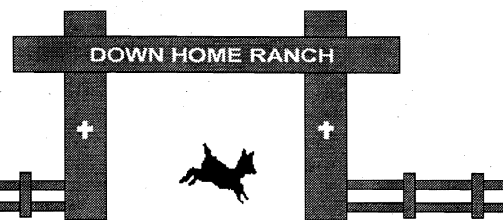


THE SPIRIT OF DOWN HOME RANCH



June/July 1998

Vol. 8 No. 3

Land Paid Off!

It was October 1990. We had come up with \$2,000 "earnest money" to secure a contract to buy the land. But we needed a lot more to make the \$25,000 down payment, to "close" in December. We didn't make it. We raised \$19,000 but had to borrow the rest.

In fact, we had to borrow some money every year for the next few years. Down Home Ranch was merely a dream. But a master plan was being developed, and a top priority was to get the land paid off.

Well, it took 7 1/2 years, but on May 31, 1998, we did it. We paid it off!

Last October we had started The Homestead Campaign and raised some of the money needed to retire the debt. Then DHR Board member Jerry Bramlett and his wife Paula came forward with a very generous donation to push the campaign over the top. This wonderful gift helped the Ranch achieve the first major goal of its 10-year plan.

With the land-debt retired, the Ranch enters a new phase—focusing on program and construction development. We are still poor, still struggling. But a milestone has been reached, and we are planning a big celebration to take place at the Yam Bake this fall. Stay tuned. Exciting things are going to happen.

Bishop Charms Guests, Dedicates Camp Center

Father John McCarthy, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Austin found room in his hectic schedule to visit Down Home Ranch and dedicate the building donated by Catholic Charities.

The Bishop was his usual charming self, making honored guests and visitors feel like beloved members of the family. He was great.

Bishop McCarthy also brought his Irish humor, and . . . a generous check from the Knights of Columbus—who have a warm heart for our brothers and sisters with disabilities. Thanks again to the Bishop and to the Knights!

This issue of *The Spirit* is six pages, a first! Activity has been intense this spring and we want to include as many stories as possible. We hope you enjoy it.

Presbyterians on Mission Labor at Camp Center

A 1997 letter to Presbyterian churches was a plea for help. A year later it came in spades.

Two churches in West Texas sent "missionaries" to help DHR prepare for Ranch Camp. Leading the pack was Pastor Jim Pitts of Abilene. Pastor Jim was joined by Jim and Bebe Boren, Bill and Billie Hartsfield and several others (where is that list?). Some were from First Presbyterian in Snyder, others from Pastor Jim's church in Abilene, Westminster Presbyterian.

During the week at DHR our new friends erected a platform and the tent that went on it, sewed craft materials for camp, made jelly, and started the bathroom for the boy's dorm.

We enjoyed the easy humor, hard work and fellowship of our new friends from West Texas.

Ya'll come back!



Singers from the Elgin Community Choir join Tom and Sherry Green and Broken Vessel on stage at the benefit at The Backyard in Austin. Proceeds from the annual event went to Down Home Ranch this year.

inside

Director's chair -----	2	Charley West -----	4
Weekend Camp -----	2	Joan Dalrymple -----	5
Wish List -----	2	Phase II Begins -----	5
Thanks to -----	3	Camp Volunteers -----	5
Program Notes -----	3	Donnie & Marie join DHR --	6

director's chair

by Jerry Horton

As camp ends we are mindful of this being a time of change for the Ranch. A new day dawns.

The greenhouses are erected. The Camp Center is operational. Three successful weeks of Ranch Camp end. The land is paid for.

We are alternately astounded and thankful. And anxious too.

Where is the \$30,000 needed for the Lola Wright Foundation challenge, to build a new cabin? Can we find the money to start Weekend Camp this fall? How about day-to-day operations? Above all, when can we build and start the residential program?

Oh yes. Now I remember. You support this mission. Your gifts make it all happen. Every photo in this issue testifies to the power of giving.

That doesn't change, even in a time of great change. Dick Smith says it this way: "It's not a matter of will it happen. The question is, when will it happen."

I'm getting impatient. May it be soon!

God bless!



Kelly and miniature donkey Lily, one day old!

