

# THE RANCH VOICE

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

Summer 2019

Teddy taught Megan “how to love and be loved.”  
See page 5 for “Horse-Inspired Healing.”



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1-800-344-0957

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# Message from the President/CEO



**Joy Ryan**  
*President/CEO*

## 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

## Take Time to “Be”

Hello Friends,

A year or so ago I told you about one of the young ladies that touched my heart. Whenever she would see me, she would yell “Joy” and then scurry up to wherever I was. She’d give me a side hug and beam from ear to ear. Over time, I made it my mission to teach her to shake hands firmly, with eye contact. She was an excellent learner!

One of the most delightful parts of our connection happened after our greeting, response, hugging, and hand-shaking. We would just be quiet with each other. Whether at lunch, walking on campus, or sitting in chapel, she didn’t have anything more to say to me. She just wanted me to “be” with her. So, we did.

She worked very hard in school and in treatment. She was a leader in her cottage and in the classroom. Wonderfully, she found a perfect foster home that understands her, her past, and her boundless potential. She has been gone from the Ranch for nearly a year. She is living with her foster family, excelling in public school, and making friends. How do I know?

When we had graduation on campus this spring, I heard a familiar “Joy” from across the Dining Room. I looked up and there she was, scurrying as usual, but with a brightness and a confidence that just shone from within. She had been invited to the Dakota Memorial School Senior Banquet and was there with her foster family. She shook my hand AND gave me a side hug. She excitedly told me she is going to be a Junior in high school in the fall, she isn’t playing volleyball anymore, but is involved in music. AND, in her words, “It’s all going so good!” Then, we just quietly stood for a few minutes until it was time to start the festivities.

I like “being” with this young lady. She doesn’t ask for much... just to be seen, recognized, and worthy of your time. And, you know, so do I. When she calls my name, shares her story, and spends quiet time with me, it simply fills me up.

The kids we serve have been through so much and have seen so much. They need care and treatment and education and medicine and occupational therapy and schedules and feedback. And, sometimes, just like the rest of us, they just need someone to sit with them and quietly “be.”

Please pray for our kids and staff.

In His love,

Joy



## A musical journey of healing

**By Erin Grabinger,  
Communications Intern  
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch**

Kids at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch are making music this summer—they are learning how to play the ukulele! The ukuleles at the Fargo campus are being lent to us by Grace Lutheran School, and the Minot ukuleles were donated by a couple that goes above and beyond for our kids. With their generosity, and a special discount from the ukulele company, Deaconess Kelly Jacob's dream of teaching the kids to play the ukulele became possible.

"Our kids are fast learners," said Deaconess Kelly, Spiritual Life Coordinator on the Minot campus. "It's been so fun to watch them learn and have fun."

Some of the kids had already memorized a few songs by the end of the first week and were proud to perform for Ranch staff.

Paul Krueger, the Senior Development Officer who worked with the donor couple (and an accomplished musician himself), was excited to facilitate this musical opportunity for the kids. "In remarkable ways, music provides healing," Krueger said. "Being able to focus and learn this simple instrument brings joy and success to our kids—joy and success that can transfer into other parts of their lives."

Research has proven Krueger's assertion that music is healing. According to a study by Stanford in 2007, "Music engages the areas of the brain involved with paying

attention, making predictions, and updating the event in memory." In addition, a 2011 article by Harvard Health Publishing said that "learning to play an instrument may enhance the brain's ability to master tasks involving language skills, memory, and attention."

Knowing the healing power of music, the Ranch makes it a priority to incorporate it into kids' lives. We provide mp4 players and ear buds for children who use music as a coping skill. Spiritual life specialists and wellness coordinators load the players with a child's favorite music (screening each song for appropriateness, of course). Each child's treatment team works with them to create rules for when, where, and how they can listen to music, and to define the consequences of breaking the rules.

The addition of Deaconess Kelly in July 2018 brought new musical opportunities to the Minot campus—she is an accomplished musician and works with interested kids to provide music for chapel services. She also plays and sings with the kids at special events, helps

kids prepare songs for a talent show every quarter, and fosters the talents of the kids who have additional musical interests.

Katie\* is one Ranch kid who has worked with Deaconess Kelly. She grew up loving music and had many fond memories of playing guitar with her father when she was younger. When he passed away, Katie stopped playing guitar entirely.



This summer, Ranch kids learned to play some of their favorite songs and practiced healing through music.

That is, until she began working with Deaconess Kelly. Earlier this year, Katie met with Deaconess Kelly to practice a song for chapel. She told Deaconess Kelly she had just reclaimed the guitar her father had given her, on which he had etched her initials. That week she had picked it up for the first time since

# Treatment

his passing. Katie told Deaconess Kelly she cried when she first played it again because it reminded her of her dad and their shared love of music.

Although Katie didn't play her guitar at chapel that week, she did sing one of her favorite songs, "Oceans" by Hillsong UNITED. Her mother came to chapel to watch her daughter sing. Before the service began, Katie played the guitar for her mom and they both shed tears. Since then, Katie has continued to improve her guitar skills, and music has become an important part of her healing.

In Fargo, ukulele lessons are being taught by Spiritual Life Specialist Jay Schaefer. He also leads groups of kids to play and sing for chapel and teaches those who are interested how to play guitar, drums, and other instruments. He set up a recording studio in a school closet and teaches kids how to record their own music. This fall, Schaefer, who is a licensed North Dakota teacher, is joining the Ranch full-time, which gives Dakota Memorial School, Fargo, the opportunity to add a music elective. The additional time he spends on campus will also allow Schaefer to provide more spiritual support and guidance to the kids.

Kids are making music at the Ranch, and for Katie and many others, music plays an important role in healing.

\*Name changed to protect confidentiality

## Telling stories through music

Songwriter, musician, and educator, Dr. Monte Selby, spent a week on our Bismarck campus in late 2018. As he has done many times in the past, Selby worked with students to write their own songs, both individually and in groups. 15-year-old Sierra wrote a song she called "Irreplaceable," and then performed it with Selby at the final concert.



Sierra performed her own song, "Irreplaceable," with visiting songwriter, Dr. Monte Selby.

***Hear Sierra and Dr. Selby perform "Irreplaceable," at <https://bit.ly/2y3jewa>, or by scanning the QR code below with your smart phone.***



### Irreplaceable

CHORUS:

Don't compare me  
Don't say I can't  
Don't say I won't  
Be extraordinary ....  
You're just blowin' smoke.

No, No, No  
You're just blowin' smoke.

No, No, No  
If I've learned one thing  
It's how strong I am  
The more that I go through  
The taller I will stand  
You see the outside  
But you don't see within  
If you're looking down at me  
You should look again  
[CHORUS]

I watched a movie  
That opened up my eyes  
I had closed a door  
And had not realized  
I wasn't meant to handle  
Everything in life  
Now I turn it all to God  
Now I've seen the light  
[CHORUS]

There's only one of each of us.  
No one ever could be you  
You are irreplaceable.  
No one ever could be you (repeat)  
No one ever could replace you

©Monte Selby and Sierra



## Dueling dragons and discovered truths

By Hannah Kosloski,  
Communications Intern  
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, Dakota Memorial School students picked up their pens and began writing stories of magnificent creations. Students wrote about dragons, sword fights, puppies and big cities. They also wrote about their experiences surviving years of trauma, neglect, and abuse.

As a part of their final writing assignment of the 2018-19 school year, every student at Dakota Memorial School, Fargo, had the opportunity to write and illustrate a short story. Each student picked an issue in society they believed should be addressed. Topics included bullying, homelessness, child abuse, racism, addiction, and environmental protection.

Most students chose to write a fable, using the format of a children's short story. Madi Novacek, the English teacher overseeing the project, told the

students they could focus on any topic they chose. "Some of the topics were a little intense, but that's OK," Novacek said. "Many of the kids wrote about things they'd actually

man who was sick and went to the drug store to get cold medicine. The medicine made him feel better, but it also made him have crazy dreams filled with dragons and knights. The dreams were a magical place to live, so he kept going back for more. The man noticed how easy it was to get more cold medicine. He started drinking it every night, so he could go back and play with the mystical creatures. Over time, as the man spent more and more time in his dream world, he started to become a dragon. He was no longer an innocent visitor to the dreamland, but a fictional monster in his own dream world. Creating this story helped the teenage writer understand his own journey with addiction and healing.

After writing their stories, students illustrated them. This unique English assignment tied the curriculum to their healing—allowing students to process

their own traumatic stories in a creative way.

On the last day of school, Novacek presented each student with a bound and laminated copy of their story.



Ranch students created their own storybooks as part of English class last semester.

experienced. Some of them told their story and changed the endings. Some were very deep and realistic and didn't have happy endings."

One student wrote about his personal struggle with addiction. The story focused on a fictional



DAKOTA  
BOYS AND GIRLS RANCH

# From chaos to calm

Horse-inspired healing

Five energetic teenage boys, ages 13-17, bounded into the retreat center at Harmony Stables just outside of Bismarck, ND. They talked over each other, each one talking a little louder to be heard above the others. Cherie Sanstead, owner and operator of the stable, exuded peace but it was lost in the nervous energy bouncing off and around the boys. She focused her attention on each boy, one at a time, and then said it was time to see the horses.

The transformation was almost immediate when the boys stepped

into the arena. As the horses, Bee and Spot, walked towards them, the boys slowed their steps, calmed their bodies, and lowered their voices. Soon their full attention was focused on the horses. In a matter of minutes, the boys, who are all in the psychiatric residential treatment program at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, went from chaos to calm.

## **In the company of horses**

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.

In the Ranch Horse Program, a therapist and/or equine specialist helps children make the initial connection between their feelings and the horse's response, but most children soon learn to notice the horse's reactions and figure it out themselves. They learn to focus on their breathing or practice other calming strategies to decrease the



intensity of their emotions, so they can reconnect with the horse.

One Ranch child said, “I learned that you have to be very quiet around horses because they can sense your feelings. If you’re not calm around them, they can get nervous.”

Regulating and controlling their emotions is difficult for most Ranch kids. Once they discover ways to be calm around their horses, they can use those skills in other parts of their lives.

Christian, one of the boys who participates in the Fargo Horse Program at Jubilee Stables, gets frustrated easily, but when he is with his horse, Kuna, he is relaxed.

“Taking direction has been a struggle for Christian, but when he is at the stable, he takes it well,” said Nikki McCarl, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). “Spending time with Kuna brings out his tender side. Just a lot of things he struggles with normally in life seem to come naturally to him

here. I could see the difference the first night we brought him to the stable.”

The “horse effect” spills over into Christian’s life outside the stable. He said Kuna has taught him he “can be around other people,” and that’s something that has been hard for him.

“He has more confidence, a sense of humor, and is more aware of being considerate.” McCarl said. “Even on the ride out here, he let [the other boy] ride in the front.”

That may not sound like a big deal, but it’s a big change from a few months ago.

### Relationship building

The arena is also a great place for kids to practice forming relationships. Most of our residents come to the Ranch with complex trauma resulting from previous relationships and how they’ve been treated.

Amber Benham, Horse Program Coordinator at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Minot, said, “Our kids don’t trust people and tend to not want to make connections. Taking the risk to develop a connection or relationship with a horse is a very important component of their treatment.”

Because they are herd animals, horses are constantly looking to build bonds and attachments, but they are not usually quick to trust. Bonding with a horse gives Ranch kids the unique opportunity to practice relationships based on trust. They can apply what they learn to relationships with their families and peers.

