

Volume 48, Number 1 - March 2025

ROOTS

Regular Features:

Notes from the
Executive Director
Honors
Memorials
500 Club
Auxiliary Twine
Ranch Profiles
Ways to Help Out

**HCYR**

HILL COUNTRY YOUTH RANCHES

ROOTS

Volume 48, Number 1
March 2025

Roots is a free quarterly publication of the Hill Country Youth Ranch. Issues are published in March, June, September and December in Ingram/Kerrville, Texas. Circulation averages 15,000 per issue.

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Hill Country Youth Ranch

Big Springs Ranch

Fall Branch Village

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Gary Priour, Founder ~ 1977

The Youth Ranch in brief

- ◆ A home for children and youth in need, established March 21, 1977
- ◆ Our mission is to provide a safe, loving, and life-enhancing Christian environment for children, youth, and young adults
- ◆ We care for children in foster care, children who are privately placed, young adults in need of assistance as they transition into adulthood, and single mothers
- ◆ We have three campuses in the Texas Hill Country: our Main Campus in Ingram, Big Springs Ranch near Leakey, and Fall Branch Village, our young adult campus near Ingram
- ◆ Our award-winning Big Springs Charter School System has locations at each of our campuses
- ◆ Each campus implements individualized services for each resident, promoting healing and growth from past trauma and opportunities for achieving goals
- ◆ Unparalleled enrichment activities, including recreation, athletics, visual and performing arts, horticulture, horse and animal care, vocational education, outdoor adventure, and more
- ◆ Housing options are available based on each resident's level of need, ranging from assessment centers to family-style homes, to apartment housing for young adults
- ◆ A community of veteran caregivers with deep experience, and proven success in the field
- ◆ Home and lifetime family to more than 2000 children over 48+ years
- ◆ Alumni community who maintain positive relationships with their HCYR family and each other
- ◆ Support for alumni of all ages, including college scholarships, transitional living, career guidance, and help during crises

Message from the Executive Director

On Purpose, For a Purpose

by Krystle Ramsay, Executive Director

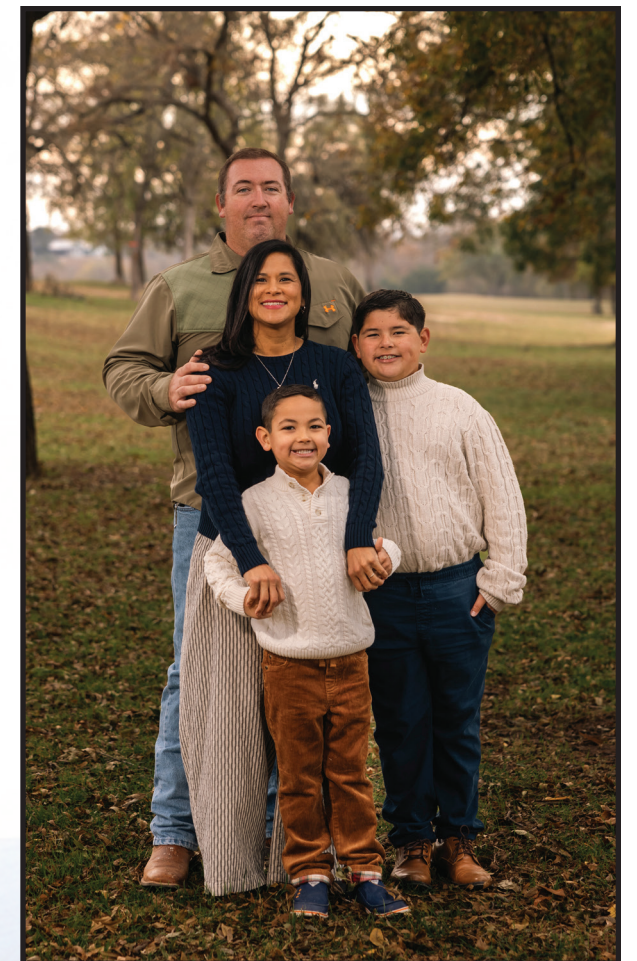
One of my favorite stories in the Bible is the story of Lot and his wife. I find myself spending hours thinking about her. You can find the story in *Exodus 19*. It begins with Lot sitting at the city gates when he notices two angels. He immediately recognizes them and bows before them. He urges them to stay in his home because of the wickedness that has overcome the people. The men of the city demand the angels be released to them but Lot refuses. In the chaos, the angels strike the men with blindness. Lot is told to gather his family and leave immediately before the city is destroyed. When Lot is hesitant to leave, the angels lead Lot and his family out of the city. They are given clear instructions to flee and not look back. We all know what happens; Lot's wife looks back and she turns into a pillar of salt.

As we entered 2025, I challenged our children and Team to "remember Lot's wife" (*Luke 17:32*). God does not want us to become calcified and stuck in a place we were only meant to pass through. Our children have come from some of the most horrendous circumstances. They have endured things most cannot even imagine. I will never pretend to understand why bad things happen and I certainly am not one that believes things happen for a reason. What I do know is that God causes *all* things to work together for the good of those who love God, those who are called according to His purpose (*Romans 8:28*). He created us on purpose and for a purpose.

For nearly twenty years, I have watched God work in and through the lives of so many. It has been a joy to serve the children who call HCYR their home. As I think about Lot's wife, I wonder why she turned back. Fear? Curiosity? Doubt? Was her longing for what she was leaving behind greater than her desire for God's provision ahead? I think it is safe to say we can all relate to Lot's wife. I have been blessed to witness firsthand God's provision over HCYR. I am confident that the work God began in Gary nearly 50 years ago will continue as we move forward. What an honor it has been to learn from Gary and be entrusted to lead this organization into the next season.



