



# THE SPIRIT of DOWN HOME RANCH

DECEMBER 2014

## DEFINING MOMENTS

A defining moment in the life of the Ranch—of course, we didn't recognize it at the time—came on a Saturday in 1991.

The East Side Group, an intentional Episcopal community located outside of Manor, volunteered to tear down some old shacks and houses on the Ranch. We knew only Tara and Jim Crosby from the group, but all the rest were soon to be friends as well. The East Siders volunteered regularly and were well-organized, having assigned tasks for everybody beforehand—man, woman, and child. We were impressed! Collier Perry, a new friend we'd met at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Rockdale, owned a construction company, and he had offered to bring a large dumpster and haul off the debris.

From our little mobile home we could see an enormous, odd, canvas-topped structure going down FM 619. When I realized it was the dumpster I snorted something like, "Oh my gosh! Talk about overkill!"

We worked together all day, removing the bricks, tires, oil cans and other detritus in the shacks, then tearing down the structures themselves and disposing of them. A few worked shoring up our ancient barn. Late in the day, several guys from East Side climbed atop the dumpster and jumped up and down to settle the pile and create just a bit more space—we'd filled the entire thing up.

Little did we realize that this happy band of volunteers was laying down an important strand of the DNA that would come to define Down Home Ranch.

Skip forward 23 years to another Saturday: October 11, 2014. Over 175 hardy souls answered our invitation to join the 8th Annual Texas Chainsaw Manicure,

the Ranch's annual campaign to create defensible space by removing brush and trees that can fuel wildfires. The weather forecast predicted huge storms headed our way, but we were not deterred.

About 75 folks had arrived by 8:00 am when members of the Texas Forest Service team began the chainsaw safety clinic. The skies were cloudy and darkening, but no rain had yet fallen. We made a group photo as cars and people continued to arrive, then started sending people to areas of the

others labored on. Judy trekked out under a monster umbrella to find Ranchers and bring them in, like a mother hen gathering her chicks. I was on my golf cart with umbrella and camera, trying to get pictures of our army of soggy but resilient volunteers: the "Vipers" and their moms from the Young Men's Service League, teens from St. Patrick's in Hutto (their fourth year), and scores of families and individuals. Despite the conditions, I didn't see a grumpy face. People seemed to enjoy facing the weather's challenge, and a ton of work was done before noon.

"Who are these good people?" I wondered, "And why on earth are they willing to spend a Saturday working in these conditions? Then I remembered our friend Maria's observation: "You and Judy have built this big, wonderful sandbox and invited us to play in it—which we do!"

In between the 1991 inauguration of our volunteer program and this year's Manicure, thousands of people have volunteered countless hours. They've raised a barn, finished homes, erected greenhouses, dug septic systems, cooked meals, cleared land, taught our Ranchers, planted poinsettias, built chicken houses, and volunteered at Ranch Camp. They took a dream and turned it into reality: greenhouses, ponds, barns, fences, homes, cabins, offices, administration buildings—volunteers have played a part in all of them. They bring fresh ideas and new energy to the Ranch. Many have made lasting friendships with our Ranchers. They have brought comfort, humor, perseverance, compassion, ideas, hard work, dedication and their big, generous hearts. We could never, ever have done it without them.



ranch where we had marked trees to bring down, brush and limbs to be dragged to trailers, and a fire and chipper/shredder to be tended. That's when it started to drizzle. "It'll pass," we said hopefully.

No such luck. The weather turned to a light rain, then a driving, soaking rain, and then a torrential downpour. It rained for an hour and a half. Soon the workers were wet and cold. Some sought shelter while

# THE FOUNDER'S LEGACY CAMPAIGN: DREAM

At the end of 2013, the Founders' Legacy Campaign was developed to build a lasting foundation that will ensure the long-term health of Down Home Ranch. One year in, we are about halfway to our goal of \$2.5 million. Several construction projects are under way, and several more have been completed. Hundreds of strong, skilled volunteers have come together to help complete these projects, and for long stretches of this summer, DHR looked like the site of an old-fashioned barn-raising (with the addition of some very fancy power tools). We're still planning on completing the Founder's Legacy in 2015, but there is plenty to brag about already.