As one Ranch child said, “I think all kids in treatment should be allowed to ride horses. Horses can tell when you are upset just like people can tell. I had to work through my frustration while grooming and

## Bee

Age: 17 years old  
Breed: Registered Quarter Horse  
Color: Red Dun  
Height: 15 hands  
Owner: Cherie Sanstead, Harmony Stables, Bismarck

Bee was a barrel racer until she was sold to an elderly gentleman who wanted to use her as a trail horse. When he passed away unexpectedly, Bee became part of his estate sale. Sanstead bought her with every intention of reselling her, but then couldn’t bear to see her go.

One of the boys who works with Bee said, “When I first got here I would try to intimidate the horses by running at them. They would get hyper and back away. It was like when other people would intimidate me, and I’d get hyper. You just have to be quiet around them and talk nice to them, just like you’d want to be talked nice to yourself. You can talk to them like you are talking to humans.”



## Spot

Age: mid-20s  
Breed: Registered Paint  
Color: Sorrel  
Height: 15.1 hands  
Owner: Cherie Sanstead, Harmony Stables, Bismarck

Although she is solid in color, Spot is a Paint with just one spot of white. She was moved around a lot—just like many of our kids. In her younger days, Spot was shown in Western Pleasure events. She went from there to a family who wanted her for their young child. When the child lost interest in riding, they sold her. She eventually made her way to Harmony where she works with kids from the Ranch.

“When I go to Harmony Stables, it changes my mood completely,” said one young Ranch resident. “It makes me feel good about myself and helps me cope with my troubles. [My horse] gives me the opportunity to be the best I can be. Horses are just like humans because they are sensitive, they can have anxiety and the same emotions as us. The horses at Harmony Stables, and my horse, Weaver, on the Minot campus, make us feel better when we are having a hard time in our treatment.”



riding my horse. If you are feeling down, you should ride a horse and focus on the wind on your face.”

## Healing trauma through movement

In addition to helping kids find ways to bring stillness to their bodies, Occupational Therapists and COTAs watch how kids sit in the saddle. Abuse and/or neglect often stunts the development of gross motor skills that allow children to sit upright, stand, walk, run, lift, throw and kick. Horseback riding helps build core strength, balance, coordination and leg strength, which all aid in the development of those gross motor skills.

Sanstead said trauma is stored in the body and the brain of both horses and humans. “Horses and humans have to find their way out of trauma the same way,” she said. “A lot of times it starts with movement, finding rhythm and regularity. Horses help provide that, with that real basic movement of the limbic system.”

One young girl came to the Ranch with poor balance and poor posture, along with no social skills or ability to connect with adults or her peers. When she first rode, she sat hunched over on the horse, almost like she was trying to disappear. After a few months of riding, she had developed the confidence and gross motor skills she needed to sit up straight as she trotted her horse around the arena.

The activities kids do with the horses depends on the needs of each child and may include riding groups, behavioral health therapy, and/or occupational therapy. Horse therapy is much less about the riding than it is about grooming the horse, making them feel comfortable, and treating them with compassion. In fact, when new kids come to the arena, it’s sometimes several weeks before they ride. Some kids never do ride—they are satisfied just being with their horse and learning what it feels like to be calm and

centered.

The activities kids do with the horses are sometimes a way to make sense of their life journeys. The guided activities give them a chance to share their stories in an unthreatening environment. For instance, in one session Sanstead asked the kids to build an obstacle course that explains life at the Ranch.

“They put together the most amazing elaborate works of art and then intricately describe the process,” Sanstead said. “They say, ‘Well, that’s discharge over there. You can take the easy route and go around the hard stuff but if you go that way, which is a little bit harder, you’ll have a lot more success.’ Then they take their horses through the course and it’s amazing to watch. Sometimes the horses give them a really hard time and they get

## Kuna

Age: 23 years old  
Breed: Quarter Horse  
Color: Chestnut  
Height: 15 hands  
Owner: Jubilee Stables



Kuna was a rodeo horse and competed in barrels. After that, she was purchased by a family for their little kids. Jubilee Stables leased her to use as a lesson horse, and then bought her after everyone fell in love with her.

When Hannah Swenson first started at Jubilee, Kuna was a little feisty. She ran around the pasture when someone tried to catch her. She has slowed with age. “Now we have the kids go out and get their horses,” Swenson said. “She stands there for five minutes waiting for the rider to figure the halter out, get it on, realize it’s upside down, take it off, put it back on... She is very helpful and kind of pushes her way into the halter. She wouldn’t do that if she didn’t love her job.”

Christian, who claims Kuna as his own when he is in the barn, said, “She’s a really trustworthy horse and she makes me feel good about myself.”

## Weaver

Age: 13 years old  
Breed: Draft and Appaloosa  
Color: Grey  
Height: 16.2 hands  
Owner: Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Minot



Weaver came to the Ranch from a woman who buys horses and “flips” them. At one point he was a therapy horse in eastern North Dakota. Weaver needs a confident rider because he can be skittish and afraid, but he loves attention and attaches to the kids quickly.

Weaver is Z’s horse. Something traumatic happened to her recently and Weaver knows it. “He doesn’t know what happened,” Benham said, “but he knows it was something and has been nothing but supportive ever since,” Benham said. “They go off in the corner and he stands there with her. Nothing else matters. This is his person and this is their time. It’s awesome to watch.”

“Weaver just makes me feel better,” Z said. “I don’t know how but he makes me feel like a princess. I always have a smile on my face when I’m with him. There is nothing that can bother me when I’m with Weaver.”



frustrated, but we help them work through that too.”

## Horse Programs on all three campuses

Horses have grazed the pastures at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch since the first six boys moved into the donated farm in Tolley, ND. The horses came with the farm. When the Minot campus was built, a Quonset by the river served as a barn for two horses brought from Tolley for the summer. The Ranch now owns 22 horses—some donated, some purchased.

In Bismarck, the Ranch partners with Harmony Stables where Sanstead provides horse camps, lessons, and equine learning programs to at-risk youth and families through her nonprofit organization, Heart of the Prairie. Sanstead didn't grow up with horses, but when she started exploring equine learning, she was fascinated by how much you could learn from

horses and how everything you do with horses can be tied back to the rest of your life.

The arrangement is similar in Fargo where the Ranch partners with Jubilee Stables. Girls go one night and boys the next. Riding instructor Hannah Swenson co-leads the 8-week sessions with a Ranch COTA. Week one starts with learning to groom their horses. They move onto more advanced grooming techniques, basic leading, round penning and ground work exercises, and by Week five they are ready to ride. They finish out the eight weeks learning to turn, stop, and trot.

While the format of the Horse Program is different on every campus, each provides a foundation for the real work of the horses—bonding with the kids, teaching them how to deal with difficult

emotions, building body strength, and strengthening motor skills.

And while the focus is all about the kids, there is no need to worry about the horses. Benham and her staff, which includes an assistant and two residents employed at the barn, take very good care of them.

“Our horses are pretty spoiled,” Benham said. “In addition to feeding them seven days a week and scheduling regular vet and farrier visits, we bring in acupuncturists and chiropractors, and get their teeth cleaned regularly. I've taken massage classes, so I can give them massages. We also have different stretching exercises we do with them, depending on their needs. And they get loved on by the kids—what more could you ask for than that?”

## Teddy

Age: 21 years old  
Breed: Registered Quarter Horse  
Color: Bay  
Height: 16.1 hands  
Owner: Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Minot

Teddy is strong, curious, and likes to get into trouble. “He can't be paired with just any kid,” said Amber Benham, Horse Program Coordinator at the Ranch in Minot. “If Teddy isn't feeling it, we find them another horse.”

Teddy is Megan's horse, and she says they picked each other.

“He was really curious about me. I was like, ‘Oh, Teddy seems like a tough horse, but I know I can do it.’ I really like Teddy. He is sweet and kind. A little iffy sometimes but I love him to death. When Teddy lays his head in my arms, he just relaxes completely. He's so lovable and so kind.”

“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.”



## Bandit

Age: 21 years old  
Breed: Registered Solid Paint  
Color: Bay  
Height: 16.1 hands  
Owner: Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Minot

Bandit was owned by an older lady who didn't have the ability to ride or to check him every day following the death of her husband. He spent about a year alone, with just a cat for a friend.

Benham said, “He is invested in the kids 110% and is just an all-around awesome horse. The kids love him. This is his forever home.”

Courtney, who is nearing completion of her treatment, has developed an amazing bond with Bandit. “When I'm having a bad day, or my anxiety is bad, I come to the barn to see him,” she said. “He makes me feel better. We were laying in the pasture one day and he laid his head in my lap. Now when I'm having a bad day and I can't see him, I get out the picture. I just remember the smells and how it felt, and am able to calm myself down a bit.”

“Bandit is an anxious horse. I know how to soothe him and he knows how to soothe me. I just love the connection we have.”



## Gonzo

Age: 24-years-old  
Breed: Solid Paint  
Color: Sorrel  
Height: 15.3 hands  
Owner: Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

Gonzo was a show horse in Iowa and came to the Ranch through a horse rescue.

"Gonzo is like a best friend to me. Any time I'm having stress, I can put my hand on him and everything disappears. He's so therapeutic. I think he chose me," Sierra said. "Growing up I had many different foster families say they were going to keep me, and then the next day it was like, 'Yeah, we don't want you anymore.' Gonzo broke down a bunch of my walls and taught me how to trust."

"You can't explain a relationship like this," she said.



## A history of equine-assisted therapy

Equine-assisted therapy is not a new concept. Around 460 BC, Hippocrates wrote about the benefits of horseback riding. In 1875, a French neurologist proved that therapeutic riding improved muscle tone, balance, motion, joint movement, and mood. And, in the early 1900's, doctors used horses to rehabilitate wounded soldiers. The field of equine-assisted therapy eventually made its way to the Ranch, where horses help children make breakthroughs in behavioral health treatment, as well as treat their large motor and balance issues.

## GROWing Plants, Giving Grants, and Building Confidence

By Erin Grabinger,  
Communications Intern  
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

A new event at our Minot campus has Ranch kids growing plants, giving grants, and building confidence!

The GROW (God Rewards Our Work) Garden Sale began this year and is already proving to be a success. A spinoff of the event previously known as BLT Day, GROW was organized and implemented by Ranch kids. The idea was to hold a one-day garden sale in the Minot Thrift Store parking lot—selling plants and items grown or created by the kids.

Students were given the opportunity to join Botany Club, and then grew plants from seed in the Ranch greenhouses. They cared for the plants as they grew, and according to one student, "We even pollinated them ourselves, flower by flower."

The plants included everything from vegetables, to succulents, and flowers, and many were sold in planters built by the kids in Mr. Meier's shop class.

The GROW Garden Sale, held on Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Minot Thrift Store, was a huge success! The event was planned

and executed entirely by Ranch kids—with a little support and guidance from their teachers and cottage staff. Megan, a delightful 15-year-old with a beaming smile and boundless energy, said, "We were all dancing outside, and we got a bunch of customers. And [they] bought almost everything!"

When everything was tallied and counted, the kids had raised over \$4,000! And that was just the beginning. It was now up to them to determine where the money could best be used. A select committee of four Ranch students created a grant process and sent notices to everyone on campus, encouraging them to apply for dollars to fund special projects.



The GROW Garden Sale helped Ranch kids build strong and lasting bonds.



The committee, advised by Science Teacher Josh Hvidsten and Dean of Students Sherry Wagner, received 13 grant applications and had a comprehensive process for determining the proposals to fund. They developed a scoring guide, called a rubric, and started by each scoring the grants individually. Then they tallied their scores and discussed each proposal at length.

They learned about conscious and unconscious bias and tried to take their emotions out of the decision—by choosing projects that would benefit the most kids and staff, rather than those that would benefit their cottage, club or favorite staff person. The GROW grant committee awarded full grants to four projects and partial grants to another four. They made giant checks and went around campus surprising recipients with the news. The students decided it was important to inform the people who didn't receive a grant right away too, so they sent them all emails.

