

# THE RANCH VOICE

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

Spring 2025

Gregory's one-on-one moment with Superintendent Tina DeGree reflects the Ranch's dedication to every student's individual educational journey.



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

## A winding path



Joy Ryan, President/CEO,  
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

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We have come to believe that all things come in a prescribed order, that there is a sequence to things. How many times have you heard the saying “You have to crawl before you can walk, and walk before you run”? In math we learn addition, then subtraction, then multiplication, and then division. Trying to learn division first makes everything more difficult.

For the children at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, regular order has not been the way of their worlds. They have been faced with very “adult” situations long before they had the knowledge to understand. Whether it be personal survival, food finding, sexual abuse, or violence, it came “out of order,” before a child has even had a chance to truly be a child.

The same is true for their understanding and relationship with God and His Word.

I recently attended a service with our children in the new Hope Chapel on our Bismarck Campus. Pastor Vincent Otto, our Spiritual Life Advisor on that campus, had a wonderfully designed message based on the story of Simeon meeting the Holy Family in the temple. He tied it to the idea of a “Bucket List,” which I thought was pretty smart! He read the Scripture, then asked the children if they knew what a bucket list was. He started to explain how meeting His Lord was on Simeon’s bucket list. It was a perfectly logical lesson, with a great message of God keeping His promises.

The Ranch kids were listening carefully. It was soon evident that each child had a very different starting point from which they heard the Good News. Quickly, hands started reaching for the ceiling as they all had questions for Pastor Vince.

- How old was Simeon?
- Did he die right away when he saw Jesus?
- How old was Methuselah?

- How did he know it was God if he was just a baby?
- Wasn’t Abraham really old?
- What’s a temple?
- Is the Holy Spirit that talked to Simeon the same one you get in Baptism?
- Once you get the Holy Spirit in Baptism, can anyone take Him out?
- If Jesus was in the temple, was heaven empty?
- How come I woke up and told myself I wouldn’t do something and then did it anyway?
- Can you get baptized twice?
- Why did they take Jesus to the temple?

I sat and listened while Pastor Vince fielded the questions from left field, center field, and right field. He answered some in full. He answered some with a light touch and made plans with the child to discuss 1-on-1. He acknowledged some and promised to go into more detail in an upcoming Spiritual Life group.

There was absolutely nothing sequential about the service. It was beautiful.

He met each and every child where they were at. Not where they “should” be, but he joined them where they were. He knows that if he meets them there, they can walk the path together.

It may be a winding path, but the destination is the same.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Ranch Voice. The doctors who work here are remarkable and it is great to share their stories with you.

Please keep our children, Pastor Vince, and all our staff in your prayers.

In His love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joy".

# Frequently Asked Questions

## The importance of home passes



By **Andrea Canton,**  
**LBSW**  
**Case Management Manager**

***Why do children in care go on home passes? If they can do that, why can't they just go home?***

Just because a kid seems to be doing well enough to go home for a weekend doesn't mean they are ready to move home full time. Mental health and trauma recovery has its ups and downs, and it is essential to make a careful, well-thought-out discharge plan. Home passes are an important part of this plan. They are test drives that serve several purposes.

**Practice coping skills learned in treatment.** At the Ranch, we believe family participation in a child's treatment is vital for success. Whenever possible, children and their families work together to learn new skills and strategies to help them be successful in their home, school, and community.

In intensive individual therapy sessions, children learn skills that help them build and maintain relationships. During family therapy sessions, children and their families practice these skills and learn how to communicate and build healthy relationships. Parents are also invited to attend a weekly parenting

group where they can learn more about the coping skills their children are learning each week.

Home passes give children and their families a chance to practice the coping skills they've learned in their everyday environment while they still have the support of their Ranch treatment team. If something goes wrong during a home pass, families can contact the Ranch for phone coaching.

Before one child went home for Christmas, we set up pre-arranged check-in calls.

If things were going well, we gave the child lots of praise and encouragement. If they weren't, we talked them through it and reminded them of the coping skills that worked for them at the Ranch. Those skills are different for every kid, but can include deep breathing, listening to music, counting to 10, or doing something physical like wall push-ups.

In some cases, we remind parents that they don't have to talk everything out right away. Sometimes kids need space before they are ready to talk. We also might coach parents on how best to bring it up and give them an example.

"I'm going to check on you in ten minutes and then I want you to share how you feel about the situation. I won't interrupt and I will respect what you are saying. When you are done, I'll share my perspective without interruption.

Then we can try to come to a shared understanding of the situation and how we move forward."

One of our kids went on a home pass and wouldn't go to church, something that was very important to her parents. When she came back to the Ranch after her pass, her therapist talked to her about the anxiety she experienced when she thought about going to church. The next time she was home; she was willing and able to attend church with her family.

**Gather feedback.** After each visit, our case managers and therapists check in with the children and their families to talk about how things went. They discuss challenges that came up, what went well, and brainstorm ways to make the next visit smoother. This feedback helps the treatment team fine-tune the support and skills the child and family need for future home passes and eventual discharge.

**Give families time to reconnect.** The period leading up to placement can be fraught with arguments, stress, and weakened family ties. Home passes give families time to reconnect and continue the healing that began in family therapy.

Simple activities like playing board games, making a meal together, watching movies, or completing a household project, help knit the family back together, creating new, happy memories in the process. Families witness firsthand the progress their child has made, which can ease their concerns about



## Beneath the cap: a story of grit, growth, and graduation

returning to the challenges they faced before treatment.

### **Ease the transition home.**

Regular passes can help ease the transition to life outside of the treatment setting. Participating in community activities and reconnecting with friends and religious groups can reinforce the child's feeling of belonging and boost their confidence about returning home for good. Gently reintroducing children to their communities not only bolsters their social support network but is also strategic in preventing potential setbacks.

**Learn the types of support the family will need.** Our goal is to ensure children and families feel supported not only throughout the treatment process but also after discharge. Transitioning from residential treatment back into the home can be a big adjustment for everyone. Feedback from home visits helps us arrange community services that will lead to success.

Every member of a child's Ranch treatment team is dedicated to making a real impact in the lives of children and families. Each trip home is a learning experience for everyone—children, families, and the Ranch treatment team—and gives us the information we need to facilitate a confident and successful re-entry into normal life.

Thomas is a taller-than-average 17-year-old with brown hair you rarely see because it is hidden under a baseball cap. He is friendly, calm, and a devoted Philadelphia Eagles fan. He is easy to like and has befriended nearly everyone on campus.

This is not the same kid who came to the Ranch—the kid who suffered from severe mood swings that took him from calm to rage in minutes. His mother, Bre, said he was kicked out of several schools. At one school, he was there just 28 minutes before they asked him to leave. They were working with a doctor who had tried many approaches to stabilize Thomas' mood swings, but nothing worked.

Bre was desperate to get Thomas the help he needed, so when the doctor said, "You may not like this option, but Thomas needs residential care," she was open to the idea.

Three years ago, Bre made one of the most challenging decisions a parent can make. She applied for Thomas to be admitted to the Ranch's Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility, and his application was approved.

"I used to get mad a lot," Thomas said. "Then, one day, my mom had



To prepare for graduation, Thomas took part in an age-old tradition, senior pictures. His photos not only capture his likeness but commemorate the joy and accomplishment of his outstanding educational achievement.

enough, and she told me she was taking me for treatment."

Bre recalled how difficult it was to drop him off on the day he was admitted.

"It was so hard to know he'd be alone," she said. "I was crying in the parking lot."

While Bre sat in her car in the parking lot, Thomas was inside the building, angry and wanting to flee.

"I thought [treatment at the Ranch] would be worse than it was, but it wasn't. It wasn't fun, but I made it through," Thomas said.

At the Ranch, Thomas found the support and tools he needed to manage his emotions. His attitude changed and his anger slowly subsided.

After six months of treatment, Thomas was discharged from the Ranch, with the expectation that he would return to his home school the following Monday.

Thomas' school wanted him to succeed, but quickly realized they could not provide the structure he had received at Dakota Memorial School (DMS), the Ranch's on-campus school—structure that was necessary for his continued educational success. With a few quick phone calls, the two schools and his family decided the best option for Thomas was to return to DMS as a day student.

That wouldn't be easy. It wasn't because he didn't want to go, but because he lived 100 miles away, which meant a 200-mile round trip in North Dakota, every day, no matter the weather!

"[DMS Principal] Shayla Leinen was an angel from God," Bre said. "She helped us figure out the logistics and soon Thomas was making the commute to DMS. It was wonderful. For the first time,

Thomas actually wanted to go to school, and he is thriving. Instead of flunking out, he will graduate early!"

Now, Thomas enjoys school and has made many happy memories. His favorite memory from the Ranch was attending a RedHawks baseball game. Thomas' favorite subject is English, and he was surprised to even enjoy reading Shakespeare.

One of his favorite teachers, Dan Kelly, said, "When Thomas came to my English class the first time, he was unwilling to read or write and now he excels in both of those areas. Thomas is consistently one of my hardest workers, and he is a role model to the other students."

Thomas also has an on-campus job in the kitchen, where he earns class credit and learns valuable skills—like teamwork, following directions, and how to get along with people.

After learning how to manage his emotions, one of the most important things Thomas learned at DMS was that he is smart. Everyone in his previous schools were so focused

on his behaviors that they didn't have time to recognize and nurture his intelligence.

Buoyed by this new self-confidence, Thomas put in the

time and effort it took to graduate. In May, Thomas will replace his baseball cap with a graduation cap and receive his high school diploma. He will be surrounded by family, friends, and teachers, who are all so proud of how far he's come.

For kids like Thomas, who have overcome so much, high school graduation is a big deal, and it is worth celebrating. Many children who attend Dakota Memorial School go back to their home school for graduation. Thomas chooses to celebrate at the Ranch. So, we will celebrate! Come May, Thomas will have a classic graduation ceremony complete with streamers and decorations, "the walk" into the gym to "Pomp and Circumstance," and long-stemmed roses to give to his family and favorite teachers. He will be surrounded by the family, teachers, therapists, and staff who helped make this day possible.

As Thomas leaves the Ranch for a new chapter of life, he plans to join the military or find a construction job. And he enters this new chapter with confidence.

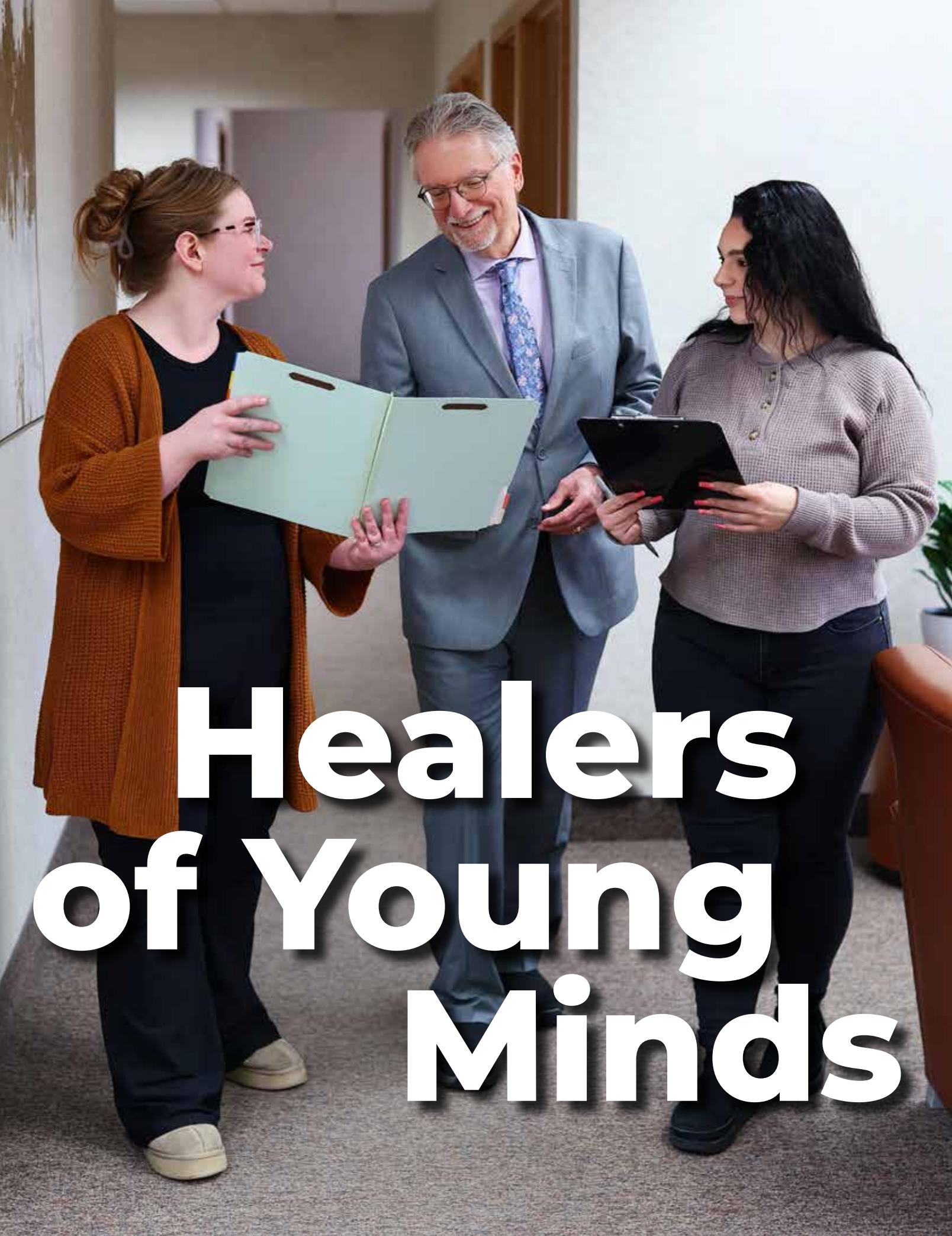
"I'm a completely changed person," Thomas said.

