

The Spirit of



WINTER 2018

CULTURE OF THINKING

*By Barry Hamilton, LCSW, Chief Operations Officer
and Casey Dickerson, QIDP, Director of Client Services*

Person Centered Planning is a process built around the discovery of what is both important TO and FOR the person. These two seemingly simple questions can shift a person's life from one of solitude to one that is full of meaning, connection with the community, friendship, hobbies to pass the time, places to go and money in their pocket. There is a formal process of developing plans that is well known by those who support, or have a loved one with a disability. These plans are developed to create programming, gather information in order for the individual to qualify for services or ensure certain requirements are being met to maintain eligibility. However, the true intent of the person centered planning process is to understand what outcomes an individual wants for their life, so that services address both what is important TO and FOR the person.

Striking the balance between TO and FOR can be challenging for any number of reasons. The Ranch has always done well with addressing what is important TO the person through planned weekend activities, participation in Special Olympics, small group activities and other interests in our surrounding communities. Over the last year, Down Home Ranch has made a commitment to provide a high level of professional expertise to address what is important FOR the person by adding nursing staff, contracted specialized therapy providers and an onsite clinic administered by a doctor. The Ranch has also lowered the staff to Rancher ratio in both our residential program and day program.

(continued on page 2)



CULTURE OF THINKING, CONTINUED

Using planning processes that are structured to have the individual's needs, wants and desires at the forefront ensures that the services are in fact directed by the person to meet their individual outcomes. Some of the most successful programming established here on the Ranch was started because of a Rancher's interest. The development of our Etsy store is a perfect example of how the Ranch adapted programming to address specific outcomes at the request of the Rancher. It began with a conversation about creating and selling items with one Rancher, and now has resulted in multiple Ranchers selling their own products in our gift shop, stores in the Austin area, farmers markets and online. Because they are now generating an income, some of the Ranchers are able to pay for a small portion of their residential service, resulting in a slight lessening of dependence on governmental funds.



Rancher Vicki proudly shows off one of the projects that she made in our woodshop educational course



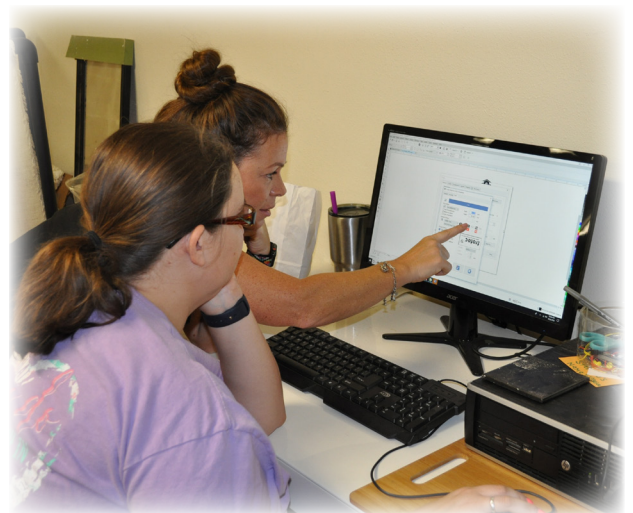
Rancher Kelly joyfully participates in Vocational training with the Development staff

The person centered process should be more than just a formal process. The Learning Community for Person Centered Practice is an international organization that focuses on best practices for supporting those with disabilities. The Learning Community suggests that "it is not person centered planning that matters as much as the pervasive presence of person centered thinking." Planning is important, but creating a culture of thinking from the person centered perspective may be even more important. This concept of thinking has been at the core of the Ranch from the very first day Jerry and Judy Horton set foot on the land that is now Down Home Ranch. Their desire was to develop an intentional community made up of people who choose to live the country life with others who have a similar experience.

As the Ranch continues to expand services to more individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), it is even more important to focus on listening closely - so that services can be more individualized. As an organization, we must be aware of the hurdles and plan for those challenging times, when a decision has to be made that impacts either what is important TO or FOR the people we serve. We all have a duty to think from a person centered perspective. Everyone's needs grow and evolve over their lifetime and it is our commitment to adapt along with the needs of our Ranchers to ensure the quality of life that all people deserve.



(left to right) The DHR Hog Hunter team excitedly pose for a picture during their weekly trip to fill the feeder. Rancher Natalie is working closely with her Job Coach, Leslie, as she learns how to program the engraving machine.





CRAIG RUSSELL
Executive Director

"Being a parent to children with intellectual disabilities is what first drove my passion for this work."