Michael, one of the students on the committee, said it was hard not to tell people what they decided before the big reveal. "They would always ask us...`did we win?' 'How much money do we get?'" he said. "And I'd [say], 'I can't tell you. You have to wait.'"



**GROW grant committee: (Left to right) Courtney, Megan, Sierra, and Michael, along with their advisors, Sherry Wagner (far left) and Josh Hvidsten (far right).**

Projects funded included a grant to the school for a new smart screen, one to Thatcher cottage for new outdoor activities and equipment, and one for a science project. In addition to these grants, the committee was given about \$600 to use for a project of their own making. After touring the thrift store warehouse and seeing how building shelves would remedy a safety hazard, the group chose to issue those dollars to the warehouse for new shelves.

In the end, students who participated in the event loved the experience and learned a great deal.

"I learned that I

enjoy planting and helping people in the community," said Courtney, a Ranch resident who hadn't gardened or worked with plants before coming to the Ranch.

Megan said, "Every time we had a GROW meeting I was so excited to go. I grew a little...GROW family here."

Students in the grant committee all agreed the project brought them closer and gave them skills they can use long after they leave the Ranch.

"The GROW sale lets kids be involved in what happens here," Courtney said. "And they feel like they can make a change."



**Ranch kids grew a variety of plants for the GROW Garden Sale. The sale was held in early May at the Minot Thrift Store.**

## Courageous, self-aware and determined

### A young woman finds hope and healing at the Ranch

Dionna is one of the rare residents who asked to come to Dakota

Boys and Girls Ranch. After two suicide attempts and a stay at the Child and Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program (CAPH) in Minot, Dionna decided it was time to focus on herself. It is difficult to find the courage and self-awareness to ask for help when all seems hopeless.

It is even more remarkable to see that courage in a child. At age 17, with the support of her forever parents, who lovingly adopted Dionna and her brothers, Dionna came to the doors of the Ranch to, “try to get better.”

Like many Ranch children, Dionna had a childhood filled with trauma.

“When I was five, I think during Christmas, my dad beat my mom up real bad and she almost died,” Dionna said. “I was right in between them trying to help my mom. She somehow got to the phone to call the police. Then my dad went to prison and my mom grew more and more into doing drugs and drinking.”

Because her mom was gone a lot, five-year-old Dionna cared for her two younger brothers. “Even though I was close to their age, I was basically

their mom,” Dionna said. “We didn’t have that much food and water, Mom never paid the bills, and Social Services kept coming through to check the house.”



Courageous young woman reflects on her journey at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

Eventually, Dionna and her brothers were removed from the home and placed in foster care. A loving foster family welcomed the three of them into their family, and later, formally adopted them.

But the trauma they had experienced had already left its marks. Dionna was a quiet kid. She had trouble focusing in school and said early speech problems affected her learning. “I really didn’t talk at all,” she said. “At school if someone talked about family, or we had to give cards to our moms or dads, I would get really emotional.”

As a teenager, Dionna struggled. She was depressed, suffering from flashbacks of her Dad beating her Mom, and would cut herself to relieve the emotional pain.

At age 17, Dionna decided to make some changes. “I really wanted to be better myself and be someone better than my birth parents. I’m Native, and I want to be something good. I want to go back there to tell them

they can change. No matter what happens, they just have to keep trying and not give up.”

Dionna’s case manager, Katie Boucher (who has been at the Ranch since 2009 and has worked with hundreds of kids), said Dionna came to treatment ready to make changes. “She talked about truly wanting things to be different. When she first came to the Ranch, whenever we reviewed any concerns or struggles, Dionna would fall apart. She beat herself up about any little thing she did wrong, despite Ranch staff telling her that mistakes happen, and it is OK,” Katie said.

“By discharge, she was able to celebrate small victories for herself. She consistently became her own cheerleader, which is a skill many adults haven’t mastered, myself included!”

One of the most important things Dionna learned at the Ranch was to see things from the other person’s point of view. “I was so focused on myself. Everything was about me. I learned that if someone is being mean to you, it’s probably because something is going on in their life, or because they are having a bad day. It’s not you.”

Her Ranch counselor, Amber Nelson, also helped Dionna learn how to work through a flashback. “She would talk me through it. ‘Remember where you are,’ Amber would say. ‘You’re not in a place where you are sinking right at the moment. You’re in a safe spot.’ I just had to think about where I was, that I was safe, and that I



wasn't going anywhere.”

Dionna is very goal-oriented—and when she learned about Job Corps, she decided she wanted that to be her next step. Once again, she took control of her own destiny. She asked for the forms she needed and applied. When she was invited to Job Corps for an interview, Dionna asked Katie to help her prepare. Katie gave her some sample questions and she reviewed and practiced until she was ready.



Dionna celebrates her high school graduation.

“When we got to the interview, she totally blew me away,” Katie said. “She identified her strengths and needs, talked about her history, and told the interviewer why she thought Job Corps was a good fit. Mid-interview, the admissions coordinator stopped her and asked if she knew how outstanding she was! He told us he rarely gets a candidate who comes in as prepared and committed to success as Dionna. I would love to say I helped her get into Job Corps, but it was all her.”

Dionna finished her final year of high school at Job Corps and graduated in May. It wasn't easy—Dionna said it was difficult for her to be around so many kids her own age. “Talking to a lot of people was a little hard for me,” she said.

But she remained determined and

focused and used the things she learned at the Ranch to make it through the year.

This summer, Dionna reached out to Katie when she realized she was backsliding after discontinuing her psychiatric medication. Katie talked through her options and walked her through the steps to make an appointment. Dionna said Dr. Wayne Martinsen, Psychiatrist and Medical Director at the Ranch, was a provider she felt comfortable with, so she reached out to him and is now seeing him for follow-up and medication management through Dakota Family Services, an outpatient

behavioral health clinic founded by the Ranch.

Dionna now has a new goal—to help other kids living in foster care. She is exploring her college options while working full time, and recently secured a second job providing before-school care to kids at a local daycare center. Between the two jobs and her determination to find grant and scholarship opportunities, Dionna is putting together the pieces so she can attend college and study to become a social worker.

Katie's ultimate hope for Dionna is that she continues to reach for her dreams.

“I hope she continues to be goal-oriented and when setbacks occur, because they inevitably will, that she can pull from her past experiences to overcome them as gracefully as she

has thus far,” Katie said. “This kid is honestly my happy thought when days get rough. She has defied so many odds and just keeps on keeping on. She is an incredible kid and is determined to beat the odds.”

### 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.

## Honing in on Healthy Habits

### Ranch nurses provide wellness and self-care for Ranch kids

**By Erin Grabinger,  
Communications Intern  
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch**

Because of how and where they were raised, many kids come to the Ranch without basic health, self-care, and hygiene skills. Some haven't had a toothbrush. Others weren't told, or didn't have the opportunity, to shower or experience a sit-down meal. And for others, seemingly simple daily living skills triggered the trauma they experienced. Children also arrive at the Ranch with little to no histories of going to the doctor, dentist, or eye doctor.

The 4-6 months children typically live at a Ranch facility gives Ranch nurses a chance to catch them up on their health, dental, and vision care, and to teach them basic self-care skills. The nurses teach and model these skills so Ranch kids can become experts at caring for their own health.

"Much of what our kids know about their health has come from peers, the internet, or other unreliable sources," said Amber Meidinger, a registered nurse (RN) at the Ranch's Bismarck campus and founder of a biweekly Nursing Group. "Now is a good time to correct any misconceptions or misinformation."

During the hour-long group, the facilitator highlights important health topics, like

nutrition, empathy, ethics, influenza, and personal hygiene. The nurses who facilitate the program find engaging ways to teach kids how to take charge of their own mental and physical health.

"It is not always easy to engage kids in learning about their health and wellness," Meidinger said. "What I find interesting and useful is often different than what our youth find interesting or useful."

Meidinger has developed several new techniques for teaching the kids about their bodies and health. She shows movies to launch discussions about nutrition, fast food, concussions, influenza, empathy, and ethics. They play interactive games to learn more about human anatomy and physiology, personal hygiene, and the common cold. Meidinger also uses hands-on activities and interactive presentations to teach kids about medications, going to the doctor, and vital signs.

One topic the kids find especially interesting is the importance of

protecting their skin from the sun. Because of the medications they take, many of our kids are extra-susceptible to sunburn. One week, the group focused on important sun safety techniques, such as using sunscreen and wearing hats and long sleeve shirts. They also talked about choosing the right sunscreen and the importance of checking expiration dates.

Another way Meidinger and other Ranch nurses make it interesting is by inviting guest speakers to group. Most recently, guests have talked about the dangers of vaping, self-piercing, and self-tattooing. Because the guest speakers are "the experts," and aren't with the kids every day, they are able to engage the kids more fully. The program constantly evolves to target the interests and needs of the kids in the program, while staying true to the core focus areas of illness/disease, anatomy/physiology, and health/wellness.

Meidinger said physical ailments can create a lot of anxiety, especially if the cause and treatment are unknown. "Knowing about the human body, illness, disease, medication, nutrition, wellness, and health promotion can alleviate some of our kids' anxiety and give them healthier ways to cope when concerns arise."



Ranch nurses ease children's fears by teaching them to take charge of their own mental and physical health.



# Celebrations



## Young donors make way for play

Ranch kids are bouncing balls and creating beautiful sidewalk chalk art, thanks to children who attended Vacation Bible School at Bethany Lutheran Church, McCleod, ND. They collected sidewalk chalk and balls for our kids and contributed their \$320 offering to the Ranch for the purchase of rollerblading safety equipment (knee pads, helmets, elbow pads, etc.). Thank you McCleod children for giving our kids the gift of play.

## A year of prayer!

Prayer is one of the greatest ways individuals and churches support the kids and staff at the Ranch. Immanuel Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa, answered that call in a big way by participating in a year of prayer for the Ranch. Their prayers focus on the concerns of our precious children.

Ranch supporters, Bob and Linda White, spearheaded the effort. As members of the Mission Committee, they knew the church could do more for the Ranch kids. They explained, "Many of these kids have no family in their life. They are counting on us to be committed in prayer. We need to be there for them."

Bob and Linda's passion for the ministry of the Ranch is making a great impact, and this is just the beginning. Immanuel Lutheran Church held a Prayer Vigil on January 26, 2019 as part of their "Year in Missions" focus. They also created a bulletin board where they post handwritten prayer requests from Ranch kids. The power of prayer is at work for the amazing kids at the Ranch.



## Cupcakes for Cops

Through planned activities and promises kept, Ranch kids meet and build trusting relationships with community leaders and authority figures. To say thank you, the girls in Butt Cottage baked, decorated, and delivered cupcakes to the Ward County Sheriff's Department and the Minot Police Department. When they made their delivery, they heard from one of the dispatch workers who explained her job and introduced them to the Ward County Sheriff. The girls enjoyed the experience and two of the children decided they want to work in dispatch someday.

## No Experience Needed

Student learns ins and outs of a career in construction

One of our young residents recently attended the Herdina Academy for the Construction Trades, a two-week learning opportunity sponsored by the Home Builders Association of Fargo-Moorhead. The Academy exposes students ages 15 and over to careers in the building trades. Students work side-by-side with professionals in the construction business to learn about tools, safety requirements, and the skills required for satisfying and well-paying careers. Through classroom and hands-on learning, students saw how residential and commercial buildings are constructed, and learned about the many types of construction professionals involved in creating a finished building.

Following the Academy, HBA of F-M CEO Bryce Johnson said, "Thank you for entrusting us with one of your Ranch kids at our construction academy! I hope and pray that the academy made a difference for him in positive ways...It was truly exciting and meaningful for us to have an individual from the Boys and Girls Ranch join us. I'm excited and look forward to seeing more of your kids joining us at the academy in the future!"