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.



Thomas (middle) chats with his two favorite teachers, Matt Kuebler and Dan Kelly.





# Healers of Young Minds

*“Mental illness is no different than a broken heart or a broken arm. It’s an illness of an organ (the brain) and it requires medical treatment and care.”*

— Dr. Jeffrey Lieberman, former president of the American Psychiatric Association

*“We need to stop thinking about mental disorders as behavioral conditions and start recognizing them as brain disorders that deserve the same level of medical care as any other illness.”*

— Dr. Thomas Insel, former Director of the National Institute of Mental Health

People are often surprised to learn about the medical staff at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. Because mental illness is an illness of the brain, as Drs. Lieberman and Insel say above, we have full-time nurse’s aides, nurses, doctors, psychologists, and nurse practitioners who provide medical care to our kids. We thought it was time you heard their stories.

**Dr. Wayne Martinsen,  
Psychiatrist/  
Medical Director  
Dakota Boys and  
Girls Ranch**

*“A psychiatrist is a medical physician who has undergone four years of specialist behavioral health training after completing medical school.*

*Psychiatrists can play a number of roles with mental health patients, but they typically specialize in medication management of mental health concerns like depression, anxiety, ADHD, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc.” —Dr. Martinsen*

Dr. Wayne Martinsen said the Ranch works with the most vulnerable, traumatized kids in the region.

“Our kids struggle with multiple mental health diagnoses and the

resulting behavioral, educational, and interpersonal problems,” Martinsen said. “The work is complex, and the stakes are high in terms of helping relieve emotional suffering, and in assisting children in reintegrating into their families and communities. Our psychiatric and therapeutic goal is to improve quality of life and set a firm foundation for their adult lives.”



Martinsen didn’t intend to pursue a career in mental health. He was going to school for architectural drafting when he started working

at a residential treatment facility in Minnesota to pay the bills.

“I enjoyed my work with adolescents, and liked trying to help them find ways to connect and solve problems,” Martinsen said.

He switched his

degree to social work, went on for his master’s degree, and spent several years providing family and individual therapy, before going to medical school and completing a residency in psychiatry. More recently, he became board certified in Lifestyle Medicine so he could focus on a broader and more holistic approach to behavioral health.

In addition to his work at the Ranch, Martinsen teaches at the UND School of Medicine as clinical faculty for medical students as well as family practice and psychiatric residents.

Much of Martinsen’s work at the Ranch centers around psychiatric diagnoses. The purpose of a diagnosis is to understand the underlying reasons for problematic behaviors so medical and behavioral health providers can implement effective treatments. The diagnosis process includes interviews of the child and family, a review of education and medical records, and often

a referral for formal psychological testing.

“The most common symptom that brings children to

*“Dr. Martinsen is compassionate and thorough. He wants his patient’s lives to be the best they can be.”*

—Parent



the Ranch is anger,” Martinsen said. “But anger can come from any number of underlying problems such as trauma, depression, bipolar disorder, autism, and personality disorders. The treatment for each of these diagnoses is different, so the cause of the anger is vital to tailoring a treatment plan.”

While people are often concerned about labeling children, Martinsen said it is important to understand emotional and behavioral symptoms so children struggling with psychiatric problems are not simply labeled as “acting out” when they need professional help.

“I like to compare behavioral health to other medical specialties. If your primary doctor diagnoses you with strep throat, it doesn’t mean you are a strep throat victim. It identifies a problem that can be treated to improve your quality of life,” he said. “Similarly, a mental health diagnosis directs treatment. Even our kids who have the most problematic emotional and behavioral symptoms have an identity far bigger than any diagnosis.”

Some people are also concerned about psychiatric medications.

“While psychiatric medications can have side effects and sometimes need to be discontinued,” Martinsen said, “it is important to look at them in a broader context. When effective, psychiatric medications relieve

suffering and help our kids get back on track with their families, friends, education, and dreams.”

Medications are never used as a stand-alone treatment at the Ranch, and children and their parents or guardians are free to

refuse or discontinue a medication at any time.

The role of psychiatric care at the

Ranch is just one facet of care that includes individual, family, and group therapy; education support, spirituality, occupational therapy, and wellness.

Perhaps the greatest lesson Martinsen has learned from the kids at the Ranch is to value patience.

“We have a resident who recently returned to the Ranch after his initial discharge a couple years earlier,” Martinsen said.

“During his first placement, he was very traumatized and sullen, refusing both therapy and medication.

Now that he is back, he is engaging meaningfully in trauma therapy, started medication for ADHD and depression, and is actively engaged in school. He is thriving as he once again

approaches discharge from our program, this time talking about going to tech school and being

back with his family. He is a far cry from the young man who sullenly refused to talk to me two years earlier.”

Martinsen has been at the Ranch for 27 years. He stays because he loves what he does.

“I love the people. I love the complexity of the problems. I love maintaining connections with all parts of the treatment team including residential staff, supervisors, therapists, nursing, psychology, and administration,” Martinsen said. “I find it incredibly rewarding to make a difference by helping children and their families live the lives they want to live. I am also humbled by other professionals and our donors. None of what we do would be possible without the support of the incredible donors who make our work possible.”

*In his off time, Martinsen and his wife enjoy traveling, spending time with their kids and grandkids, and enjoying the company of friends.*

**Dr. Hannah Baczynski,  
Psychologist  
Dakota Boys and  
Girls Ranch**



*“A psychologist is a doctoral-level mental health professional. In addition to providing therapy, we order, administer, and interpret psychological assessments; develop and oversee mental health programming; diagnose mental health conditions; and supervise counseling interns working towards licensure.”—Dr. Baczynski*

*“Dr. Martinsen has been a godsend for our son! We will be forever grateful.”*

—Parent



Dr. Hannah Baczynski likes to say she made it through her teenage years on anger and spite.

“I was a cranky, defiant child. I got myself into a lot of trouble because I was always moving around or being sassy, and I didn’t always get along with the teachers,” she said. “I did a lot of things that were impulsive and probably unwise. In some ways, I wasn’t so different from the kids we have at the Ranch.”

Baczynski credits her success to a couple of key factors. Being a fast learner allowed her to get by academically without much effort. And living in a small Illinois community with a large, well-known family meant she had a lot of support. These experiences help her connect and relate to kids.

At the Ranch, Baczynski conducts psychological assessments, leads therapy groups, and is involved in program development and staff training. While she doesn’t have a lot of time to provide individual therapy, she does like to have one or two kids on her caseload to keep her grounded.

Over the last year, Baczynski has been reworking the Ranch’s treatment programming to center

around Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). DBT is a type of therapy designed to help people change unhelpful patterns of behavior by learning new skills to manage their emotions and reduce conflict in relationships.

Baczynski believes in the ability of DBT skills to help everyone and said learning and practicing the skills changed her life.

“I’ve seen them transform kids’ lives, and I think about them myself all the time,” Baczynski said. “I started teaching my children DBT skills when they

were toddlers. We started with paced breathing activities to help them calm down and regulate their emotions.”

One of the more powerful DBT skills is opposite action, a skill that helps you manage intense emotions by doing the opposite of what your mind and body are telling you to do.

“I had a kid who dealt with his frustration by bolting from the room and punching the wall over and over,” Baczynski said. “At one point about 60% of the way through his treatment, he looked at me after punching the wall and said, ‘I have to stop doing this. It’s not working.’ I’m like, ‘That’s

what I’ve been telling you!’”

They discussed ways he could recognize what he was feeling and then take opposite actions like pausing to take a deep breath, expressing his emotions in words, and asking for a moment to take a time-out.

“For kids with really severe trauma, seeing them use their DBT skills to get through trauma treatment, and then be a totally different kid on the other side is really magical to watch,” Baczynski said.

She tells the story of one young boy with a smile.

“At the end of therapy, I always have a termination session where I tell kids what I’ve learned from them. I worked with one kid who had pretty significant ADHD and required a lot of patience, which is not one of my strongest qualities,” she said. “When I told him the biggest thing I learned from him was patience, he looked at me as if to say, ‘I’m not quite sure you’ve mastered that.’”

Over the last year, Baczynski has been training the Ranch therapists and leading the charge to get everyone on the treatment team on a 16-week rotation of DBT skills training and practice. Groups provided by nurses, case managers, wellness staff, spiritual life staff, and therapists are all focused on learning and practicing the skills of the week.

She is now rolling it out for the residential treatment specialists who are with the kids day and night. Understanding and learning about DBT enables them to help the kids practice the skills when they aren’t in therapy or

*“Dr. Baczynski is incredibly bright and engaging. In addition to developing a coherent therapeutic approach the therapists can use, she is stunningly clear and thoughtful about helping direct care staff understand their place in every step of our children’s treatment.”*

—Dr. Wayne Martinsen

group.

“The research shows that getting all staff involved will not only improve outcomes for the kids but also improve outcomes for the staff by improving retention and job satisfaction,” she said.

When asked what she wishes people knew about the kids, Baczynski said, “A lot of times people have this misconception that they can drop their kids off and we will fix them—like they exist in this vacuum where we can tinker with them a little bit and they’ll be fine. Kids are a product of their environment. Poverty, homelessness, domestic violence, or anything like that impacts the brain. The stuff that happens in the home is the pattern against which they do everything. We can’t ‘fix’ the kids by themselves. We have to make changes in their environment.”

To do that, the Ranch starts with families by encouraging them to be involved in their child’s treatment through family therapy and a weekly parent group.

“It’s not just about going to therapy once or twice a week,” Baczynski said. “If a kid struggles in school, how can we work with the school to create an environment where they can succeed in school? If they struggle at home, how can we impact how they interact with their parents and siblings? How do we impact friendships and free time? What kinds of hobbies can they do. The whole system needs to change to impact the child.”

Baczynski said the greatest misconception about kids and mental health is that kids have

control over their behaviors.

“When a child is abused, it impacts the wiring of their brain. They might not remember the abuse or trauma, but it impacts how they react to everyone in their lives. The brain is very plastic and changeable so there are things we can do to mitigate the damage, but it is hard work,” she said.

Baczynski chooses to work at the Ranch because of the culture.

“The Ranch places such value on learning and improving and making things better. We bring people with unique strengths together to provide the best possible care for the kids. We can look at things from different angles and problem solve together,” Baczynski said. “Working with an interdisciplinary team allows us to think through things in a more comprehensive way. And we are all here for the right reasons. We love the work we do. We all want to learn and improve and do the right thing for the kids.”

*Baczynski attended the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL, where she majored in psychology and statistics. She earned a master’s degree in forensic psychology and a doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND. She*

*and her husband live in Fargo with their two children. She enjoys painting, yoga, aerial workouts (with aerial silks and a metal hoop), and doing lots of fun things with her family.*

### **Jadin Stromme, PMH, MP-BC, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner**



*“A psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner is a mid-level provider, the same as any nurse practitioner but we specialize in mental health. We can prescribe medications, provide therapy, and diagnose mental health conditions for people across the lifespan. Nurse practitioners are different than a physician’s assistant in that we can practice on our own without a physician’s oversight.”—Jadin Stromme*

Jadin Stromme got her bachelor’s degree in nursing from Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. She discovered her love for psychiatry while working in the Emergency Room at Sanford Health.

“When you work in the ER, a lot of psych is involved. There is such a stigma to mental health that not a lot of people in healthcare can break past,” Stromme said. “It hit me that you can really make a difference with mental health. I was able to therapeutically communicate with these patients when their mental illness symptoms were the most acute.”

So, when Stromme decided to go back to school, she enrolled

in the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND. Following graduation, she worked at an outpatient clinic, but quickly realized it wasn't the right fit.

