



THE SPIRIT of DOWN HOME RANCH

DECEMBER 2015

MAKE NO SMALL PLANS

Jerry Horton

Judy and I wrote a fable in 1989 called “Once Upon A Time” in preparation for attending the National Down Syndrome Congress Convention in Denver. We were in the early stages of dreaming up the ranch we hoped to call Down Home Ranch. Yes, the “Down” is intentional, a tip of the hat to our daughter Kelly and all those with Down syndrome we hoped would become our closest friends and neighbors one day.

In our little tale we envisioned 67 people living on 125 acres at Down Home Ranch, with three greenhouses, a bakery, a woodshop and a garage for the repair of farm equipment. We had a little garden and a few animals. It was a modest, quiet place.

Twenty-six years later, we occupy 410 acres with 80 people — full and part-time ranchers and staff — taking care of business. In recent years, we’ve averaged 12,000 volunteer hours per year. We have 11 greenhouses growing 13,000 poinsettias, hydroponic vegetables and hanging baskets. We have two outdoor garden areas, 31 head of pasture-fed cattle, horses and donkeys, and over 100 free-range chickens producing an abundance of eggs.

The Maintenance and Repair Shop is fully functional, providing training and jobs for Ranchers, while keeping vehicles and equipment well maintained. Two commercial kitchens are where we teach cooking classes, prepare meals, make jelly and candied pecans, bake and can. The newly-finished Woodshop will soon be producing high quality wooden products like cutting boards and very cool Purple Martin birdhouses (which will be on sale on our E-Store, currently being developed).

In those early days we knew nothing about raising money, creating programs and necessary administrative structures; but we studied and learned. We asked others to help and they did. We devoured Stephen Covey’s book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective*

People, especially the habit “Begin with the end in mind.” The Ranch and its creation became our life’s work.

In truth, we didn’t have “in mind” everything that has come to be at the Ranch. As we travelled around the country we picked up new ideas, brought them back and tried to implement them. Some lasted, some didn’t. The Yam Bake was a popular fall festival but though it was well-attended and fun, it took up huge amounts of time and energy and never really made any money. We decided it was a great friend-raiser, but not much of a fund-raiser, so we gave it up. (Folks still miss it.) A Christmas tree farm seemed like a good idea to us but ... the Christmas trees didn’t agree. Two lone Afghan pines survive.

Daniel Burnham, a renowned architect, was famously quoted as saying “Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably will not themselves be realized” — a powerful concept that we embraced. It was if the Ranch took on a will and purpose of its own as it grew.

So, we continue to think big and make no small plans. Last year we bought The South 80, expanding our western and southern boundaries. We’ll soon be erecting 35-40 two-acre paddocks, about 80 acres in all, to allow us to double the size of our cattle herd and start producing pasture-raised beef for our tables as well as for a soon-to-launched Community Supported Agriculture program, where neighbors and friends purchase vegetables, eggs, beef and other products directly from DHR. We expect to be back in hog production soon.

We have seven Recreational Vehicle (RV) hook-ups over in Sara’s Garden, where the 1860 log cabin sits. Over the years, wave after wave of individuals and organizations have come and spent time at DHR, enjoying the beautiful view of Cypress Pond while benefiting the Ranch with their volunteer

labor. Lonnie Green and the Campers On Mission folks have built buildings, cooked many meals and done a host of volunteer projects while staying in our little RV park.

But, we’ve a new plan to recreate Sara’s Garden, our memorial garden, where several adults and children are remembered by loving families. It will be a beautiful place of calm and repose — its original intent. Then we’ll build a new 20-space RV park on the west side of the retention pond on The Spur, while continuing to make improvements to the pond. It’s a lovely site and will allow us to deliberately and selectively recruit RVers who would like to barter volunteer work for a nice place and terrific neighbors.

Additionally, we’re exploring the possibility of a Village on the Spur, toying with ideas about manufactured, affordable homes that could be leased or rented. There are interesting senior communities springing up around the USA where people can have a weekend cabin, a place to winter over, or even a year-around retirement cottage. We’ve had inquiries from parents and others ruminating over the idea of actually spending serious time on the Ranch. Our cabins and lodges do a brisk rental business of friends and family wishing to spend a few days or few weeks at the Ranch now.