Early in the spring, Ranch Manager Scott Ragan supervised waves of volunteers in erecting the "Pallet Palace"—an open air venue in the woods below the Swim Center, partially made from reclaimed pallets. Many of the men from Sunnybrook Church in Stillwater, Oklahoma worked on the Palace, as did some of the volunteers from Blythe Island Baptist Church of Brunswick, Georgia. These remarkable friends have been making regular treks to Texas just to

spend a week engaged in fellowship, hard work and dances that are without equal. The name "Woodhaven" was chosen as a permanent replacement for "Pallet Palace," and it's more than fitting for our beautiful new woodland gathering place.

As our community has grown, so has the need for a larger dining room. The groups that built Woodhaven joined Architect Gary Bellomy of Land Design Studio and men from his Austin Men's Fellowship group to expand the Pavilion. The expansion consisted of removing the old exterior wall in the back of the dining room and building a new wall 15 feet further out, creating an additional 900 square feet surrounded by screened, sliding glass doors that provide extra light and ventilation. The old pergola was incorporated into the expansion and other Pavilion improvements were completed, including two new offices, a gift shop and a stairway to the storage attic.

Ragan also brought in a team to erect our new Maintenance and Repair Shop (MARS). MARS isn't just a catchy acronym, it's one of our most important buildings; a critical piece of the puzzle that keeps the

Ranch running. In addition to providing a large, enclosed space to service our many vehicles, golf carts, and ranch equipment, MARS is where we maintain and build so many of the things we use each day: from tools and tables to appliances and engines. MARS allows us to be better stewards of our land, our community and our finances, earning each penny we save.

Chief Operations Officer Craig Russell agrees that constructing the new shop is a smart financial move, noting "We lose both money and time whenever we have to take vehicles to town for repair work." Ragan added, "The old MARS was open on three sides—not exactly the best conditions for working on engines. If work couldn't be completed in one day, we would have to cover it with a tarp and pray for clear weather." (The old maintenance shed has been an eyesore as well as a poor work environment.)

MARS is completed and almost ready for operations, needing only the laying of in-ground cable to establish communications. The new shop is a 40' X 60' metal building with three roll-up doors in front, one in



# BECOMES REALITY

back, two offices, a bathroom and a break room. Above the rooms is a storage area, and virtually all mechanical tools, compressors, welders and the like are finding new homes there. There is also a roofed, concrete slab on the back side where ranch mowers, tractors and other equipment can be kept out of the elements.

The Ranchers on the Mechanics Team are very excited about the new MARS building. Rancher Mike explains, "I like working on cars and being around people. We will fix the golf carts, cars and vans when they break. Also, it will be easier to drain the oil when we have to change the oil." When asked where they're going, Ranchers love to reply, "I'm on my way to MARS!"

So what's on track for 2015? One of the most important projects will be new housing for more Ranchers, including some "micro-homes" for independent living. We'll also begin work on a community center in the Village that will include a "hardened space" that can serve as a storm shelter during violent weather, including tornadoes.

We've also developed plans for the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, a place for weddings,

church services, celebrations, concerts and more. A welcome and administration center, already designed, will soon be built across from the Barn.

We have plans to continue converting our greenhouses to hydroponic growing, adding water catchment systems, solar energy applications and other resource and energy conservation projects. Work on these projects has already added delicious, fresh food to the Ranch tables and cut our energy and water bills while providing great jobs for Ranchers and staff alike.

We also need to (finally!) install paved roads, parking places and shelters for golf carts and bicycles to cut down on the wear and tear inflicted on our vehicles (as well as our legs and feet).

Who could have dreamed that one day DHR would be such a vibrant, thriving community? A few acres of brushy land have become home to a wonderful group of people, both with and without disabilities, who chose to live on and work with the land and all it provides. If you've never visited, or it's been a while, please come out and see the building of a legacy.