As you can see, we have made some changes. We retired *The Corral* Newsletter in December 2024, and you will begin receiving this, our quarterly *Roots* publication. You may notice a difference in our branding but our mission remains the same. We have spent a year planning for this new launch and are excited to share with you all the wonderful things taking place at all three of our locations. Another year, another season! May God continue to direct our steps in all that we do!



Changing how we communicate with you!

Roots by Tony Gallucci, Editor

We don't have to tell you that some things have changed! You're holding it in your hands. Many of you have received our newsprint-based newsletter the *Corral* for years, maybe decades. I got my first copy back in the mid-1980s. In that span of 40 years, I have watched the way the world communicates, from snail mail, to the internet, then email, then listservs, then websites, then social media, all change how we connect with each other.

Still, we have not evolved past the need for language and pictures to get a message across. We proudly use all of those methods of communicating, but there is nothing like holding a physical document in your hands. We know this magazine is something a bit out of the ordinary for you loyal readers and donors! We wanted something that you'd love to read to catch up on how your donations are changing the world for children, and then to display on your coffee table, to leave on a waiting room table at your place of business, or to pass on to a friend to share your love for a favorite charity. We hope that we have met your expectations with *Roots*!

In addition to our rebranding efforts (see Sara's story to the right), we are expanding our efforts to tell our story and keep you abreast of what's happening at the places you love. We think you might like to know what's happening on a regular basis at each of our three campuses, how our children are doing, their successes and growth, and maybe ways in which you can be a larger part of our important mission.

So, our venerable *Corral* has become *Roots*, an homage to our deep history going back nearly 50 years in which we have not only become rooted in our hometown community, but also created our own community in which over 2000 children have sent down their own roots. We have created a place these youngsters can call their home, where they experienced abiding love, and grew into their own selves ready for a world they could only envision before their arrival here. To keep you updated we feel like an expanded format, this magazine, is our best vehicle. You'll receive it quarterly, and the total page count will double, giving you more information than ever before, while keeping all the features you're used to seeing in our newsletter pages.

Welcome to our stories.

Thrift Store needs more volunteers

Our Thrift Store in Ingram has become a huge success, contributing both to the Ranch and our local communities, raising significant funds and helping to furnish the houses at both children's campuses and the dorms at Fall Branch Village. This is only possible through many great donations, and the volunteers who do all the work to prepare and price the items. This brings us to a plea for those of you who have a desire to help. We really need you for a few hours a week to replace or add to our numbers. Stop by the Store to see it for yourself at 3171 Junction Highway, just east of Ingram. Each day of the week is run by a different team of volunteers, with some days more short-handed than others. Store hours are 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Check us out at <https://youth-ranch.org/Thrift-Store>.

We have a new look!

Branding by Sara Skaines, Marketing Manager

I believe that one of the most impressive parts of Hill Country Youth Ranch is how the organization has grown and changed to meet the needs of the population we care for. There are not many organizations who rise to the occasion and pivot in such a determined way. In every era HCYR has prioritized the health of our children and young adults above all else.

Over the past 10 years of volunteering and working with Hill Country Youth Ranch, I can't tell you the number of times someone has been surprised when I tell them we have three campuses. Most people know we care for children in the foster care system, but many are unaware of how we also care for privately placed children, young adults transitioning into adulthood, single mothers, and our community through our charter school system.

The confusion over the variety of services offered across the campuses—despite being rooted in the same principles—led to a misalignment in how our organization was received. Some saw our campuses as multiple, separate entities rather than a unified organization with three campuses. This disjointed identity impacted the clarity of our message and made it harder for us to convey the true essence of who we are and what we do.

Our challenge was clear: How could we find a way to distinguish ourselves as a place of healing and growth while uniting our three campuses under a single, cohesive brand?

The Hill Country Youth Ranches

We needed a fresh approach that would not only resolve confusion but also represent the unity between our campuses and our mission to provide a safe, loving, life-enhancing Christian environment for children and young adults. This mission has been the cornerstone of our work for years, but rebranding helps us refine how we communicate it. We want people to know that no matter where they engage with us, they will find a supportive and restorative environment where healing can take place.

Together with our team, we have decided that our locations will be unified under the name of

Hill Country Youth Ranches, with unique campus names to help identify their locations: our Main Campus at Ingram, Big Springs Ranch at Leakey, and the young adult campus Fall Branch Village.

Over the years, we've changed in many ways. Our campuses have evolved in design, structure, and scope. We have introduced new services and programs, expanded our reach, and adapted our approach to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve. But despite these external changes, our mission has always remained the same.

As we look forward to the future, our rebranding symbolizes a new chapter. It's a reminder that we are constantly evolving to better serve those who rely on us. However, it's also a reassurance that, despite changes, we remain anchored in the same values that have guided us for years: faith, family, building trust, healing and growth, and continuum of care.

We believe that growth as an organization isn't just about expanding our services or our campuses—it's about deepening our impact in the lives of youth in need. It's about connecting more meaningfully with individuals and families, offering a stronger sense of community, and fostering lasting change in the lives of those we care for.

Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey!



4-H program makes . . . CHAMPIONS!

We champion our school's 4-H program every chance we get. Guided by Brune Science teacher and 4-H Sponsor/Founder Tripp Davenport for over a decade, it is easily one of our most successful, and popular, programs.

Over the years we have won a number of top awards at area livestock shows, but the 2025 season may top them all (see list of top winners on the next page), with a clean sweep in the Broiler division at the Real County show in January. At the same show top Gelding went to another Brune student.

It was the first year for our students to show Angora Goats, and they excelled there too, taking awards at the San Angelo Stock Show where Angoras are a specialty.

Students also participated this school year in Foods and Entomology competitions.

Best of all, 4-H is all about teaching leadership and responsibility, and every child is a Champion in those categories.