As Founders, Judy and I talk with the DHR Board and others about the fact that we are seniors wishing to “age in place,” utilizing the same services we now provide for our ranchers. We’ve thought for a long time that a couple of our big group homes will probably, in the future, serve as homes where Ranchers ready to retire can continue living at DHR.

We’re all aging. We can’t just wait for whatever comes. We need to be thinking and planning ten, 25 or more years out—shaping that future as best we can. So it is that we make no small plans.

THE LADIES OF MARTHA HOUSE

Lizzie Arnold with Judy Horton

Elizabeth Arnold, aka Lizzie, began at Down Home Ranch as a Weekend Resident Assistant. She moved from there to managing Martha House as Resident Assistant, was promoted to Residential Manager last spring, and has just been promoted to Program Director. She is responsible for oversight of staff and standards for all eight residential homes.

JH: Where did you grow up and what high school did you graduate from?

LA: In a small town in South Texas called Nixon. I graduated from Nixon-Smilely High School.

JH: When did you first come to work at DHR? What do you remember from your first weekend?

LA: I came in for an interview back in June of 2012. It was the first time I stepped on the Ranch, and I fell in love and I knew this place was special and I wanted to be a part of it! I had worked with children with disabilities for about two years and always wondered what they would be like when they grew up, so it was awesome to see adults working and living just like anyone else. My first weekend as a WRA, I worked at Teresa house and was inspired by their loving hearts and willingness to learn and grow into their independence.

JH: When did you take over Martha House? What did you like about working in the houses?

LA: I took over Martha House in February 2014. I had known these girls for a couple of years and I knew what they were capable of and what areas they could improve. It was my goal while working at Martha House to make sure I was encouraging and reminding them of what they want to accomplish and what they need to do to gain the independence they want! I loved the enthusiasm and personalities of all the girls. I loved giving them an ear to listen to any problems they were having, a hand to help them with any assistance they were needing, and a heart to treasure and love them when they needed a reminder of how much they are cherished.

JH: Did you have experience with people with IDs before working at DHR?

LA: I worked at Texas Elks Summer Camp for two years as a counselor, providing assistance and supervision for children with physical and mental disabilities.

JH: Do you think you will make your career working with/on behalf of people with IDs? Why?

LA: Yes, I would love that. I have developed a passion for ensuring they have access and the same opportunities as adults without IDs.

JH: You do modeling on the side. What kind of shoots do you do? What do you enjoy about modeling?

LA: The majority of my shoots have been for Paul Mitchell as a Hair and Make-up Model. I love getting all dolled up before a shoot. That is my favorite part — every girl LOVES getting her hair and make-up done, so that's always a treat. I also enjoy getting to know the photographers; they have become some of my favorite people. They are given the opportunity every day to capture the unique look of the model and clothes before them, and provide direction. I love it when they give me assurance that I

How did you cope with this situation and still care for your girls in Martha House?

LA: My heart still skips a beat and tears well up in my eyes when I think back to the day my family and I found out about my Mom's cancer. The thought of losing my Mom was terrifying! My Mom and I bump heads a lot because I have inherited her strong-willed, fighting side which creates silly arguments and disagreements between us. Suddenly, all our disagreements didn't matter and I began treasuring the memories we had created together over the years. Time became something that we didn't have enough of and all I really wanted to do was to be a little girl again, who used to sit in her Mom's lap and bring her flowers plucked from the neighbor's garden. (Our neighbors didn't think this was so cute.) Working at



*(above) Lizzie and the Martha House girls.
(right) Lizzie and the rest of the staff
practice safety drills as part of our new
program (learn more in Developing an
Emergency Response Plan for DHR, right)*



look FABULOUS and help me to work it!

JH: You are majoring in psychology I believe. How do you feel the discipline presents people with IDs?

LA: I took an Abnormal Psychology class a couple of semesters ago and realized maybe we're the ones who aren't normal. Thomas Szasz pointed out the negative effects of labeling people. I study psychology because I love learning how and why people think a certain way. It's fascinating. I think we should study those with IDs because they have life figured out in ways we haven't. They face hardships and find ways around them, and manage to have a great, positive attitude about it.

JH: Your mom recently went through treatment for breast cancer. Has this changed your relationship with your mom at all?

the Martha House during this time was difficult because I never wanted the girls to see me upset but I have never felt more love and support than during this time by DHR. Words cannot express how grateful my family and I are for what the staff has done for us during this difficult time. Once my Mom began remission I could finally breathe again and our relationship had definitely grown closer.

