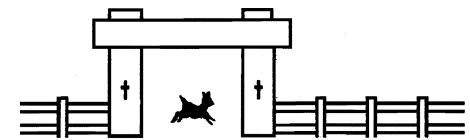


*1997: The Year  
At  
Down Home Ranch*



*A special place...*

*...a different pace...*

**Winter 1997**

The year began well. Yam Bake '96 was a hit, and got us off to a good start toward raising the land payment (6th of 10). The response to our annual appeal, and to the Angel's Grove initiative, made it possible to match the RGK Foundation challenge grant—a great boost.

The RGK grant, along with awards from Justin Paul, Anderson, Still Water and other foundations, funded the start of the reassembly of the six donated greenhouses, which will allow us to expand our horticultural program from 3,000 sq. ft. to 14,000 sq. ft. of space.

Another 1,000 seedling trees were planted, Virginia pines and Leland cypresses.



*Judy Horton & Mickey Harris plant Virginia pine seedlings*



*Lynne trims baby Christmas tree roots*



*Right: Mickey carries newborn heifer calf, Lady Jane, while mother Lollipop looks on anxiously*



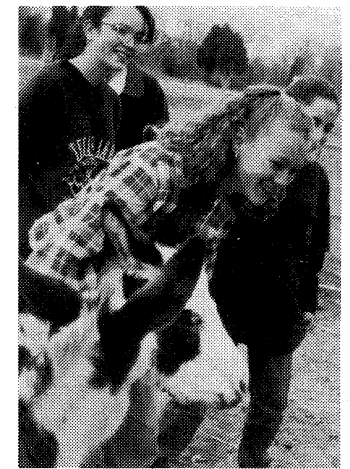
*Board President Carroll Fultz, with Lynda and Terry at Episcopal Council*



*Bill & Lynda enjoy a Ranch outing to Aquarena Springs in San Marcos*



*Grace Lutheran Youth Group cleaned the historic cemetery in early March*



*Young people from Grace Lutheran Church in Elgin take time out from cleaning the cemetery to get to know Jack & Jill, the Ranch's miniature donkeys*

**Spring**

Spring ushered in a time of intense activity. In March, the first shipment of greenhouses began arriving. The site was prepared and a concrete slab poured for one house. The volunteer house and porch was moved, being readied for our VESS volunteer.

The Ranch Hands (our colleagues with disabilities) enjoyed working in the shade house, and planted more than 1,000 beautiful hanging baskets—several varieties of airplane plants—which sold well to local nurseries.

In May we had berries for the first time since 1995, and friends from area churches helped clear the cemetery and pick dewberries to make jelly. Students from St. Stephen's Episcopal School cleared debris from acres of newly root-plowed fields.



*Berry picking by young people from Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church*



*Above: Berry pickers from Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church gathered over 30 gallons of wild dewberries, which Ranch Hands made into jelly*



*Special Olympics were in Houston this year. One day Down Home Ranch may be an event site for regional Special Olympics sports*



*Right: Bill Moors stirs the dew-berry jelly mixture while making jelly from the wild dewberries picked by volunteers*



*Ranch Hand Terry Pundsäck, helped by Kelly Horton, daughter of Judy & Jerry Horton, inside the greenhouse*



*Concrete slab and beams are poured for the Nexus greenhouses donated to the Ranch*

## *Summer*

Camp dominated our summer, as always! Fifty-five campers from all over Texas came for our two one-week sessions, and swam, ate s'mores, hiked, and took care of the animals.

It was a time of growth for all concerned. We had as much fun as the campers did, and look forward to Summer '98.