## BUILDING THE FUTURE

Gifts from charitable foundations, churches, individuals and businesses have gotten us almost halfway to the \$2.5 million goal of the Founder's Legacy Campaign. However, we still need more than \$1 million to complete these critical projects. Jerry and Judy ask you to consider making a pledge to help them continue building the ranch of their dreams.

If you have a question or want to make a gift please contact:

Judy — [judy@downhomeranch.org](mailto:judy@downhomeranch.org)

or

Jerry — [jerry@downhomeranch.org](mailto:jerry@downhomeranch.org)

or visit us at

[www.DownHomeRanch.org](http://www.DownHomeRanch.org)

## THANK YOU!



the old...

and worn...

becomes...

the new!

Welcome to MARS!

*Our Newest Resident: One of nine cows and heifers calving this season. We got four new heifers and five bulls, which will be castrated, grown out and then processed to provide DHR with beef for several months.*

I'm now 76 and get all kinds of stuff from financial advisors asking "Are you prepared?" or "Do you have enough saved to retire?" And people familiar with DHR ask something similar, like "What are your plans for the future?"

I was with a group of visitors the other day, down south of the pool, and someone asked me about my "transition plan."

"Well," I said, pointing my finger, "I'm going to be moving over there."

"Oh, you're building a house?"

"No," I replied, "that's our cemetery."

He sort of laughed, but looked at me with an odd stare. I relieved the tension by telling him I was healthy, loved my job, was still productive and had goals to yet achieve. But, I was working on the transition thing. And I am.

But I've got two major things to accomplish first. One, complete the Legacy Campaign and the promises we have made—independent housing and paved roads in particular. Two, I want to step away from a leadership role trusting the Ranch is on a secure financial path.

Both come down to money: growing our enterprises, raising more charitable income and living within our means. It's not easy.

I'm thinking that I'll work full-time through 2015 and then part-time for DHR and part-time



from the  
**DIRECTOR'S  
CHAIR**

for the DHR Foundation—helping build an endowment fund. (Of course, the Board of Directors calls the shots on these issues, so I may be playing more golf than planned.)

I was looking at an article on some of the great accomplishments of seniors: Michaelangelo completing the Pieta at age 87; Verdi writing the Ave Maria at 85; Grandma Moses getting a commission at 99. Warren Buffett is still making money and waves at 84.

I'm only 76. Maybe too young to retire?

## INN KEEPERS

Our Inn Keepers program really took off in 2014. Down Home Ranch is becoming a popular retreat destination for many Austin area churches looking for a beautiful location where they can gather and find fellowship away from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

So far, we've had 18 church retreats on our 2014 Inn Keepers calendar. Many of these scheduled retreats are affiliated with the "ACTS" Community within the Catholic Church, but the retreats are open to all. Our reputation for comfortable, clean facilities, a cheerful and accommodating staff along with delicious meals is drawing lots of attention from local organizations.

Kitchen Manager Gigi Ross enjoys seeing the daily transformation that occurs in individuals attending a retreat at the Ranch. She noticed that when people come in the dining room on the first day, their demeanor is quiet and they tend to keep



*Gigi loves retreats — new people to feed!*

to themselves. However, by the end of the weekend, Gigi says, "We see the excitement in their faces and feel the energy in the room. It's a blessing to be a part of that awesome experience!"

The Ranch has been hosting retreats for a number of years, but a significant number of weeks became available after the end of Ranch Camp last summer, and we are now booking well into 2015 and even 2016. We're able to serve even large groups; the Ranch can sleep around 100 and the dining room will accommodate 150.

We've played host to Mystery Weekends from St. Luke's United Methodist in Houston, parish retreats from local Episcopal churches and youth retreats from many different churches, as well as many ACTS gatherings.

If your church or other group is interested in using DHR facilities and services, please contact Laura Zipoy at [lauraz@downhomeranch.org](mailto:lauraz@downhomeranch.org).

## A FAREWELL TO FARMS?

A good friend used to say, "Irony will get you in the end." I never knew exactly what he meant, but it sounded good.

We are not unaware that some do not embrace our mission, or are even actively opposed. But what organization doesn't have its detractors? Yet, we are of a mind to live and let live, happy in tending our garden and leaving others to theirs.