JH: What is your vision as Program Director for the Ranchers insofar as the Residential Program is concerned?

LA: I strive to give them the support and encouragement they need to chase their dreams and to gain the independence they desire. I also want to give their parents the assurance their children are taken care of by hands and hearts that love them.

A HOME OF HIS OWN

Judy Horton

Tom woke up early the day his new home would arrive. He had his morning coffee on the front porch, gazing toward the spot he knew it would come to rest.

Delivery wasn't scheduled until late morning, so RA Carol had to convince him to come eat breakfast and go on to work, with the promise that Scott would be in close communication and let him know when the micro-house would roll through the gates of Down Home Ranch.

About 10:30 the word came and the whole ranch turned out to watch. Everyone was curious to see the structure and witness how it would be inserted amidst the trees of

the Village Commons.

Tom watched avidly as the young men from Lone Star Structures, owned and operated by a Mennonite family in Lott, TX, expertly transferred the tiny home from the flatbed onto skids, inserted tires beneath, and carefully maneuvered it into place.

When it was safe, Tom peered into the window of his new bedroom. "It's so small!" he wailed. It's true that Tom's present room in Isaiah House is very, very large. However, I pointed out to him that he would have the whole house to himself.

His eyes crinkled up as a huge smile spread across his face. "Oh, yeah!" he said with satisfaction. "Oh, yeah."

Old friends, new opportunities



DEVELOPING AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN FOR DHR

Many years ago the Horton family, a family friend, and Ranch staff endured a frightening episode with a mentally ill neighbor, who imagined that the Ranch was driving hundreds of snakes onto his property. It resulted in years of court hearings and, eventually, the prohibition of his return.

Despite this incident, the Ranch has never seemed unsafe, except perhaps for weather and fire danger during the extensive drought. Still, recent events in the news and cautions from local law enforcement, as well as a few parents, have encouraged serious consideration of staff's ability to respond effectively and appropriately to threats, both man-made and natural, so we have created a long-term solution.

Ranch senior staff has invited Lee County and Williamson County law enforcement and EMS personnel to visit the Ranch. A detailed map noting buildings, their functions, and their names has been provided to any entity which might respond to a criminal or medical threat.

The Ranch recognizes that response time from any outside agency is likely to be in excess of 40 minutes. Therefore, response plans have been developed by Ranch personnel for the protection of Ranchers, staff and visitors.

The Ranch's insurance agency, Frost Insurance, is also working to help the Ranch foresee anything that might occur at the Ranch, however unlikely and unthinkable, and create a response matrix.

We recently made a trip to Leakey, in the southern tip of the Texas Hill Country. Leakey is on the Frio River, named for its cool, spring-fed waters. We were looking for my great-grandparents' graves. Their son James Walter was my grandpa, and he taught my dad Wayland to swim in the Frio. Granddad, Annie and seven kids left Leakey and made their lives in California, where I was born.

After I met and married Judy, I hoped to land a job at a community college along Hwy. 49—maybe Sonora Community College, near Twain Harte. Even after we moved to Austin and were back in grad school I was still hopeful. But then in 1984, Kelly Page was born and our lives began to change as we thought and talked about her future. In '89 we incorporated. We had made the decision to start a ranch. I flew out to

Chico, California to interview for a job at Cal State U that was, I thought, made for me, and spent an extra day there to visit with the President of a local



from the
**DIRECTOR'S
CHAIR**

Down syndrome association. I told her Judy and I were going to start a community.

Well, I finished second in the running for my job, but the decision had been made, and we immediately began our work. Judy made me promise to not start looking for land, since we had no money and the ranch had zero income. I promised. But I'd crossed my fingers behind my back. A few weeks later we signed a contract to buy 217 acres.

After we bought and moved into our little mobile home on the ranch, we took my mom to visit her childhood home in Blevins, in Falls County, Texas, where she and the Stuckey side of the family farmed, almost certainly at the same time the Hortons were farming in Leakey on the Frio. Mom and Dad met in a Texas cotton patch, eloped and married in 1930, unaware that 60 years later their son would buy land about 100 miles equidistant between their childhood homes, to build the home of their dreams.

It's a wonderful life.