"I got a little bored doing outpatient therapy. I wasn't being challenged, diagnostically or therapeutically," Stromme said. "It's very different at the Ranch because the kids have such complex issues. I like the challenge."

Stromme enjoys getting to know the kids and build relationships with them during such a pivotal time in their life.

"Almost every kiddo here has depression and anxiety. Knowing how to communicate with them about that, telling them there is a reason they are feeling this way and that it's not hopeless is very rewarding," she said. "I want them to know there is light at the end of the tunnel—that they can do things that are going to make them feel better."

"When you have a breakthrough moment with a kid, it's unlike anything else," she said.

A big breakthrough moment with one resident has taught Stromme a lot about how to relate to the kids.

"This young girl doesn't think she is very smart or that anyone loves her. She was resistant to treatment, and often said things like, 'No,

I don't like that,' and 'That's not fair'," Stromme said. "Over the past weeks, she has turned a corner and is a different kid in the way she carries herself. Being a good listener is what has really connected us. Like all of our kids, she needed to feel heard."

The challenge of providing psychiatric care to kids in acute psychological distress has helped Stromme grow her diagnostic and therapeutic skills. She credits much of what she has learned in her short time at the Ranch to Dr. Wayne Martinsen, the Ranch's psychiatrist and medical director.

"Dr. Martinsen is one of the reasons I'm at the Ranch. I'm learning so much from him. He makes it a safe place to learn, to grow in my profession and knowledge, and to help these kids," she said.

Stromme appreciates working with a cohesive team and has been surprised by all the teamwork and communication.

"Everyone is so involved with our morning updates with Dr.

*"Jadin has been a great addition to the team. She brings not only a freshness of education, but also a more youthful perspective. Many of our kids have been traumatized by a grandpa, dad, or uncle. Jadin is not threatening to them by virtue of who she is. Beyond that, I hear from team after team how well she does with the kids and her colleagues."*

—Dr. Wayne Martinsen

Martinsen," she said. "We have therapists, case managers, cottage staff, and school staff. Everyone provides input in how the child is doing, including information and concerns from the residents and their parents. We're seeing all aspects of what's going on with the kids and are very well-rounded, which leads to really good holistic care."

Stromme said the Ranch couldn't do what it does for the kids without the support of the community and donors across the country.

"I hope they know how important their donations are and how they go a long way here," Stromme said. "There aren't a lot of other resources for these kids and the work we do is so important."

*Stromme lives in Fargo with her husband, their young son, and their two dogs. Spending time with her husband, son, and dogs is very important to her. They like to spend time outdoors, go to the lake, cook ethnic food, and get together with friends. She also enjoys traveling and has traveled all over the world, including trips to Iceland, England, Africa, Greece, and Thailand.*

Like Martinsen, Baczynski, and Stromme, the medical staff at the Ranch are all passionate about their work and the kids. Everything they do is based on the science and biology of the brain. At the same time, they are compassionate and kind and work together with everyone on the treatment team to do what is right for each child and their family. They are committed to healing young minds.



## Restoring history: Reviving a century-old treasure

The original Tolley farm, donated to Dakota Boys Ranch by Louis and Ida Butt, was a working ranch. The children who lived there helped with chores in the house and on the farm, including tending to the horses, cows, and other livestock. The wagon they used to carry hay and other supplies was built by Louis from the frame of a broken-down 1928 International Model T Truck. Like many other pioneers of the day, Louis used what he had to create what he needed.

In 1969, when Dakota Boys Ranch operations moved to its current location in Minot, ND, and sold the Tolley farm, the wagon was purchased by George Fick, husband of Maryanna “Skip” Fick, who worked in the Dakota Boys Ranch Foundation. The Fick family used the wagon at their farm northwest of Burlington for many years.

After years of disuse and being stored outside, the wagon was in rough shape, but George believed it still had the potential for greatness, if only as an important piece of Ranch and North Dakota history. In 2020, George and Maryanna’s children, Derrill, Sharon, Lavonne, and Jeanine, pulled the crumbled wagon from the trees at the Fick farm and donated it to the Ranch. The career and technology teachers at Dakota Memorial School (the Ranch’s on-campus school) took on the project of guiding their shop students as they restored the wagon.

Spending years exposed to the elements left the wagon covered in rust. That, and its 1928 frame,

meant that restoration would not be a quick, easy, or inexpensive project. Larry Hayden, a Ranch donor in Washington, donated the funds for the project and teachers Todd Fjeldahl and Andrew Meier incorporated it into their Production Tech classes.

### Reconstructing the past

“We took on the project in the summer of 2020,” said Fjeldahl. “I started by ordering the specialty tires, which ended up being a 2 ½ year process. It got slowed up by COVID.”



**The hay wagon, built by Louis Butt and used on the Tolley farm, after years of weathering and disuse.**

Five or six students were involved in the restoration over the course of four years, but one student, Remington, took the lead on much of the project.

“Remington kind of played the role of the foreman, and he had some extra responsibilities,” said Fjeldahl.

Students began dismantling the

old structure early on, but without new parts, the work halted. In true pioneer fashion, they used any salvageable wood scraps to make other projects while they waited. When the tires finally arrived, work on the project could really begin.

“That’s when Remington really took a big role,” Fjeldahl said.

One of the rims was almost completely rusted out and professionals at a local tire store wouldn’t touch it. Remington, a self-taught welder, was up for the challenge of grinding, filling, and rebuilding the rim.

“It’s basically due to him that we got to go any further because 1920s rims are very hard to find,” Fjeldahl said.

Working on a 100-year-old vehicle frame made finding the necessary

parts a challenge, which was discouraging for the teachers and students.

“The project was still going forward, but there were so many moments we felt like quitting; we didn’t know where to go next,” said Meier.

The group relied heavily on the knowledge and expertise of people



**The fully refurbished hay wagon on display outside the shop where the students built it.**

in the community, and even called on a retired Ranch shop teacher when they hit a snag.

In addition to rebuilding the rim and replacing the tires, the restoration included replacing the flatbed boards, fixing minor frame issues, removing the brakes, and cutting off other pieces they didn't need. The group even fashioned a "jig" to ensure the gaps between the boards were even.

Seeing the wagon transform and take shape was exciting.

"Before it would have looked like a really old pickup with a flatbed and sideboards," Remington said. "Now it's a full flatbed with a headboard on it for haybales, like what you'd use for a hayride."

Remington enjoyed many parts of the project but found wading through the unknown to be the most rewarding part.

"Whatever project we are in the process of, I really enjoy kind of figuring out the next steps," Remington said.

The wagon restoration was significant for kids at the Ranch in that it allowed them to reinvigorate a piece of history. It was an eye-opening experience to learn they could take something old and make it new again.

"I grew up with the old machinery, so I'm familiar with it," Meier said. "But these [students] aren't familiar with the old ways."

### **Hands-on learning makes an impact**

Many students at the Ranch find typical classroom learning challenging, but really excel with hands-on, real-world projects like this one.

In addition to the technical skills involved in welding and carpentry, students learned the value of hard work, perseverance, and teamwork.

"The idea of starting with basically nothing and now there's a finished project," Fjeldahl said. "A handful of students have had some involvement, some more than others, but they all contributed and did their part. And now we see the final project."

Remington, who will graduate from Dakota Memorial School in May, showed great leadership throughout the project.

"I like having kids like Remington in that environment to show the other kids what to do and be an influence for the younger kids who are less experienced," Meier said. "They get a taste of that work ethic."

Beyond the nuts and bolts of the restoration process, the project gave students an opportunity to learn about perseverance, teamwork, and the importance of preserving history for future generations.

The wagon, once a broken-down piece of the past, now represents a renewed sense of accomplishment for students at Dakota Memorial School, and an enduring legacy of Ranch and North Dakota history.



**Students removed the old wood, fixed minor frame issues, and removed unnecessary parts from the hay wagon.**



# Understanding Our Kids

## The gift of story



**By Carla  
Luehe,  
Library  
Media  
Specialist**

As the Library Media Specialist at the Ranch's on-campus school, it is my job to ensure that our shelves are filled with books that are interesting, appropriate, challenging, and promote healing for the children at the Ranch. My job challenges me every day to build the literacy and reading habits of our kids.

Sometimes I have the amazing opportunity to connect with an author and a subject in ways that give our kids new experiences and build their love of reading. Or even reveal to them the possibilities of being a writer! That's the case with teacher, librarian, and author John Schu, who recently spent the day on our Minot campus.

I first heard John speak years ago at a North Dakota State Reading Conference when he was Scholastic's Ambassador for school libraries. During his presentation, he shared his love of books and how his favorite books and authors bring him joy. When John presents, he brings copies of his favorite books and hands them out to everyone in the audience. It feels like Oprah Winfrey's Christmas show, "You get a book, you get a book, and you get a book!" Everyone leaves with a book, a happy heart, and a smile.

When I was introduced to John at a December 2024 literacy event in Minot, I told him about my work at the Ranch and we discussed the possibility of him spending a day with our students. Two months later, he walked onto our campus to do just that, and what a day it was!

John presented to three groups of students, grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12, held a book signing, and gave every child one of his favorite books or one of his own. John started the day with the elementary students

and really made a connection with them by talking about the book, "The One and Only Ivan," by Katherine Applegate, one of his favorite authors.

One of our student's mothers said, "I just wanted to share how excited [my daughter] was to tell me about the author who came to talk to the kids and signed her book. Her very first autograph! It makes my heart happy when she gets excited about things related to learning and school."





During his sessions with the middle and high school students, John shared his own story about living in residential treatment centers as a young teen, which he tells in his book, *“Louder Than Hunger.”*

When asked about the visit, the kids had a lot to say.

*“I thought that Mr. Schu was really funny, and he made me feel special when he gave me a book.”*

—6th grade girl

*“I liked how Mr. Schu talked about the things he went through when he was a kid. He was very inspiring, kind, and generous. I love the book he gave me.”*

—4th grade girl

*“Stories affirm our experiences. They challenge our comfort zone. They give us space to hibernate and pull us out of our isolation when we need to be reminded we aren’t alone.”*

—John Schu

*“He should come back. He inspired me to be myself.”* —6th grade boy

*“I can relate to his struggles. They helped me understand myself.”*

—8th grade boy

*“If you got pain, speak about it. If you can’t speak about it, write about it. It could help someone else.”*

—9th grade boy

Finding good books for our kids is one thing. Finding books

whose stories parallel their own experiences, and then meeting the people who write them, is icing on the cake.

John Schu has made a career out of advocating for the things he cares about most: kids, books, and the people that connect them. He was named a Library Journal Mover and Shaker for his dynamic interactions with students and his passionate adoption of new

technologies to connect authors, illustrators, books, and readers. He is the children’s librarian for Bookelicious, a part-time lecturer at Rutgers University, and shares his love of reading with countless educators and students around the world.

John, who lives in Naperville, IL, has written five books—New York Times bestseller, *“Louder Than Hunger,”* illustrated by Veronica Miller Jamison; *“This Is a School,”* illustrated by Caldecott Honor artist Lauren Castillo; *“The Gift of Story: Exploring the Affective Side of the Reading Life,”* and *“Ruthie Rose’s Big Idea,”* illustrated by Holly Hatam.

## John Schu on Social Media

Twitter: @MrSchuReads

Instagram: @MrSchuReads

Blog: MrSchuReads.com

Website: JohnSchu.com



## “Louder Than Hunger”

by John Schu

In his book, *“Louder Than Hunger,”* John Schu writes a fictionalized “novel-in-verse” account of his own experiences and emotions as an adolescent living in residential treatment facilities for anorexia nervosa, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, and depression. In an afterword, Schu writes that he “felt unworthy of taking up space.” While *“Louder Than Hunger”* is raw and honest, it also brings hope to those who want to quiet their self-destructive inner voice and embrace self-acceptance, support, and love.

According to a Publisher’s Weekly review, “This heart-wrenching verse novel is an unflinching depiction of resistance and disordered eating recovery.”

# Celebrations

## Celebrating Easter fun

At the Ranch, Easter is a time to share the good news with our boys and girls that because Jesus died and rose again, they too can have new life. Leading up to the holiday, kids make Easter art, decorate eggs, make special Easter treats, hold a cake decorating contest, 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. Here's a look back at Easter 2024.



Easter was a little chilly last year, but kids and staff braved the cold to complete the annual Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt. Bible verse clues in each egg took them to different locations across campus, concluding with chocolate cross prizes in the Chapel.



Cornelsen Cottage won the cake decorating contest award for Taste with their yummy strawberry cake and cake pops.



Butt Cottage won the cake decorating contest award for Appearance with their Rainbow Bunny Bottom Cake.



Seegers Cottage won the cake decorating contest award for Creativity with their Cotton Candy Bunny Bottom Cake.



Kids decorated eggs and made other fun Easter crafts as they talked in Spiritual Life Group about Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our sins.