Alas, it has now become apparent that not only are some not inclined to the rural, country life but they would deny some farms and ranches serving people with intellectual disabilities like autism or Down syndrome access to public funding for providing services on a farm or ranch.

Over the past year or so we have become more and more familiar with a new Rule from CMS, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The new CMS Rule specifically targets "farmsteads" as probably "institutional," "isolated" and "segregated" and, therefore, probably not eligible for public support.

We visited a farm in the Midwest recently that is a beautiful, loving community for a couple dozen adults with very serious levels

of Autism Spectrum Disorder (autism), all of whom are recipients of Medicaid waiver funding called Home and Community-Based Services, which CMS is threatening to cut off. Not only might they meet a narrow definition of "institutional," "isolated" and "segregated" but also, CMS does not like "disability-specific" communities—in this case a community for people with autism—who often choose to be among others with autism. It's not about the choice of the residents, it's about choices the regulators prefer.

One of the great ironies is that those behind the building of this wonderful community are like those of us at Down Home Ranch and many, many communities across America: hard-working, dedicated people that spent years and years, raised millions of charitable, non-government dollars and toiled to build something unique and grand, only to find their own government doesn't applaud their work.

Irony will get you in the end.

But, we're hoping the story doesn't have a sad ending. (See the article on the CCC, next page.)

# A MAJOR CHALLENGE: PLEASE HELP!

The Anderson Foundation of Austin has awarded a \$50,000 grant to Down Home Ranch. But, it comes with a caveat: we must raise \$50,000 to get the award.

This is a significant challenge, so we are asking all who support our mission to consider a gift or pledge. If we can meet this challenge it will be a great boost in helping us start 2015, a year of great promise for Down Home Ranch.

## AN IMPORTANT COALITION

Jerry and Judy Horton are founding members of the Coalition for Community Choice (CCC), a national organization promoting the idea that each person and each family with a disability should be making choices about where to live, where to work and where to enjoy life—not a remote government bureaucracy. We support personal freedom in this choice.

The CCC is a grassroots organization. It has no funding, no political affiliations and no interest other than serving the children

and adults with intellectual disabilities that will be negatively impacted by some regulatory policies that will decrease the number of residential and community options for adult men and women that are starved for good choices.

The CCC will soon have a web site, but for now can be contacted via the Madison House Autism Foundation in Maryland at the URL below. Contact Judy or Jerry if you'd like more information on the CCC.

[www.autismhousingnetwork.org/advocacy/coalition-for-community-choice/](http://www.autismhousingnetwork.org/advocacy/coalition-for-community-choice/)



## AMPLIFY AUSTIN

We heard about Amplify Austin just a month before the event but we made it in—and we're glad we did.

Each year, hundreds of local non-profits ask their supporters to go to the Amplify Austin web site and make a donation. In 2014, this enormous fund raiser brought in more than \$5.7 million in 24 hours, and non-profits received more than \$78 thousand in additional prizes.

We scrambled to create emails and alert our friends, asking them to donate between 2:00 pm and 3:00 pm if possible. One supporter was kind enough to create a video of some of our Ranchers that we sent out as



an incentive. ([youtu.be/r0dJzwpTwLk](http://youtu.be/r0dJzwpTwLk)). It was a frantic and fun 24 hours as we watched our tally rise. We won an extra \$1,000 for having the largest number of donors for our chosen time slot, and we raised close to \$15,000. The success of the event was a tribute to the relationships we've made with good people who rose to the challenge in a short time frame.

We're eagerly anticipating Amplify Austin 2015, which will be held March 5-6. If you'd like to receive an email notification, use our online signup or send your email address to [kristin@downhomeranch.org](mailto:kristin@downhomeranch.org).

Back in 2007, supporters of the Ranch testified before the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services' Medical Care Advisory Committee. The question being debated was whether Down Home Ranch would be allowed to continue to serve Ranchers who had Home and Community-Based Medicaid Waivers. Jerry and I were unable to attend,



### JUDY'S VIEWS

and that turned out to be a good thing. Residents' families testified eloquently before the Committee, describing the wonderful lives lived at the Ranch. Down Home Ranch is a fully integrated community of people with and without handicaps engaged in the common purpose of living together in harmony, each contributing according to ability, and receiving support when needed.