DOWN SYNDROME RESEARCH

Until recently, Down syndrome was considered far too complex to tackle. Although research was growing quickly in the fields of diseases and conditions with a genetic cause, such as cystic fibrosis, these are caused by inheriting a single gene. Until massive computing capacity was developed, researchers could only speculate as to how to approach a condition occasioned by the presence of an entire chromosome consisting of some 300 genes.

Today, thankfully, technology allows for the scientific search for drugs and therapies that will cure or mitigate the effects of that extra chromosome. There is reason to hope that the babies and toddlers with Down syndrome of today will at some point encounter a treatment that will enable them to lead essentially normal lives, and that adults will escape the typical early decline and dementia.

Roger Reeves on effective intervention in Down syndrome

www.hopkinsmedicine.org/institute_basic_biomedical_sciences/about_us/scientists/roger_reeves.html

Lumind Down Research Foundation

www.lumindfoundation.org/Down-Syndrome-Cognition-Research

Linda Crnic Institute for Down Syndrome at UC, Denver

www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/institutes/lindacrnic/Pages/lindacrnic.aspx

Jon Pierce-Shimomura Research Lab, UT Department of Neurosciences

www.utexas.edu/research/wcaar/jps/research-approaches/

National Down Syndrome Congress, Atlanta, GA

www.ndscenter.org

National Down Syndrome Society, New York, New York

www.ndss.org

National Institutes of Health DS-Connect Down Syndrome Registry

<https://dsconnect.nih.gov>

NEW DIET MAY HELP PREVENT ALZHEIMER'S

Exciting news emerged from a study on the M.I.N.D. diet studied by researcher Dr. Nancy Di Fiore of Rush University. The diet is described as a hybrid between the ultra-lowfat DASH diet and the Mediterranean Diet, both of which have been recognized as offering protection against the development of Alzheimer's disease.

This is important for our community because virtually all people with Down syndrome develop Alzheimer's, generally at much younger ages than in the normal population. Steps will be taken immediately to implement this diet at DHR. Unlike previous diets, even with imperfect application the M.I.N.D. diet appears to offer substantial anti-Alzheimer's effects.

To learn more, go to: www.rush.edu/news/diet-may-help-prevent-alzheimers

NOTED

We are delighted to note the promotion of Dr. Jon Pierce-Shimomura of the Neuroscience Department, University of Texas at Austin, to Associate Professor with Tenure. Jon's laboratory studies the genetic underpinnings of Down syndrome and other neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Jon is also

noted for having worked with the Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas to establish the Informal Classes network of teachers and courses of informal classes for adults with intellectual disabilities. He is married and the father of three children, one of whom — Ocean, age 11 — has Down syndrome.

SAVE THE DATES!

In 2016, the Golf & Gala weekend and Swimfest will shift.

The annual Golf & Gala will move from the spring to the fall, and take place September 16-17.

Swimfest will move from the fall to the summer, and occur on June 11.

HOLIDAY GIFTS FROM DHR



We are now taking orders for our superior blackberry jelly, especially for Christmas delivery. The spring rains produced a big crop and our new juice extractor has intensified the flavor, making this year's jelly the best we've ever made.

The jelly crates make a great gift. Each wooden crate holds two 18 oz. jars, nestled in hay, wrapped in clear cellophane and tied with green and red raffia.

A two-jar jelly crate is \$20, postage included. Call Annette at 888.926.2253 to get your order in early.

LONGHORNS AT LAST

Even the Ranch's most dedicated Aggies don't burn orange on days they will attend classes at The University of Texas at Austin. College life at last! Students meet at the Littlefield Cafe for a half-hour of socializing before heading for their classrooms.

Classes are offered through UT's Informal Classes and tailored for adults

with intellectual disabilities. Regular UT students attend classes with them to facilitate learning and build friendships.

Topics have included math, reader's theatre, music, and creative writing among others. The Ranch shares tuition cost with students and provides transportation.