The praise band from Our Savior Lutheran Church provided music for the Easter chapel service.



Rev. Rick Jones shared the good news that "Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!" during the Easter chapel service on our Minot campus.



## Cozy creations

Kids in Wildlife Club made custom sweatshirts! A special thanks to Mrs. Meier, Mrs. Krueger, and Mrs. Brackins who supplied the Cricket machines and helped make it all possible.



Each child used vinyl graphics to create a custom sweatshirt to keep them warm during Wildlife Club activities.



Amazing volunteers make projects like these even more fun!

## Always learning

Sara Meixner, Dakota Memorial School (DMS) Math Teacher, received a full scholarship from Jump\$tart to attend the National Educator Conference in Louisville, KY. Ms. Meixner learned what's new in finance and financial education and met fellow educators from across the country.



Professional development opportunities allow DMS teachers to bring new resources and knowledge to their colleagues across the district.

## Excited about reading at Dakota Memorial School

Library Media Specialist, Carla Luehe, does all kinds of fun and engaging activities with kids at Dakota Memorial School to get them excited about reading. In October, students earned weekly prizes for participating in the READ Marathon, including a fun eye



patch! They had Halloween guessing games where students won cake-decorating kits or new books. And an incredible 12 elementary students earned a personal pan pizza for completing the Book-It program.

## It's all about choice

Nurse Kathryn is excited about giving children at the Ranch "voice and choice" on the topics they discuss in Nursing Groups. "Voice and choice" ensures kids feel heard and validated in their thoughts and feelings. So far, the kids have asked to learn about the medications they take and why they take them; vital signs such as heart rate and blood pressure; and alternative therapies for coping.

"It's been great to see what our residents want to learn about," Kathryn said. "Having them be a part of their care plans is such an important piece to building rapport and motivating them to do better for themselves."



Nurse Kathryn proudly displays her "voice and choice" poster for nursing groups.



# Celebrations

## Safety first!

Rob Ortiz from Verendrye Electric Cooperative visited Dakota Memorial School to educate students about power line safety. The students tried on lineman gloves and discussed what to do if they ever encountered a downed power line.



Rob used a scale model to demonstrate what happens when birds, automobiles, and farm machinery come into contact with power lines.

## Celebrating with friends

Friendsgiving, an annual Ranch tradition, brings our kids together to celebrate all they have to be thankful for. This year, the kitchen made the turkey, and each cottage made a side dish to share. The kids were also treated to music, delicious desserts, and fun games.

Holiday traditions provide kids with a sense of belonging and can bring meaning to their lives.



## Right on point

In shop class, a student made a pencil-shaped coat rack that looks pretty \*sharp\*! The coat rack now resides in an office in the school, where everyone can admire it, and hang their coats, of course.



## It's turkey time!

Our Minot team knows how to have a "gobbling" good time! Teams from across the Ranch showed up to win at the 4th Annual Turkey Games! And Thanksgiving festivities just aren't complete without a fun outfit.



A team of our incredible teachers, otherwise known as "The Leftovers," did NOT disappoint in their turkey get-up.



The People and Culture team, also known as the "P&C Pin Pals" showed their team spirit with matching turkey shirts.



A team of our Facilities and Kitchen staff, better known as "The Dashing Drumsticks," wowed in their matching festive aprons.

## Leach Foundation cares for kids

The Tom and Frances Leach Foundation, Bismarck, granted Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch \$100,000 to complete necessary infrastructure modernization and safety upgrades. The purpose of the project is to create a safer and more comfortable environment for children in care at the Ranch.

Representatives from the Leach Foundation Board visited the Bismarck campus for a quick tour and were thrilled with what they saw.

“The Leach Foundation is honored to provide funding for Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch so the Bismarck campus can upgrade its HVAC and heating systems,” said Ann Reich, Foundation Board Member and Grants Committee Chairman. “The foundation board applauds Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch for their care and passion for helping at-risk children and their families succeed,” added Reich. “It was a pleasure to visit the campus and witness their compassionate work.”



(From left) Tami Helmers, Executive Assistant and Grant Coordinator, Tom and Frances Leach Foundation; Josh Miller, Facilities Manager, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch; Ann Reich, Foundation Board Member and Grants Committee Chairman, Tom and Frances Leach Foundation; Lisa Aisenbrey, Vice President of People and Culture, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

## Learning to be independent

Ranch programming emphasizes the well-being and growth of the whole child. We want children to learn new skills that make them successful while they're with us but also be able to take those skills back to their homes, families, and communities. Equipping kids with independent living skills, such as sewing, personal hygiene, cooking, or doing laundry, sets them up for future success.



A student learns the basics of sewing with a machine.



Students made some delicious treats in an activity focused on teamwork and collaboration.



Students made biscuit pizzas in the air fryer, a fun, simple entrée that tastes great, too!



# Celebrations

## Budding philanthropists

Philanthropy and Youth (PaY) committees from Fargo South High School, Davies High School, West Fargo High School, and Oak Grove Lutheran School visited our Fargo campus to tour the facility and learn about the Ranch and the kids we serve.

Started by the Barry Foundation, PaY introduces high school students to philanthropy by allocating funds to high schools in Fargo, ND, Moorhead and Detroit Lakes, MN, and the surrounding areas to use for grantmaking to local nonprofit organizations.



## As white as snow

In Spiritual Life Groups, kids talked about God's love and forgiveness, that He makes their lives new and clean, and because of that, they can look to the New Year with hope and without fear. They made 3D snowflakes to hang in the dining hall as a reminder of God's love and faithfulness.

Throughout the lesson, they focused on Isaiah 1:18, which says, "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."



The 3D snowflakes in the nutrition center serve as a fun decoration, but also an important reminder of God's love for us.

## Horses are healing

Andrea hadn't attended any off-campus outings, as she often became overwhelmed during small-group activities. But because of her safe behavior, she was able to go to the horse barn for the first time. Beforehand, staff talked to Andrea about what happens at the horse barn and what would be expected of her. She wasn't comfortable riding during horse group that day, but she observed her peers and talked with staff about what was happening. She even did "knuckles" with Loki, the resident colt. Sharing what they learned during group on the way home, Andrea proudly shared that she learned all the equipment needed to ride a horse, and how to put it on and take it off properly.



## Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch was “Twice-Blessed” by Inspiritus Community Health Foundation

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch received two “Twice Blessed” matching grants from the Inspiritus Community Health Foundation. The first grant, totaling \$17,550, will be used to complete necessary safety upgrades, including adding sprinkler systems to our existing Minot cottages. The essential upgrades will ensure each cottage is a safe, comfortable, and healing environment for children at the Ranch.

The second grant, totaling \$36,268, will be used to build Zurcher Cottage, a new Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility, on our Minot campus. The cottage will provide best-in-class care and treatment to meet the unique needs of the youngest and highest needs boys and girls served at the Ranch. Construction on the cottage began in September 2024 and is expected to be completed this Fall.



**Tina DeGree (right), Vice President of Education and Compliance, accepts a check from Shelly Wepler (left), Inspiritus Community Health Foundation President.**



**Sheila Miller (right), Vice President of Finance, Facilities, and Technology, accepts a check from Shelly Wepler (left), Inspiritus Community Health Foundation President.**

## Giving from the heart

Women of the Grace Lutheran LWML and the Grace Lutheran Mission Quilters from Grace Lutheran Church, Fargo, held a Valentine's Day Tea and in-gathering event to collect items for the Dakota Memorial School Caring Closet. The ladies collected many items including toiletries, sheet sets, snacks, and undergarments. The Mission Quilters also made and donated eight quilts.

The Caring Closet provides students at Dakota Memorial School with necessary toiletry, clothing, and home items they may not otherwise have access to. Providing students with basic needs items found in the Caring Closet means they can worry about one less



**Members of the Grace Lutheran Church LWML and Grace Lutheran Mission Quilters with their collected in-gathering items.**

thing and focus on school and just being kids.

## Sharing hope

The guys from Hip Hop and Hope dropped by our Minot campus and had the kids singing, dancing, and laughing. DJ “Pretty Ricky” shared his story of following his dreams and working hard, encouraging kids to do the same. Each child also had a turn at the turntable mixing a song of their choice! The night ended with an enthusiastic game of basketball.



**Hip Hop and Hope’s goal is to help people encounter the love of Jesus, rebrand their lives, and rediscover their identity.**

# Celebrations

## Zine making

Ranch Kids went to a local event and learned about “Zine,” when and how it originated, and that it is a form of self-expression. They had so much fun learning about a new type of art!



A zine is a self-published booklet, often made from one or two sheets of paper, that can be silly or serious. Zine is short for “magazine” or “fanzine.”

## Celebrating Dr. Seuss

Dr. Seuss, AKA Theodor Seuss Geisel, was a beloved children’s author who penned and illustrated favorites such as *The Cat in the Hat*, *The Lorax*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and more. In honor of his birthday, Library Media Specialist, Carla Luehe, dressed up like the Cat in the Hat to read Dr. Seuss books to the kids.



## Fostering love at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

Foster Love, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting children in foster care, generously donated 100 backpacks to kids at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch and Dakota Memorial School. Each brand-new backpack is filled with essential school supplies to set kids up for success in school.



Every student receives a backpack full of school supplies when they leave the Ranch—equipping them for a successful transition back to their home school.

## Decorated with love

Dakota Memorial School Student Council members painted the windows at the Minot Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Thrift Store for Giving Hearts Day. They had fun and made the store look so festive!



## Super readers!

Elementary students at Dakota Memorial School, Minot, placed 1st in the Malcolm Mitchell Read Bowl for all of North Dakota! More than 800,000 students competed around the country and the world. They will receive a certificate from the Share the Magic Foundation as well as a box of grade-appropriate books from Scholastic.



## Celebrating our donors

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch hosted its annual Arizona Donor Appreciation Luncheon on Valentine's Day. Friends of the Ranch gathered to hear from President/CEO, Joy Ryan, and former Ranch resident, Scott Booth. Scott shared about the time he spent at the Ranch, the lessons he learned, and how it has shaped his life today.



(From left) Anne Compere, Senior Director of Mission Advancement, Lisa Cole, Mission Advancement Officer, and Joy Ryan, President/CEO



Dakota Memorial School students visited Clay Your Way, a local pottery painting shop, to make coasters for the giveaway drawing for donors at the luncheon.



Each guest received a Valentine handmade by a child at the Ranch.



"I truly believe that without the intervention the Ranch had in my life, I would not be here today. The Ranch allowed me the opportunity to grow into the adult, husband, father, and student I am today. Grateful does not even begin to describe how I feel about my experience at the Ranch," Scott said.



## Ready for her closeup

A student at Dakota Memorial School photographed Sydney, the therapy dog, for his online digital photography class. She was ready to sit, stay, and pose (with the help of some treats, of course) as she had her photo taken.



## Teamwork and kindness

After a man accidentally donated his late father's shoes the morning he passed away, our thrift store team went to work to track them down, an almost impossible task. Thanks to the incredible efforts of our North Store and Fargo Warehouse team, the shoes were located and returned to the man, who was deeply grateful to everyone who helped. The North Store staff also signed a sympathy card for him, and the Warehouse team added a personal note. We're incredibly proud of the teamwork, dedication, and kindness of everyone involved!



## From struggle to success

MaKenna, a passionate and determined young woman with a vibrant smile, is inquisitive, a little shy, and understands the importance of kindness and empathy. Her life has



**MaKenna proudly holds a card featuring her painting, "Thanksgiving Feast."**

been marked by lasting friendships, a supportive family, and a desire to do what is right.

In middle school, MaKenna was a target of frequent bullying and she had difficult experiences with the staff and administration at her school. Intent on sticking up for herself and others who had been mistreated, MaKenna lashed out in anger. The school was unequipped to meet her unique needs and MaKenna was referred to Dakota Memorial School (DMS), the on-campus school of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, where she attended as a Day Student.

When she started attending DMS

in 8th grade, MaKenna was anxious about what other people would think.

"When I first had to go to school [at DMS] I was nervous," MaKenna said. "People always say the boys and girls ranch is for naughty kids."

Much to her surprise, MaKenna found a supportive learning environment and teachers who really cared.

"[At DMS] I got more one-on-one time, obviously because the school's a little bit smaller. I learn differently so that was very helpful for me," MaKenna said.

MaKenna connected with many of her teachers at DMS, but she felt a special connection to Mr. Damar Brandt, her Special Education teacher. They often shared conversations about religion and faith,

which helped MaKenna quiet some of her fears about the way Christianity had been misrepresented to her in the past. She found comfort in being able to have those conversations with a trusted adult.

"Mr. Brandt and I had many conversations about faith, and that meant a lot to me," she said.

MaKenna valued the relationship she built with Brandt so much that she called back months after returning to public school when she was struggling with questions about her faith.