Others testified too — advocates for full inclusion who claim DHR is too isolated and institutional. One boldly asserted that Down Home Ranch is a "counterfeit" community.

How I wish that my friend Clyde had been living at the Ranch then, for I would have asked him to testify in a heartbeat. Clyde was living in Giddings, where he had lived in a group home for many years. He became acquainted with the Ranch through meeting our Ranchers at a local dance, and began to date a girl who lived here at the time. Within a few months he asked to be put on the waiting list for residency, and after a few years a slot opened up and Clyde came to live with us.

Clyde loves the Ranch. He is smart, well mannered and articulate, regularly winning first prize in music, history and trivia contests on our annual cruise to Mexico. Frankly, he could do well anywhere, but he likes it here. "I have lots of friends here, I get to do lots of interesting things, I like my work, and I like the food," he says. I feel much the same.

In January, most of the Ranch will pile into a big bus and head off to Galveston to begin our annual cruise. We'll eat together, dance together and go to the beach together. "Counterfeit" community? Hardly!

# IN MEMORIAM

Margaret Laporta, Ranch Camp's most enthusiastic participant for many years and beloved sister of Genie Sorensen, Down Home Ranch board member and past president, passed away April 22, 2014 in New Jersey, where she lived her entire life.

Each year Marbie, as she was known to her family, began anticipating next year's Ranch Camp almost before the current session ended. In her 60s, she was among our oldest campers, but loved everything about camp, participating in every activity possible. She danced all the dances, loved crafts, sang with gusto, and it was advisable to watch out during musical chairs, when she demonstrated an unexpectedly robust competitive spirit!

Marbie began attending camp after a chance encounter between Kelly Horton's oldest sister Carolyn and Marbie's sister Genie while all were swimming at a pool in Austin. The two sisters began discussing their siblings, one thing led to another, and Genie became interested in Down Home Ranch. Eventually Genie joined the Board of Directors and became an integral part

of Ranch life and governance and Marbie began joining in camp fun each summer.

A few years ago Marbie came to Austin for her regular summer visit and developed a nasty case of pneumonia. She was distraught that she might miss camp and drove the nurses at Seton crazy because she feared missing Ranch Camp. She did, but we worked her into a later session after she had recuperated. You'd never have known she'd been hospitalized only a few weeks before; she was her old self, with her usual pizzazz.

Marbie continued to attend Ranch Camp until Down syndrome and age caught up with her and her health began to fail. When she could no longer walk, her visits to Austin ceased and Genie spent more time in New Jersey.

Marbie was fortunate to be born into a family ready to love her and provide her the best education afforded children with Down syndrome at a time when most were shipped off to state institutions. We will miss her and her indomitable spirit.

# SWIM FEST

It was a hot Texas summer day, but that didn't stop anyone from having a fun time at Swim Fest. (For those who spent all day in the pool, the heat may have made the day a little better!) We welcomed the usual number of visitors to the Ranch, including a good number of family members, to cheer on their teams.

The results of the Swim Fest Competition are in and the Blue Kakemimacs stole the show this year by winning both team events—they raised the most money and swam the most laps. There were several individual awards given out:

- Swimming: most laps — Mark
- Walking: most laps — Michael
- Fastest Female Swimmer — Kelly
- Fastest Male Swimmer — Travis

Special Olympics events like aquatics and fund raisers like Swim Fest provide

competitive opportunities for Ranchers and others with intellectual disabilities to grow, improve, mature and experience the highs and the lows of sport. This year, we raised \$34,383 towards a goal of \$40,000. The money we raise at this annual event goes toward the costs of training for and participating in Special Olympics events several times each year, including uniforms, practices, scrimmages, regional meets and state-wide competitions. It also goes toward an annual vacation for our hard-working Ranchers, who always choose to spend that money on a cruise so they can get off the Ranch and get onto every dance floor they find.