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Austin Pond Society
Boy Scouts of America
Cedar Park Girls' Lacrosse Team
Clif Bar & Company
Dell Computer, Round Rock
Family Worship Center Youth, Elgin
First Presbyterian Church Youth, Austin
Four Points Pop Warner, Austin
Immanuel Lutheran School,
Giddings (9th grade)
K.J.Z.T. Society No. 93, Austin
Northpark Presbyterian Church
Youth, Dallas
NW Austin Kiwanis
Regents School, Austin (7th & 8th grade)

St. Patrick's Catholic Church Youth, Hutto
St. Peter's Church, Coupland
St. Stephen's Episcopal School,
Austin (10th grade)
Mrs. Johnnie Stewart
Sunnybrook Christian Church,
Stillwater, OK
Texas A&M Forest Service
Texas A&M Horticulture Students
Thorndale NJHS
Thrall NJHS
Thrall MS "Serve Learning Class"
Trinity Episcopal School,
Austin (7th grade)
UT Wranglers & Darlins

...plus many, many individuals and families. We couldn't do it without you!

NOTED

With deep sorrow we note the passing of Colonel Wayne Sorensen (U.S. Army, Ret.), Ph.D., husband of long-time Down Home Ranch board member and president Genie Sorensen and great friend of the Horton family, following a year-long illness. Dr. Sorensen most recently served as Director of Health Care Administration for Concordia University in Austin following a long and distinguished career. We loved him for his stalwart support of the Ranch and its mission and for his delightful sense of humor.

With great sadness we note the passing of John Amos Russell, rancher and great favorite of DHR. John was diagnosed with leukemia while on visit with his family and began treatment immediately. John's family marshalled an army of friends to help them through trying times. We rejoiced with them during John's all-too-brief remission. Casey Dickerson, John's favorite person, flew to MN to visit John several times, and to represent the ranch at his memorial service. We will hold a service of our own when the family comes down this fall to install an appropriate remembrance of John in Sara's Garden.

I had a friend in Mexico from a family with an abundance of children: five daughters and four sons. In the U.S., each would have probably moved out at the age of 18. But this family observed a different custom. As each became an adult and began their own family, they simply built another story onto the family home. By the time I met them, the house was eight stories tall, with abuela on the top floor and children everywhere else.



VIEWS

One evening, gathered around the dining room table, the topic turned to a nephew whose parents were divorcing. Everyone was worried as it appeared he would lose his home. Who would take care of him? Where would he live? Who would feed him? I was concerned, too. "How old is he?" I asked, thinking he must be a teenager. "Twenty-seven years," said my friend. I committed a truly cross-cultural sin and burst out laughing. Every face at the table had a look of utter incomprehension. My friend explained that in the United States children usually left home at 18 and rarely returned.

That was 40 years ago, and things have changed. Gone is the norm of the huge family in Mexico, and many American children live with their parents well into adulthood. Sometimes it's a "failure to launch" but sometimes everybody's happy with the arrangement, so why not?

Our thinking has changed, too. We created a safe, caring haven where our kids would be loved and cared for. We did not anticipate the day when they would assume the mantle of co-workers, neighbors, and friends. Today we are an interdependent community of adults with many gifts. I still see the Ranch as a loving community, but I also see it as a rare and exciting choice for people with intellectual disabilities who want to work on a real Texas farm and ranch.

We're still the old-fashioned neighborhood where a helping hand is never far away, but now that hand is just as likely to belong to a Rancher as to a staff member. And that's fine with everybody here.

PRINCE OF PASTURE

Jerry Horton

I've followed Joel Salatin from a distance for a long time. I've admired his imaginative leadership and business acumen in making his Polyface Farm in Virginia a model of creative, humane, and effective animal husbandry. His methods for pasture beef, pasture pork, pasture poultry, and other farming practices are widely respected and admired and *The New York Times* has dubbed Joel "the Prince of Pasture." He travels across the US and around the globe, preaching that, as farmers, we are called to be good stewards of our land and livestock.

Last October my son-in-law Brian introduced me to Joel when Down Home Ranch had a booth at the Mother Earth News Fair in Topeka, Kansas. I had a chance to talk a little with Joel about what we are doing here at DHR and how we are slowly adopting his ideas and practices into our

animal husbandry program. He's personable, funny, and full of endless anecdotes.

Recently I flew out to Virginia to take Joel's "Lunatic Tour" of Polyface Farm and see his pasture-chicken, pasture-turkey, pasture-pork and pasture-beef operations up close and personal. Afterwards we had a two-hour conversation about bringing some Polyface practices to Down Home Ranch, such as installing 38 two-acre portable paddocks for rapid rotational grazing—designed to be light on the pasture and good for the soil, while producing high grade pasture-fed beef and pork.