At the Ranch, we strive to bring normalcy to our children's lives. Giving them the opportunity to participate in community events, explore career interests, and work on-campus jobs are just a few of the ways we prepare them to move back to their home communities.



The Herdina Academy for the Construction Trades provided a collaborative summer work experience for one Ranch child.



## A Group Coop



Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch students worked with Andrew Meier, vocational technology teacher on the Minot campus, to build and design a chicken coop for a member of the community. Our students applied their learning to create a fully functioning, beautiful chicken coop complete with windows, a door, and hand-painted decorations by one of our students. Use this link, <https://bit.ly/32ljp7> or QR code to watch a Ranch Kid Vision video of one of our students talking about the chicken coop project!



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)



## Goats and chickens and horses—oh my!

Dakota Memorial School (DMS) in Minot received a grant from Fuel Up to Play 60, a national initiative sponsored by the National Football League and the National Dairy Council. Students learned how their food gets from the farm to the table by visiting a local grain elevator, growing their own plants and vegetables, and getting up close and personal with the goats, chickens, and a horse that came to the school on Farm to Table Day. At the same time, students learned the importance of a balanced diet and physical activity. While movement is woven into the school day all year long, on the last week of school, teachers and staff introduced fun and interesting ways to incorporate physical activity into each day. Healthy diet and movement both play a critical role in our children's treatment by helping them regulate their minds, bodies, and emotions.



## Sootheze Buddies



The children in Cornelsen and Butt cottages, Minot, received some spectacular gifts from our donors: Sootheze Buddies. These weighted stuffed animals can be heated or cooled and are great coping tools to help our youngest children sleep when snuggled up to them at bedtime.

## All in God's Timing



A Servant Team of teenagers from St. John's Lutheran Church and Grace Lutheran Church spent several days volunteering at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Minot. The goal of these Southern Indiana churches is to partner on youth trips and events, and according to their leader, "reinforce a foundation of faith in our youth and show them how to be servants of the Gospel by joining Jesus on his mission in our everyday lives."

Facilities Director Mike McLeod said, "The timing was perfect for the group to visit campus and help us meet our deadline for completing the playground expansion at the school. Sometimes God does have a plan and it worked out perfectly."

# Thrift Stores

## Earth-friendly thrifting

### Drop, shop, save, and recycle!

*Ranch Thrift Stores were launched in the 1980s to create sustainability and stability for Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. The Thrift Stores give folks another way to support the Ranch and help provide the therapy and other services our kids need to heal.*

Day after day, week after week, month after month, a steady stream of random and mixed items arrive at the doors of the nine Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Thrift Stores. Toasters, clothes, hats, mittens, ties, wall hangings, knickknacks, pottery, glassware, yarn, home goods, and more are stuffed into grocery bags, garbage bags, boxes, totes, and laundry baskets, and dropped off at one of nine Ranch Thrift Stores (eight in North Dakota, one in Minnesota).

The basic premise of any thrift store is that one person's clutter becomes another person's treasure.

"Thrift stores are an outlet for items or products you no longer want or need," said Lisa Olson, Vice President of Retail at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. "We are the middleman that can take your things and give them a new home."

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, Ranch Thrift Stores accepted 183,110 donations (whether it's a small grocery bag or a horse trailer full of items, each drop-off/pick-up is counted as one donation).

Many people are surprised to hear how hard we work to avoid putting broken and unsaleable items in the dumpster

on their way to a landfill. Ranch Thrift Stores go way beyond the "clutter to treasure" premise with their approach to finding a new home for what comes in the door.

And that's nothing new. Ranch Thrift Stores were big advocates for recycling and sustainability long before millennials raised the environmental consciousness of the nation.

### What the thrift stores recycle

Not everything the thrift stores receive is saleable, but thrift store employees are very resourceful about finding ways to turn things into cash.



Joy Ryan, President and CEO of the Ranch, said, "We know our thrift store donors donate to allow us to help the Ranch kids. We take that very seriously and work to capture every possible bit of income we can. Income comes from sales, but also from recycling and repurposing."

**Appliances and Metals:** A thrift store employee or volunteer tests every donated appliance to make sure it works. Some of the stores have regular volunteers who fix what can be fixed. But even stores without that resource find a way to recycle the broken appliances.

Jo Martin, manager at the Ranch Thrift Store in Grand Forks, said, "We won't sell appliances if they don't work, but we can turn lemons into lemonade by recycling everything on them that is recyclable. We cut the cords off and take them to the recycling center a couple times a month. Depending on the market, we get \$40-\$75 a tote for those cords."

At the Grand Forks store, sorters cut the cords off broken appliances before putting them in the middle of the room where someone else goes through them with a magnet to remove any steel. Steel isn't worth a lot, but if separating it out and selling it means the thrift store breaks even, it's worth it.

"That's one less thing for the landfill," Martin said.

In addition to the metal found in appliances, the Ranch receives a lot of recyclable metals—copper pots, brass candle holders, metal bed frames, cookie sheets, muffin tins, etc. If the items are broken or won't sell, we sort and recycle the metal. Ranch Thrift Store employees separate metals because of the huge demand for copper, brass, and aluminum which sell for higher prices when separated.

"It is extra work to sort it, but if we didn't, we'd get steel price for everything," Martin said.



**Jewelry:** Employees or volunteers check all jewelry to make sure it's not broken and to ensure every earring has a match. Broken jewelry and mismatched items are placed into grab bags, which are popular with crafters. We also sort through the jewelry for valuable silver or gold pieces we can sell to precious metals buyers.

**Textiles:** Clothing makes up the bulk of donations to the thrift stores. While much of it goes on the sales floor, some of the clothing we receive is too loved, not in style, or more than the stores can sell. Clothing in these categories is sold to a recycler that sorts it into different grades. Last year, Ranch Thrift Stores recycled 1.8 million pounds of clothing.

The recycler distributes any usable clothing to other countries. They make the rest into rags or shred it for other purposes, like home insulation, pillow stuffing, car stuffing, and even "new" fabric made from recycled fibers.

Speaking of rags...even ripped t-shirts and towels are recyclable.

"In Fargo, we save any white t-shirts that don't make it to the sales floor for a local auto detailer. They come in every month to buy them," Olson said. "Other buyers want regular t-shirt rags and towels that don't make the cut or don't sell. If we don't have a buyer in that community, employees and volunteers make up rag boxes to sell in the store."

**Electronics:** The Ranch has a buyer for old cell phones, but it's difficult to find a buyer for computers and televisions.

"We don't accept computers more than seven years old, and we only accept flat screen TVs. It's a tough one,

but we literally can't give them away. We've tried, and no one wants them. It costs us \$25 to dispose of a TV at the landfill so we had to stop accepting them."

**Books:** In some locations, we work with a company that recycles any books that don't sell. We are just now looking into another potential outlet for books.

**Other recyclable items:** Sometimes people donate cleaning supplies. If we can sell them without violating OSHA rules, we put them on the shelf. If we can't, or they have been opened, we use whatever we can in the store. We receive a lot of flammable chemicals, which we are not allowed to sell, so we dispose of those at the Hazardous Waste site. We'd like to catch the flammable chemicals as people are dropping off their items, but we don't often have time to go through everything while the donor is still at the donation door.

We repurpose a lot of the cardboard boxes and send any we can't use to the recycling center. We have to pay for them to be picked up, but they don't go in the landfill.

Olson said, "Sometimes we receive fixtures and we try to use those. We are pretty thrifty and want to use whatever we are given, so we try to make them work."

#### **When it doesn't sell**

The thrift stores have a complete inventory turnover every three months.

"Items are on the floor for two months before going on sale the beginning of the third month," Olson said. "We start at 50% off, then go to 75% off. Anything that hasn't sold after three months is removed and recycled to make room for more inventory."

#### **Win. Win. Win.**

While many people hold garage sales to make a little extra cash from the things they longer want, others love the ease of dropping them off, letting someone else do the work, and knowing they are contributing to a cause that helps local children heal.

It's a win-win-win situation. People making the donations can easily dispose of items they no longer need; shoppers purchase things at a fraction of the cost of new; and the troubled, complicated and amazing kids at the Ranch receive specialized care and programming made possible by additional revenues from the thrift stores.

The Ranch owns and operates three thrift stores in Fargo, ND, with one each in West Fargo, Minot, Bismarck, Devils Lake, and Grand Forks, ND; and one in Dilworth, MN. Go to [dakotaranch.org/thrift](http://dakotaranch.org/thrift) for store locations and hours.

Check out the newest Ranch Thrift Store that opened March 15 at 5289 51<sup>st</sup> Ave. S. Fargo, just off 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave. South. Our new Deer Creek Thrift Store is a clean and open space, full of natural lighting. The new store is fully stocked with items donated at other locations, but we really need your donated items to save on transportation costs.

Drop your donated items off at the donation door or call 701-277-9424 to schedule a pickup.

# Understanding Our Kids

## Creating Lifelong Connections

### The Role of Case Managers at The Ranch



**By Katie Boucher, Case Manager Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch**

I sometimes joke that my job as a case

manager is a little bit of everything, usually all at once! The real answer is that I, and other case managers at the Ranch, support the long-term success of our kids by advocating for them and creating community connections.

Accessing resources to help young trauma survivors succeed is challenging for families who are not well-versed in navigating the web of community, state, and federal human service systems. Securing the community support and aftercare services is so important to the long-term success of Ranch kids—so, case managers help families get everything in place.

Because communities, children, and families are all so unique, the solutions are different for each child. Determining these ongoing needs starts the moment a child is admitted to our residential treatment program. We start by administering clinical assessments and tools that help us determine the needs of our kids and families, but it really comes down to talking to the child and family to determine their strengths and challenges, and what is important to them. When we know these things, we can develop an individualized treatment plan specific to each child.

Kids in treatment are “kids first,” so when we create treatment plans, we try to give kids opportunities for normalcy. Normalcy looks different for every child. For some it’s attending church with their family every Sunday and then going to brunch at Perkins. For others it’s applying for jobs and colleges, staying involved with extracurricular activities, or celebrating special life events and holidays. Continuing activities that bring them joy helps youth transition home when they complete treatment.

Engaging with and supporting families is another key part of case management at the Ranch. We know that placing a child in treatment at the Ranch is not easy. Over the years, I have heard from families who appreciate having someone to call when they are feeling unsure or when they want to brainstorm interventions they can use at home.

We typically have daily contact with families through calls, emails, or in-person visits. Families are the experts on their own lives, so we work closely with them to make sure we are putting things in place that will be realistic for them to continue once their child is home. For some children we partner with home town community members to find activities the child can participate in when they return home. Others we connect to mentors, or set up intensive in-home therapy services, after-school programs or activities, PATH Family Support services, or therapy with a provider in their home community. We also help families understand and

access insurance coverage through Medicaid to ensure they can afford the services they need.

When reflecting on the single most important factor in my own successful transition to adulthood, I attribute my success to having supportive people in my life. I imagine you could do the same. Support can come in many ways, and for kids who won’t be going home, or don’t have any family to involve in treatment, the support must come from outside the family. It’s up to us to bridge that gap and find other ways to provide the support kids need.

Our end goal is always the same, regardless of the child’s family situation—find the best-case scenario for the child. This might include developing a plan specific to vocational and independent living skills to prepare them for Job Corps, the work force, or college.

Our role doesn’t stop when a child leaves the Ranch. Families often reach out to us weeks, months, even years after their child has moved on. Sometimes they want to celebrate their child’s continued success, and other times they ask for support and guidance. Either way, we are blessed to hold a space in their lives. By creating lasting connections with youth and families, we can remain a resource for them across the lifespan.