Top Winners at the January Real County Livestock Show

- Jaxton** ~ Reserve Champion Breeder Buck Rabbit, and Reserve Grand Champion Breeder Rabbit
- Joseph** ~ Champion Pen of New Zealand, Grand Champion Pen of Three Rabbits
- Joseph** ~ Reserve Champion Lightweight Angora Wether
- Ethan** ~ Angora Goat Senior Showmanship, SWTXC Scholarship
- Alexander** ~ First Place Division 1 Broiler Pen, First Place Division 2 Broiler Pen, Grand Champion Broiler, Reserve Champion Broiler
- Evelyn** ~ Reserve Champion Berkshire Barrow
- Rudy** ~ Champion Gelding

Top Winners at the February San Angelo Livestock Show

- Dolores** ~ First Place Medium Weight Angora Wether in Fleece, Second Place Medium-weight Angora Wether out of Fleece, Second Place overall Medium-weight Angora Wether
- Paige** ~ Reserve Grand Champion Mohair Fleece
- Jaxton** ~ Second Place Medium-weight Angora in Fleece, and Second Place Division 1 Mohair Fleece



Celebrating our Donors . . .



Our donors provide us with every conceivable need: a few of our recent donors include the Lions Club who donated money, Family Auto who gives every child a bicycle every single Christmas, Trinity Baptist Church who collected a literal ton of food, and the fantastic donation from Donna Walker of a generator for our Community Center!



Doug and Laurie were my foster parents for a few years when I was a teen. I remember the first day I came to their house and was so nervous and scared. They made me feel right at home, and they had a dog, Molly, and a cat that helped ease me into my new environment. I know that I may have been a moody 14-year-old but could not be more thankful for my time with them. They were kind, loving and made me feel right at home. I am thankful that I was able to live with my sister at this house as well until she left for the Navy a year later. We still come to Kerrville to visit them. They are so amazing, and definitely made a huge impact in not only my life, but in the lives of so many other children in care as well.

~ Kim Samaniego

Staff Stories

Doug & Laurie Lanier

by Laurie Lanier

In August 1999, Doug and I started working as houseparents at HCYR, first at Stevens 2 and then at Chapel Pond (now Stehling Cabin). We worked with over 30 teenage girls, with some girls staying only a few weeks and some girls staying with us for over three years. We tried to teach our girls that our cabin was a family. As I look back, I'm amazed by their resiliency and their desire to have fun, normal teenage experiences. We enjoyed watching them play sports, get dressed up for prom, and graduate from high school. After 5 years, we decided to stop being houseparents in order to pursue adoption. In 2005, we adopted our son Tristan, followed by Haley in 2007 and Mason in 2009.

I began assisting the Clinical Team by writing service plans.

Doug has worked a variety of positions moving from Recreation Director, to GRO Supervisor, to his present position as Admissions Director. He also served as Chaplain. There have been many changes at HCYR over the past 25 years, but many things remain the same, such as favorite traditions and, most im-



portantly, the mission of helping children to heal in a loving environment. The greatest reward of working at HCYR takes time to see and that is when we get to see our former residents, especially our girls who are all grown up. We love to visit with them and it gives us so much joy to hear about their jobs, their families and lives. They open up about the struggles they experienced as teenagers in foster care. We talk, we share memories and, mostly, we laugh a lot, just like family.

What's happening at:

HILL COUNTRY YOUTH RANCH MAIN CAMPUS

by Billy Bob Cox, Campus Director

December was a busy month for all of us here at Hill Country Youth Ranch. The focus was on Jesus and the children. On top of the normal, day-to-day activities on the Ranch we had several seasonal events. Among the activities:

☆ We had a float in the Ingram Christmas parade featuring superheroes. The greatest superhero featured was Jesus.

☆ A Tamalada at the Milton House where staff worked together to make tamales for the Ranch Christmas breakfast.

☆ The staff Christmas breakfast was held at Acapulco this year. Staff also had a Christmas Potluck where they shared gifts.

☆ This year we did something special: Family portraits were done for each of the cabins.

☆ The cabins at the Ingram campus had a Christmas decoration contest. The children enjoyed both the decorating and the competition. Hosler won the "Most Spirit" award with their cow-themed decorations.

☆ Our residents were hosted at Jones Christmas Ranch, which featured over 3.5 million lights but focused on the light of the world, Jesus Christ. It is an amazing event.

☆ Residents attended Christmas events at Sea Word and Fiesta Texas.

☆ This was in addition to regular events such as movie night on campus and a trip to Mr. Gatti's.

☆ The highlight of our Christmas celebrations was the first annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service held in the chapel in Ingram. It was a multimedia event with reading of the Christmas story from the gospels interspersed with traditional Christmas carols. Residents used glow sticks to illuminate the chapel. It was a beautiful and moving event.

☆ The year ended with two exciting events. We had a New Years Eve party at the Bee Creek Community Center for all the campuses. Instead of keeping the children (and houseparents) up until midnight, we counted the New Year in at noon (which was midnight in Fiji!).

☆ February brought a focus on Love and our children enjoyed a fun Valentine's Day dance. All children were given the Five Love Language Assessment and our Team enjoyed a fun training on the Five Love Languages.



One of our residents, Cameron, graduated at midterm. He turned 18 in January and is considering his options moving forward. In the meantime, he is working locally and still resides at the Ranch.

Our horse and horticulture programs at Ingram continue to be successes. We will pick the horse program back up this month as the weather has made it impractical to schedule until now. The horticulture program is going well and the greenhouse is full of greenery thanks to our wonderful volunteer Kellye. Several of our residents have their own plots where they have planted flowers and vegetables. These programs have been facilitated by Joan Wood, who is lovingly referred to as 'the Horse Lady'. She has brought out several volunteers, and donations too, to help with the Agriculture programs she is introducing to the Ranch.

We are in the planning stage of bringing a 4-H program to Ingram, much like our immensely successful program at Big Springs. Adelfa Ramos, Director of Enrichment Programs, and I met with Joan Wood and the 4-H representative of the Agriculture Department and are excited about what 4-H offers beyond agriculture including leadership development, robotics, cooking, and fashion.