"Relationships were important to MaKenna," Brandt said. "It was a blessing that she felt she could call back and ask a question."

While at DMS, MaKenna found joy and comfort in her art classes. Having a creative outlet was helpful for her when times were tough, and the accolades she received built her confidence. MaKenna's watercolor painting, "Thanksgiving Feast," was featured on a Ranch Thanksgiving card sent to donors across the United States; and her painting "Healing Hands" won a Silver Key Award at the 96th Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

MaKenna's art teacher remembers her as "empathetic, thoughtful, a great painter and friend to others, and a young woman with a strong faith."

When MaKenna returned to public school mid-way through her sophomore year, her struggles with change and a life-altering medical diagnosis made it a challenging transition. But she remembered the lessons she learned at DMS and did her best to advocate for her needs.

"I feel like I wouldn't have had



**MaKenna (center) was surrounded by loved ones as she showed off her high school diploma.**

as much success without Dakota Memorial,” MaKenna said. “Everything was so bad when I was in 8th grade, I wanted to drop out. I’m thankful to the staff at DMS who helped me succeed so I could get to the day where I graduated.”

After graduating high school, MaKenna attended Transition Academy, a readiness program that helps young adults gain independent living skills, explore post-secondary education and employment options, integrate into the community, and establish support systems.

She now has a full-time job, and when she isn’t working, enjoys hanging out with friends and playing video games. She also enjoys her pets—two dogs, a bunny, and a cat.

MaKenna said she learned important lessons and coping skills at DMS

that she has carried with her into adulthood. Those lessons included the importance of working together, advocating for yourself, and accepting the help that is offered.

“It is really good to have support,” MaKenna said, “especially for someone who is struggling with mental health issues.”

When asked what helped her navigate the fear of starting a new school, and then returning to public school, MaKenna had some encouraging words for incoming students.

“When things are scary, give it some time and everything will change,” MaKenna said. “Your perspective, what you’re thinking, and how you feel will all change.”



“Healing Hands,” a painting done by MaKenna, won the Silver Key Award at the 96th Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, the most prestigious and longest-running recognition program for creative teens in the U.S.

## SHOP DAKOTA RANCH

### Each Purchase Provides Hope and Healing

Shop our elevated second-hand boutique consisting of fashion-forward, hand-selected modern and vintage goods.

Shop  
**DAKOTA RANCH**  
Modern & Vintage Goods



Scan to start  
shopping now!





# Ways to give

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

## Give Now

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

## Prayers

So many of our children come to us exhausted from just fighting to survive. Often, they've lost all hope. Please pray for strength—strength for our children to face and overcome the circumstances that led them to us. Pray for them to find rest, safety, and the promise of God's abiding love. And pray for our staff. Working with our children is difficult, and Ranch staff also need your prayers for them to be accepting, respectful, kind, and strong as they work with these precious children who sometimes lash out because they are in so much pain.

## Memorials and Honorariums

When you make a donation in memory or in honor of a loved one, they will live on through programs that provide much-needed care for the hurting children who come to the Ranch. You can make your donation online at [DakotaRanch.org](https://DakotaRanch.org) or by calling 1-800-344-0957.

## Planned and Estate Gifts

Naming Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch as a beneficiary in your will is one way to leave a legacy that serves God's Kingdom. But, it's not the only way. Other legacy giving options include Charitable Gift Annuities, naming the Ranch as a beneficiary of your retirement plan assets or a life insurance policy, leaving real estate to the Ranch, and more. To learn more, contact one of our Development Officers at 1-800-344-0957. Or, visit our legacy giving website at [DakotaRanch.org/legacy](https://DakotaRanch.org/legacy) for tools and information you can use to maximize your philanthropic goals. (See page 27 for more information about Charitable Gift Annuities.)

## Tree of Life

Honor or remember a loved one by purchasing a leaf, acorn, or rock on one of our Trees of Life. For a Tree of Life order form, scan the QR code on the right, or call 1-800-344-0957—we can send you an order form or take your information over the phone.



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

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

# CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY

LOCK IN YOUR RATE NOW

Gift annuities have always been a smart choice. Your payments will last as long as you live, no matter what the economy does. The sooner you start your payments, the longer your lifelong income stream will last.



## GIFT ANNUITIES GIVE YOU:

- Fixed income for life.
- An income tax deduction.
- Possible capital gains benefits when you fund one by transferring stock.
- Payments can be for one or two lives.
- Every gift annuity benefits the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch mission.
- A portion of your annuity payments are tax free.

AGE	RATE (ONE-LIFE ANNUITY)	AGES	RATE (TWO-LIFE ANNUITY)
70	6.3%	70 & 70	5.5%
75	7.0%	75 & 75	6.2%
80	8.1%	80 & 80	6.9%
85	9.1%	85 & 85	8.1%
90+	10.1%	90 & 90	9.8%

*\*Rates as of March 1, 2025*

Once you fund a gift annuity, your rate and your payments never change. The rate you lock in today is yours for as long as you live.

For more options and higher payments, ask us about a deferred gift annuity. By waiting a few years for your first payment, you can receive an even higher payment rate. No matter what type of gift annuity you fund, in addition to the tax benefits, you will have the unparalleled satisfaction of knowing the benefits you receive also help others. After a lifetime of payments to you, any funds remaining in the gift annuity automatically fund the Ranch mission.

A Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) is a contract between you (the donor) and a charity. In exchange for a gift of cash or property, the charity agrees to make fixed payments to you for the rest of your life. A CGA is beneficial if you have cash or appreciated property that produces little to no income.



**For more information, contact:**

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch  
P.O. Box 5007, 6301 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW  
Minot, ND 58703

**DakotaRanch.org • 1-800-344-0957**



## A legacy in giving



At their January picnic, the Duda family held a cakewalk to raise money for Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

### The Duda Family

“It is truly an honor to support Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch,” said Pam Jovaag, chairman of the Duda Family Council and fourth-generation family member. “Philanthropy is a foundational element of the Duda family and a core value—to be good stewards of our time, talents, and treasures. A special focus for the Duda family has been to support organizations like the Ranch that benefit children.”

The Duda family’s American story began in 1909 when Andrew Duda emigrated from Slovakia to the United States. It is a story of perseverance, the pursuit of dreams rooted in a foundation of faith and family, and the desire to leave an indelible legacy.

When Andrew came to America, he started out in Cleveland, OH, before buying land in Slavia, FL, where his family joined him in 1912. They tried to make a living as a family with young children but fell on hard times. Eventually, they returned to Ohio where they worked and farmed to save enough

money to come back to Florida—by this time, their three boys were older and could help farm the land.

In 1926, they delivered their first cash crop of celery to market and A. Duda and Sons was formed. Today, DUDA is a respected entity in both the agriculture and real estate sectors, most recognized for its Dandy celery and the planned living community they developed in central Florida. When DUDA established the community in 1989, they named it Viera, which means “faith” in Slovak.

Their Christian faith was always central to Andrew and his family. In fact, one of the reasons he came to America was so he could freely practice his Lutheran religion. With a few other founding families, the Dudas started what is now St. Luke’s Lutheran Church and School, Oviedo, FL. As an extension of that faith, Andrew and his sons were committed to making an eternal difference in the world.

DUDA, a successful family-owned and -operated business, is now run by fourth and fifth-generation members who carry on the legacy of philanthropic giving, both corporately and as a family.

Mark Stinson, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation board member and treasurer, and his wife Audrey, nominated the Ranch to be a part of the Duda family philanthropy efforts, and invited Linda Medhus, Senior Engagement Officer and the Rev. Dr. Paul Krueger to attend their January picnic as representatives of the Ranch’s Mission Advancement Team. The picnic was part of the Duda

Family Council's mission to engage family members—249 descendants across generations—and promote the longstanding legacy of philanthropic giving.

More than 50 Duda family members gathered at the picnic to learn about the Ranch. Krueger shared testimonials of the children and families served by the Ranch and told how the monetary, volunteer, and spiritual gifts impact the Ranch ministry and its ability to help at-risk children and their families succeed in the name of Christ.

In her introduction of Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Audrey said, "It is

truly a pleasure to see how our family embraces the heritage our founders started all those years ago."

Family members of all ages made cards of encouragement for Ranch residents and staff, and participated in outdoor games, a bake sale, and a cakewalk to support the Ranch ministry. In total, they raised more than \$8,800 to support children and programs at the Ranch, surpassing their \$5,000 fundraising goal.

"The spirit of giving that exists within the Duda family

is truly inspiring," Medhus said. "We are honored and very grateful to have been selected as the recipient of this wonderful gift."



Duda family members made cards of encouragement for Ranch residents and employees.

# MONTHLY GIVING MATTERS

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

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

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

It's easy to join. Just visit **DakotaRanch.org/HoneycombPartners** or call 1-800-344-0957.





## Dedicated to second chances



### Vern Rockstad

**From serving his country in the Army to shaping young minds in special education, Vern Rockstad has always been dedicated to making a difference.**

When Vern Rockstad decided to expand his giving to other Christian charities in addition to his church, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch piqued his interest.

"I think I read about it someplace and my wife, Jean, and I started contributing like \$40

a month," Vern said. "Then Pastor Krueger came out and we learned more about the Ranch and all the good you do for children."

Vern was born in North Dakota and spent his first 11 years on his grandfather's farm near Walcott, ND.

"I grew up during the Depression years," he said. "We didn't have any money. The acreage we farmed wasn't very good. Dad went up and down the Red River looking for employment. He was a good worker, so people wanted him to work. His main job was picking potatoes. And during Thanksgiving time, he worked at a turkey plant."

Even with the extra work, making a living was difficult for Vern's parents and he said they were "looking for an escape route." They found one in 1941 when they learned of opportunities for employment in Washington State.

Vern moved with his parents and younger sister to Puyallup, WA, where his parents both worked in the Todd Pacific Shipyards. He graduated from high school in

Puyallup and then attended Pacific Lutheran University where he earned a teaching degree.

"I graduated from PLU on a Sunday, and the next day I joined the Army with four of my buddies. I served three years, most of it in Frankfurt, Germany," Vern said.

When he returned from the Army, Vern took a job teaching sixth grade at Puyallup.

"The next year, a young gal from Iowa signed up to teach in the same school, and after four years of romancing, I married her," he said.

"We did a lot of traveling and touring when we were out of school in the summer. After about the fifth year we decided now was the time to have a child," he said.

They raised their daughter and son in the Puyallup area, where Vern had spent most of his adolescence.

After a few years, Vern was offered a job teaching special education students. While he had to ask what "special education" meant, he quickly grew to love it, spending 24 years of his 32-year teaching career in special education. He spent most of those 24 years at Sumner High School, which is just three miles east of Puyallup.

"We had a tremendous special education program at Sumner High School," Vern said. "The success of my teaching was getting good parent support. I had students who were ashamed to be in special ed at first, and after I made home visits, they were glad to have me as a teacher."

Vern recalls one student who had been in many schools with many

different teachers before his parents moved him to the Sumner School District.

“After about the first week I had had it with this kid. I made a home visit, and it really paid off,” he said. “For the first time, the father realized his son was not the son he thought he had. He started working with him and with me and we made a go of it. He became a model student.”

Vern’s love for the Ranch stems from his passion for kids who struggle.

“I feel sorry for kids who weren’t given a second chance. That’s why I worked in special ed. They were left out of the loop and didn’t get back in unless someone gave them a boost. I think I was the person that gave them a little boost,” Vern said. “The Ranch does the same thing. You give those kids a second chance.”

Vern introduced his students to things they hadn’t experienced before. Every month, Vern and some of his students picked up the waste papers at the high school and took them to the recycling plant.

“We’d get enough money throughout the year to take the kids to a nice restaurant in Tacoma, WA,” Vern said. “We did that for about 10 years and the kids loved it. They looked forward to it.”

Every spring, he also took a busload of kids to show them where he worked on the Wonderland Trail in Mount Rainier National Park, one of the longest, non-motorized, suburban trails in the U.S. He was on the summer trail crew, clearing out fallen trees and debris to keep the trail open for hikers.

The success of Vern’s special

education program was recognized not only by his students, who called themselves “Rocky’s Raiders,” but by Vanderbilt University Department of Special Education, a top-ranked Special Education Program in the country.

“The last year I taught we were judged, along with all of the special education units in America, by Vanderbilt University,” Vern said. “We were named one of the top three high school special education units in the country.”

In 2016, Vern and Jean moved to a retirement home in Federal Way, WA, where he became a member of the board. Since Jean’s death two years ago, he has continued to be very involved in his community. (When I wanted to schedule a time to visit with Vern for this article, I was told he was quite busy and that it would be hard to catch him unless I called after 6 p.m.!)