Weekend Camp to Open in September

For a long time we have been wanting to offer weekend camps--a Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon camp. The idea is simple: an easy, fun weekend for the camper; respite for the family.

Now that the Camp Center and the platform tent are operational--and well tested by Ranch Camp--we are ready to launch this new program.

A brochure describing the weekend program will be available soon, but if you are interested in one of the four weekends being offered this fall you would be wise to call soon. Camps will be very small and space will be at a premium.

Dates for camps: Sept. 11-13; Oct. 9-11; Nov. 13-15; Dec. 11-13. Check-in will be 3:00 -5:00 pm on Friday, check-out before 4:00 pm on Sunday. The cost will be \$150 per camper. We haven't a scholarship fund yet, but will work on it.

We expect Weekend Camp to be a lot of fun and a big hit.



Guard dozers shape the earth for our new pond. The Guard has worked on the pond several weekends now and will be close to done after their July visit. The Taylor office of the Natural Resources Commission is providing engineering for the construction of the pond, which will include a "dry hydrant" to fill a fire-tanker truck in the event of a fire anywhere in our community.

What do we wish for this fine day . . . ?

- * another golf cart, or two-- they really help us get around
- * monthly pledges
- * more fishing tackle
- * garden tools: hoses, rakes, etc.
- * volunteers
- * adult, three-wheel bikes--with solid tires (if possible)

coming soon

Fri. 7/3	Ranch Camp '98 concludes
Sat. 7/28	Elgin Western Days (DHR booth)
Fri-Sat, 8/8 -8/9	Nat. Down Syndrome Congress, Dallas
Sat. 8/14	Board of Directors meeting
Fri-Sun, 9/11 - 9/13	Weekend Camp
Sat., 10/3	Yam Bake!
Fri-Sun, 10/9 - 10/11	Weekend Camp
Fri-Sun, 11/13 - 9/15	Weekend Camp
Fri-Sun, 12/11 - 12/13	Weekend Camp
Sat. 12/12	Christmas Open House



Ranch Campers and volunteers wave in front of the Camp Center. The building, donated by Catholic Charities—a gift from Jerry and Stepanie Gregoire—was thoroughly initiated over the three weeks of camp. Over 70 campers benefited from the Center, some of whom “camped” in one of three bedrooms. The back deck, a contribution of Mike McCoy, McCoy’s Building Supplies was an indispensable gift—the site of all meals, activities, evening vespers and... a place to sit and talk.

Thanks to . . .

The men from the Bastrop County Restitution Center for 1,000+ hours on the Camp Center

The men from Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, for work on the cover for Charlie’s motor home . . .

Jay Henderson, for a long, long day wiring the Camp Center

Greg Pina, for hanging the overhead door to the Atrium

Boyd Taylor, for trenching the water line to Charlie’s home ...

Lonnie Green, George Dalrymple and daughter Judy, for doing the plumbing in the Atrium bathroom.

Bill Wahrmond, for cowboy storytelling at Ranch Camp ...

Lonnie Green, work on the green houses...

Brothers Joe Reyna, David Saragosa, Robert Wenske of the Knights of Columbus, for work on the Camp Center...

The confirmation class from Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church and their sponsors, for work on the Camp Center and the Gazebo...

Mike Paulsen, Carroll Fultz, and Peter Fultz, for work on the Camp Center..

Boy Scout Pack 244, Den 3 and Cub Scouts Pack 154 for clearing brush, grounds clean-up and tipi assembly

Everyone who helps “build a dream” at Down Home Ranch

Design and Development Team

We are putting together a building & design team. Can you help?

We need expertise in: waste water management; site survey; roads; water/energy conservation; architecture; etc. We are looking at Spanish Colonial Revival for our architecture, and would welcome persons knowledgeable and enthusiastic about that style.



Jerry Horton and Charle West, center, are surrounded by men of Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, and of the Bastrop County Restitution Center—all of whom provided a Saturday of labor at the Ranch. The Hyde Park men set the poles for the roof that will cover the motor home donated by Charlie.

program notes

by Judy Horton

As Director of Programs, I look forward to Ranch Camp with a combination of anticipation and just a little bit of dread.