What's happening at:

THE CHARTER SCHOOLS

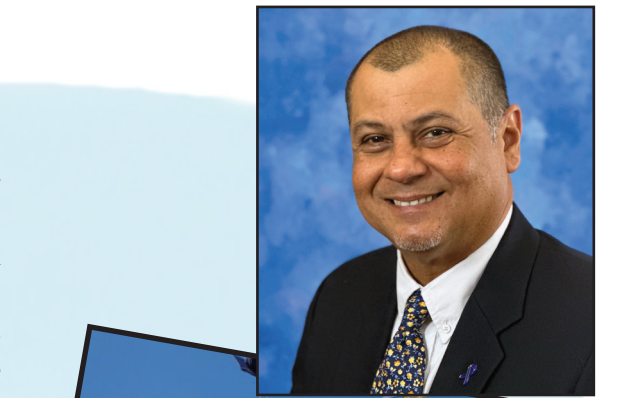
by Albert Hernandez, Superintendent

ACADEMICS

Students and teachers are working furiously to prepare for our end-of-year testing that will be coming up in a few months, through individualized after-school tutoring and mentoring.

On February 8th, a group of the 2025 senior class traveled to Schreiner University in Kerrville to take their first step toward college by taking the ACT exam (shown below).

Our Seniors are also very excited about their graduation day, which will be on May 23 for all three campuses (Brune, Fall Branch and Cailloux/Najim). We are so very happy and proud of each student's success.



ATHLETICS

Track season for the Brune and Cailloux/Najim campuses is in full swing. The Brune track team includes a whopping 47 athletes between the middle school and high school boys and girls, while the Cailloux/Najim campus will field a team of 10 student-athletes.

4-H PROGRAM

The Brune Charter School 4-H organization sponsored by Tripp Davenport, has been more than successful this year - they have been spectacular.

Several members took home top honors at the Real County Junior Livestock Show held in Leakey in January and the San Angelo Stock Show in February (check out the results on pp. 6-7).



What's happening at:

BIG SPRINGS RANCH

by Tye Phelps, Campus Director

On March 1st, residents of Big Springs Ranch on the Frio gathered at the Inaugural Texas Independence Day Barn Kickoff, celebrating the Lone Star State's rich history and heritage in style.

The foot-stompin', hand-clappin' event drew attendees of all ages who enjoyed delicious food, exciting games, and thrilling cowboy entertainment. Michael, Bridgette and their team of cowboys put on a captivating show, sharing tales of Texas history and teaching the next generation about the Cowboy Way.

The gathering also served as an opportunity for residents to learn about barn rules, cowboy chores, and upcoming activities, sign up for riding lessons, and discover the excitement of the Equestrian Program.

"It was a great time!" said one attendee. "We're thrilled to have such a wonderful community here at Big Springs Ranch," said another.

The event was hailed as a huge success, inspiring residents to saddle up and be a part of the Cowboy Way.

The excitement of the Texas Independence Day Barn Kickoff was just a warm-up for the main event: The First Annual Big Springs Ranch Chili Cookoff, set to take place on November 15th of this year. This highly anticipated gathering promises to be a celebration, reunion, and outreach event all in one, bringing together family, donors, and Hill Country residents in the heart of Real County.

Sanctioned by the prestigious Terlingua International Chili Championship, this cookoff is sure to attract chili enthusiasts from far and wide. Mark your calendars for November 15th and get ready for a day of delicious food, lively company, family activities, star-gazing, Texas music, and community spirit in the beautiful Texas Hill Country's Frio River Canyon.



TAIAO All-State Defensive Back

Ed Brune Charter School Freshman, Landon Yaklin, was named to the 1st Team Division II All-State Six-man football team in the Texas Association of Independent Athletic Organizations (TAIAO) for his play during the 2024 football season. Landon recorded 49 solo tackles and 61 assists on the season at defensive back. On Saturday, December 7, Landon participated in the TAIAO Six-man Football All-Star game held at Allen Academy in Bryan, Texas, where he recorded 5 solo tackles in helping his team win the game against the North All-Stars.



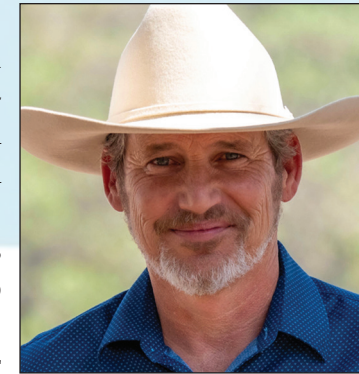
What's happening at:

FALL BRANCH VILLAGE

by Douglas Adair, Campus Director

It is always amazing how God answers prayers when we're standing in line with His will. It's when we try to force God into submission that we get ourselves into trouble. Trying to force our plans reminds me of the rambunctious boy who tried to pull a number over on Jesus.

Little Billy wanted a bicycle for his birthday, but his parents told him that it probably wouldn't happen. Thinking about how disappointed he would be if he didn't get a bike, Billy remembered something the pastor said at church on Sunday. "If you're really good, Jesus will answer your prayers." Or something like that, he couldn't quite remember, but he knew it had something to do with Jesus and praying and being good. So, he decided the Almighty was his only hope to get a bike. Billy, however, not being such a good kid, decided he needed better odds, so instead of praying, he figured he'd write Jesus a letter. His first draft said "Dear Jesus, if I get a bike for my birthday, I'll be good for a whole week." Contemplating what he wrote, he thought better of it and crossed it out. There's no way I can be good for a week, he thought. He tried again. "Dear Jesus, if I get a bike for my birthday, I'll be good for three days." I can do that! But looking at the scribbled words on the paper in front of him, realization sunk in again. I can't possibly be good for three days. My little sister gets on my nerves too much. So, he tries again. "Dear Jesus, if I get a bike for my birthday, I'll be good for one day." Frustrated, he knows one day won't be good enough for Jesus. Another plan in mind, he crumples the paper, and runs to the local church. There, he snatches a statue of the Virgin Mary, rushes home and picks up his pencil again. "Dear Jesus, I've got your mama, if you ever want to see her again, I better get the bike for my birthday. Sincerely, Billy."



