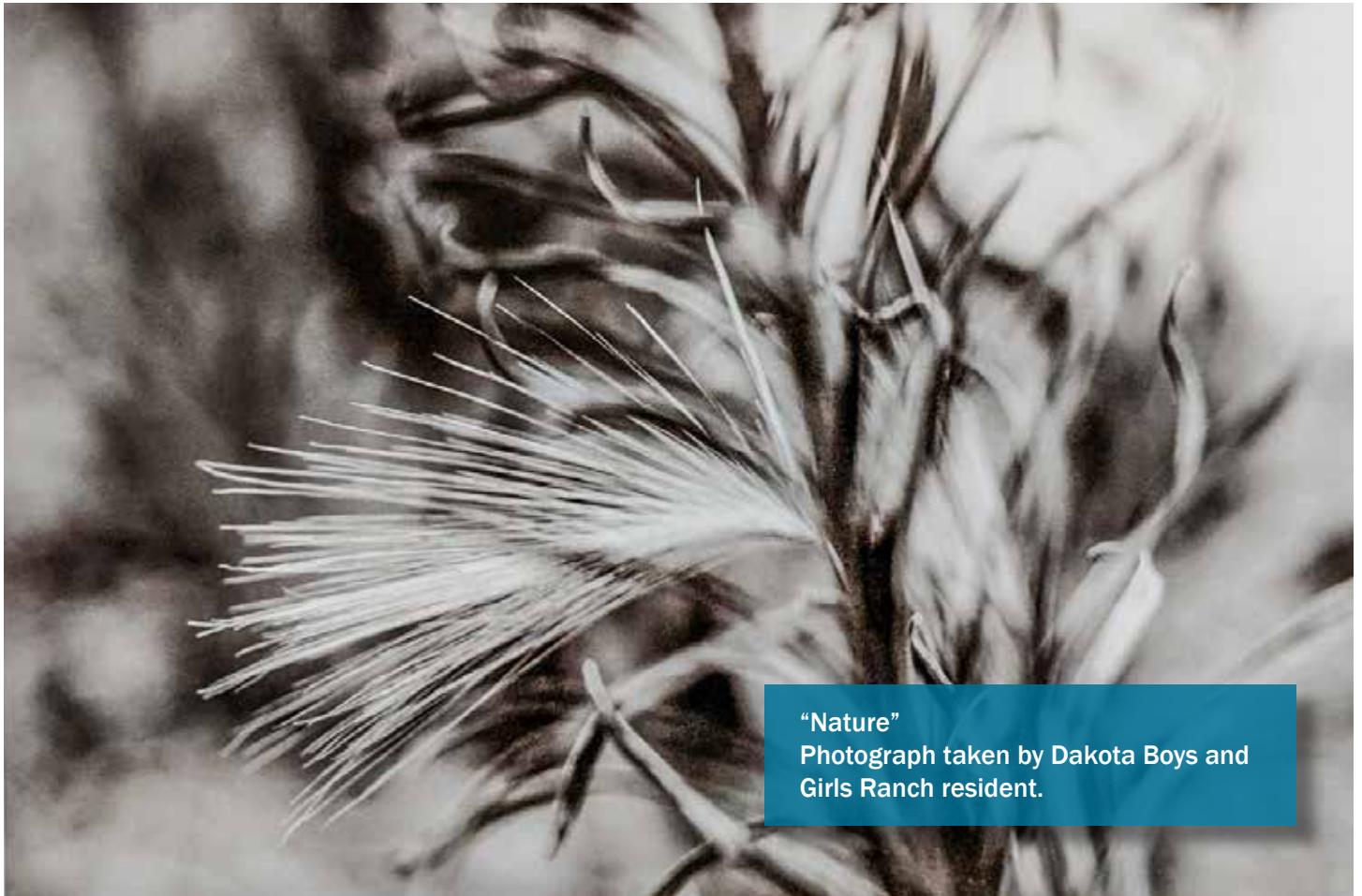
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Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch  
P.O. Box 5007  
Minot, ND 58702-5007

Change Service Requested



“Nature”  
Photograph taken by Dakota Boys and  
Girls Ranch resident.

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

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

1-800-593-3098

Foundation:

1-800-344-0957



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Godward Out