At age 94, he rarely misses his daily exercise class, talks to his daughter,

Robynn, every night at seven and visits her regularly, organizes a twice-weekly Bible class, and spends every Sunday with his grandson, Tristan, and his family. Last week, he proudly watched as Tristan was baptized, following through on a promise he made to his grandmother, Jean, before her death.

Vern’s faith has always been important to him, so the Ranch’s Christian foundation is another thing that appeals to him. He was thrilled to support the Ranch’s Bismarck Chapel campaign so he could ensure that Ranch children would have a special house of worship.

“I believe that God is over us and through Him, we walk with Jesus every day. And if we really want to be Christians, we have to act like Christians,” he said. “That means that sometimes you have to come down to the kids’ level and start over and build up from there. I see the Ranch doing that with great success.”



Vern and his late wife, Jean, shared a strong work ethic, a passion for learning, and a love of travel — which made a lasting impact on their daughter, Robynn.



## Engineer, woodworker, and a heart for children



### Charles Volek

Charles Volek is a soft-spoken, lifelong Texan. He doesn't recall exactly how he heard about Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch when he and his wife, Judy, who passed away in 2022, started supporting the Ranch many years ago. But he is very clear that his experiences with their own family, and reports of our nation's declining education and family life, are why the Ranch mission is so important to him.

"Our son, Chris didn't like school," Charles said. "The school wanted him to take a bunch of easy classes so he could graduate with his class. We didn't like that idea because we felt that he was smart and grasped things quickly. It took an extra year, but he graduated. Then he worked at various places in computer sales and took a few courses at the community college."

One day, a friend at work told Charles about his son going to Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. Charles mentioned it at the dinner table, and a few weeks later, Chris brought it up. "He said, 'Dad, do you think I could go to Texas Tech?' I told him I knew he could. He went to Texas Tech and earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in computer science."

Charles and Judy's daughter, Holly, is an internal medicine and pediatric

physician and teaching professor at the McGovern Medical School at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. She also cares for kids who have complex special needs. Last fall, Charles and Holly made a special trip to the Minot campus to see the Ranch mission in action. They toured the school with Superintendent Tina DeGree, met with Chaplain Rick Jones to learn about the faith components of the Ranch, and visited with Kat Morton, Ranch Program Manager, who gave them an overview of the Ranch's therapeutic treatment programming.

They also met Dr. Wayne Martinsen, the Ranch's Psychiatrist and Medical Director, who invited Holly to join him for a conference where one of his doctoral students was presenting a case study and treatment plan for one of the Ranch kids. Holly later told her father that the Ranch has a "one of a kind" program and wished there was one or more in every state.

During his campus visit, Charles discussed the Zurcher Cottage project with Linda Medhus, Senior Engagement Officer. He saw the footprint of the cottage and gained a greater understanding of the need for a new psychiatric residential treatment facility on the Minot campus.

### Charles' early life

Charles grew up in Rosenberg, Texas, a small town just 30 miles from downtown Houston, where his parents were both barbers. He loved the outdoors and spent much of his spare time hunting and fishing. His father worked many jobs to support



**Charles stands proudly beside a Christmas tree adorned with beautiful Intarsia ornaments he crafted himself.**

the family. Charles developed a strong work ethic and has never been afraid to get his hands dirty. One year, while in high school, he helped his father and cousin farm rice. He also spent a few summers picking cotton and working as a carpenter's helper and welder's helper.

Charles said he didn't grow up in a wealthy family, but they were big givers.

"They didn't have money to give away, but they helped people as they needed it," Charles said. "They always had a big garden and took the excess produce to the barbershop to give away. It was a different age then. If someone needed something, you gave it to them."

## Working life

Charles, the first in his family to attend college, earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from the University of Texas, Austin. After college, he worked

for El Paso Natural Gas in El Paso, TX, where he met Judy. "I was living at the YMCA and eating at a boarding house with a group of other guys. One of the guys who lived there didn't have a car. I did, so he wanted to double date," Charles said. "He arranged the date, and for some reason couldn't go, so our first date was just Judy and me. We met for a drink and a movie, and it went from there."

Not long after they started dating, Charles was drafted into the Army where he served for two years. When he came home on leave, he and Judy married and she joined him for his final year of service in Huntsville, Alabama.

"We were stationed at Redstone Arsenal, and I was basically doing engineering work for the government," Charles said. "I had to wear the uniform and go through the usual Army procedures, but otherwise I was designing equipment and testing rocket missile components."

When Charles got out of the Army, they moved back to Texas and he began his 33-year career at Shell Oil Company, conducting research on how to produce viscous oils by injecting steam, working as an oil reservoir engineer, and holding various supervisory assignments.

## Retirement life

After retiring from Shell, Charles volunteered and crewed on *Elissa* (built in 1877), a square-rigged sailing ship berthed in Galveston. He also took up woodworking with a primary interest in making Intarsia. Intarsia involves using different woods for their color and grain patterns to create a mosaic-like sculptured picture.

Charles has lived an interesting and fulfilling life. He and Judy traveled the U.S., visiting most of the national parks and many other countries. They were both very involved with their church, with Charles holding many volunteer positions.

At age 90, Charles continues to serve on the church facilities and endowment committees, walks daily, and is a member of the Woodworker Club of Houston. He has given up hunting and sailing but continues to fish. Last summer, Charles took his son and grandson on an Alaskan fishing trip.



**When Charles and his daughter, Holly, visited Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in July 2024, they took some time to check out Minot's Scandinavian Heritage Park.**

Charles feels he has been blessed, and his children are doing well. "They know I am considering a contribution to the Ranch, and they are good with that," he said. "The Bible teaches that what we have is God's, not ours. I believe my support of the Ranch can make a difference for kids needing help."



# Mission Advancement

## Giving with purpose



**By Linda  
Medhus, Senior  
Engagement  
Officer**

We are continually blessed by God's goodness working through you to provide a foundation of faith and healing for the children at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. Thank you for your wonderful support!

In past donor surveys, many of you noted that you support our mission as an extension of your faith. You desire to have a meaningful impact on the lives of children.

Please know this—each dollar you give to the Ranch creates an opportunity for a child to be in a

safe and loving environment to heal from their pain, succeed in school, and experience the hope that comes through faith in Christ. Your prayers and gifts have a profound purpose and a tremendous impact on the lives of kids!

Ranch donors come from all areas of the United States, as you can see from the map below. Each red circle contains a number indicating how many people in that area supported our mission in 2024. Do you see yourself here? We are touched by the love and kindness you extend.

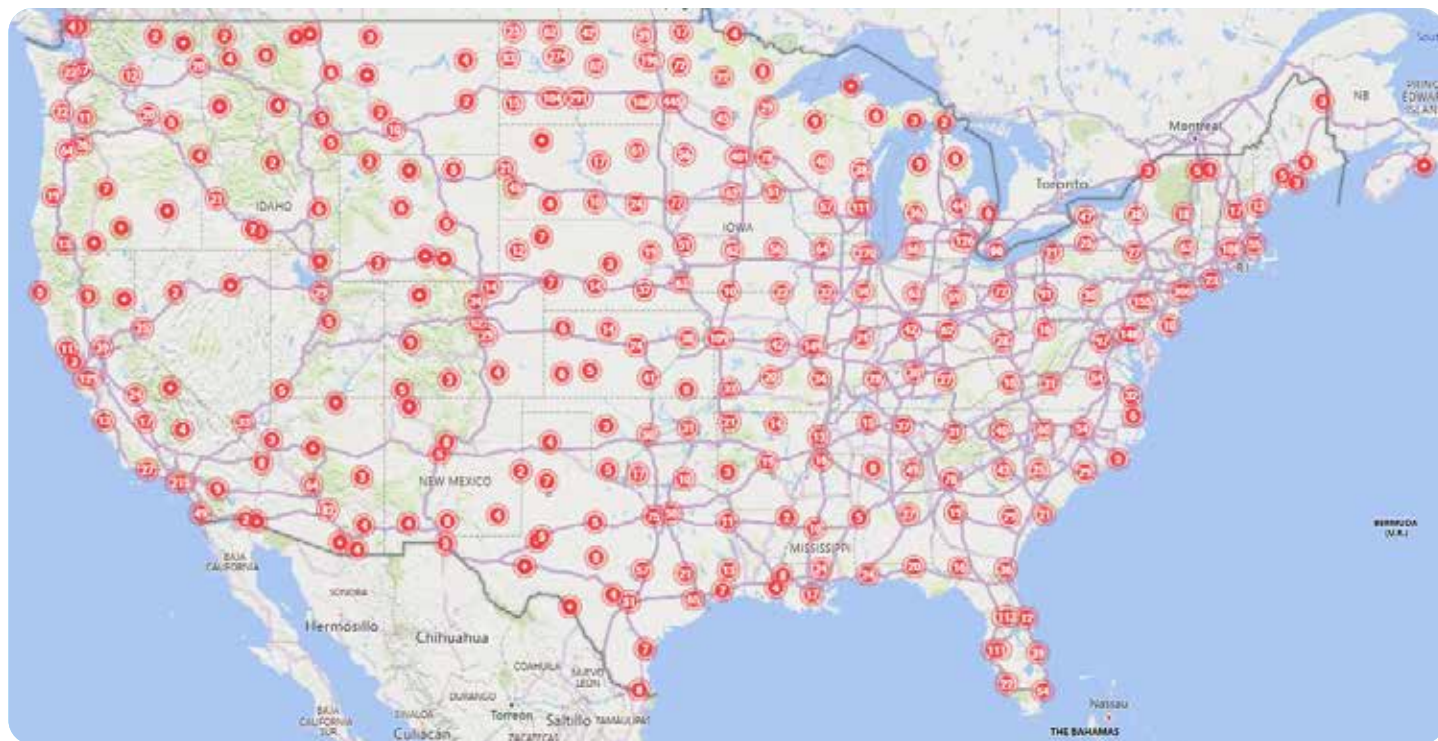
\*Donors living in Hawaii and Alaska are not included on this map, but we are very thankful to have supporters in those states, as well.

The gifts we receive encompass all areas of support—sacrificial

giving, ongoing general giving, recurring gifts, major gifts, planned gifts, grants, bequests, memorials and honorariums, non-cash gifts, matching gifts from companies, Thrivent Choice Dollars, and crowdfunding. Every gift is important and deeply appreciated.

With your support, you walk alongside children in their mental health recovery. You meet their despair with the hope of Jesus. You help them find success in the classroom. You set them on a course for healing, making it possible for them to move forward in life with hope and purpose.

Make no mistake – your gifts have a very meaningful impact. And we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



# Boards of Directors

Representatives of the Ranch's Mission Advancement Team, who cover every area of the United States, would love to visit with you. They are also available to come to your church or speak at events to create a greater awareness of the Ranch mission. To connect with Linda Medhus or the representative assigned to your area, please contact the Ranch at 701-509-4547 or [info@dakotaranch.org](mailto:info@dakotaranch.org).



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# Zurcher Cottage Update

## Zurcher Cottage: Opening Fall 2025

In 2017, a group of Ranch staff and board members came together to form the Minot Work Group. Their task was two-fold. First, they were to oversee a campus assessment and prioritize any necessary repairs and upgrades. The initial repairs and upgrades were addressed first, thanks to friends of the Ranch who came together to support a mini-campaign.

The second task of the work group was to determine the additional spaces needed to better serve our kids and their families well into the future. The work group identified the most urgent need as the building of a new Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility that will integrate everything we have learned about brain development, treatment, and trauma-informed care.

The construction of Zurcher Cottage began in September 2024 and is scheduled for completion by October 2025. The building, licensed for children ages 10 to 17,

will replace two outdated cottages and provide a safe place for the Ranch to meet the unique needs of our most vulnerable boys and girls.

These children come to the Ranch with psychiatric and behavioral challenges of the highest degree. They are survivors of significant trauma. They have psychiatric, behavioral, and developmental challenges due to abuse, neglect, and violence. As a result, many self-harm and have thoughts of suicide.