Anticipation because I look forward to seeing the campers and sharing our special times together. Dread because the work load can be very hard indeed, and the responsibilities awesome.

Truth to tell, camp makes me mindful of Jesus’ saying that we gain our life only by being willing to give it up. Everything in life—from parenthood to ministry—that turns out to be worthwhile and fruitful brings me smack up against this concept. Will I hold on to my life, my privacy, my personal space? Or will I give them up so that others may enjoy some benefit they might not otherwise receive?

True, too much of this and I start going a little crazy. People so often say to Jerry and me, “Oh, you are so wonderful.” To which we reply, “No, we’re not.” (Then they think we’re modest, too!)

But those who know us well know we’re just sinners standing in the need of prayer, the same as anyone else. The most heroic thing we do is show up for work every day. And our lives return to us in the form of our campers!

West Goes East—Finds Welcome Mat Out

Charlie West came east (of Austin) and landed—motor home and all—at Down Home Ranch.

Charlie is a new friend of the Ranch and official “Ranch Camp Grandpa.” We met him through Ranch friends Dick Smith and Fred Mancuso.

A Member of Hyde Park Baptist Church, Charlie has donated his beautiful motor home to DHR and a special place is being fixed up as Charlie’s Place. Men from Hyde Park Baptist have already set the poles for a roof to shelter the home (and Charlie) from the sun.

Charlie became an instant and big hit during the first week of camp this summer and earned his stripes. His maturity—Charlie is 84—and candor, not to mention a quick wit and engaging smile, made him a big hit with campers and staff alike.

Down Home Ranch continues to be blessed by good people like Charlie



Charlie West and Joan Dalrymple

West taking a chunk of the ministry to their hearts.

A dedication of Charlie’s Place in honor of his beloved Lil, his late wife of 56 years, will take place on July 25 at Down Home Ranch.

Welcome to the family, Charlie!



Pastor Jim Pitts helps roll up the sides of the tent. He and a small “missionary army” of West Texas Presbyterians built the wooden platform for the tent—one of the girl’s dorms at Ranch Camp—and then erected the canvas tent. The Presbyterian missionaries also made jelly, sewed pot-holders for camp crafts, and started the bath in the boy’s dorm.

Right: Beverly and Dan Johnson kneel beside an engraved marker, placed in memory of their son Philip, at the dedication ceremony for Angel’s Grove.

Nurse “St.” Joan

For a second year in a row Ranch Camp Ranch was blessed with a true “Daughter of the King,” in the form of Joan Dalrymple of Houston.

Judy Horton met Joan through The Glory Bound Singers, a choral group in the Daughters of the King, an Episcopal prayer-support order for women. Joan serves as volunteer nurse and has been a great blessing to the Ranch. The Ranch Campers (and staff) love her dearly.

Joan’s husband George has also become a friend of the Ranch—doing plumbing for the volunteer’s house May ‘97, roofing for the Camp Center and more plumbing for the boy’s dorm this spring. In keeping with that spirit, they donated the funds to install the septic system at the Camp Center!

Last year George came to Down Home Ranch fresh from a trek to photograph Mt. Everest, including a hike into Base Camp. (George’s tales led most of the Horton clan to avidly read *Into Thin Air*.)

Joan and George—from Ireland and Scotland respectively—exemplify the spirit of service that is so vital and so prevalent at the Ranch. Cheers!





July 1998

Reflections . . .

Volume 1 Number 6

Ranch Camp

by Judy Horton

Ranch Camp began in 1995. Campers with mental retardation—adults and children alike) come from all over Texas and even Florida for a week of fun and fellowship. It is always the period of most intense work and greatest joy that we experience during the year. Following are some special memories of the staff and volunteers of *Ranch Camp '98!*

I remember Xavier—how he cared for the pig and the turtles. Every day he would try to make sure the leftovers were set aside for Humphrey the pig, and if this was not done would report the fact sorrowfully to Miss Judy. When a volunteer took the large turtles home to her pond, he tried to console the small turtles and couldn't be convinced they were not missing their large friends.

Mickey Harris, Senior Steward

I remember Hal being such a gentleman that he would forget the game and offer his chair to the female campers during musical chairs!

