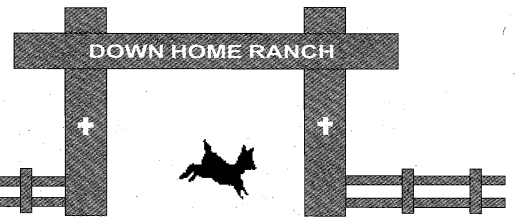


THE SPIRIT OF DOWN HOME RANCH



June 2003

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Three Resident Volunteers Join DHR Staff

Good things happen in threes!

Rosalie Hibbs, Karla Morton and Jason Morton joined the DHR staff in April as Resident Volunteers.

Rosalie, from Tulsa, Oklahoma, brings 50 years of nursing experience to her new work at DHR. Her cousin, Rev. Robert Mahoney, a good friend of the Ranch, introduced her to DHR and she felt the calling to serve this special community.

Karla is not new to the DHR team, volunteering for four months last fall prior to her assignment with the Peace Corps. In February, she and Jason were married and learning Arabic in Morocco. When the Iraq war began, the Peace Corps pulled all volunteers out of Morocco. Their new assignment is in Micronesia but they will continue at the Ranch through August.

We are thrilled to have Rosalie, Karla and Jason on the DHR team.

And, we are actively looking for a new Resident Assistant to begin in August or September, hopefully serving for at least one year. Call if you're interested.



Garden Center Blessed and Dedicated

Kelly Horton read from scripture as Bishop John McCarthy, retired Catholic Bishop of Austin, blessed and dedicated the Down Home Ranch Garden Center in a special ceremony on May 17, 2003. The new 7,000 sq. ft. building has had a transforming effect on the Ranch, bringing all operations under one roof, with a renewed level of comradarie. The building includes three offices, a large classroom, a break room, restrooms, a gift shop, and a retail garden center .

The rear of the building is a 3,500 sq. ft. warehouse, used for potting and transplanting, woodworking, tool storage, equipment repair, and many other uses.

The Garden Center was made possible through a grant from an anonymous West Texas foundation.

Early Order Deadline for Poinsettias Quickly Approaching

Its not too early to get your order in for Christmas poinsettias. The "Early Bird" deadline is September 1, 2003. If you place your order by that date you will receive your poinsettias at last year's prices. Prior to 9/1 they will be \$6.29 each for purchases of 30 or more—which includes free delivery. After 9/1 they will be \$6.50 each for 30 or more.

Poinsettias are also a great fund-raiser for adult or youth groups, choirs, bands, and other organizations. They are "church quality" and are guaranteed to have three large stems. We have sold out early in the past so call now for your order form: 888-926-2253.

Leave a Legacy

Please think of Down Home Ranch as you consider your will and how your estate will be gifted. We will put all "Legacy Gifts" into our Endowment. Gifts of cash, stock, real property, valuables and other items can provide a lifetime of support for our Ranchers.



Leave A Legacy™

director's chair

Kelly's graduation from high school coincided with my 65th birthday—so we're both in transition. She has taken to calling me "old timer," quickly followed by, "I love my dad." Our mutual affection has survived high school.

She is now officially the fourth DHR Rancher (resident), with six more to come this year, and at least another fifteen after that.

Our goal is to have the Ranch built, populated, staffed and enjoying some financial security in the next five years—by June '08, when I'll be 70 and headed out to pasture.

Lately, I've been speaking to a lot of clubs like Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimists, Sertoma, etc. These are folks who have known hard work, struggle, and sacrifice. They understand the values of labor, persistence and service.

I tell them the story of my little girl with Down syndrome, who is now a young woman of 18 years, full of hope and promise. She, my Kelly, still talks of her wedding, of having children, teaching sign language and owning her own car.

These are dreams not to be lightly dismissed, nor treated as pipe dreams. True, many will not come true. But, then, how many of us who enjoy fulfillment as adults have had all our dreams come true?

Kelly, Robert, Mike and Daniel have big dreams to pursue. They have high hopes, hopes that are encouraged here on the Ranch.

They **can** achieve, but even if they fall short, they can still have a good life among friends and family. We are like a monastic community: **this** is our life!

