



Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch—a short history

The year 2007 at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch marks the beginning of 55 years of service to at-risk youth and their families across the nation. In 1952 The Good Samaritan Society turned their Mapleton Ranch over to the N.D. District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). That year also marked the formation of the Dakota Boys Ranch Association as a recognized, but independent mission of the LCMS. It is now also a recognized service provider of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In 1959, the Ranch responded to the need to help more troubled boys and began building on the current home site just northwest of Minot. The Ranch began admitting girls as residents in 1993 at its Fargo Youth Home site. The Ranch began admitting girls campus-wide in 1997. The Ranch changed its name to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in 2003 to more accurately reflect its population.

The children served by the Ranch experience severe emotional, behavioral and developmental challenges and come from diverse backgrounds, cultures and religions. The Ranch has six programs located in Minot, Fargo and Bismarck, North Dakota, which are all accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

The Dakota Boys Ranch Foundation was established in 1971 to provide funding for the programs, which is done via direct mail and comprehensive campaigns, endowments, estates, wills, grants and special events. Program funding is augmented by the Ranch's seven thrift stores, located in Minot, Bismarck, Devils Lake, Grand Forks and Fargo, North Dakota; and Moorhead, Minnesota. Thousands of friends across the nation are committed to the Ranch's goal and mission of helping at-risk children and their families succeed in the name of Christ.

The newest program at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is its Transition to Community Mentoring Program, which is being funded by an appropriations grant through the U.S. Department of Justice. The funding period for this grant continues through July 31, 2007, and it is anticipated that with current and continued evidence of statewide and community support by agencies, churches and individuals, that this program will become an established program at the Ranch. The program is staffed by one agency-wide mentoring coordinator and three site coordinators in Minot, Fargo and Bismarck.

The most recent change to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch facilities occurred on its Minot Campus, with the 2006 construction of an addition onto the current Dakota Memorial School. The addition incorporates spaces for: a classroom for youth transitioning from our Bismarck Western Plains program to the Minot Campus (developmentally challenged); an elementary classroom for youth who need additional individualized attention at the K-6 grade level; an independent living training center, for youth to learn how to function in apartment style living; a business/technology area for students to learn employability skills such as time management, customer services, stocking shelves, cleaning, organization, time cards, payroll, and how to make change. The addition also includes space for additional teachers and administrative staff and a conference room for student and teacher meetings. The school is K-12 and is accredited by the NCA.

Other recent organizational changes include a move toward campus-wide leaders, with support staff at each of the Ranch's three campuses. In the past two years, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch has established campus-wide leaders for spiritual life, residential coordination, case management, tribal liaison, nursing, training and the afore-mentioned mentoring program. In 2006, the Ranch hired its first Vice President of Human Resources and its first Chief Development Officer.

Statistics show that hundreds of children and thousands of family members have been helped by services provided through the Ranch. The most accurate estimates show that nearly 26,000 children, families and social service workers and agencies have been impacted by Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in its more than 50 years of service. In North Dakota alone, the Ranch has served children from 194 cities and towns, including rural areas. Overall it has served children from 36 states. And, as evidenced by the sharp increase in numbers of residents in recent years, the Ranch will continue to be sought and will seek to provide service for an ever-increasing population of at-risk children.

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch constantly seeks to improve the programs and services it provides to at-risk children and their families. The Board presently is using its due diligence to consider several options that many benefit the children currently in our care, as well as the influx of children who are projected to become residents at the Ranch in the next five years.

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is the second largest social service agency in the state behind the North Dakota Department of Human Services. The Ranch is one of the top 100 largest employers in North Dakota (sixth largest in Minot), with a \$20 million budget and more than 450 employees. Recent estimates show that Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch has had more than an \$80 million economic impact on the state.

For more information and a year-by-year documented history, email: ctisom@hotmail.com and request "The Complete Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch History."