Fall Branch Village has started off the year in God's will, without the ransom letter! Moving out of 2024, we had prayers and momentum. We doubled the occupancy, implemented a transitional, goal-oriented program, and made a change to accept single mothers of any age.

The Transitional Program requires residents to work toward person-centered action plans, with set milestones. It was important to have clear, obtainable, goal-oriented expectations. With the plan in place, the residents work toward monthly goals, such as savings, employment, education, and purchase of a vehicle, which brings them closer to independent living.

After much prayer, it was decided we should eliminate the age limit of 18-26 in the Young Mother's Program. Abuse and neglect have no age limit. We needed to invest our services in any mothers and their children needing a safe haven or help transitioning into independent living. It's now a Mother's Program where families can grow, heal and establish solid ground on their way to independence.

The prayer for 2025, is simple. Establish life skills training, expand the Mother's Program and find mentors for our residents. In the first month of the new year, we had applications and interviews for two female mentors, enrolled an additional mom and her child to our Mother's Program, and began registering residents in our new life skills training curriculum. God is good!

There is still a lot of work to be done. The support, and love, for the program at Enhanced Horizons does not go unnoticed. God will continue to bless the program and those who support it because we are standing in line with God. We stand in the gap for the young adult without a family, the mom, the child, the homeless, the poor. Little Billy got it wrong when he thought the pastor said, "If you're really good, Jesus will answer your prayers." It's when you're praying in God's will, you'll see the seas be calmed, the walls of Jericho tumble, and programs be expanded, so that our moms and young adults can have the blessed life they deserve.

Auxiliary Volunteer Spotlight

The Hill Country Youth Ranch Auxiliary's Thrift Store, under the management of Bridget Dale, set records by raising over a million dollars in 2024. The proceeds go toward supporting Ranch residents through scholarships, grants, and other means. The donation pushed the Auxiliary to the top of the list of HCYR donors, having made over 600 donations since it's founding in 1977. Executive Director Krystle Ramsay, Auxiliary President Cheryl Sieker, and board representatives Harold and Judy Wilson presented a congratulatory check to our store manager Bridget Dale at the January meeting of the Auxiliary at Rails.



Left top, L-R: HCYR Executive Director Krystle Ramsay, Board member Harold Wilson, Auxiliary President Cheryl Sieker, Board Member Judy Wilson, Thrift Store Manager Bridget Dale.

Left middle, L-R: Blythe Thomas, Barb Haberer, Sheila Petersen, Kay Welty, Catherine Akin, Janet Clark, Linda Hamilton, Karen Moore, (behind) Pam Hardin, Bridget Dale, Candi Douthit, Alice Vanderveen, Cheryl Sieker.

Left bottom, L-R: Susanne Lovitt, Chris Thompson, Wendy Sachs, Chris Grant, Mimi Bouslag, Beverly Mabry, Bridget Dale, Blythe Thomas, Willa Sturdevant, Eileen Aldous.

Auxiliary Twine

Dear Friends,

The ancient African proverb "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child" certainly applies to the Hill Country Youth Ranch Auxiliary. When Gary Priour founded the Youth Ranch in 1977, thanks to the perception of Marj Nicholson wanting to assist in a contributing and constructive manner to help support the Ranch, she suggested the formation of an auxiliary. Thanks to a 'village' of interested persons, the Auxiliary has supported the Ranch by volunteering their time and effort, their individual talents and creative ideas and countless donations for almost half a century.

The Auxiliary is open to anyone wishing to learn more about the Youth Ranch and we encourage membership to join in our endeavors. Luncheon meetings are held throughout the year and feature interesting programs by Ranch personnel.

Upcoming fascinating programs include hearing from houseparents at Big Springs Ranch which is always very insightful and heartwarming. April's luncheon will feature a success story from a student who will enlighten us on how thankful and rewarding it was to find a warm and loving family when they arrived at the Ranch 'village.' May's meeting is held at the Ranch with an opportunity to tour the campus and will include a program on the outstanding summer enrichment activities that are funded from the proceeds of the Auxiliary's yearly "Healing Hearts Celebration", scheduled next for September 23, 2025.

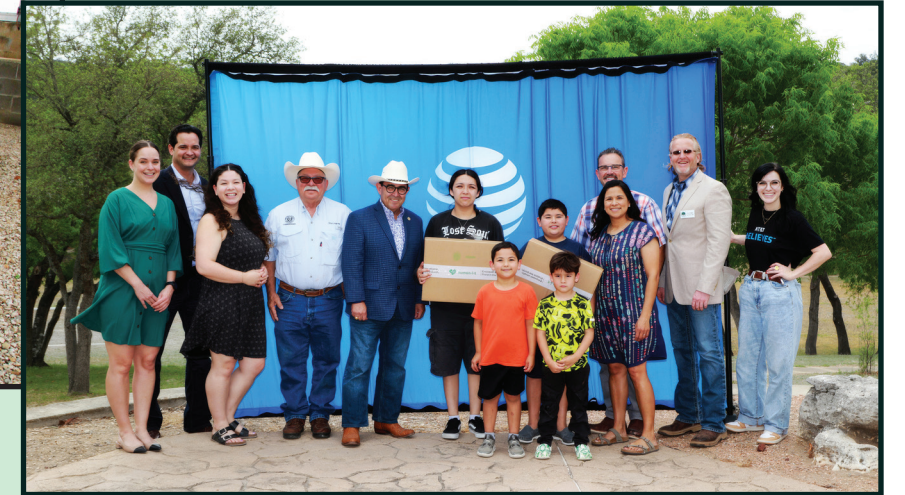
Nearly 200 area residents make up the Auxiliary, which supports the Ranch through projects like the highly successful Thrift Store, thanks to dedicated volunteers. We invite and encourage you to join our 'village' to care for the Ranches' young people. For more information on becoming an Auxiliary member, please contact jvaughan9741@aol.com.