Ranch case managers leave no stone unturned to ensure kids go on to create rewarding lives, even when the odds are stacked against them.



## Caught at a Crossroads: Two People, One Story

### Cassandra's Story



Cassandra was in a relationship for many years with a man who was extremely volatile. She thought he directed the physical abuse only at her and that her kids were safe.

“I always deflected everything, so if he was angry

I would hop in the way. I thought I was protecting the kids, but they could still hear the arguments that lasted for hours,” Cassandra said.

“At the end of that relationship, my kids were traumatized, and I was a battered woman,” Cassandra said. “It took a long time to realize that’s what we were coming out of. I brought a lot of my own issues out of that relationship.”

At the same time, Cassandra was worried about her daughter, Samantha.

Samantha was diagnosed with depression and anxiety and put on medication at a young age. Cassandra did everything she could to get her daughter the help she needed—including outpatient counseling and inpatient treatment. For a while, Samantha did OK.

“She went almost a full year without needing any inpatient services,” Cassandra said. But then she started pushing the limits far beyond normal teenage behavior. More counseling and inpatient stays would settle things down for a short time, but it never lasted.

“She has been sad forever,” Cassandra said. “I was afraid her journey was going to be a life in and out

### Samantha's Story



Samantha couldn't figure out why everything felt so awful—both inside and out. The 13-year-old said her behavior was out of control.

“I was lashing out a lot,” she said. “I tried to run away twice. I was screaming, yelling,

throwing things, and breaking things. I felt so out of control and couldn't make it stop.”

Samantha's struggles were the result of mental illness that started at an early age. She was diagnosed with depression and anxiety and put on medication. After six months, Samantha was no better, so her mother took her to another doctor. This doctor doubled the dose of her anti-depressant, which in retrospect, was the wrong thing to do. Samantha was later diagnosed with bipolar depression; and according to some experts, treating bipolar depression with anti-depressants alone can increase the number and severity of manic episodes.

As Samantha's behaviors grew more extreme, she saw several different outpatient counselors and psychiatrists, and spent time at Red River Behavioral Health System, St. Sophie's, and Prairie St. John's—all psychiatric hospitals in eastern North Dakota.

Through all of this, Samantha was sad and lonely, so she started looking for attention. She found “boys” online who told her she was beautiful and gave her the attention she craved. Her mom and many counselors told her she was being misled,

# Treatment

of institutions and in and out of prison—because of impulsive thoughts. She lied. She told me she hated me. She punched holes in the walls.”

One day, Cassandra found messages on her daughter’s phone from someone pretending to be a young man.

“She was being groomed,” Cassandra said. “He was telling her things like, ‘Oh, good girl. We just need to make sure that you’ll do what you’re told. My uncle is nervous.’”

Cassandra did everything she could to deter Samantha from communicating with strangers online. She shut down accounts, but Samantha reopened them. She took away her phone, and Samantha found other ways to access the internet. She took her to therapists who told her about the dangers, but nothing worked.

“I was terrified my daughter was going to be a victim of human trafficking,” Cassandra said.

Finally, after an incident that resulted in Cassandra taking her daughter to the emergency room, someone told her about Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. Cassandra said it was only a matter of weeks until she was driving Samantha to the Ranch.

When Cassandra dropped her daughter off at the Ranch, their relationship was so strained they weren’t speaking. Even then, leaving her young daughter at the Ranch was not a decision Cassandra took lightly. She spent the first month Samantha was gone, crying all the time, thinking, “Oh my God, what have I done?”

But she needed it,” Cassandra said. “The Ranch is fabulous. She made more progress and gained more insight in her four months at the Ranch than she had in years of therapy. The day I picked her up to come home, she gave me these huge hugs and we were both crying. I know this is a lifelong journey, but she needs to know that she’s got me no matter what happens. I don’t think she would have known that without the Ranch. I told her that and every therapist told her that. But, I didn’t feel it until she came home from the Ranch.”

“The Ranch gave me my daughter back.”

and that these people were older men trying to earn her trust before taking advantage of her. But to Samantha, these online friends were the only people who made her feel understood and loved.

Samantha came to the Ranch after a difficult night that led to a trip to the emergency room. Someone told her Mom about the Ranch, and just a few weeks later, Samantha was living on the Minot campus and undergoing treatment.

“It was a little bit boring because I didn’t have my phone,” Samantha said. But she doesn’t look at her four months at the Ranch as a negative experience.

“Everyone was so understanding, patient, and caring. People at the Ranch really want to help children and teens. They want them to know they are cared for. The most important thing I learned was how to treat others and how to keep a balanced and good relationship with people.”

It was at the Ranch where Samantha finally understood the potential consequences of her online behaviors. She started to realize how much danger she was putting herself in by talking to these men and giving them her real name and location.

She worked with a therapist who helped her discover ways to cope with her irrational thoughts. She also discovered that music is a very effective coping skill for her and has been able to bring that skill home with her.

“When I got home, I got rejected by this guy I liked,” Samantha said. “Before the Ranch, this would have probably led to a full-blown depression. Instead I was in my room listening to music and crying. I got over it pretty quickly.”

Samantha wants Ranch donors to know how grateful she is for the help she received at the Ranch. “Not everyone comes out successfully, but most do, and they’re very grateful for the help they get,” she said. People who donate [to the Ranch] really want to help these children and teens. They want them to know they are cared for and they want them to get better.”



## Moving forward together

Cassandra says the Ranch saved her daughter's life. "I really believe that without the Ranch, Samantha's journey was going to be a life in and out of institutions and in and out of prison."

Instead, Samantha is making plans for her future. She wants to have a good family and to work at the CDC [Center for Disease Control].

Cassandra had no idea the Ranch could change the entire dynamic of her daughter's life.

"It not only gave my daughter coping skills, but it's given the whole family insight and understanding. Samantha knows that she's got me no matter what happens. She wouldn't have known that without the Ranch. I'd been telling her that, other therapists told her that, yet I just didn't feel it until she came home. The day I picked her up she gave me these huge hugs and we were both crying."



With the help of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Cassandra and Samantha have built a strong mother-daughter bond and have hope for the future.

Cassandra and Samantha's shared message for parents and kids in similar situations is to never give up.

"If you know your child needs help, insist," Cassandra said. "If someone

tells you there's nothing wrong, find someone else. Samantha got the help she needed. I will forever be grateful to the Ranch for giving me my daughter back."



Children at the Ranch learn of Christ's love for them—the best inheritance they can receive.

Help us provide for the next generation by including our ministry in your will.

Call 1-800-344-0957 for more information.



## “The New Me”

Anthony didn't plan to graduate from high school. For as long as he can remember, his plan was to drop out of school as soon as he reached the legal dropout age.

Yet, he was one of six students to graduate from Dakota Memorial School (DMS) in May, and he gave a commencement speech during the ceremony. It was a proud moment for Anthony. “All the things I've been through, I never really thought I'd graduate,” he said.

Anthony's graduation was a dream come true for his parents and older brother. For Anthony, graduation was proof he can do and accomplish more than he even dared to dream.

As a child, Anthony's struggles with extreme depression and anxiety made it difficult for him to connect with his teachers and peers. He couldn't focus on his work and was getting farther and farther behind. In 5th grade, Anthony reached his breaking point and refused to go to school. He was home-schooled for a while, but he said it didn't work out.

After spending two weeks in the hospital for treatment of his anxiety and depression, Anthony was given the option of attending DMS or going back to the school he came from. He chose DMS, but made it very clear he didn't have to like it.

“I remember the first day I was at DMS. I bawled my eyes out and didn't stop until I got home. I didn't want to come here,” Anthony said.

Gail Lundy, Day Student Coordinator at DMS, Minot, said at first Anthony didn't even want to go to the lunch room. “He was just so

uncomfortable with the socialization and all the people,” Lundy said. “It took some time for Anthony to be comfortable here. He put up a wall and wouldn't talk. He would just sit there and do nothing. Now, Anthony has built good relationships with several staff, and he is well-liked by his peers and teachers. He is in the lunch room every day.”

Anthony now says he was wrong about not wanting to attend DMS. “As I started getting to know people and build myself up a little bit, I started to like it here. Staff give us time to pull ourselves back together and continue in the classroom. The teachers are patient. When you don't feel like doing anything and don't want to talk—I call them shutdowns—they let you regroup and come back when you are ready.”

Over time, Ranch teachers and staff learned to identify the signs that Anthony was heading towards a shutdown—signs like withdrawing from teachers and friends, refusing to do everyday tasks, or wanting to sleep

to avoid social interaction.

“We watch Anthony and can recognize if he is off and may be struggling with depression and anxiety. He is diabetic, so we also monitor that,” Lundy said. “We work with him and come up with a balance while still keeping him accountable. If



Anthony, a Dakota Memorial School student, came to believe he could graduate...and he did!

he starts missing school, we call Mom and Dad right away as that is the start of his cycle and any shutdowns. His parents have been wonderful and so willing to do what is best for Anthony.”

Garrison Public Schools, Anthony's sending school, has also been very supportive. At one point, Anthony transitioned back to Garrison, but



everyone soon realized Anthony would be more successful at DMS.

“It was this wonderful partnership [DMS, Garrison Public Schools, Anthony, and his parents] that made it possible for Anthony to be here, where he could keep learning and graduate,” said Tina DeGree, principal at DMS, Minot. “Typically, students are with us a short time before transitioning back to their home school. In rare cases, especially with Day Students like Anthony, DMS is the best place for a child to learn, so they stay with us until they graduate.”

Anthony is grateful for the chance he had to attend DMS, and the many changes he has been able to make in his life.

“Ever since I was a little kid, I had a speech impediment. English [class at DMS] helped me progress my skill into not having the speech impediment. I learned how to write essays and stories,” Anthony said. “I was never good at Math, but the teachers here started helping me. I was reluctant at first, but as the questions got harder, I pushed myself to figure it out. Turns out, I like pushing myself in that way. It makes me feel good inside. This place gave me a chance to learn and to be good with myself. It gave me a chance to grow and make myself new.”

Anthony has excelled in many areas since arriving at DMS seven years ago. Lundy said he made the Honor Roll several times, was Student of the Quarter, and participated in Student Council. When another Garrison student started attending DMS, Anthony played the role of a Big Brother, giving him pointers and advice and telling him how DMS has helped him.

“He is a really good role model for

other kids,” Lundy said.

### A promising future

Anthony wants to make a difference.

“I see myself prospering as a new me,” Anthony said. “Just by getting out there, helping other people who really need it. The school helped me, and now I want to give back to people who are going through what I was going through.”

As for career plans, Anthony wants to become an independent carpenter like his dad. “I like to do different jobs like plumbing or fixing a wall or just building something. I think it runs in the family,” Anthony said. “My father works for different companies as a carpenter. He travels all over the place and fixes things that are broke—things another contractor tried to fix but made it worse.”

Anthony said he learned a lot of things at DMS that will help him in his dream to be a carpenter. In addition to the math and writing skills he’ll use in a career in carpentry, Anthony took shop classes where he learned and practiced framing, plumbing, sheet rocking, electrical work, and more.

“This place is wonderful,” Anthony said. “They help you through your toughest times. They are patient and slowly work with you. All I have to say is it’s a very wonderful place to be. I’m going to miss it.”

**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.**

## Invite a Ranch speaker to your congregation

You can share your passion for Ranch kids with your congregation or organization by inviting someone from the Ranch to speak at your meeting, event, church service, or



Bible Study. We are available to speak to your group, and would love to tell you more about the Ranch and the amazing children we serve. Hear real stories of kids who are at the Ranch now, and kids who have moved on to become successful adults.

Inviting a Ranch speaker to your group allows you to provide hope and healing for even more children as we reach more people with their stories and needs.