*Andrea Hansen stuffs Edward the Scarecrow at Ranch Camp*



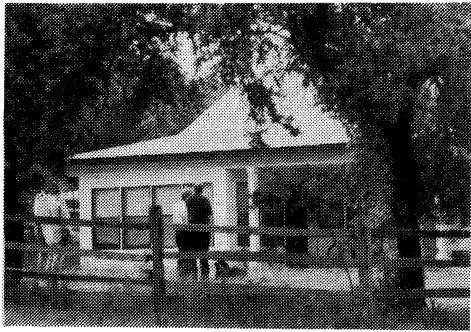
*Buddies, counselors, and staff hold hands in worship in the gazebo during Orientation Weekend for Ranch Camp '97*



*Eric catches another fish, aided by Head Counselor Jack Frerick*



*Campers, Buddies, counselors and staff line up in front of the barn for a photo shoot before going on a hayride*



*Fr. Jim Evans, Dir., Catholic Charities, inspects home donated by Jerry & Stephanie Gregoire. Catholic Charities then donated the home to Down Home Ranch and Village Homes moved it to "the hill" at the Ranch.*

In the midst of Ranch Camp, the house which will become the Camp Center was donated. What a great help it will be!

The summer also saw the construction of the first permanent new structure at the Ranch—the Gazebo!

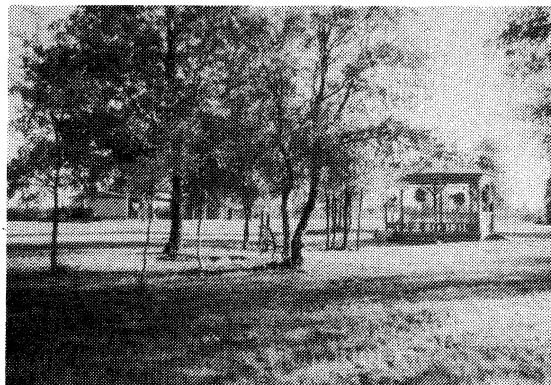
A place for picnics, for quiet talks, for bible study and prayer, the Gazebo will grace Sara's Garden for years to come.



*Community service workers from the Bastrop County Restitution Center erect the framework for the Nexus greenhouses*



*The dedication ceremony for the beautiful gazebo donated by Drs. Dan & Sally Nowland of San Marcos in memory of their daughter Kelly*



*Right: The view from Sara's Garden, showing the gazebo in the evening light*

## Fall

Fall is always Yam Bake time! Despite a steady rain that had the kids skidding in the red mud, many folks came out and had a good time.

However, Sunshine the Clown brightened everybody's day!



*Don Rettberg, Jr., Sunshine, and Edward B. Finnegan staying dry*



*Left: Ranch Hands Bill Moors and Lynne Christianson join Director Jerry Horton, VESS volunteer Carie Brahan, and the truck driver following delivery of the second half of the new Camp Center home*

Over three successive weekends volunteers took the roof off the donated house and then Village Homes of Austin moved it, set it up and secured it—all donated!

The house will have the roof and porch reattached, be tied to utility lines, have a septic system installed, and then it will be ready to go into action as the Camp Center—soon to host Respite Camp #1.

Carie Brahan, VESS volunteer from Kansas, began to settle in to her new duties and new digs after arriving in August. Carie will be a great help as the Ranch sets ambitious goals for 1998.

*Right: A light-hearted attempt to get the two halves of the new Ranch Camp Center house together by Bill, Lynne, Terry, Carie and Judy.*



## **1998 - A Preview**

We have our sights set high for 1998. Here are a few of our many goals:

- Construct deck, porch, and infirmary for Camp Center house
  - Build two cabins and a pavilion for Ranch Camp
  - Host four (4) weekend Respite Camps for 40 campers
  - Serve 100 campers at Ranch Camp
  - Erect and operate four new greenhouses
  - Train and employ 3-4 more Ranch Hands (with disabilities)
  - Complete pond and arbor in Sara's Garden; begin sidewalks
  - Create Master Plan with Texas A&M professor & class
  - Erect new equipment barn for tractors & equipment
  - Begin construction on home for eight residents
- 

### **Mission**

*Down Home Ranch seeks to be faithful to the Christian mission to provide for those in need. Our mission is to build a rural community for adults with developmental disabilities, offering training, housing, recreation and dignified employment, as well as opportunities for growth in mind, body and spirit.*

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