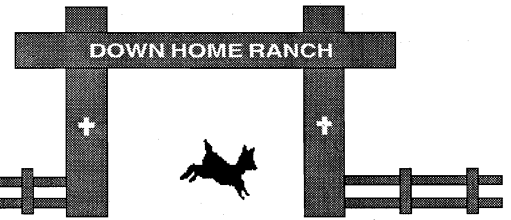


THE SPIRIT OF DOWN HOME RANCH



August 2001

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Daniel and Michael on the dozer as clearing begins for The Village—the residential community at Down Home Ranch. The Village road will be a half a mile long, winding through 10 wooded acres. The D5B dozer is on loan from Steve Stoecklein's construction company.

The Big Push!

Down Home Ranch is being built in four phases. Phase I included everything from incorporation (May 1989) to buying land, starting Ranch Camp, erecting greenhouses, and in May 1998, paying the land off. That marked the end of Phase I.

Next, we sought money to begin to build, and we raised over \$500,000 for Phase II—to build the Pavilion, two bunkhouses, and two houses. The Pavilion and bunkhouses are built and operational, and the two houses will be under construction this fall. That will conclude Phase II.

But, we already raising support for Phase III, and have enough to build a third house. This will give us three 4-bedroom homes, each with three Ranchers and a Home Steward, plus we have some money toward a duplex for two volunteers.

The goals for Phase III are ambitious: more resident homes; cabins for Ranch Camp; volunteer housing; a new barn; an office building; McCarthy House, the Chaplain's residence; an endowment fund and more. The costs will be high.

This summer marks the beginning of the "big push," a sustained effort to firmly establish Down Home Ranch as a viable community. We cannot do it alone, but we can if we work together. Please join us. We need your help.

Rain Causes Delay, But Dozers are Rolling

Typical of *Ranch Camp*, we had over 8" of rain during the four weeks of camp. But it didn't dampen the enthusiasm. The fun went on.

However, it did temporarily stop the dozer work for what will soon be the residential community—The Village, for short. But dry weather came and clearing has begun again. The shape of the road is taking place and we hope it will be built soon. Utilities will follow.

There will be many opportunities for help as we move toward construction of the first three homes at the Ranch.

Most importantly, we will need many workers to actually help build the three homes. Using volunteers and in-kind donations from businesses—Wilsonart is donating flooring for the three homes—will help stretch the funds we have to get the job done. Habitat for Humanity at St. Mary's Student Center, Texas A&M, is going to help and other groups will be a part of this exciting project.

The end result will be that Daniel, Michael, Robert, Hannah, Terry and others will be seeing their new homes finally being built. The Village will be the heart of Down Home Ranch, and many hopes and dreams are resting there.

Under the hot Texas sun the dozers are rolling, clearing the way for a bright future. We can hardly wait to pound in that first nail!

Wish List

- A bigger tractor, hay equipment
- A small tractor with shredder
- New bunk beds for camps
- Volunteers to hand-clear brush
- Hand and garden tools
- Churches to join our Faith in Action coalition

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director's chair

by Jerry Horton

A letter arrives from Steve, a delightful man in his 40s who comes to camp each summer.

In exquisitely well-formed block letters, Steve expresses his interest in living at the Ranch, and he thanks me for giving him a golf-cart tour and explaining the Master Plan to him.

Steve says that he is trying to discern (although he doesn't use that word) whether God wants him to live at the Ranch.

A few days later Dusty and Wadsworth, our mutts, bark me awake at 2:00 AM. Sleep is over for that night. It's time to ponder the imponderables, and to worry.

There is no longer any doubt: A big part of my job description must be to worry! Because I sure do it. Even when things go well I worry.

After ten years you'd think I'd have a little more trust in the power of prayer. God has always come through for the Ranch. Even when hopes are dashed, and something we counted on doesn't come through, help usually arrives—often from a completely unsuspected quarter.

And yet, I fret. *How will we pay our bills? Where is the money to add the fourth greenhouse bay? How can we meet the shortfall we know the residence program will have?*

So I do get into the doldrums, especially when I forget that I'm not in this alone, and that family, friends, supporters, and well-wishers around the world keep us and the Ranch in their daily prayers.

And so the night passes, and it is day, and I say, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief!" I think of Steve with his hopes and his dreams, and then I settle down to work.