Contact the Ranch at 1-800-344-0957 to request a speaker. We will do everything we can to accommodate your request.

## Nonprofit collaboration heals the heart, mind, and soul

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

Last spring, Deb Dawson, the CEO and founder of the Fargo-Moorhead nonprofit African Soul American Heart (ASAH), met with Ranch kids to teach them about African culture and connect them with girls who, like them, had witnessed or experienced violence or other traumatic experiences.

Her visit was part of a joint project between Dakota Memorial School teachers Madi Novacek, English, and Alana Wilhelm, Art. Novacek and Wilhelm created the project so Ranch kids could learn about local nonprofits. They kicked it off with a nonprofit scavenger hunt. The kids took turns reading about and researching nonprofit groups in the community before choosing to focus on ASAH.

“We focused on African Soul American Heart because their purpose—to protect, educate and empower children—is similar to what we do with our kids,” Novacek said. “We designed the entire project to teach our kids they can make a difference.”

The overall purpose and theme of

the project was to educate Ranch kids about issues in our community. Kids at the Ranch have often been the recipients of services provided by nonprofit organizations. This project showed them, in a very real sense, that they are entirely capable of being on

about the lives of children living on the other side of the world.

The final project was to design and screen-print their own t-shirts. They took it one step further and decided to sell t-shirts—with the proceeds divided between ASAH and the Ranch.

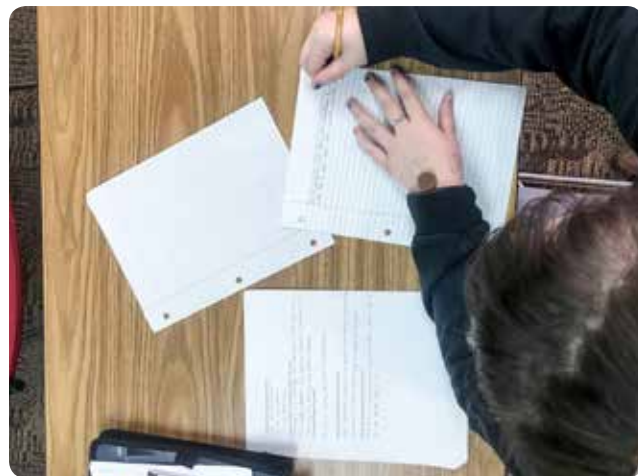
The ASAH collaboration created a great opportunity for Ranch kids to learn about empathy and compassion, and to experience the joy of giving back. By partnering with ASAH, our kids were able to learn more about another culture and help other children like themselves, truly healing the heart, mind, and soul.



Deb Dawson, CEO and founder of African Soul American Heart, shared photos of the children from Uganda with Ranch kids.

the other side of the equation—they can be the givers making a difference in someone else’s life.

After they selected and learned about ASAH, Dawson paired each student with a girl in Uganda whose education is funded by ASAH. They exchanged letters, which gave them the opportunity to share their stories and reach out to other students. They were also able to hear



Ranch kids wrote to students in Uganda via a pen pal program.





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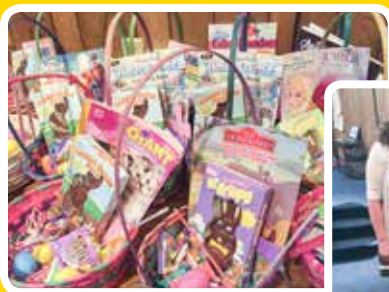
# Celebrating Easter at the Ranch

A few minutes after the Easter service is supposed to begin, the kids start looking around, wondering what happened to Chaplain Rick Jones—he is never late to chapel. Where could he be? Then they start to hear the faint sound of someone yelling in the distance. The yelling grows louder and louder, closer and closer, until suddenly Chaplain Jones runs into the chapel—carrying a cross and yelling at the top of his lungs, “Christ Has Risen, Christ Has Risen!”

Easter Sunday is a time for celebration and rejoicing at the Ranch. In Minot, Chaplain Jones leads a special Easter service for Ranch children and their families—with wonderful music by the Praise Band from Our Saviors Lutheran Church, Easter readings by the kids, and this very special entrance.

The excitement begins weeks before Easter, as the kids make Easter art, decorate Easter eggs, learn Easter music, eat colored spaghetti noodles, and search for hidden plastic eggs filled with candy during the annual Easter egg hunt. Most importantly, they hear the Easter story many times, so they understand its significance to the world and to their lives.

Christ has risen, indeed, and He is working in the lives and hearts of Ranch children and staff.





## Creating a Legacy of Learning

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

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch staff are dedicated to providing the best care and opportunities for kids at risk, and it doesn't stop at the Ranch's residential treatment centers.

This past year, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Thrift Stores partnered with two different organizations, Bismarck Legacy High School, and CREATE (Career Readiness Education and Training Experience) to help teens and young adults learn important job skills. Participants in both programs worked directly with thrift store staff, learning skills they can apply in their everyday lives.

In Fargo, warehouse manager, Dallas Elhard, worked with CREATE to literally "create" an amazing job training experience. CREATE, based out of the Fargo Vocational Training Center, works with young adults, ages 18-28, to create job training internships. The internship includes a 40-hour job training workshop and 120 hours of job experience with companies like the Ranch in the Fargo-Moorhead area. More than just a labor experience, CREATE participants meet weekly with a job coach who helps them reflect, grow, and learn as they go through the program.

Andrew came to the thrift store's Fargo warehouse through CREATE. During his internship, Andrew met consistently with a job coach, learned the basics of an interactive program, and helped build and fix furniture. After a successful four months, the Ranch hired Andrew as an official

part of the team. Both Andrew and Dallas agree that it was "an overall positive experience."

"It's a good, comfortable, understanding environment with good people," Andrew said. "I recommend [CREATE] to anyone who is struggling to find a job."

Across the state, Jeremy Lindell, Bismarck Thrift Store manager, worked with Legacy High School to create and implement a "real life job experience." Like the CREATE program, students work directly with thrift store staff to gain job training skills.

Students begin the program by enrolling in a class that promotes student learning and experiencing real life situations. Laura Mildenerger, the program supervisor at Legacy High School, selects students to work at the Bismarck Thrift Store 2-3 hours a week. Students begin by cleaning, mopping and removing garbage. As they grow in their confidence and skills, they learn the basics of cashiering and stocking shelves.

This partnership has been in the works for almost two years, and Jeremy said it has been very successful.

"The most enjoyable part [of the program] is working and seeing the kids every day. Their growth at the end [of the semester] is awesome. It's just a lot of fun," Jeremy said.

Both partnerships open doors

of learning and experience that fulfill the purpose and mission of the Ranch Thrift Stores—to be positive, productive members of the community. In addition, thrift store staff provide on-the-job training through more than 15



Andrew, a former participant in CREATE, a job training program, now works full time at the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Thrift Store warehouse in Fargo.

job programs and employ Ranch residents who are on track to live independently when they leave our care. At the thrift stores, they gain valuable job experience and learn about accountability, teamwork, responsibility, and dependability.

The learning culture of the Ranch means that employees find opportunities to provide and receive growth and learning wherever they can—for their own personal growth, kids in residential care, the kids' families, and the many thrift store employees who come to the Ranch through job programs. Together, we promote health, healing, and opportunity for all people in our communities.

## Came for the honey, stayed for the kids



Jerry and Karen  
Leeseberg

Karen Leeseberg has been supporting Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, either herself or through her parents, since she was born. Her father was a pastor, so the family contributed to a lot of Lutheran organizations. In Karen's mind, Ranch honey is tied to fond memories of her childhood.

"We always had Ranch honey on

the table," Karen said. "All I knew was that the Ranch was a place for troubled kids, and they sent us honey."

Despite moving around a lot, Karen had a great childhood and a wonderful family. Her husband, Jerry, grew up in very different circumstances.

*Jerry and Karen Leeseberg spread the Ranch message everywhere they go. On a recent vacation to Disney World, Florida, they were stopped by a man who noticed their Ranch jackets. He was originally from North Dakota and knew of the Ranch. They gave him all the updates and shared their passion for the Ranch ministry. Jerry likes to call this photo, "Ranch Dressing."*

"While Karen's family was open and caring and emotionally supportive, mine was distant," Jerry said. "My dad was a workaholic, and my mom became bitter and unpleasant after contracting tuberculosis and spending 18 months in a sanitarium."

Jerry said he understands the plight of Ranch children so well because he survived a similar childhood. "I have a heart for kids at the Ranch because I went through a light version of what they go through."

When Jerry's mom was in the sanitarium, he and his younger sister were watched over by Aunt Faye, "who wasn't really our aunt," he said. "We never did know how she was connected to our family. She was an alcoholic and addicted to gambling and cards. Lots of days, there wasn't food on the table because she spent the money on drinking and gambling."

They didn't tell their Dad what was going on because he was already under so much stress—working long hours and spending any spare moment with their mother. But, when Jerry was in third grade, his sister begged him to talk to their father.

"I finally got some time alone with him, told him the situation, and in a couple days she was gone," Jerry said.

Jerry and Karen met in Louisiana where she was an elementary teacher at a Lutheran school and Jerry was part-owner of a small retail company. They knew of each other because Jerry was the treasurer of the church where Karen taught, and he kept misspelling her name. Her maiden name was Bailey and he kept leaving out the "e,"



which Karen finds ironic considering his last name, Leeseberg, is filled with e's. She wrote him a note asking him to please get her name right.

They met in person when a few faculty members at the school asked Karen to babysit during a dinner—she could sit at the table but was to keep an eye on the kids. Jerry was a guest at that dinner and was seated across from Karen—with several kids between them and the other adults. They talked for hours about Russian history—both are history buffs—and two years later they were married.

A few years into their marriage they decided to adopt children through the foster care system in Louisiana. They adopted sisters, Amanda and Danielle. Two weeks before the adoption was to be finalized, their social worker, along with four other people carrying black bags, came to their home.

“The only thing this could mean is that we were losing our kids,” Jerry said. “We had been promised financial assistance, and they discovered we weren't eligible. They based the assistance on the birth parent's financial situation and their ability to collect welfare. Ninety nine percent of birth parents qualified, but Amanda and Danielle's parents, while low income, didn't qualify for welfare. Which meant we weren't eligible for assistance.”

Their social worker said they had less than five minutes to decide if they wanted to keep them. “We told her, ‘This is their forever home. Of course, we'll keep them,’” Jerry said.

For a variety of reasons, they moved to Flower Mound, Texas in 2004, five years after they adopted the girls. Jerry continued his career in Information

Technology and Accounting and Karen worked as a librarian in the Business Library at Southern Methodist University, where she still works.

Soon after they moved to Texas, Al Evon, a representative from Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, visited them. The Ranch was looking for board members who weren't from North Dakota. Karen and Jerry were prospects because of their long giving history. They learned from Evon that the Ranch was about so much more than honey.

Jerry joined the Ranch board of directors in 2011, where he remains an honorary board member. For years, he has volunteered his time and expertise to the Ranch, attending monthly IT meetings, and making recommendations for IT policies, procedures, and purchases. He continues to bless the Ranch through his wisdom and knowledge about automation and technology.

Throughout their long and fascinating story, Jerry and Karen have continued to support the Ranch financially. Karen said they tend to give very generally, which is different than what many donors choose to do. They give to the general fund rather than to pet projects.

Jerry said they like taking the less common path—in giving and in other parts of their lives. “God has empowered us and equipped us to go where others don't want to go. Just like our decision to adopt children no one else wanted, we choose to give to the general fund of the Ranch. We trust God and Ranch leaders to use it where it is needed most.”

In addition to their annual giving,

Jerry and Karen have named the Ranch as a beneficiary in their will. They have visited all three Ranch campuses several times, and Karen said the tours solidified their decision to support the Ranch now and after they are gone.