Andy Evans, Nurse, Session II

In the face of each camper, I see the face of the One who made us all. We, who do not know them, think of the handicapped as different. They are not dumb. In fact some are a lot smarter than you and me. They just have a different way of showing it. Never have I met a more loving and accepting group of people. I like to watch many of the campers who are closed up and withdrawn when they arrive, come alive and become open and outgoing.

Jack Frerick, Men's Counselor

I remember Gregory sneaking into the Center against rules. Caleb was hustling him out the back door, and Gregory caught me giving him "the look." Gregory and I had already had many "discussions" through the week, and as he saw me his face fell and he exclaimed: "Oh no, you again!" We lost it.

Gay Harris, Camp Manager

I'll never forget how the young men who are the counselors in the men's dorm responded to a panic attack in one of the campers with such calm assurance, and such nurturing spirits. I was so proud of them.

Jo Ann Carpenter, Nurse, Session III

What impressed me was how Annadelle wanted so much to make friends with our family. We're so glad we came. We want to come back.

Julie Bell, Volunteer

One of my ladies really liked to burp at the table. I made her say "Excuse me" every time, and now my whole table of ladies is really good at burping and excusing themselves.

Ann Harris, Team Leader

I'm really going to miss "Taco Man (Hal)". He's been a great buddy.

Caleb Cunningham, Team Leader/Counselor

The "No campers in the Camp Center" and the "no videos" rules kind of went by the wayside when the temperature hit 100 degrees!

Janet Carpenter, Cook

"Want to go to the store for a taco and a Pepsi?"

Hal, Camper

As for me, I remember so many things!

- *The fishing worms I stuck in my purse and forgot until a strange smell began wafting out a few days later.*
- *Caleb's wonderful patience with Gregory, the red-haired scamp of Session I.*
- *The excitement of everyone when friends from Elgin provided an airlift of chips and Bible verses on the last day of camp, flying low overhead as the campers ran through the fields collecting the drop.*
- *Hannah shyly asking if I would come to the tent and sing her a bed-time song, to which I was only too happy to oblige.*



- *Karen comforting a counselor on a recent loss, fresh with the loss of her own dear mother a few months ago, with all of us winding up in tears.*
- *My own joy in the presence of my fellow Daughters of the King and Glory Bound Singers: Janet, Joan, Beverly, and Andy, and the knowledge that Daughters all over the Diocese of Texas were in prayer for our campers and staff.*
- *Talent night, with beautiful "Angel" singing expressively, having spent hours copying out lyrics for the occasion.*

- *Norma, 5' tall and round as a melon, claiming identical twin status with my daughter Carolyn, 6' and lean as a string bean, upon discovering they have the same birthday.*

It's hard to explain how important camp is to people who haven't experienced it. As a child, I attended camp for several weeks every summer near Kerrville. I believe I learned more at camp about how to live and be than in any other formative experience of my childhood. I wanted that experience for my daughter Kelly and for special people like her.

So here's to Hal, and Angel, and Terry and Richard, and all the campers. We'll see you next year.

Judy Horton, Down Home Ranch

"Phase II" May Sound Innocuous But It's Music to Our Ears

With the land paid off, camp over, and the two "reassembly" projects completed—greenhouses and Camp Center—we mark the end of Phase I.

Phase II begins at the mid-point in 1998, July 1st, and will be a period of intense design, fund-raising and (we hope) construction. The Lola Wright Foundation challenge grant is the first "biggie" of this period. Once we meet this challenge, we can build the first of two cabins planned.

Phase II should last only through Dec. 31, 1999 and includes the following:

- * Two cabins for Ranch Camp
- * Pavilion for Ranch Camp
- * A home for eight Ranch Hands!

We hope that this time next year the first residents will be home on the ranch.



Linda Dojutrek, Terry Pundsack, Kelly Horton, Edward Finnegan, Don Rettberg, Jr., Sterling Hibbs and Mike Monske join Fr. John McCarthy, Bishop of the Diocese of Austin, the dedication of the DHR Camp Center. The Camp Center has been put the test during Ranch Camp '98 and has proved to be an invaluable addition.