Prairie View A&M Nursing students served as Counselors for a week of Ranch Camp—adding a distinctly international flavor. Pictured are: Ray Clark (USA), Jackie Peters (St. Thomas, Virgin Islands), Michelle Do (Vietnam), Ada Brown (Nigeria), Sinee Suwannakinthorn (Thailand), Danielle Ellison (USA), Tiffany Tolden (USA), and Laura Haralambie (Romania). Thanks to our new Aggie friends for the week of help!

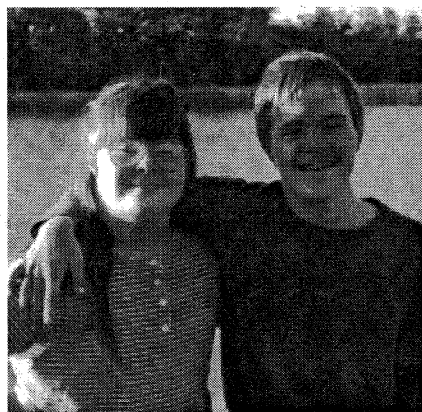
Next Nexus!

When we erected the donated Nexus greenhouses in 1997/98, we didn't put them all up. We're now putting the last one up.

The fourth bay, the largest at 42' wide, is being connected to the three existing Nexus houses, and will be used to increase the poinsettias crop this fall.

calendar

Saturdays are	Volunteer Work Days
Aug. 4 & 11	Erect Nexus greenhouse
August 7 & 14	Poinsettia Plantings
Oct. 13, 7:30 am	Ranch Ride
Oct. 13, 3:00 -8:00 pm	Yam Bake
Nov. 2-4	Fall Camp I: Harvest Home
Nov. 26	Begin Poinsettia Deliveries
Dec. 7-9	Fall Camp II: Christmas Camp



Kelly and Sterling at the pond. This picture, in sepia tones, will be the cover of the Master Plan

Master Plan is Done

Last year the Stillwater Foundation, Austin, awarded a grant to the Ranch to help develop a Master Plan. After a search, Land Design Studio was selected and the work began.

Last October six architects descended on the Ranch, staying for several days as work began. It was exhausting and exhilarating. Hopeful parents joined us to talk about the dream of a working farm and ranch for our children. We pondered the scale of the vision, and wondered where to put things. What about the architectural style? And building materials? How can we add strength to the community? Do we have to sacrifice beauty to build economically? Much work. Many hours. And a beautiful Master Plan.

It is a fine product, and it tells the story of Down Home Ranch. But it isn't just a story anymore, it is a Plan—a beautiful roadmap to the future.

Copies of the plan will be available soon.

Ranch Camp: Another Great Summer!

Ranch Camp 2001 was a big hit, with tears flowing freely at the Friday closing ceremonies. Even in one week strong friendships form, and it's hard to say goodbye.

Ranch Campers enjoyed more flexible scheduling that lets them pick what they want to do and when. They can fish (Chris Luce caught a 5 pound bass!) or swim, boat, play ball, ride horses, walk the donkeys, or just "chill."

Over 100 campers came for the summer sessions, from as close as Elgin and Taylor, and as far away as California and Virginia! Camp is over for the summer, but the memories will last a lifetime.

Our programs are successful thanks to terrific young volunteers who endured for four weeks. We are amazed at how hard they will work, and at how much they care.

Scholarship money assured that no camper was turned away. Thanks to: St. Thomas Episcopal, Rockdale; All Sts. Episcopal, Cameron; Edward Jones, Elgin; Maxwell, Taylor; Elgin Bank; Guaranty Trust Bank, Austin; Daughters of the King, Episcopal, Diocese of Texas; Daughters of the King, Episcopal, Province VII; Dr. Paulette. Johnson, Missouri.



Hannah gets her face painted—under the watchful gaze of Big Tex Brook—as a part of the fun provided by Shiloh Baptist Church, a Tuesday evening party during Ranch Camp.



With the demise of VESS, we knew we couldn't keep Jackie Chellberg on as a volunteer. But we couldn't let her go, so we hired her! In this photo, Judy and Kelly Horton. (left) help Jackie prepare poinsettias for delivery last December.

Weekend Camps

Two weekend camps are now open for enrollment, ages 13 and up.

November 2-4 we'll have a Harvest Home theme, with regular camp activities. Dec. 7-9 will be our traditional Christmas Camp, always a big favorite.

Enroll early to assure a spot. Call Jackie to sign up: 888-926-2253.