But they will not be able to support themselves, work as they will. They'll depend upon others—me and you—to create the security and the good life they so deserve.

We cannot fail them.



Joel Gamez, center, receives his keys from Jerry Horton for the new E-Z-Go Workhorse that he won in the raffle at Down Home Ranch. Chris Kelm, right, from Taylor Tire Center joined in congratulating Mr. Gamez.

Joel Gamez of Taylor Wins E-Z-Go Workhorse

Joel Gamez of Taylor was the lucky winner of the E-Z-Go Workhorse that was raffled at Down Home Ranch on Saturday, May 17, 2003. The raffle was a joint venture between Taylor Tire Center and Down Home Ranch.

Only 1,100 tickets were sold for the raffle with the winner receiving the E-Z-Go Workhorse and Down Home Ranch also receiving an E-Z-Go Workhorse. Residents and staff at Down Home Ranch will be using the Workhorse to assist with the work in the Tree Farm.

Mr. Gamez, owner of Gamez Machine & Truck, only bought one ticket for the raffle. "Sometimes you just get lucky," he said. He plans to use his new E-Z-Go Workhorse on his property located just outside of Taylor.

Wish List: Can You Help Us Get One Of These Items?

- Wooden rocking chairs
- Wood benches
- Parts for JD 450 track loader
- Commercial riding mower
- Road base (delivered)
- Dump truck (functional)
- Drill press, band saw
- Good fridges, for seed storage
- Barn wood, old cedar wood
- Cutting torch, bottles
- Garden tools: rakes, hoes, etc.
- Golf cart
- Golf clubs, mens & women
- Tickets to games, events
- Guinea hens
- Flags: Texas, US, elsewhere
- Bike rack
- Pontoon boat

We've Got Space

Looking for a place for that next youth retreat, family reunion or business meeting? We've got just the place for you. Our air-conditioned facilities include our Pavilion, with room for up to 84 to meet and eat, and a large full-service kitchen; two bunkhouses that each sleep 28; and the Camp Center, a 3-bedroom house with a big deck facing the above ground pool. Also included is 267 acres of lush trees, meadows and wildlife. With rental rates near the lowest in the area, you will certainly want to come out and enjoy our modern facilities as well as the warm, welcoming atmosphere and beautiful countryside at Down Home Ranch.

calendar

June 15-20	Ranch Camp: Session I
June 22-27	Ranch Camp: Session II
June 29 - July 4	Ranch Camp: Session III
July 27	Elgin City Limits
August 14-16	Plant poinsettias
September	Martha House: Grand Opening
Sept 27	Board Member Kevin Morse's Triathlon
Oct. 4	Yam Bake X
November	Deliver 51,400 trees
December	Deliver 10,000 poinsettias
Dec. 22 - Jan 2	Christmas Break

Grinnin' & Pickin' Back at the Ranch

Here at DHR we're a music-loving bunch.

Every Monday evening we make the long drive into Austin for practice in our buddy choir, aptly named *We Are the Chorus*.

Music is a big part of every *Ranch Camp* and if you've been to the *Yam Bake* you know it is there, too!

Daniel has wanted to learn to play the guitar for years, so we asked in the last issue of the *Spirit* for the donation of a guitar.

George Fields of Austin ran right out and purchased a brand new *Sonata* guitar for Daniel. It's a honey, and Daniel is working hard on *You Are My Sunshine*.

Michael, too, is very musical and soon a second guitar was donated by Mary & Joel Dunn for him. Since Mike's left hand is handicapped by cerebral palsy, he must use a slide with the guitar in open tuning. He quickly got the hang of it, and now Gabriel House sometimes sounds like the sound track of the movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* Even Jerry is getting into the act, picking up his banjo after years of neglect.

Many, many thanks to the Fields and the Duns for their generosity to our residents!



Alcoa Rockdale Employees Volunteer on Martha House

Twelve employees and their families from Alcoa Rockdale, participated in an Alcoa ACTION Event on Saturday, May 10, 2003, giving more than forty hours of labor to Down Home Ranch.

Alcoa Rockdale holds three ACTION Events each year and Down Home Ranch was one of the lucky beneficiaries this year. During ACTION Events, employees give at least 40 hours of time and labor to a non-profit organization.