“I think the reason we give to the Ranch is because we really believe in the work you do,” Karen said. “There are thousands of good charities out there, but none of them are like the Ranch. Helping kids grow up so they are not dysfunctional, breaking the cycle so they don't go onto perpetuate the problem is huge. And then you add the spiritual component to that—giving those kids the opportunity to understand that not only are they loved here on earth, but they are loved eternally by God. What the Ranch does is a great long-term investment.”

For Jerry, giving to the Ranch is a very personal decision.

“These kids are alone. If that doesn't get cured, they are alone all their lives. They are afraid. I was alone much of my life. Other than Karen and her family, I didn't have anyone,” Jerry said.

“The Ranch teaches kids how to not be alone, how to be social, how to link into their communities. Every place you look, the Ranch excels. I've volunteered in programs down here, and in many instances, it was considered a good day if the kids didn't riot. At the Ranch, people care. They are educated and have expertise specific to the needs of these kids.”

“The Ranch is the only organization I've run into that gives kids their lives back.”

## Thank You for Doing Stuff



**By Tim Unsinn, Development Officer**

He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

I appreciate how Bob Goff, the author of *Love Does*, paraphrases this verse. He says, “Love God, love people, and do stuff.”

Jesus refers to this verse as the greatest commandment. In Luke 10, Jesus uses a parable to explain what it means to love our neighbor. I believe He didn’t want to leave any room for excuses. He says it was on a road where a man was beaten and robbed and as he lay on the ground, half alive without his

clothes and possessions, a priest and a holy man steered clear of him. The next person, a Samaritan, saw the man and his heart went out to him. Jesus said the Samaritan gave the injured man first aid, took him to an inn and made him comfortable. He also paid for the man to recover at the inn. Jesus is clear: we aren’t only to love God and love our neighbor, we are also supposed to do stuff.

I believe there are many similarities between that man left on the side road and the kids we are blessed to serve. Many are physically and mentally abused. Many are scarred. Many have no possessions to call their own. We are so grateful that you, and so many other wonderful people, hear their stories and your heart goes out to them. Then, like the good Samaritan, you open your wallet and say “Here, take what you need.” In many cases you not only give once, but over and over. You

want the best for the kids we serve.

You may give monthly and/or annually. You may have a gift for the Ranch in your estate or have named the Ranch as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy. You may give to specific areas like horse therapy, education, or spiritual life; donate quilts, fund an endowment; or say “We trust you. Use this money where you need it most.” However you choose to give, you bless the precious children at the Ranch. You love your neighbor as yourself.

We are so thankful you don’t pass by our kids. Like the Good Samaritan, you care for them through your support. Thank you, for “doing stuff.”

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 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 Tim Unsinn, or any of the people shown here, at 1-800-344-0957 or [info@DakotaRanch.org](mailto:info@DakotaRanch.org).



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Mission Advancement Officer



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**Janet Zinke**  
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VP/Development Officer



## Foundation and Corporate Grants

### **Cass County Electric Cooperative;**

\$5,000; Thrift Store Delivery Truck, Fargo

### **Great River Energy;**

\$1,000; Carpet for Dakota Memorial School, Bismarck

### **North Dakota Council on the Arts;**

\$2,500; Song-writing artist-in-residency, Fargo

### **Sam's Club—Bismarck;**

\$1,000; Gardening Program, Bismarck

### **Wiebe Mission Advancement Fund, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**

\$20,000; Spiritual Life

### **Trinity Lutheran Church Foundation;**

\$1,000; Spiritual Life, Fargo

### **Walmart, Minot;**

\$2,000; Cottage windows, Minot

### **Walter Ray Meyer Endowment Fund, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod;**

\$1,300; Dakota Memorial School, Salsa Garden Project, Minot

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**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 how you can make a major gift with livestock or grain.

Current gifts of grain or cattle allow you to avoid the sale of the commodity as income, while the production costs may still

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Your land, farm, and other resources can fund the following gift options:

- **charitable life estate**
- **charitable remainder trust**
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6301 19th Ave. NW, Minot  
DakotaRanch.org

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



# 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 help us teach our kids about Jesus' unending love. For more information about making memorial and honorarium gifts to the Ranch, contact Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch at 1-800-344-0957 or [info@DakotaRanch.org](mailto:info@DakotaRanch.org).

## Memorials

March 14, 2019 – July 12, 2019

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ADAMS, DORRIS JEAN VALLARD

Athleen Butzke

AGRIMSON, REV. ELMO

Raynard Huglen

ANDERSON, DEREK

Rosella Debele

ANDERSON, KAREN

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Lynn & Elaine Melby

Robert & Joyce Moore

Diane Nygaard

Howard Richardson

Lavonne Rudolph

# Memorials/Honorariums

ENNIS, HAROLD & MABLE

Karl & Nancy Christensen

FABER, KARL

Rudolph J. Faber

FATLAND, SYLVIA & JAN

Dean E. Fatland

FERGUSON, C. DEAN

Sharon Grotte

FREIDRICH, TRISH

Caroline Letzring

FRIGEN, KEN

Chris & Jean Hansen

GRANDMA CHORBA

Richard & Sandra Atkinson

GRIDER, MARY F.

Charles Grider

GUENTHNER, HENRIETTA

Bennie Guenther

GUSTAFSON, ROBERT

Steve Salzman

HAHN, ED

Arlys Torgerson

HANS, LAURA

Anita Petersen

HARTHUN, LEROY S.

George W. Fick

HATANPAA, KATHY

Anita Petersen

HECK, GOTTFRIED & IRENE

Mr. & Mrs. Norman L. Steine

HEINTZ, ROBERTA

Marilyn Heintz

HELFRICH, JOSEPHINE

Sheryl Morris

HENNIX, ARLISS

Natalie Wade

HODENFIELD, CAROL

George W. Fick

HOGUE, WILLIAM

Marcina Hoge

HOLTE, HAROLD

Dottie & Jackie Nelson

HULTGREN, LUCILLE

Anita L. Peterson

IWEN, BEVERLY

Olav & Marilyn Aarsvold

Sherry Fettig

Brian & Karen Gebeke

Terry & Barbara Gebeke

Raymond & Lucretia Grudem

Kenneth & Cynthia Hejl

Don & Elaine Holm

Ronald Iwen

C. Edward & Jeanne Olson

Keith & Cathy Peltier

The Schultz, Golding, Long, &

Dickinson Families

JAEGER, TINA M.

Charles & Helen Bohm

JARES, JIM

W.L. & Joan Ferguson

JENSEN, TIM

John Shelver

Bruce & Pam Smith

JOHN, ROBERT

Keith & Roberta Hoesel

Wilbert & Delores Kunz

JOHNSON, JOHN & VERNA

Family of John & Verna Johnson

KAELBERER, FREDDY

Joyce Henke

KELLER, DEREK

Rosella Debele

KELLER, LEO

Delores Maier

KELLER, RON

Joan Fiechtner

KELLOG, DON

Fred & Judith Otten

KEOLA, KHAMSIDE

Joy Ryan

KERN, LORNA

Don & Caroline Maurer

KICKER, KEITH

George Fick

KNUDSON, LYLE

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Flechsig

KNUDSVIG, JOHN

Wayne & Carol Norby

KRAUSE, MELVIN

Linda O. Hansen

KUNKEL, WILLIAM

Keith & Roberta Hoesel

Delores Maier

LANDSIEDEL, JOAN

Dolores Simdorn

LANGER, REV. PAUL G.

Sharon Rowe

LARSON, REV. VINCENT

The Anderson & Sandman Families

Mike & Linda Ingram

Richard & Donna Johnson

Cathy Langston and

The Summit Women

LAUF, DUANE

Gertrude Anderson

LAWRENCE, BERNEDA "BJ"

Lloyd & Karen Koestler

LEAPALTD, LEONA

Evelyn Montgomery

LENNIE, ALLYN

Joyce Henke

LEONHARDT, SONJA

Delores Maier

LEWIS, SHIRLEY

Joyce E. Sexton

LINDLAUF, PALMER

LaVonne Fannik

LLOYD, EDWARD H.

Richard & Myrna Thorsell

LOSIE, EILEEN MAE

Carolyn Vacek

LOWDEN, KENNETH

Jerry & Sharon Busch

LUHMAN, ROBERT

LaMae Pettit

MAIN, BEATRICE

LaMae Pettit

MARTIN, JACLYN

Thomas & Sara Marcis



MCBRIDE, JENNIFER ROLLER  
Clayton & Zona Pearson  
MEYER, HAROLD H.  
Keith & Betty Meyer  
MEYERS, SANDRA  
W.L. & Joan Ferguson  
MIDBOEFROM, INES  
Ron & Janis Bakke  
MILLER, ELOISE  
Audrey Iverson  
MILLER, WILLIAM & ADELINE  
Donald & Eleanor Miller  
MOELLER, RAY  
Marlene Eilts  
MORWEG, ROGER  
George Fick  
MUMM, RYAN  
Grover & Jan Riebe  
Charles & Gwen Rotenberger  
MUSCH, MARTHA  
Thelma DeBilt  
Jill Degree  
George Fick  
Susan Graham  
Larry & Marlys Hauser  
Anthony & Marla Kvlig  
Barb & Gayne Meiers  
Susan Roise  
Sandra & Richard Trondson  
Carla J. Vannett  
NELSON, DARRYL  
Doris Jensen  
Ray & Marlys Long  
James & Ruth Mattson  
Jean Peppard  
Donald Schumacher  
NELSON, DORIS  
Linda Hill  
NELSON, IRENE  
Doris Jensen  
Ray & Marlys Long  
James & Ruth Mattson  
Clarice E. Mosolf  
Jean Peppard  
Donald Schumacher

NEUROHR, ELAINE  
Hanna Link  
OBERLANDER, CLARENCE  
Lorina Zuern  
OLSON, MARION EDNA  
Dave & Bridget Kjorstad  
OPPEDAHL, GRANT DAVID  
David & Janice Oppedahl  
PEEPO, EUDORA  
Linda O. Hansen  
PENNEKAMP, HELEN  
Carol Urbach  
PETERSEN, PHYLLIS  
Carol Grieger  
PETERSEN, WAYNE  
Carole Walton Peterson  
PETERSON, ROBERT  
Fred & Judith Otten  
PETERSON, SHIRLEY A.  
Gerald E. Peterson  
PFEIFER, GERALD  
Robert & Judith Rice  
PITT, MARVIN  
Anita Petersen  
POCHANT, SALLIE  
Irene Heid  
PRIEBE, LENORA  
Richard & Betty Jean Carow  
PUEPPKE, CURTIS  
Martin & Ladeen Guericke  
PUSHMAN, DONALD &  
DOROTHY  
Robert & Grace Swanson  
RASMUSSEN, KEITH  
L. Duane Larson  
REINDEL, DALE  
Dottie & Jackie Nelson  
RICE, LEROY  
Merle Henke  
ROD BAKER'S DAD  
Leonard & Marie McGinnity  
ROSSOW, REV. E.J.  
John & Irene Berkley