We're also keen to emulate Joel's success with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and hope to launch a subscription program in 2016, producing and delivering farm-fresh food to friends of Down Home Ranch.



Joel and Jerry at Polyface

BEST CRUISE EVER!

Approximately 70 Ranchers and their family and friends set sail in January for the Ranch's 9th Annual Cruise to Cozumel, QR, Mexico. All cruisers agreed that this was the most trouble-free cruise ever. Everyone enjoyed the Cruise Director aboard the *Carnival Triumph*, which underwent a complete make-over after its breakdown in the Caribbean two years ago. A big thank-you to all our Swimfest donors who contributed to the vacation fund.

(below left) Cruisers always love a good buffet. (far left) Once the guys learned how to use it, the drone took some great shots! (top left)

LONE DRONE ON THE RANGE

Jerry Horton

In a recent video taken at Down Home Ranch, Chris Hatcher used a drone. In one scene, it rose high over Cypress Pond and the barn, providing a breathtaking, bird's-eye view of the ranch.

Inspired, we got a good deal on one in Austin and bought one for ourselves. Its maiden run reminded Craig, Scott, and me of how we felt on Christmas day when we were kids. But it's not just a big boy-toy, although it is awfully fun to fly. It has a very serious purpose: to videotape and map the 410 acres of DHR using software that lets us photograph or video-tape a section, then press a button and move to the next

quadrant. This will help us plan fencing and service roads, site grazing paddocks for cattle, hogs and other animals, understand water-flow on the property and plan more efficiently for other projects.

The guys who learned to fly it — Craig, Scott, and Perry — had it ready for the Texas Chainsaw Manicure on Oct. 10. They gave a close up look at it, then a demonstration of how it flies, then ... voila! A video of the Manicure in progress, which was shown to our volunteers after the lunch that followed their hard morning spent felling trees and clearing brush.

It's pretty cool.

CLYDE CUPPLES

Clyde has lived at Down Home Ranch since August 25, 2011, when he moved into Barnabas House. He was very happy with his own large, spacious room that he did not have to share with anybody, unlike his previous home in Giddings.

“Barnabas House is the best,” according to Clyde. “I like it very much, and I like our RA Keva and the other men in the house very much, too.”

Clyde has a motto he lives by: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” He is quick to state it is from Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 13. “My favorite is really John 3:16” he continues, “that tells me about God’s love where the first one tells me how to live.”

Nobody who knows Clyde doubts that he takes his faith very seriously, and understands it thoroughly. He attended the St. Louis ACTS retreat held at the Ranch last fall. He says he felt the retreat was very

meaningful. He made a lot of friends and was very grateful for the chance to attend.

This year Clyde will go on his fifth cruise with the Ranch gang. Each year Clyde adds to his collection of Carnival Cruise prizes won in trivia contests and karaoke; he never needs to look at the monitor given his encyclopedic knowledge of song lyrics.

Clyde’s birthday is May 23. He notes that he shares his birthday with Joan Collins and Drew Carey and that it’s one day before Jerry Horton’s. He was born in Elgin, IL and has two older brothers and two younger sisters. He lost a sister in 2008 and his mom in 2011 and feels the loss acutely. His family lives out of state but he occasionally gets to visit them, proud of his ability to afford to travel through his work at the Ranch.

Clyde works in Gardens, which he enjoys despite the heat and physical exertion. He helps harvest and goes to the Farmer’s Market in Bastrop with a crew on Saturday

mornings. He enjoys telling people about his work and listening to the live music.

Last year Clyde met a young lady he spied across the crowded room at a dance in Georgetown. “She was so beautiful!” he says, “I just had to talk to her.” He approached her and they began talking. Soon they were dancing and discovering many things in common.

“I feel so comfortable around Ashley,” he says “she is so good to me.” Ashley is busy getting her passport so she can go on the cruise with the DHR gang this winter. Clyde can hardly wait to show her the ropes aboard ship. The couple also enjoys dates off the Ranch — dinner dates, bowling, and movies.

Someday, he says, they may want to marry. For now, though, life is rewarding and Clyde is a happy man. He takes advantage of a everything the Ranch has to offer.