In addition to the labor from the employees, the non-profit receives a \$3000 grant from the Alcoa Foundation. What a great gift to DHR!



Board Member Continues Training for September Fundraiser

Board member Kevin Morse has taken on quite a fundraiser for Down Home Ranch. He is soliciting pledges for his 140.6 mile run, bike and swim in the Ultramax Triathlon in Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri, on September 27, 2003. Kevin's goal is to raise \$10,000 for the Ranch!

Kevin can be seen running on Town Lake or biking around Austin in his Down Home Ranch t-shirt or hat. In a three-week training period he logged approximately 10,000 meters of swimming, 72 miles of running and 200 miles of biking. Those distances will increase as he continues to prepare for the September race.

Can you help Kevin reach his \$10,000 goal? Simply send your check to Down Home Ranch in the enclosed envelope and mark it "Morse Triathlon".

judy's views

My baby has graduated.

Yes, it's true. For the first time since 1965, I don't have a child in school!

When Kelly was born, daughter Janis, #3, was in high school, Martha, #2, in college, and #1 child Carolyn had already finished her master's degree and married.

It was a daunting task to start over from scratch, but we were up for the challenge.

What we didn't know was that it would turn out to be a bit *more* challenging than we'd first thought. The diagnosis of Downs sent any future choices between UT and A&M flying out the window.

It was hard, but we rallied, and began to look around to see what might be waiting for Kelly when she was through with public school.

The answer was...not much.

What we wanted for our girl were friends, good work, a chance to keep on learning, and a real community. So we started Down Home Ranch, which is now home.

And here at the Ranch we love to celebrate—achievements, birthdays, holidays—any excuse will do! So after Kelly's graduation the Gabriel House gang (the Hortons, Michael, Daniel, and Robert) and assorted friends and relatives went to Dairy Queen to mark the occasion.

Kelly was in a sassy mood, and we all laughed so hard and had such a good time we drew the attention of the rest of the patrons, who regarded us with bemused tolerance and, perhaps, a little envy.

So—no Harvard for Kelly. But a good life nonetheless.

"Faith is the evidence of things unseen, and the substance of things hoped for," says the apostle Paul.

Kelly gave us faith, and the Ranch is the evidence of it and very much the substance of things hoped for.

Together we are building Down Home Ranch—a special place, with a different pace. If you're already a part of the Ranch, we send our thanks. If not, the welcome mat is out!

**Garden Center
Coupon Sale!**

**Buy ONE
New Guinea Impatiens
and get ~~ONE~~ TWO free
with this coupon!**

Spring Plant SALE

Its time to wind down our spring plant growing and begin preparation for poinsettias! So we're having a sale. Bring this coupon in for a great deal on New Guinea Impatiens in the most beautiful colors around.

Recently we added a selection of gardening necessities such as fertilizer and bug control products. We can serve all your gardening needs!

And don't forget about our GardenHouse Gift Shop...the perfect place to find a gift for yourself or someone else. We also have a new selection of outdoor garden decor.

Garden Center hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. It's a short, pleasant drive to the Ranch, so come, visit, and stock up.

Can You Help?

Some things take an hour or two, some longer, but all are vital:

- Help build a fishing dock
- Build raised gardening beds
- Build a chicken coop
- Paint and stain
- Take a Rancher to an event
- Help out in greenhouses
- Help clear pecan bottom-land
- Help on Martha House
- Build cabinets for kitchens
- Teach our residents: reading, cooking, woodworking, typing

Our Thanks to . . .

- **Nations Rent on Hwy 620 in Austin**—for use of drywall lift.
- **St. Stephen's Episcopal HS Seniors**—for 85 students volunteering a full day.
- **Anonymous North Dakota company**—for the donation of a drywall lift.
- **Taylor Tire Center**—for selling hundreds of raffle tickets for the E-Z-Go Workhorse.
- **Elgin Chamber of Commerce members and the Elgin Ministerial Alliance**—for visiting the Ranch for their May meetings.
- **Horton family and friends**—for picking gallons of wild dewberries in honor of Jerry's birthday.
- **Diocese of Austin Crosstraining program**—for 43 retreatants volunteering a full day and a half.

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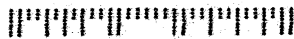
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