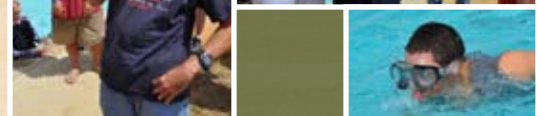
All our Ranchers work hard. We'll be budgeting that money carefully to make sure that every Rancher has the opportunity to play hard as well.

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

December 18, 2014	..... Christmas Party
January 22-26, 2015	..... Cruise to Cozumel
February 6-7, 2015	..... Family Weekend
March 5-6, 2015	..... Amplify Austin
April 2-4, 2015	..... Easter Lily deliveries
April 17, 2015	..... Golf Tournament, Avery Ranch
April 18, 2015	..... Gala, Bullock Museum
June 25-28, 2015	..... NDSC Phoenix



*DHR Case Manager, Casey Dickerson, with Margaret 'Marbie' Laporta.*



# MOTHER EARTH NEWS FAIR

Judy and I had a table at the Mother Earth News Fair in Topeka, Kansas, this October.

When I was in the SF Bay Area in the '60s, loving my little back-yard garden and nursing a dream of my own five-acre rural paradise, *Mother Earth News* came on the scene. It had a serious appeal for those of us interested in making a home on the land.

I re-subscribed a few years ago, and found a more mature, wiser publication that writes for an educated audience very interested in food and land stewardship, and in learning better ways to nurture the soil and live lightly. (Full disclosure: my son-in-law is the publisher, but that hasn't influenced my opinion—it really is a great magazine.)

Here at Down Home Ranch we have 410

acres of Post Oak Savannah, not particularly great soil for farming, and not great for pasture, but most around us do both. Our land has been overgrazed, invaded by undesirable plant species and suffered from drought, neglect and abuse.

Whereas our primary mission is to provide homes, jobs and opportunities for people with disabilities such as Down syndrome and autism, we are also stewards of our land, helping to nurture it back to health and productivity. It's an integral part of our strategic mission and gives our Ranchers with disabilities an opportunity to participate in their own support.

For more information about *Mother Earth News* and future fairs, visit their website, [motherearthnews.com](http://motherearthnews.com).

## NEW POSITION, NEW LEADERSHIP

Earlier in the year I talked with board members about needing help at the administrative level, as much of my time as executive director was being consumed by various issues that required mature leadership and supervisory experience. In looking around our organization I had become aware of the enthusiasm and quick thinking of Craig Russell, who is married to Naomi, also a very valuable, no-nonsense, hard-working DHR employee.

In the summer of 2013, Judy and I were at the NDSC convention in Denver and needed someone on the Ranch to solve a particularly difficult problem in our absence. I called and talked to Craig and Naomi and asked for help. To my great pleasure he delivered, handling a tough situation with skill and competence. In the following months, as he continued to do good work, I created the new position of Chief Operations Officer and asked Craig to take the job.

I knew Craig had served as a regional

manager for several years with an international energy corporation and had also served in the Marine Corps. He had been recognized for helping his employer save a great deal of money—a skill sorely needed by all nonprofit organizations. As I know from personal experience, he has an ease with other people and excels at inspiring trust and confidence. Craig is a “can do” kind of guy. He can recognize the issue, offer up solutions and lay out a strategic plan.

Craig is taking a lot of things off my desk, which is helping me stay more focused on development and other important areas. He is a vital member of the senior staff team and is the go-to guy when I am travelling.

We are all delighted to have someone of Craig's personality, ability and—most importantly—good sense of humor. If you have a suggestion or just want to send your congratulations, contact him at [craig@downhomeranch.org](mailto:craig@downhomeranch.org).

## THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Blythe Island Baptist Church, Brunswick, GA  
Boy Scouts of America  
Clif Bar & Company  
Dell Computer  
Family Worship Center Youth, Elgin  
Holy Rosary Catholic Church, La Grange  
Peace Presbyterian Church, Pearland  
Prairie Lea Baptist Church Mission Trip  
Scottish Scouts, Aberdeen, Scotland  
Shiloh Baptist Church VBS Youth, Thrall  
St. Michael's Catholic Academy, Austin  
St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Hutto

St. Stephen's Episcopal School, Austin  
Sunnybrook Christian Church, Stillwater, OK  
Texas A&M Forest Service  
Thorndale NJHS  
Trinity Episcopal School 7th graders  
Univ. Presbyterian Church HS Youth, Austin  
UT Wranglers & Darlins  
Young Men's Service League, Austin

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



After working hard to build us some Texas-sized compost bins, we took visiting Scouts from Scotland to the Cotton Club in Granger for live music, eats and a good time. It's a very rustic, old-time bar and dance hall: burgers and fries, pool tables and a big group of regulars that come to dance the evening away. Great family fun for some great volunteers.



We planted a Live Oak tree in memory of Tom Hannafin, Sr. Tom was on our Development Committee and a big supporter of DHR, whose son has lived here for the past four years. The family came out to decorate the tree, remember Tom and let loose some balloons to soar high above.



Meet Craig, the new DHR COO.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

Ever wonder what our Ranchers do all day? Some Ranchers work alone, some on a team. Their jobs are all directly related to the work of the Ranch. Those with green thumbs care for the gardens and animals, gather eggs and help run the greenhouses. Some choose to keep the Ranch spic and span, cleaning, mowing and weeding. The office team prepares mailings and assists the staff. Repair and maintenance crews specialize in carpentry and vehicle maintenance, while crafters make items for the gift shop and our Resident chefs prep food, make jelly, and cook for retreat groups. Sometimes we all pitch in, as we did in early October, hauling over 500 square bales of hay from pasture to barn. That's a job for real Texas men and women!

Ranchers love working directly with the staff responsible for taking care of the Ranch, who are not "direct care" staff. They are expected to show up on time, perform to the best of their abilities, maintain business decorum, and improve their skills. They really love helping volunteers, who often need advice on how we do things at the Ranch. But, most of all, the Ranchers take pride in their

work, learning the value of a job well done.

Just ask Rebekah, who is not at all shy about telling people how to do things correctly in the greenhouses. She should know: she's been growing poinsettias for about seven years now. Or Sterling, who arrived a few days ago to change the Benedict House filters. Sterling also assisted with the construction of our fence around the back yard. Ask any Rancher, and you'll get a full explanation of how important their work is and just how to do it the right way.

Ranchers are evaluated every six months, just like any employee, and wages are based on meeting individual expectations. Sadly, some don't get to keep all of what they earn since, for some, a dollar earned means a dollar less of disability support. But a little earned income is better than no income at all. Ask a Rancher on the way to the bank and you'll find someone who is happy to have a paycheck.

A Rancher is just like anyone else; we all want to do the best we can at work we like, and be recognized for our efforts. DHR is a place where we can make that dream come true.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Judy Horton, Member  
Jerry Horton, Member  
Genie Sorensen, Member  
Randy Ziehe, Member

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## ADMINISTRATION & STAFF

Jerry W. Horton, Ph.D. Founder/ED  
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Debbie Burnfield, Gardener  
Michele Denton, Driver  
Casey Dickerson, Q/Case Manager  
Andrea Fisher, CPA/Accountant  
Cass Flaherty, Operations Assistant  
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Carol Garrison, Program Instructor  
Misty Grumbles, Kitchen Assistant  
Elizabeth Hall, RA (Timbercrest)  
Steve Hall, Operations Assistant  
Laura Hanson, Program Assistant  
Melanie Huggins, Residential Manager  
Casey Lange, Program Assistant  
Brian Loer, Grower  
Anita Norris, RA (Anderson House)  
Fabian Olivares, Carpenter  
Glenda "GiGi" Ross, Kitchen Manager  
Lee Rabbitt, Program Instructor  
Annette Ragan, Office/Billing Manager  
Scott Ragan, Ranch Manager  
Craig Russell, Chief Operations Officer  
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Kelly Tanner, RN, Nurse  
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Christine Watkins, Grounds Assistant  
Brad Zipoy, Groundskeeper  
Laura Zipoy, Ranch Receptionist