Craig's journey at Down Home Ranch started as a volunteer in 2012, assisting with technology while also fixing bikes for the Ranchers. He took his first formal position at DHR in 2013 with Operations and Day Program while continuing to work with technology and development. Craig's involvement grew in 2014, when he accepted the position of Chief Operating Officer. He was then named Executive Director in 2017, and has focused on a commitment to increase supports provided to the Ranchers as well as creating more choices and opportunities.

I recently completed some training through Health and Human Services and I want to share some thoughts with you. As you know our mission is "Empowering the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through Social, Educational, Residential and Vocational opportunities". Our role is to provide opportunities and empower the people we serve to make the choices they desire. We look at each individual to determine how we can best serve him or her and then establish a plan on how to do so.

One of the trainings I completed was on Person Centered Planning. This type of planning involves teams of people that focus on the person's vision for their future. This is an ongoing process that adapts to the wants, needs and desires of the individual. As a parent, I liked the fact that the conversation started with my child. What does my son want to accomplish in life? Where does he want to work?

Our son, who has high functioning Autism, struggled getting up for school. Every morning, it was incredibly stressful for him and us. Finally, we sat down with him and asked, "Is there a way we can wake you up that does not create stress for you?" He stated that if we turned on his television in the morning without making any noise and left the room it would be much better for him. We did as he requested and he now wakes up without stress, ready to start his day. This is a simple example of how listening to the person allowed for a solution.

When I consider the opportunities we create at Down Home Ranch, I see how we are looking to the Ranchers for their vision in our programs. The bags, potholders and other sewn products in our Enterprise program are the result of two Ranchers desire to sew. Their aspiration to sew has now turned into a business, selling their products online and local markets. The DHR feral hog hunter class is the result of a Rancher watching the news and then coming to me with an idea. He has a name badge that states "Feral Hog Class Founder" and wears it proudly. It is listening to the people we serve that has changed how we define our mission and all that we do.

In 2019, we will be introducing a campaign called "See Me," focusing on the individual person. You will read about Ranchers that are volunteers, artists, entrepreneurs, employees and more. These are the people of Down Home Ranch and the Elgin community. I look forward to you learning more about the amazing people we serve!

Craig Russell, Executive Director



I would like to personally invite you to take an insiders look into the Social, Educational, Residential and Vocational opportunities we offer here at Down Home Ranch. On the first Wednesday of every month, we host a Tour of SERVICE that is open to the public. I hope to see you out at the Ranch!

RSVP online at:
www.downhomeranch.org/tours



(left to right) Ranchers Alan, Ashley, Clyde and Nathan volunteer at the Sacred Heart Food Pantry. Ranchers Austin, Ashley and Clyde volunteer for the Elgin Chamber of Commerce preparing for the upcoming Hogeye Festival. Ranchers Alex, Charles, Kristen and Jim volunteer for the City of Elgin as they proudly travel around town to beautify their community.

DHR VOLUNTEERISM PROGRAM *By Cedric Wilson, Program Specialist*

The Volunteerism Program started approximately a year and a half ago in an effort to involve Ranchers in their greater community and we now average about 32 hours a month volunteering. Initially, the Ranchers volunteered at the Lions Club Thrift Store on Elgin's Main Street, as well as Elgin Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. We have since added the Bastrop County Animal Shelter, Falcon Ridge Rehabilitation Center in Hutto and the Sacred Heart Food Pantry in Taylor. In addition, we also volunteer with the City of Elgin, performing trash pickups around town, as well as helping with landscape upkeep at the Elgin Chamber of Commerce. Our most recent project with the City of Elgin was assisting in the preparation for the annual Hogeye Festival, affixing decals to 200 promotional flashlights. The response from the Ranchers was overwhelmingly positive from the start and has now become a favorite activity for many. The Ranchers particularly enjoy helping out at the Food Pantry and nursing facilities.

The work at the Pantry involves sorting and repackaging food and produce donated by local retailers and farms in the area. Upon arrival, Ranchers immediately put on their gloves and line up ready to work. It is common for the Pantry to have a dozen or more boxes of food for us to process. Several Ranchers have expressed how much they enjoy helping provide food for people who really need the assistance. Every time we leave the Sacred Heart Food Pantry, their

manager, Danny says, "I appreciate all you do for us and I am grateful."

At the nursing facilities, I have noticed there is a lot more enthusiasm from the Ranchers, whether it be playing Bingo, nail painting, arts and crafts or just visiting with the residents. The Ranchers are particularly looking forward to the Holiday season, as there are some special projects in the works. Alane Buikos, Activities Director at Falcon Ridge said "You guys are wonderful! We appreciate all that you do and look forward to seeing y'all next time."