(far left) Clyde always has a smile, even when he’s hard at work in the gardens (above)

(left, top and bottom) Casey had an amazing time at the Special Olympics World Games. (article below)

2015 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES

Casey Dickerson

Recently I had the opportunity to attend the 2015 World Games in Los Angeles as one of the coaches for golf. It was, without a doubt, one of the most amazing events I have ever participated in. Golfers I worked with had a chance to play with athletes from Denmark, Austria, South Africa and Ireland, to name a few. It was really incredible to meet athletes from all over the world and see the similarities we have with each other. One of my Unified® partners mentioned to me that she could not understand how there was not even more advocacy and education for people with disabilities than there currently is because it is a cause that truly spans all

populations. Never was that more visible to me than at these games. Race, age, religion, gender, nationality — none are without a stake in this cause. To me, it was one of the most exciting aspects of having ESPN provide such wonderful coverage.

Hopefully, the world at large can see the amazing things our guys can accomplish and see that it impacts people everywhere. My biggest hope leaving the Games was that some of the Ranchers would have the opportunity to attend a future World Games and bring their own accomplishments to the international stage. Until then, we will just have to continue making our mark right here in Austin!

WORKING TOWARD CHOICE FOR PEOPLE WITH I/DDs

Judy Horton

If you receive funds from a government program to which you are entitled by age or need, such as Social Security, how would you feel if the government said you couldn't live in Sun City and continue to receive benefits because there are too many people like you already there? Suppose the government told you your adult child with Down syndrome could not live at Down Home Ranch because he shouldn't live around other adults with intellectual disabilities?

If the government can tell people with disabilities where they can and can't live, why can't it dictate where we senior citizens are allowed to live? And why can it tell adults with intellectual disabilities where they can live? Why is there no provision for respecting the rights and desires of those adults and their families?

The Coalition for Community Choice (CCC) is a national grassroots collaboration of people with disabilities, their families and friends, disability rights advocates, professionals, educators, and housing and services providers founded to advance the principle that community can be experienced in all residential settings. Jerry Horton, Executive Director and Founder of Down Home Ranch, has been instrumental in its founding and growth.

CCC PRINCIPLES

A home and community is defined differently for every person. Federal policy should not define "Home and Community" for people with I/DD. Individuals with I/DD have the right to decide what "Home and Community" is to them. Therefore,

policy should not include language which restricts settings or narrowly defines what is considered a "Home and Community."

Individuals with I/DD should not be restricted from living in any setting based on resident diagnosis, desired lifestyle and location, density of persons with disability, and/or non-individually assessed least restrictive environment that otherwise would be desired and supported in their person-centered planning process.

Individuals with I/DD have the right to choose from a full range of support service options to meet their needs and reach their full potential.

Individuals with I/DD have the right to choose their support service provider to provide services in their voluntarily chosen setting, including options such as: agricultural settings, campus settings, intentional communities and live-work-play pedestrian-oriented developments.

No government official should have the power to override or restrict one's choice of home and community options.

The government should decrease barriers to residential options and not restrict innovation of affordable and accessible housing.

The government should provide more incentives to development of housing and support services to meet the specific needs for those with I/DD in that community.

For a more comprehensive discussion of this topic, go to the Founders' Blog at downhomeranch.blogspot.com. For more information on the CCC, go to coalitionforcommunitychoice.org.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Scott Ragan Ranch Manager
- Craig Russell Chief Operational Officer
- Naomi Russell Ranch Operations Specialist
- Keva St. Fort RA - Barnabas House
- John Sanderson Interim RA - Isaiah House
- Pat Tatroe Ranch Foreman
- Christine Watkins PT Greenhouse/Garden
- Brad Zipoy Groundskeeper/Operations
- Laura Zipoy Ranch Receptionist
- Peyton Zipoy ..Program/Administrative Specialist

ADMINISTRATION & STAFF

- Jerry W. Horton, Ph.D. Founder/Executive Director
- Judy Horton Founder/Director Emerita
- Elizabeth Arnold Program Director
- Debbie Burnfield Program Instructor
- Casey Dickerson Q/Case Manager
- Joe Dorsey Operations Staff
- Ashley Fleming RA - Wilderness House
- Laurie Forehand Kitchen Assistant
- Cody Garner Operations Assistant
- Misty Grumbles Kitchen Manager
- Elizabeth Hall PT Driver
- Steve Hall Program Staff
- Laura Hanson Driver/Day PRN



DOWN HOME RANCH

20250 FM 619, Elgin, Texas 78621