RUED, VERNIE  
George W. Fick  
RUED, LAVERNE  
St. Paul's LWML  
SCHMIDT, EDGAR  
Mrs. Marlys Ophem  
SCHNEIDER, KENNETH  
Betty Born  
SCHRUPP, GLENARD  
Don & Arlene Schumacher  
SCHULTZ, IRENE  
LaMae Pettit  
SCHULZ, RUBY  
Richard & Betty Jean Carow  
Violet Podenski  
SCHWARTZBAUER, FRANCES  
Florence E. Wiest  
SCOFIELD, LEONA  
Merle & Ethel Peterson  
SCOTT, EVERETT  
Joy Ryan  
SEIDLER, CATHERINE  
Rodney & Mary Ann Ekren  
SHELDON, EDITH  
Mary Beth Etter  
Dorothy Schulz  
SHELVIK, NAOMI  
Anita Petersen  
SIMMSON, NELDA  
Joyce Henke  
SKUNES, RONALD  
Clayton & Zona Pearson  
SMITH, LYNDA  
Elizabeth Ravenscroft  
SMITH, PATRICIA  
W.L. & Joan Ferguson  
SOLBERG, NORVELLA  
Jim & Karen Bonnet  
SOMMERFELD, JIM  
Don & Deanne Kirsch  
STONER, CARL  
Elizabeth Stoner

# Memorials/Honorariums

STRANDER, ANN

Bruce & Pam Smith

STREITZ, DON & GWEN

Steve & Paulette Streitz

STEWART, JAMES

Gerald & Joan Fiechtner

STROH, MARY

Bruce & Pam Smith

STRUXNESS, LEONE

Anita Petersen

SUMMERS, MARK

Elizabeth Ravenscroft

SWANSTON, TERRIE

Doris Knudson

TASSELMYER, VIVIAN

Elizabeth Ravenscroft

THOM, HARRIET LOUISE

Richard & Lucille Gust

THORSEN, LILY

Faith Evans

THORSEN, JACK

Faith Evans

TOEPKE, MARLENE

Wes & Marlys Kunz

Wilbert & Delores Kunz

Delores Maier

Marvin & Laverne Schulz

TORNO, BARRY

Richard & Lucille Gust

TRYHUS, CLARENCE

Robert & Judith Rice

TVEIT, RUSSELL

Eunice Jacobson

VORLAND, KERMIT

Mr. David Vorland

WAAG, BONNIE

Duane & Carol Aldrich and Family

WAHLIN, KEN

Marilyn J. Baumann

WALKER, JEANNE

Linda Thomas

WALLNER, RONALD

Bruce & Pam Smith

WANNARKA, SHIRLEY

Bruce & Rosemarie White

WEAVER, MR. & MRS. GEORGE L.

Dr. & Mrs. Donald L. Weaver

WEISE, WAYNE

Elaine Schroeder

WELLMANN, NORMAN

Iva Wellmann

WELLS, MARIA

Nolan Bode

WETSCH, LOIS

Bethol Knutson

WILKENING, ROSALYN

Anita Petersen

WILKENS, ADAM

Diane Heagle

WILKENS, TERRY

Arlon E. Fuchs

Irene Heid

Keith & Roberta Hoesel

Delores Maier

WINKLER, CARROL "DOC"

Al & Johnne Bierdeman

WOLLMUTH, LORIN

Roger & Lori Wachter

WRIGHT, LENORE

Gilbert & Kathryn Beaman

YOUNG, ALEXA

Chris & Jean Hansen

YOUNG, ARTHUR

Rev. David & Mary Ann Young

ZIEGLER, DAVID

Paul Krueger

ZIEMAN, JULIA

Dawn Tyson

## Honorariums

March 14, 2019 - July 12, 2019

MARRIAGE OF SCOTT &  
MADISEN BEELER

Robert Modin

JOHN CAMPBELL

Michelle Elness

VARYHAN KUMAR SINGH

CHHIBBER

Vishal & Saveen Chhibber

EMMA & CARTER COLE

Lisa Cole

NELDA DEKKER

Jeffrey Dekker

GARY

Marian Milks

DIANNE & FRED HAFFLEY'S

WEDDING

Don & Arlene Schumacher

LARRY KNUTSON

Shirley Schmitt

LARRY KNUTSON'S 85TH

BIRTHDAY

Emmanuel LWML

VINCE & GRACE LARSON

Cathy Langston and

the Summit Women

JAMES LEACH

Lenore Perry

SHAYLA LEINEN

Michelle Elness

DONALD MOE

Dorene Allis

MARGARET POTASH'S BIRTHDAY

Jerome Potash

JOY RYAN

Quin and Kole Seiler



## A Prayer for Healing

At every moment of our existence

You are present to us, God,

In gentle compassion.

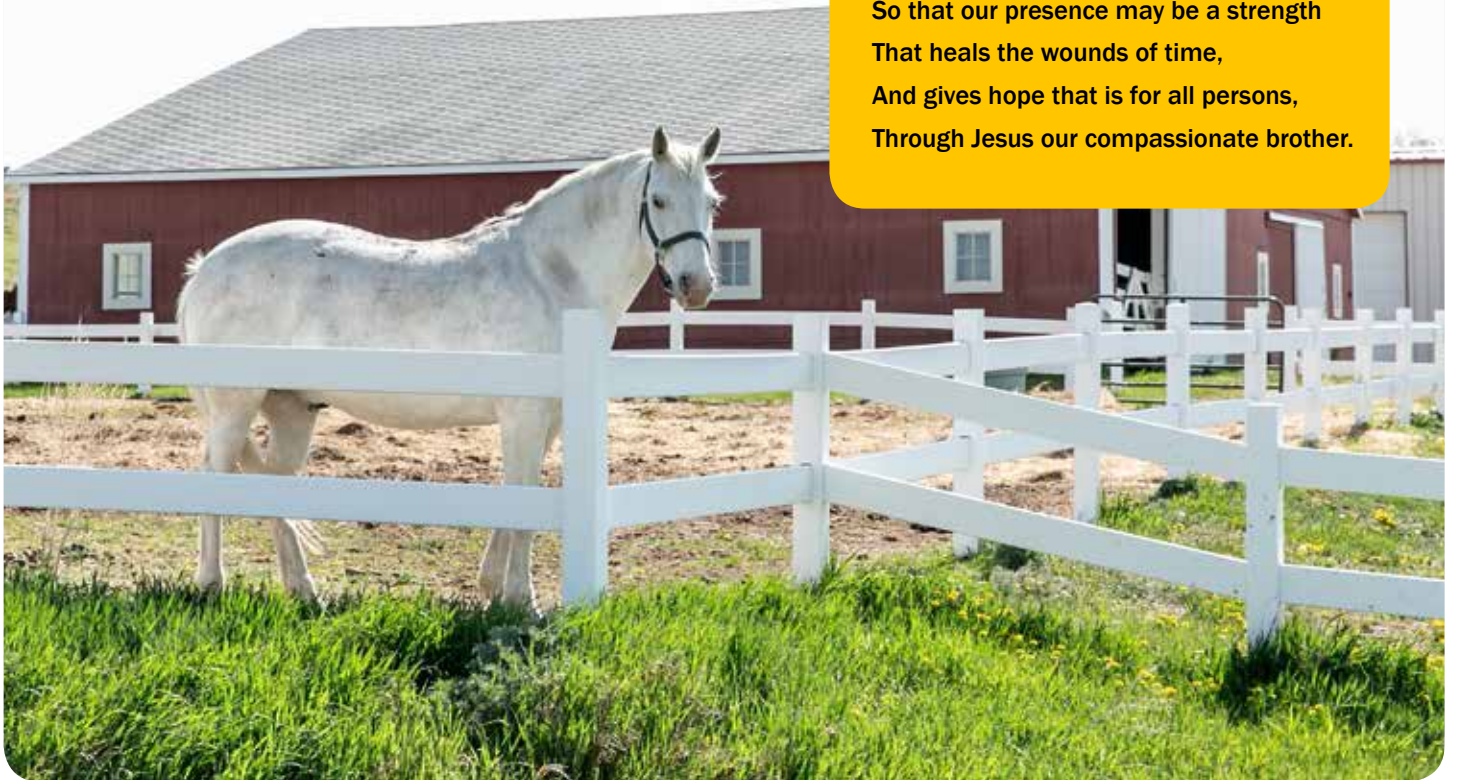
Help us to be present to one another

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 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

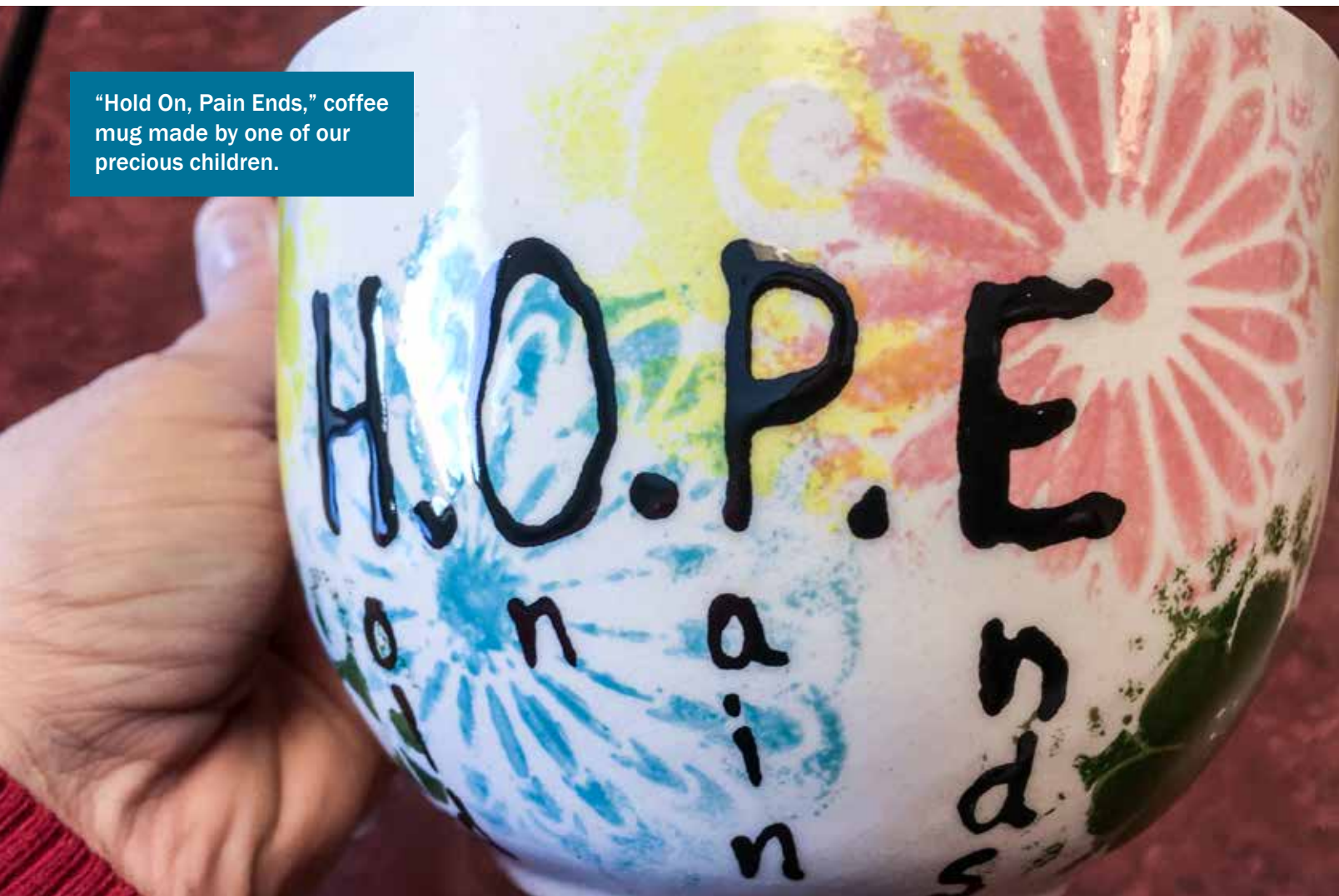
Please pray for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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

"Hold On, Pain Ends," coffee mug made by one of our precious children.



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 Phone: 1-800-593-3098

Foundation: 1-800-344-0957