On a personal level, I enjoy supporting Ranchers to have access to these opportunities; it is one of the highlights of my week. I come from a tradition of helping ones local community. My Grandmother helped through her church and had a hand in helping many people around Los Angeles. My mother, a nurse and Navy wife, showed the value of helping others, just for the sake of helping others. I'm thankful to carry on that tradition here at Down Home Ranch.

MISSION OF DAY PROGRAM

"To create an empowering environment for adults with IDD, through access to opportunities towards the fulfillment of their best selves."

Pictured here are Ranchers Alex, Nathan, Jim and Ashley after they finished planting DHR flowers in front of the Elgin Chamber of Commerce



VOLUNTEER VIEW: DELL EMPLOYEE: MELANIE WATKINS

Melanie has volunteered at Down Home Ranch since 2012 when she first began working at Dell. She is deemed a community service champion at Dell and we feel so blessed she has chosen to support DHR. Melanie has single handedly invited over 250 Dell employees to volunteer at DHR! Here's a little more about her story:

What motivated you to volunteer with Down Home Ranch?

My sister-in-law Christine Watkins, has been working and volunteering at Down Home Ranch for many years. Her and my husband share an older brother with disabilities who attends Ranch Camp in the summer time. Christine showed me the beauty of volunteering at Down Home Ranch and once I started volunteering with Dell, I never turned back!

My current supervisor at Dell, Tom Garvens, began volunteering at Down Home Ranch many years ago. Tom helped build the DHR barn and enjoys seeing how the Ranch has grown and progressed over the years. Since 2013, it has been an annual team tradition to volunteer together during Poinsettia season. I have had the pleasure of coordinating various Dell teams for poinsettia season, as well as other grounds keeping projects. In 2017 alone, Dell brought out 254 employees to volunteer! Wow!

What makes volunteering at Down Home Ranch a meaningful use of your time? When we can combine family and teamwork events, it creates a great memory. It is good to know there is a place for folks with special needs where they can thrive.



What is the biggest personal benefit that you've received as a volunteer? The biggest benefit to me is the fulfillment I feel gathering together with a group of people to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

What do you wish other people knew about working with individuals with disabilities? They are good hard-working folks who do their best to be independent and enjoy life. This can be a little harder for them to do, which is why I am so glad places like Down Home Ranch exist. The Ranchers at Down Home Ranch have rich, abundant lives with productive work and educational classes, as well as staff who love them.

What would you tell someone who is thinking about volunteering at the Ranch? Just do it! It is well worth the drive and effort. You need a willing heart and must come ready to get your hands dirty!



HELP US WELCOME FIVE NEW RESIDENTIAL RANCHERS!

Austin, Brandon and Kevin moved into the Eagle house in November of 2018. The Eagle house is the newest addition of a 3-person shared home with a live-in staff member located in Elgin, TX. Brandon and Austin grew up together in Texarkana, TX. They both share a love for bowling and couldn't be happier to participate in Special Olympics bowling together. Brandon's favorite thing about moving to DHR is the opportunity to get a job working with chickens and volunteering at local food pantries and nursing homes. Brandon says often "I love it here!" Austin's favorite part about moving to the Ranch is getting to live a life full of friends on a true Texas Ranch. The third new Rancher, Kevin, moved to DHR from Fredericksburg, TX. Kevin's favorite part about moving to the Ranch is making new friends and memories. Kevin enjoys playing video games on the weekends and watching movies.

Kelly and Vicki are also new roommates, sharing a two-person home in the DHR village. Both women are a part of the independent living program. Kelly was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. She started coming to Ranch Camp back in 2005, so she has been friends with a few of the DHR Ranchers for quite some time. When asked what her favorite thing about moving to Down Home Ranch was, she stated "Starting a new beginning and getting to know new and old friends." Kelly's favorite hobby is creating art. She has even entered in quite a few art shows! Vicki grew up in Washington State. She desired to move away from home so she could live in a community with like-minded individuals. Her family asked her to do some research and find a place she would want to live, and she chose Down Home Ranch! Her favorite thing about moving to the Ranch is getting to drive her golf cart and interacting with the animals.

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*We are very excited to introduce to you the newest members of the DHR family.
These five amazing individuals will make for a total of 41 DHR residents!*



(left to right) Kevin, Kelly, Vicki, Brandon and Austin

READY FOR RANCH CAMP? *By Ashley and Tom Oliver, Ranch Camp Co-Directors,*

As 2018 is quickly coming to a close, the staff at Down Home Ranch are working diligently to prepare for Ranch Camp 2019. We are excited for the new friendships, adventures and memories that will be made. While at first, one week may not seem like much, for the campers, staff and volunteers, one week can be life changing. For some campers, this will be the first time they have ever attended camp. For others, it will be a time to reconnect with friends they have not seen since the summer before. Either way, we are working hard to make sure all will have a grand time!