— Hector David Sanchez

July 20, 2001

Baby David Sanchez lived but a half hour, but was loved into eternity by his dad and mom, Hector and Ashley Sanchez, and by other family members.

David was born with a serious disability that allowed him only a brief half hour with his family. But father Hector had time to baptize him, and family members were able to hold their sweet little son, nephew, and grandson.

Hector and Ashley, whose daughter Christina, age 9, has Down syndrome, are longtime friends of the Hortons and supporters of Down Home Ranch.

Following mass at St. Thomas More in Austin, baby David's remains were brought to rest in Sara's Garden here at the Ranch.

judy's views

On July 7th we attended the closing ceremony for VESS, the Catholic volunteer placement service that sent us two remarkable women, who together have given three years of their lives to the Ranch. VESS closed its doors after 28 years, unable to attract enough volunteers to continue.

Without VESS, we'll have to work harder to attract volunteers—and volunteers are essential to progress at Down Home Ranch.

One way we will do this is through *Faith in Action*, a new program we are beginning which will increase the involvement of faith communities in the life of Down Home Ranch.

We have been blessed with gifts of time, talent, and treasure from over 90 congregations, most in Central Texas. The *Faith in Action* program will ask these good people and others to join with the Ranch in a long-term coalition to provide financial, volunteer and board/management help to youth and adults with disabilities.

For example, we will ask churches to allow us to recruit volunteers—volunteers to help train residents in greenhouse jobs, to teach cooking, to provide enrichment classes such as Bible study or quilting. We'll ask church groups to help with building projects, and to cook at *Ranch Camp*, and to help with Yam Bake.

A 25-member *Advisory Board* will provide oversight and guidance for *the Faith in Action*. Board members will help inform their congregations of opportunities and challenges at the Ranch, while providing oversight and guidance.

The *Faith in Action* program is an exciting new development, one with great promise for those disabled Texans who place their hope in Down Home Ranch.

Foundation Grants Spur New Development

Down Home Ranch has been blessed with several grants in the last few months. Included are:

- Burkitt Foundation, El Paso
- Cameron, Houston
- Cora, Houston
- Dougherty, Austin
- Kodosky, Austin
- Shield-Ayres, San Antonio
- Templeton, Lufkin

Recently, the Lola Wright Foundation in Georgetown issued a \$10,000 challenge for a volunteer duplex—to be awarded as soon as the Ranch raises the balance needed for the domicile.

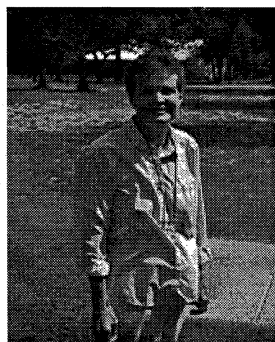
Tree Farm to Start

Growing trees and shrubs has always been a part of the overall economic plan for the Ranch, and now is about to begin—and *you* can help.

We're starting seedlings under greenhouse conditions, later to transplant some into larger, field-grown, drip irrigated containers.

You can help by providing "starts"—mountain laurel seeds, acorns, etc. (Just be sure you can tell us the species!)

Growing trees and shrubs will create jobs for residents and income to help support the Ranch. And, it will give us an abundance of plant materials with which to landscape Down Home Ranch.



Adrienne Aldrich

Volunteer of the Month: Adrienne Aldrich

Keeping busy is not a problem for Adrienne Aldrich, our friend and Volunteer of the Month. "Adri" lives in nearby Blue and tends her farm with the help of her son.

Every week Adri waters plants, or helps transplant in the greenhouse. During camp she helped the campers with their craft projects and really enjoyed being able to work with the campers.

Adri sells her wares of fine home-made jellies and jams and vintage linens at craft fairs throughout Central Texas. Each summer she plants and harvests an enormous organic garden, putting up preserves of all types.

On Wednesdays Adri shows up as faithful as the sunrise, and we are proud to name her as Volunteer of the Month for August, 2001!

Oak Trees: Acorns Needed

- Burr Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)
- Chinquapin Oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*)
- Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*)
- Nuttall Oak (*Quercus texana*)
- Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*)
- Shumardi Oak (*Quercus shumardii*)
- Water Oak (*Quercus nigra*)
- Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos*)
- White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

Call Jerry: (512) 856-2246 if you have a sources of acorns.



Bob shows Eric his big bass caught while fishing down at the waterfront.

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 disabilities such as mental retardation, offering training, housing, recreation and dignified employment, as well as opportunities for growth in mind, body and spirit.

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