Blessings to all,
Ann Vaughan
1st Vice President, HCYRA

Some recent donations thank you to our donors!



The Kerrville Garden Club has provided much help in kickstarting the new greenhouse program.



AT&T and HUMAN-I-T donated 100 laptops.



Volunteers made Christmas at the Ranch something extra special! Thanks to all!



Representatives of the Harvey Najim Foundation visit the school he donated to build.

How our programs enrich lives

- **Summer Programs** – The whole gamut of enrichment programs is offered each summer on an elective basis. Residents take classes in life skills, cooking, sewing, arts and crafts, dance, music, drama, painting, vocational education, sports, fishing, horseback riding, wildlife, and more. They can participate in various programs in rotation.
- **Christian Education** – Our mission to provide a life-enhancing Christian environment starts with chapel. Our children often arrive angry at authority, including God. Each requires a different ‘next step’, so we sing and talk about the love of Christ, and strive to be mutually respectful until an opening occurs.
- **Visual & Performing Arts** – Art, music, poetry, dance, and theater are powerful healing tools for children who have experienced trauma. An otherwise non-responsive child may be able to paint, write, dance, or dramatize what they cannot otherwise share. Artistic gifts are often enhanced in such children, and their works can be stunningly beautiful. Students may be able to pursue a future career using their special talents with our encouragement and nurturing.
- **Horsemanship** – Certified staff help children learn to be around horses safely, while also learning to groom, saddle, ride, and show them. Riding for fun is what the children enjoy most. They also learn valuable life lessons like respect, self-discipline, trust, responsibility, and work ethic through such interactions, experiencing healing in the process.
- **Recreation** – Recreation is an inherent aspect of childhood, and an essential component of healing and growth. Trauma is stored in the body and mind in ways that influence behavior. Recreation provides life-changing experiences through exercise, adventure, challenge, and play. It also offers gift discovery and skill development.
- **Young Adult Transitional Living Program (TLP)** – Residential and educational support for alumni and aged-out foster youth, ages 18 - 26, including high school completion, college enrollment and financial assistance, job skills training, life skills coaching, transitional living housing, career guidance, and help during crises.
- **Fresh Start Programs** – In addition to the TLP, Fall Branch Village provides housing and support for young women who are ready to make a new start and find their way to healthy independence, and single mothers of any age without the means to provide for their children.



Ranch children were treated to a demonstration from Air Evac, who landed a medical helicopter at Big Springs. The Air Evac team provides medical emergency help for Ranch residents and staff.

A special thank you to . . .

Adam R. Scripps Foundation
 Ed & Trudy Brune
 The Cailloux Foundation
 Elma Dill Russell Spencer Foundation
 Will & Liz Franklin
 C. A. Habermacher
 Hal & Charlie Peterson Foundation
 Harvey Najim Family Foundation
 Hill Country Youth Ranch Auxiliary
 Heavin Family Foundation
 J. E. & L. E. Mabee Foundation, Inc.
 Kathleen C. Cailloux Family Trust
 Lee Smith Property Management

The Meadows Foundation
 M. S. Doss Foundation
 Thelma Mueller
 Oma Bell Perry Charitable Trust
 Perry & Ruby Stevens Charitable Foundation
 The Porter Company
 Jane Cheever Powell
 Gary & Carol Priour
 Querencia Farms
 Sterling-Turner Foundation
 Perry Stevens
 Diana Stumberg
 Wolf Mountain Foundation

500 Club

We are honoring donors above who have made substantial, often continuing, gifts to HCYR over their lifetime of support.

In the 500 Club (right) we are pleased to announce new members whose donations have now totaled over \$500 by virtue of gifts made from October 4, 2024 through February 20, 2025.

Anonymous Donor, Boerne, TX; Kendra Pesek, Fredericksburg, TX; Brad Hinson, Hickory Creek, TX; Anonymous Donor, Houston, TX; Working Partner, LLC, Houston, TX; Anonymous Donor, Ingram, TX; Jess Niles, Ingram, TX; Gabe Rene, Ingram, TX; Anonymous Donor, Kerroville, TX; Stacy Egger, Kerroville, TX; Tony Farmer, Kerroville, TX;

James Horne, Kerroville, TX; Robyn Stuart, Kerroville, TX; Peggy's Stitch Eraser, San Antonio, TX; Anonymous Morgan Stanley Donor-Advised Donation, TX; Sherry Moses Regnier, TX; Kimberly Johnson, Waco, TX.

Thank you to these new 500 Club members, and to all our cherished donors, for your generous support.

Christmas is for everyone!



Christmas is a holiday celebrated at every Ranch! Fall Branch Village young adult residents were thrilled to receive a Santa's bag of gifts to celebrate the season. Our Campus Director Douglas Adair was the honorary elf who delivered the cherished gifts.

MEMORIALS & HONORS

Each month HCYR receives memorial gifts honoring loved ones who have passed away and other gifts remembering special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, etc. Because they are so important to the daily operation of the Ranch, and in keeping with their two-fold purpose, we gratefully acknowledge all such gifts both in the newsletter and in cards sent to family members. The following list includes loved ones honored by gifts made from December 7, 2024 through February 20, 2025.