Speaking of working hard, Ranch Camp is not possible without compassionate staff and volunteers. Ranch Camp is like other camps except for one vital difference—we adjust our pace to the individual needs of the campers. We are on a mission to find people that are on board to help us make that happen.

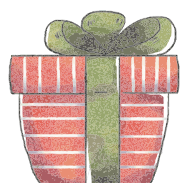


At camp, we go fishing, take the canoes out, hang out with chickens, tackle the archery course, go swimming, dance until our legs are noodles and so much more!

If this seems like you, then let us know! We are looking for counselors who are 18 years of age and older, who are enthusiastic, hardworking and love positively affecting lives. Visit our website, www.downhomeranch.org/ranch-camp, for more details.

Not able to be a counselor, but still want to help? Perfect! Volunteers are crucial to camp. We are looking for individuals, 15 years of age and up, who can give a portion of their time. Volunteering with Ranch Camp can look like half a day to a full day, or maybe just 2 hours each day of the week. Volunteering at Ranch Camp is very flexible! Want to make it a family bonding time or youth summer mission trip? We can make that happen too!

If you have a special gift or talent you would like to share at camp, please let us know. Our campers love when people perform concerts, host sports events or come and play the guitar while having s'mores. We can quite literally fit you in anywhere and we loving doing so! We are sure that spending a bit of your time with us this summer will be a gift to you and those that you are with. We look forward to what an incredible summer it will be and we hope you will join us for Ranch Camp 2019.



Give the perfect gift this holiday season and send your loved one to Ranch Camp! If you submit your application (and it is approved) by December 20, we will send a personalized letter to your Camper letting them know they are going to camp!

→ — ←
Email development@downhomeranch.org if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity



We Had a Rockin' Good Time!

Celebrating another record-breaking Gala

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From the bottom of our hearts, we thank everyone who supported this remarkable record-breaking event. The 2018 Gala had the highest amount of funds raised in history with a whopping \$127,042! We have YOU to thank for that.

Around 350 people came together to celebrate the many successes of Down Home Ranch and the compassionate supporters, like you, who have cheered us on the entire way. Your generous support helps ensure that individuals with disabilities will forever have an empowering place to live, work, learn and play. To all of our dedicated DHR supporters, take a bow, you earned it!

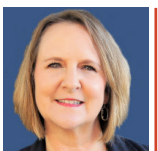


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BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPOTLIGHT



MARTHA ADAMS
Board Member

Martha is the proud daughter of the co-founders of Down Home Ranch, Judy and Jerry Horton, and the sister of co-founder and Ranch resident, Kelly Horton! She has lived in Austin off and on for 40 years and has been happily married to David Heard for 27 of those years. They have two children, a daughter, Rachel, and a son, Alex. Martha taught third grade in Austin ISD for 11 years. She is currently working privately with students out of her home.

Martha is honored to have served for the past four years on the Down Home Ranch Board of Directors and steadfastly believes in the mission of the Ranch: to empower the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through social, education, residential and vocational opportunities. It's a source of tremendous comfort and pride knowing that her sister Kelly is living a life of purpose and is treated with respect and dignity by her Ranch community. Martha looks forward to helping to continue and grow this mission as the Ranch moves forward!

DHR Naturally Raised WAGYU-ANGUS BEEF

For Sale at the Ranch!
Monday - Friday, 8am-4pm

512-856-0128
www.downhomeranch.org/beef



Locally
processed to
perfection!

Ask about our
25lb value packs!



Open 24-7 on ETSY!



For years we have opened up our gift shop doors to the public, M-F 8am-4pm, and periodically on the weekends for special occasions. You have probably even seen our handcrafted goods sold around town at local markets and stores.

We have seen our demand grow, as people reach out wanting to order our goods and have them shipped straight to their door.

The wait is over! Down Home Ranch's Etsy store is officially open and the Ranchers are ready to ship your favorite products across the United States.

DownHomeRanch.etsy.com



DownHomeRanch

Unique handmade goods produced in Elgin, TX

📍 Elgin, Texas | 21 Sales | On Etsy since 2017

★★★★★ (2)

📖 Favorite shop (36)

NOW OFFERING RESPITE CARE AT DHR!