Camp wouldn't happen without great volunteers

Everyone who has donated to the Ranch has in some way assisted with Ranch Camp. However, some special folks have given hours and hours of their time and energy, as counselors, team assistants, general helpers, nurses, etc. We honor especially the following volunteers and businesses:

Alamo Heights Optimist Club, San Antonio
Andrus, Callye, Session II, Houston
Bastrop County Restitution Center, Elgin
Brahan, Carie, VESS Volunteer, Derby, KS
Bramlett, Paula, all sessions, Elgin
Carpenter, J.B., Frame Switch
Carpenter, Vanessa, I & III, Taylor
City National Bank, Taylor

Cunningham, Caleb, all sessions, Austin
Dalrymple, George, Houston
Dalrymple, Joan, nurse, Session I, Houston
Daughters of the King, Diocese of Texas
Daughters of the King, Province VII
Evans, Andy, nurse, Session II, Houston
Foley, Anne, Session III, Taylor
Frerick, Carolyn, Elgin
Fullilove, Kate

Fultz, Carroll, Sessions I & II, San Antonio
Gilbertson-Winburne, Dorothy, Austin
Goertz, Denise, Sessions I & III, Cedar Creek
Green, Marcia & Lonnie, Rockdale
HEB Food Store, Taylor
Harris, Ann, Session III, Elgin
Hartley, Eric, Session I, College Station
Henderson, Jay & his dad, Austin
Hibbs, Braxton, Elgin High School, Elgin
Hoover, Zach, Session III, Dallas
Johnson, Dr. Poullette, Kansas
Kyle, Donna
Maxwell Trucks, Taylor
Maby's, Manor
Meadows, Jan & Robert, Elgin
Members of First Presbyterian, Snyder
Members of Westminster Presbyterian, Abilene
Merchant Press, Taylor
McCaslin, Nancy & Randy, Manor
Nitro the Clown, Temple
Palmer, Normal & Pat, Blue
Paulsen, Michael, Round Rock
Perry, Collier & Peggy, Rockdale
Rinn, Lindsey, Session II, Cameron
St. Joseph Catholic Church, Manor
St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Rockdale
Super S, Taylor
Tatroe, Jonathan & Paul, all sessions, Thorndale
Tatroe, Pat & Jill, Thorndale
Thibodeaux, Gregg, Thorndale
Tomek, Rebecca, Session II, Buchholts
Wahrmund, Bill, San Antonio
Wahrmund, Jeff, Elgin High School, Elgin
Wal-Mart, Bastrop & Taylor
Welch, Carolyn, Noah & Caitlin, Lawrence, KS
West, Charles, Session I, Austin



The deck at Camp Center. McCoy's Building Supplies donated most of the material for the deck, which was a beehive of activity during Ranch Camp. Workers labored until after 9:00 on the Saturday before camp to make sure it was ready for Ranch Campers.



Tim Sutherland and boy scout troopers take on Lawhon-Gardner cemetery. The Scouts camped out by the cemetery Friday through Sunday afternoon, completing the best clean-up we've seen yet. Tim, his wife, friends and scouts have volunteered to really get, and keep, the cemetery in great condition. Are hats are off to the scouts!

Donnie and Marie Move to DHR

The Down Home Ranch donkey digs got crowded a couple weeks ago, as Donnie and Marie moved in.

Dan and Beverly Johnson donated the pair of beautiful miniature donkeys to the Ranch, knowing that they we are slowing starting a breeding program.

Donnie is a gelded jack, while Marie is fertile. They are a beautiful pair of "crossback" donkeys—distinctive markings common to the breed.

We will arrange a marriage of convenience to our Jack, a spotted male (or jack) and hope for a foal in about 13 months. Our three month old Lily is doing very well, and we'll soon turn her mom Jill into the corral with Jack as well.

Thanks Dan and Beverly! (Don't get too chilled in the Colorado Rockies!)



Men from Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, auger post holes as part of a project to put a protective roof over Charlie West's motor home. Charlie is donating the home to Down Home Ranch, but will use it for his (we hope) frequent visits to the Ranch.

organization

Values

Down Home Ranch seeks to be faithful to the Christian mission to provide for those in need.

Mission

The mission of Down Home Ranch 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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