In Memory Of:

GERRY & JONN ALLISON
John, Lars, & Ana Allison

GREG BAETHGE
Ronnie & Rochelle Lumpkins

HANNAH BAILEY
Ruth Zoeller

STELLA L BANASZAK
Konrad Banaszak

WILLIAM BARLOW
Herman & Merle Baldwin
Bob & Cynthia Moran
Cheryl Sieker
Linda Brown Stephens

CLAYTON BEHREND
Doris & Stanley Ernst
Ikey Peter

EVELYN BELL
Sandra Dunphy

FRAN BERTAGNOLLI
P. Kerth

ETHEL BORCHERS
Frederick & Corrine Jung

PENNY BRANN
Carl & Maxine Mayes

LARRY BUTCHER
Sue Atkinson
Susanne Hartman

BARBARA CALDWELL
Ronnie & Rochelle Lumpkins

PATSEY FAYE CHASE
John Allison
Lars Allison
Daniel Massey
Steven Massey, Jr.
Ashton McKinley
Katalina McKinley
Audrey Peterson
J.D. Peterson
Jimmy Peterson
Stephanie Peterson

DESTHER CHILEK
Walter Hogue & Sandra Pryor

MICHAELA COLE
Demetria Juber
Nanette Newbern

ROMA COLLINS
A wonderful friend
Betty Shaw

TIM R. COWDEN
Bud & Mary Clare Fawcett

FRANK DELANO CRAWFORD, Sr.
David & Marilyn Stehling

KERMIT G. CRENWELGE
Elroy & Doris Behrends

BILL DAVIDSON
Hill Country Youth Ranch Auxiliary

HAMP & CLAIRE DEWS
Jane Ann Henry

HAMP DEWS, Jr.
Jane Ann Henry

LAVONIA DEWS
Jane Ann Henry

GLORIA DOUGHERTY
Keith M. Hill

SIDNEY ELLEBRACHT
Doris & Stanley Ernst

LINDA EWING
Thomas Ewing

HARRY FALKENBERG
JoAnn Falkenberg

DAVID FLEMING
Nanette Newbern
Claire Starks

BETTY JOY FRIEDRICH
Ronnie & Rochelle Lumpkins

MAXINE GOFF
Mary Jane Morrison

WILLIAM E. GOOD
Kenneth Good

VANNIE A. GRAVES
Paulette Graves

E. W. HALLFORD
Doris & Stanley Ernst

EVELYN HENRY
Jeffrey & Kimber Jackson
Mac & Lady Jane Percival

GERALD HIGH
Albert Pittman

CLOATEE HUCKABY
Betty Renea Surlles

CAROLINE JONES
Connie Braziel
Adeline Honig

EDWARD & RUTH KIRK
William B. Grimmer

R.G. LEINWEBER
Doris Ivy

ANNELLE LOVERING
Marilyn Hankins

DELL MARTIN
Sammy Martin

BOBBY McGUIRE
Connie Braziel

JOHN EDWIN OEHLER
Donald Dietz

ELAINE OSBURN
Richard Osburn

OUR PARENTS
John & Lee Ann Allen

BRIAN PETITT
Mitzi Petitt

RHODA LEVIN PRIESMAN
James R. Fiedler

MEMORIALS & HONORS, CONT'D

EARL F. PRYOR
Walter R. Hogue

JOY PUTNAM
Anonymous

DOMINGA P. RAMIREZ
Suzel Vela

JAMES REEVES
Royce & Karen Herbort

DEE ROBINSON
Edward Robinson

MILDRED RUST
Edward & Sylvia Albrecht

NATHAN SAGEBIEL
Carolee Sagebiel

JOHN FRED SAMPSON
Mary & Paul Morrison

EDGAR SCHNEIDER, Jr.
Clarence Jenke

KAYE DEMPSEY SHEPPARD
Wayne & Norma Curtis

MIKE SHOFIELD
Betty Shofield

BETTYE KATHLEEN STEVENS
GMPA is thinking of your family after the loss of Bettye and we're honored to make this donation in her name. We know it will make a difference in a way that she loved.
Galveston Municipal Police Association

KATHY STEVENS
James and Mamie Keith & Family
We loved Aunt Kathy so very much and will miss her greatly!
You're in our prayers.
Amanda Travis

LANNA SUMMERS
Coy Summers

DOUGLAS TATSCH
Ronnie & Rochelle Lumpkins
Bob & Cynthia Moran
David & Marilyn Stehling

HOWARD TWILLEY
Bill & Lynda Tolleson

ROBERT D. VonLINTEL
Carl & Maxine Mayes

WADE WATKINS
Sharon McClure
Nanette Newbern

ERVIN "BUDDY" CHARLES WELLS, Jr.
Anonymous

We're so sorry for the loss of Buddy. We hope that your family's love and memories are a great source of comfort to you during this difficult time.
With love and prayers,
Randall & Corey Carpenter
Jimmy King
Frank Speakmon
Darlene Stevens

KEN WHITEWOOD
June Oehler

BRAD WILLIS
George & Jan Willis

DEBBIE WILSON
Ronnie Lumpkins

ROBERT YOUNG
James Franklin Ellis

In Honor Of:

BEV AVERY
Jena Cartusciello

BRIDGET DALE
In honor of your service to HCYR
Larry Hesketh

LIZ FELTON
Frances Andrews

JAMES FIEDLER
Happy Birthday
Kay & Kevin Bearden

AL & JEANINE HAUGHEY
Merry Christmas
Shirley & Bob Zimmerman

SARA HICKMAN
For a lifetime of service to others
Tom Kruckemeyer

JUNELL HOLMER
Merry Christmas
Barbara Satterwhite

JASON HURST
Elizabeth Radabaugh

CHAD & KRISTY JACKSON
Merry Christmas
Charles & Barbara Jackson

JESUS
Anonymous

SHERLEE JOHNSON
Kimberly Johnson

MIMI LINSOTT
Frances Andrews

RAE & LLOYD MARQUIS
In honor of 62 years of friendship
S. Richardson & Elizabeth Carpenter

VIRGINIA & E. C. MARTIN
Teresa Martin

TARA MAXEY
Merlin Maxey

DONNA & DEWAYNE McNALLY, ED & BECKY WHITE & LARRY SCHULZE
Our children
Curtis & Rene Schulze

CLEO MEADOWS
Mike Meadows

GARY PRIOUR
Nicholas Ogan

KRYSTLE RAMSAY
Happy Birthday
Mary Estrada

URIAH RAMSAY
Happy Birthday
Mary Estrada

BRICE WEBB
My father, in honor of Christmas and his servant's heart
Brice Webb

HAROLD & JUDY WILSON
Brent & Nancy Phelps

Support for Youth in Need!