Take a break and have your loved one visit a real Texas Ranch for a few days! Our respite services provide short term assistance to caregivers by providing staff oversight and supervision with daily living tasks. Respite can be from 2 to 14 days in length; options are based on availability. The service can be provided in either a group home setting with trained live-in staff or in a small independent living setting in the Down Home Ranch Village with staff just a phone call away.

All programs are designed to help build confidence by encouraging social connections with peers. The Day program has over 40 unique course offerings to choose from including: kayaking, independent art, basketball, archery, woodshop, zumba and more!

We accept contracted respite rates through IDD waivers including HCS, TxHmL, CLASS and other programs, in addition to General Revenue rates from the LIDDA. Private Pay is \$151 per day, which includes meals, day programming and/or weekend activities.



To learn more visit www.downhomeranch.org/respite



SAVE THE DATE FOR AMPLIFY AUSTIN 2019



**FEBRUARY 28TH
- MARCH 1ST
6PM - 6PM**

Amplify Austin 2019 is right around the corner and we are excited to participate in this community wide event for the 6th year in a row. This 24-hour period of giving provides an easy and fun way for compassionate supporters like you to tell the world why their favorite nonprofit is so important to them. Last year, in ONE day, Down Home Ranch raised \$40,000, all which went towards giving empowering opportunities to the Ranchers.

Wondering how you can make the BIGGEST impact?

Register for free to campaign for DHR

Gather a group of coworkers and register to become a business fundraiser

Donate the day of the event

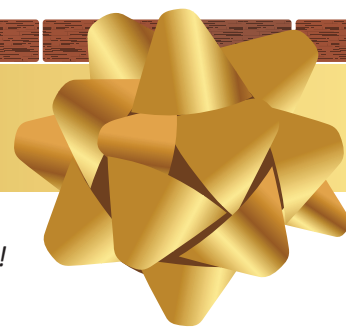
Spread the word!

We have the power at our fingertips to be heroes for our Ranchers and their is one day a year when it is easy to do: Amplify Austin Day.

Contact development@downhomeranch.org to get involved today!



GIVE THE GIFT OF AN EVERLASTING TRIBUTE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!



Bricks are 100% tax deductible!

Smithville Tigers
Softball
Champions 2018

**HONOR YOUR FAVORITE
TEAM OR BUSINESS**

Happy 30th Anniversary
Laura and Brad!
Love, Perry and Peyton

**COMMEMORATE A SPECIAL
EVENT OR MEMORY**

In Loving Memory
of Steve Smith
Love, Mom

MEMORIALIZE A LOVED ONE

By gifting one of the first 400 bricks, you will become a *Cornerstone Member* of this project, receiving a signed certificate of membership and permanent recognition at the garden's entrance. The bricks can be engraved with sentiments and images based on your wishes, with customizable clipart or logo options for an additional \$50 fee. The Garden is designed to utilize an existing gazebo and koi fish pond, while adding a circular path paved with 9,000 bricks. Located just inside the gate of the Ranch, the Garden is open to the public during regular operating hours. The Garden serves as a place of rest, repose and reflection for all to enjoy and promises to be a gathering place for DHR Ranchers and guests for years to come.

The Garden is a long-term project with the potential to raise more than \$1 million for the future of the Ranch. Thank you for helping build a stronger foundation for Down Home Ranch, brick by brick.

☒ **Yes, I would like to make an everlasting tribute!**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please print clearly

If you would like to dedicate this donation, please email development@downhomeranch.org with the name and mailing address of the person you would like to be notified.

**SAVE A STAMP,
ORDER ONLINE!**

www.downhomeranch.org/memorial-garden

_____ Cornerstone Bricks x \$200 = \$_____ Total



Make checks payable to
Down Home Ranch
20250 FM 619
Elgin, TX 78621



Information to be laser engraved on a 4" x 8" brick:
Up to 20 characters per line, including spaces and punctuation.
A completed form is required for each brick.

Did you know Down Home Ranch grows over 10,000 poinsettias every single year? We sell them to schools and churches to use as end-of-year fundraisers, as well as to the public at local farmers markets, HEB Elgin and (as always) at the Ranch M-F, 8am-4pm!



DOWN HOME RANCH, INC.

20250 FM 619 Elgin, TX 78621

888-926-2253 or 512-856-0128

Website: www.DownHomeRanch.org

Email: info@DownHomeRanch.org



downhomeranch.org



[@down_home_ranch](https://twitter.com/down_home_ranch)



[DownHomeRanch](mailto:info@DownHomeRanch.org)

Check out our 2017 Annual Report on the DHR Website underneath the "Who We Are" tab!

If you would like to change your mailing preferences, please email development@downhomeranch.org

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