In designing Zurcher Cottage, we used the most current knowledge of trauma-informed care, the latest brain research, and our own experiences to create spaces that will provide a comfortable home-like environment with the most



**When complete, Zurcher Cottage (named in memory of the lead donor, Carol Townsend's, parents and brother, Elmer, Connie, and Earl Zurcher), will provide a state-of-the-art healing space for the Ranch's most vulnerable boys and girls.**

progressive sensory, safety, and durability features, including:

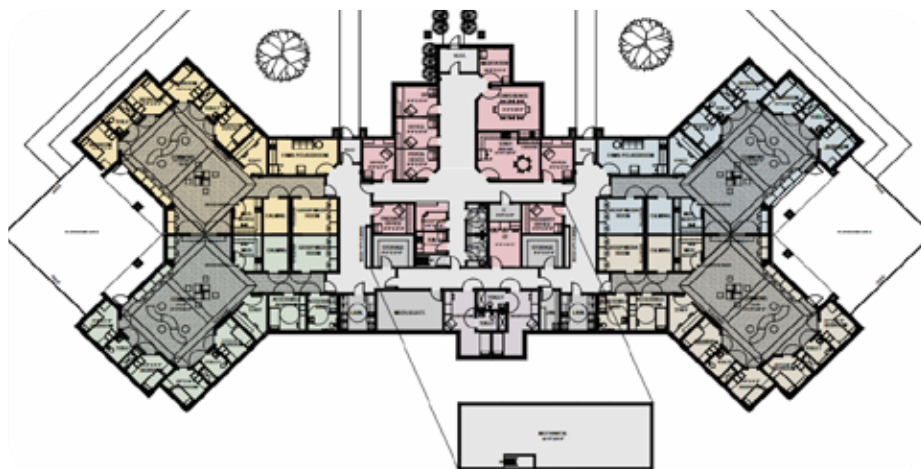
- High impact sheetrock on walls and ceilings
- Sprinkler system throughout the building, which allows for fixed windows.
- Windows set at 4 1/2 feet from the floor for safety while providing excellent outdoor light. The glass is tempered and laminated to deter breakage.
- Anti-ligature handles throughout.
- Durable, safety-minded furniture designed to meet the demands of a psychiatric facility.
- Clear lines of sight in and between pods so staff can assess and manage safety risks.
- Four wings (pods) with secure doors or dividers between them that can be opened or closed as needed to keep children safe and emotionally regulated.
- And much more...

We are nearly there!

We are thrilled to announce that



**Despite many days of temperatures that didn't rise above zero degrees, our construction company has remained on schedule. The day they started installing the roof sheathing in late February was an exciting day!**



The 15,400 building will include twenty 10'x10' foot single bedrooms with built-in bed, desk, and storage shelves; as well as a secure outdoor play area, offices and groups rooms, and special lighting and acoustics to meet the sensory needs of the children.

our Zurcher Cottage fundraising campaign has reached 95% of its \$8.5 million goal, thanks to the unwavering generosity of our dedicated Ranch supporters.

Now, we invite you to be part of this pivotal moment. With just 5% remaining, your contribution can

make a lasting impact and help us cross the finish line.

To learn more about the project, call us today at 800-344-0957. We would love to answer your questions and discuss how you can join us in creating a shared legacy for at-risk children and their families.



**Consider a gift to build Zurcher Cottage,  
a place where children can heal and  
become their best selves.**

### Ways to Give

- Call 800-344-0957
- Mail check to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, P.O. Box 5007, Minot, ND 58702
- Give online at [DakotaRanch.org/ZurcherCottage](http://DakotaRanch.org/ZurcherCottage) or scan the QR code



## Foundation and Corporate Gifts

**The Tom and Frances Leach Foundation;**

\$100,000; HVAC

Replacement (Bismarck)

**Rupert Dunklau**

**Foundation;** \$250,000;

Zurcher Cottage (Minot)

**School Sisters of Notre**

**Dame;** \$1,000; Cottage

Appliances (Minot)

**North Dakota District**

**LWML;** \$4,000; Gym Floor

(Minot)

**Dakota Medical**

**Foundation;** \$2,000; Dakota

Family Services Mental Health Clinic Library

**Inspiritus Community**

**Health Foundation;**

\$36,268; Zurcher Cottage

(Minot)

**Inspiritus Community**

**Health Foundation;**

\$17,550; Cottage Sprinkler

System (Minot)

**MDU Resources**

**Foundation;** \$6,000; Group

Room Chairs (Bismarck)

**Hope Lutheran Church;**

\$3,000; Christmas

Celebration (Fargo)



# Memorials/Honorariums

Unless otherwise designated, donations you make in memory or in honor of your loved ones will be used to help build and maintain chapel facilities on all Ranch campuses. Your gift to the Ranch will live on through the children at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch who learn about Jesus' unending love. For more information about making memorial and honorarium gifts to the Ranch, contact the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation at 1-800-344-0957 or [info@DakotaRanch.org](mailto:info@DakotaRanch.org).

## Memorials

**November 1, 2024 - February 28, 2025**

ABBOTT, MARY ELLEN

Michele Dees

ADAMS, CATHY

Philip & Sarah Lukas

ADAMS, JOYCE

Mark & Karen Erdmann

Richard & Janet Fedje

Beth A. Grosen

ALESIA FRERICH'S MOTHER

Joy Ryan

ANDERSON, IONE

Ed & Gert Anderson

ANDVIK, STANLEY "STAN"

Barbara Rude

ANKENBAUER, THERESA

David & Sharon Miller

AUFFOTH, ROLF

David & Sharon Miller

AVARY, NADINE SCHWARTZ

Barbara Pingel

BAHN, PEGGY

Myrlin & Shirley Hall

BASLER, JOHN

Shelia Gerry

BAUER, ROBERT

Jeff Givens

BAUMANN, DIANE

Adam & Lani Wahler

BEERMAN, CARMEN

Family of Carmen Beerman

BELL, ANNA MAE "ANN"

Barbara Pingel

BERGSETH, KENNETH

Lee Bergseth

BERKLEY, JOHN

Irene Berkley

BERTAGNOLLI, COLONEL FRANK

Frances Bertagnolli

BEUCH, ORVILLE

Ethel Beuch

BIANCO, DR. MICHELLE

Dr. Robert A. Bianco

BIERMAN, RONALD

Sherry Fix

Donna Swanhorst

BLUMHARDT, JODY

Kay Stoterau

BOETTNER, RUSSELL

Marlys Boettner

BOMMERSBACH, ELEANOR

Linda Hegseth

BORUD, CURT

Barbara Rude

BOSSE, JUDY

Larry & Sue Bartelheimer

BRANDT, MARJORIE "MARJ"

Kris Svangstu

BRANDT, RONALD

Donald & Carolyn Feldman

BREHMER, CHARLENE "CHAR"

Barbara Pingel

BREWARD, JOHN C.

Gloria Breward

BREY, KATHRYN

David Steketee

BROOKMYER, DAVID J.

Belinda Rulon

BUCKMAN, LESTER & CAROLINE

Austin & Sarah Buckman

BULATOV, GUMAR & AKLEMA

Almaz Bulatov

BULLOCK, WAYNE

Chuck & Lene' Haney

BUTLER, RICHIE

Wiley Butler

CALLIOTT, EDWARD

Linda J. Calliott

CARDILLO FAMILY

Frank Cardillo, Sr.

COGDILL, GERI

Laura Nelson

CORNELSEN, DAVID

Eileen Cornelsen

DAHL, DAVID

Rosemary Thomas

DAWSON, DARLENE

Violet Podenski

DESMOND, ROBERT

Susan Mysliwicz

DESTEFANO, MARY GRACE

Debi Yeager

DE VILLERS, KEITH

Al & Johnne Bierdeman

DOLL, GEORGE

Keith & Roberta Hoesel

DSCHAAK, DOROTHY

Marlene Buehner

EISENBRAUN, WILHELM "BILL"

Paul & Kathryn Eisenbraun

Leland & Linda Fleischer

LuErna Sawyer

Paul, Rebecca, & Willow Sawyer

ENGELMANN, ANNETTE

Barbara Pingel

FATLAND, DEAN, SYLVIA, & JAN

Sandra Meyer

FATLAND, SYLVIA & JAN

Dean Fatland

FLECHSIG, BETTY

David & Michelle Entrot

Walter Flechsig

Michael & Kathleen Lelm

Daryl & Cheryl Morse

Rolland & Janet Reinhart

FREDERICK, VERN

Jerome & Linda Retterath

FUGL, SHARON

Bruce & Pam Smith

GABEL, HOWARD

Jim & Judy Mittelstadt

GIGLIO, JAMES

Joseph Giglio

GLOE, KEITH

Bill & Linda Mobley

GNAU, RENEE

Nancee Vanderpluym

GOETTING, MICAH  
Robert & Sarah Goetting

GORMAN, MAXINE  
Steve Gorman  
Linda Medhus

GRANT, RONNIE  
Sharon Grondahl

GRAVESON, INEZ  
Bruce & Norine Johnson

GRUNEWALD, REV. KURT  
Curtis & Elaine Bening

GUST, RICHARD  
Susan Bethke  
Owen Brenden  
Lilia M. Christianson  
Dale & Laurie Dannewitz  
Rosella Debele  
Eric & Danae Delman  
Adrian & Colleen Fitchner  
Janet Franz  
Alfred & Luella Gust  
Dale & JoAnn Gust  
Jason & Mandy Hall  
Myrlin & Shirley Hall  
Jerry and Sandra Hamilton  
Sharon Heil  
Kolin & Glenna Johnson  
Dianne Krenz  
Wanda Kroeplin  
Inez Nathan Kuebler  
Margaret Lachenmeier  
Megan Martin  
Cris & June Miller  
Mark & Michele Peterson  
Gerry & Karla Pfau  
James & Shelley Porter  
Lynn Schepp  
Arlin & Mary Skoda  
Alan & Jennie Smith  
Terence Smith  
Gloria Thorson  
Deborah Volberding  
Ivan & Melinda Wold

GUSTAFSON, JULIANN "JULI"  
Gerald Peterson

HAKES, TIMOTHY  
David Hakes

HANSLER, LAWRENCE "LARRY"  
Andrew Repoza

HARMS, RAYMOND  
Lyle & Rebecca Gahler

HARRELL, SADIE & LORETTA  
David Packet

HARVALA, DORIS  
John & Patricia Sebastian

HAYER, HARRY  
June Hayer

HEID, LEONARD  
Carleen Christian

HEIDI  
Linda Thomas

HEINE, LILLIAN  
Jackie & Dottie Nelson

HEINTZ, ROBERTA  
Marilyn Heintz

HEHL, BARBARA  
George & Eleanor Krueger

HELLMERS, HERBERT  
Rev. Dwight & Cathy Hellmers

HEUCHERT, LAWRENCE  
James & Sharon Puppe

HILL, KEVIN  
Linda Hill

HINTZ, RAY  
Mildred Bueligen  
Jim Jenness  
Rev. Roger & Lauren Schepmann

HO, DR. STEVEN  
Jasper Lai

HODGE, KELLY  
Bill & Joan Ferguson

HOFF, DONALD  
Elaine Hoff

HUBRIG, GARY  
Kari Hubrig

IMM, LYNN  
Elizabeth Ravenscroft

IMME, NORMAN  
Anita Petersen

JACOBSON, BETTY  
Ruth Lumb

JACOBSON, BONNIE  
Doris Saeman

JANKO, JESSE  
Phyllis Janko

JANKS, JERI  
Sharon Kunka

JENKINS, DALE  
Beau Ashburn

JOHNSON, ERLING  
Marsha Reddig

KIEHNHOFF, AGNES  
Brad & Jenny Sawyer

KINDT, AL  
John & Patricia Sebastian

KJELSON, KEITH  
Joel Erickson

KLEMP, REV. JOHN & DARLEEN  
Hope C. Lewis

KNUDSON, GLEN  
Wiley Butler

KOLBERG, DIANE  
Weiser Homemakers Club

KOLLMANN, CONNIE  
Ruth Lumb

KRUG, SHARRON  
George & Eleanor Krueger

KURAGUNTILA, DR. KANTHAIAH  
Paul & Pameela Kuraguntla

KURTZ, GREGORY H.  
Violet Podenski

KUSSLER, JAMES O.  
Jan J. Smith

LANDSIEDEL, GLEN  
Dolores Simdorn

LAHLUM, AUDREY  
Lois H. Irwin  
Joyce Limesand  
Howard Lahlum  
David & Sharon Miller  
David & Ginger Podoll  
Ronald Truax

LANDRY, TODD E.  
Barbara Pingel

LARSON, ARNOLD  
Joel I. Erickson  
Duane & Shirley Larson

LEE, INGEBORG & ANDERS  
The Palisades Lutheran Church

LEE, PETER  
The Palisades Lutheran Church



# Memorials/Honorariums

LEET, JANET

Bruce & Norine Johnson

LEIN, JR., CHARLES

John & Patricia Sebastain

LENDVOY, DOLORES

James & Kaylene Reddig

LICHTENBERG, MARIE

Kenny & Denise Hinkeldey

LIGON, DONALD

Roger & Phyllis Gunderson

LINDGREN, MARLYS

Julie Burich

LITTLEJOHN, MARILYN

Nolan & Eileen Bode

LOUT, ROSALIE A.

Dale Franz

LUCY, OUR DARLING

BLACK & WHITE PINTO COB

Cadie Craddock

Calie Lindseth

LUKE, BECKY

Marlene McGaughey

MAC DONALD, JACK & DONNA

Lynn Aldrich

MAC KENZIE, PETE

Elizabeth Ravenscroft

MARCHAND, JOHN

Curtis & Elaine Bening

MAROHL, RUDY

Walter E. Baumann

MASSETH, DON

Aaron & Lisa Fortney

MATHWICH, DALE

Carol Kleinschmidt

MATTERN, KAY

Susan Bethke

Marlys A. Orluck

MC BRIDE, RICHARD

Marlene Buehner

MC LEAN, JOHN "PAT"

Linda Amey

Michele Benson-Fischer

Gerald & Arlene Herbst

Kim Stack & Keith Lindquist

Janice McLean

Paula Meisner

Shirlyn & Gail Steinmetz

MESSELT, RALPH

Clayton & Zona Peterson

METCALF, RET. US ARMY COL.

FRANK "BUD"

Barbara Pingel

METZ, ESTHER "GAY"

Violet Podenski

MICKELSEN, MAX

Elizabeth Ravenscroft

MILLER, TOM

Brandon & Melissa Klein

MILLER, WILLIAM & ADELINE

Donald & Eleanor Miller

Vickie Moon

MOE, SHEILA

Tammy Noteboom

MONNENS, DALE

Gary & Lois Brehmer

MOORE, JOEL

Diane Moore

MORRISSEY, MATTHEW

Barney Morrissey

NELSON, JEAN

Alissa Thiessen

NELSON, MARIAN

Bruce & Norine Johnson

NIMS, TERRI

Bob & Karen Huether

Bruce & Pam Smith

NOETZELMAN, MAYNARD

Donna Noetzelman

NORHEIM, EDNA

Kerry Horton & Arnie Donat

OATMAN, VERN

Marlene McGaughey

O'CONNOR, MARCY

Kimberly O'Connor

OLSON, KEVIN & RON

Jennifer Olson

OMAR, VICKE

Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

ONSTOTT, EDD

Sue Hylland

OVERTON, NANCY

Bruce & Norine Johnson

PERHUS, MARIAN

Barbara Rude

PERKINS, IRMGARD

Anita Petersen

PETERSON, BILL

Marlene McGaughey

PETERSON, ELLEN

Carl E. Peterson

PETRILLO FAMILY

Frank Cardillo, Sr.

PIERCE, ELYZABETH

Marisa Knutson

POCH, RUTH

Martin Poch

POMERENKE, DELBERT

Steve Salzman

PRINZ, CONRAD J.

Edward & Elaine Prinz

REEVES, DAVID & RUTH

Robert McCormick

REISMAN, DARCY A.

Deborah Kelley

REYNOLDS, MARLENE

Lowell & Jean Bradbury

RODIN, LYLE

Ruby Peterson

ROLSHOVEN, RAY

Dottie & Jackie Nelson

RYAN, JIM & ANNE

Jean Ryan-Niemackl

SANNES, ROBERT

James & Darlene Vowels

SAVRE, JEAN

Morris & JoAnn Saxerud

SAYLER, CLARENCE

Hanna Link

SCHATKIN, SIDNEY B.

Margaret Schatkin

SCHILLING, RONALD

Donald & Carolyn Feldman

SCHNEIDER, LINDA

LeRoy & Kathy Bertsch

SCHOENBECK, JOYCE

Merle Heidenreich

SCHULDHEISZ, REV. BENJAMIN & ESTHER

Dan & Jan Schuldheisz

SCHUMACHER, DARYL

Dottie & Jackie Nelson

SCHUMACHER, STEVE A.

Doris Wegner

Arlene Schumacher

Jeff & Linda Schumacher

SHERECK, DARREL

Cynthia Shereck

SITZER, BRENT

Lou & Myrna Mitchell

SONGSTAD, BERT

Evelyn Kluender

SPANJER, KATHLEEN "KATHY"

Violet Podenski

SPREEMAN, NANCY JO

George & Eleanor Krueger

STOCK, TOM

Tammy Noteboom

Joy Ryan

SUTTON, AMY

Pam Popp

SZEWCZAK, CASEY T.

Patricia Szewczak

TAMMEN, ELIZABETH

Shelia Gerry

THOMPSON, JILL

Susan Bethke

Bob & DiAnn Briggs

Myrlin & Shirley Hall

THORSEN, LILY

Rachel Dancy

TRUEBENBACK, MYRA

Lyle & Rebecca Gahler

VANDERHOEF, AIDAN

Dennis & Mitzie Nay

Shane & Anna Oas

VERKINDER, BONNIE

Melva Smith

VETTER, JIM

Gary & Rose Vetter

VIGGERS, REV. DAVID K.

Caroline Letzring

VOORHEES, WEBB & JOYCE

Rev. Jack L. & Joneen Richards

WATSON, NORMAN

Bill & Joan Ferguson

WATSON, STEVE

Paul & Elaine Carlson

WEBSTER, IRENE

Roger & Lisa Cole

Dale & Laurie Dannewitz

McCoy Family

Corinne Redmond

Sandy Schmidt

Diana Trussell

Linda Visocky

WEIDNER, SR., ARTHUR

Kenneth & Lisa Farnham

WEIGAND, DANNY

Derek & Holly Weigand

WEISS, JIMMY

Norma Von Osterheldt

WELLS, ALICE

Kay Stoterau

WELSTAD, KIM

Susan Bethke

WERFELMANN, DOROTHY

Constance Wise

WESTLING, CARL & ANITA

Jennifer Olson

WESTRA, MARY

Chris Hansen

WHEELER, EARL

Joyce & Sharon Knudsvig

WHITE, MAXINE

Donna Swanhorst

WIESER, TERRY

Marilyn Frank

ZOROMSKI, EUGENE

Eugene Heckendorf

ZURCHER, ELMER & CONNIE

Carol Townsend

BERNICE BERGSETH

Lee Bergseth

BJORN

Rosa Berg

CALLAN EDWIN PETERS

E.J. & Kim Rossow

CAROL BLATTEL

Kay Stoterau

CAROLE RHODES

The Grand Giving Fund

CASIMER "CASEY" T. SZEWCZAK, III

Patricia Szewczak

CECILIA PODCZERWINSKI

Janet Podczewinski

CHRISTMAS 2024

Arnold & Ann Register

CLIFF & MARILYN KRAFT

Richard & Marilyn Gruenhagen

CURT & LA MAE ROHLAND

Ethel Beuch

DON & LOTTA PEARL

Cathy McDonald

DON & TAM HAMM

Kevin Johnson

DONNA HOLL

Michael Holl

DOROTHY ROMEO

Bob James

DOUG AND NANCY DE VORE

Royce Roberson

EDMOND ZALKIN

Brian & Lori Edwards

JESUS CHRIST

Ayodele Owoyele

JOHN HEFTER

Jeff & Debra Engley

JOHN & AMANDA THOMAS &

FAMILY

Cynthia Eggl

Jill Eggl

JOHN & BESS MANESIS

Mary Manesis

JOY RYAN

Kole & Quin Seiler

LAURIE DANNEWITZ

Tom Rafferty

LIAM PEDERSEN

Wayne & Theresa Devine

## Honorariums

**November 1, 2024 - February 28, 2025**

ADAM 2/13/2006

Clara Heinemann

ALYSSA BEAL

Laurie Neill

ANDREA PFENNIG

Steve & Bonnie Chase

ASHTON HOLZER

Wayne Markegard

BART BURNS

Keith & Gerry Burns

BEAU ORSON

Beau Orson



# Memorials/Honorariums

LOGAN & CALEB CAMANN

Christina Marean

MARY FUHLBRIGGE

George & Eleanor Krueger

MAJOUR REIDE

Mary Smith-Santana

NOLAN & EILEEN BODE

Mark & Jessica Bode

PAUL AND SUSANN KRUEGER

Rick & LeAnn Richard

PAUL ROEDER

Dan Roeder

REV. DIETER AND RUTH ANN HAUPT

Damien & Cynthia Collado

REV. DR. PAUL A. KRUEGER

Mr. Paul League

ROSIE TRESENITTER

Darlene Loeen

SAM CANELLA

Holly Giertz

SUMMER STURM

April Eide

THE CHILDREN EVERYWHERE

LaVerne Seefeld

THOMAS R. DECKER

ShaRell Nelson

TOM & DONNA LINNERTZ

Warren & Sonya Fried

TOOTIE LARSON

Alan & Gillian Larson

TRISTEN 1/12/2002

Clara Heinemann

VERNON & ELIZABETH KEUNE

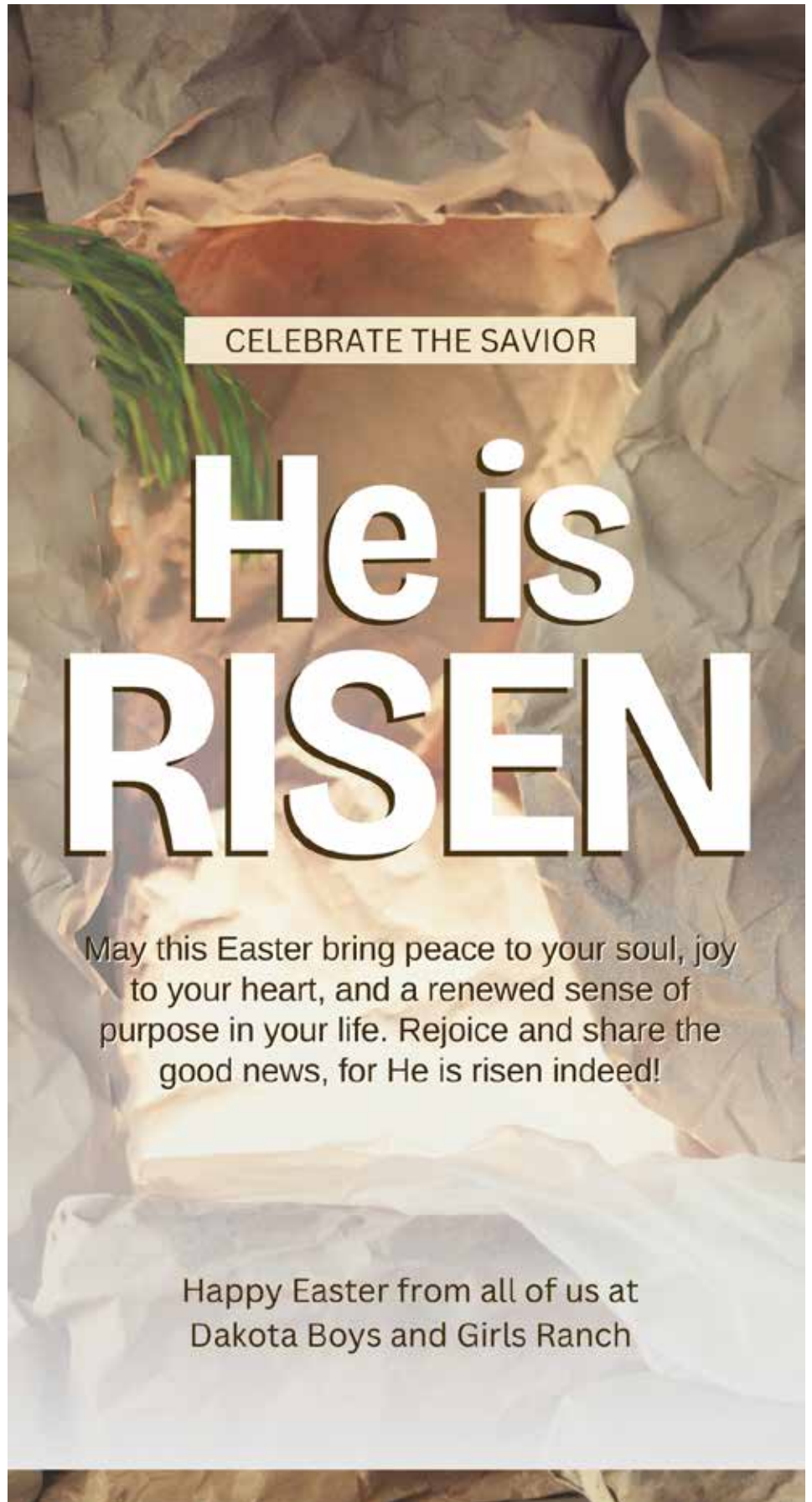
Laura Montgomery

WAYNE & BETTY REINHART

Mark & Jane Solseng

WILLIAM BEVAN

Robert Russo







“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!” —2 Corinthians 5:17

## *A prayer for growth*

Heavenly Father, help me to embrace change with an open heart and mind. Guide me through transitions and help me to grow from every experience. Help me to find calm in the midst of chaos and to trust in Your plan for my life. Help me to understand that progress takes time and to trust in your timing. Fill my heart with Your love and peace. Amen

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)





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

"Sleepy Kitty," by Ranch resident. Acrylic paint on paper collage. Inspired by author and illustrator Eric Carle.



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 Number: 1-800-593-3098

Foundation: 1-800-344-0957