HCYR has innovated its three campuses to provide the best care for children and youth in foster care. However, there are more than two million children outside of foster care that need resources. Because of this, we are expanding our scope of care to include private placements.

Children in care show a variety of physical, behavioral, and emotional difficulties at a higher rate than their peers due to experiencing trauma and dysregulation. These scars are carried into adulthood, creating a cycle of abuse and trauma. Many who step into the caregiving role face challenges that hinder their ability to provide, but don't want to place children in the unpredictable and often difficult atmosphere of foster care.

Growing our Range of Impact:

On our children's campuses, we are welcoming private placements alongside our foster placements to continue caring for all children who are in need. On our young adult campus, we are growing our population of transitioning adults, as well as single mothers to provide support as they get back on their feet.

At Hill Country Youth Ranches, our goals are to care for youth at any level of need through our dedicated staff and treatment team. For those outside of foster care, we provide a sliding scale to ensure that every child and young adult has access to necessary resources. We provide family-style homes, assessment centers, on-campus charter schools, skill building opportunities, and more!

What We're Raising Funds For:

Services and Programs: We believe that healing and enrichment go hand in hand. That is why we prioritize both therapeutic services and programs like gardening, horsemanship, recreation, fine arts, and more. Healing can be facilitated during a therapy session, but it also happens through everyday activities and experiences. Creating opportunities for joy and fun tremendously aids a child's ability to overcome obstacles, and each experience helps build skills that will aid them for a lifetime.



Children who do not have a parent in the home are being cared for by:
 Grandparents: 1,464,000
 Other family: 936,000
 Foster Care: 391,098

Breaking the Cycle of Abuse:

Providing healing through an individualized care model addresses and overcomes challenges long term. Many of our children and young adults come from experiences where they did not have food security, clothing that fits them, or access to a safe environment. That is why we are passionate about giving our residents the resources they need to succeed, so that they can mirror that experience for their families.

If you would like more information about our goals and opportunities, call or email us, or scan the QR code! Phone: 830-367-2131, Email: communications@youth-ranch.org.

Join Us in Our Mission!

Monetary Giving

Gifts of any size positively impact our organization and prepare a bright future for the youth we serve! Monthly donors are the backbone of our organization, providing a stable source of funding that allows us to maintain our ongoing initiatives and also enables us to respond swiftly to needs for the children.

Legacy & Tax Smart Giving

Designating HCYR as a beneficiary through a **Bequest, Trust, Life Insurance, or other planned giving** vehicle can make a huge impact in the lives of children we serve here in the Hill Country. We also accept donations from **stocks, IRAs, and Donor-Advised Funds.**

Raising Awareness

Help our ranch family grow by educating others on our mission and admission process, and by referring HCYR to other presentation opportunities. Bring your friends and join us for a tour of one of our beautiful campuses!

Upcoming Events!

You're Invited to our Spring Fling
 AT THE HILL COUNTRY YOUTH RANCH THRIFT STORE
 3171 JUNCTION HWY, INGRAM, TX 78023
 Kickoff: Monday, March 17th from 5:00-7:00PM
 Spring Fling Sale: March 17th - 21st
 We've saved our most beautiful clothing, scarves and bags for this special event - don't miss out on exclusive savings on name brand and luxury items!
 Join Us for the Kickoff Party and outfit your spring & summer wardrobe with style while enjoying beverages, snacks, and helping a great cause for youth in need.

Join Us & Experience the Hill Country Youth Ranches!
 Options available for groups, couples, and individuals. Learn about the history, services, programs, and proven impact of our organization. Our campuses are located in Ingram and Leakey, Texas.
INQUIRE FOR YOUR TODAY:
 Call: 830-367-2131 • Email: response@youth-ranch.org

STAY UP TO DATE
 Be the first to know about upcoming events by following us online!
YOUTH-RANCH.ORG
 youthranch
 youth.ranch

Do you have used heavy equipment you'd like to pass on?

The Ranch is in need of some heavy equipment for use in maintaining our three campuses, in part to replace machinery that is now almost beyond repair from decades of routine use. We also have a few equipment needs for new facility maintenance and upkeep requirements. If you can help us out, we will gladly provide documentation for tax purposes and can shepherd title transfers as needed.

Our Needs

- Smaller tractor with front end loader
- Skidsteer and attachments
- Mini-excavator
- Rocksaw & Rock trencher
- Three-quarter to one-ton trucks
- Any construction type equipment

Do you need Donor Profile help?

Do you want to change your *Roots* subscription information? Do you have a change of address? How about a friend you would like a copy sent to?

We encourage you to let us know of any adjustments in order to keep our database current, and so that we acknowledge and cater to your preferences.

Simply call Candi Douthit, Database Manager, at 830-367-2131 or email Candi at data@youth-ranch.org. Thank you!

Shoutout to all Ranch Alumni!

As most of you know, I am a former resident myself (1980s girl) who was blessed to return to the Ranch in 2011 to work alongside the HCYR staff.

Something near and dear to our hearts are the relationships we have developed with each and every one of you, and it is important that that connection continues.

Many of you write emails, post on Facebook or Messenger, send texts, or even write letters! We would like to invite you to catch up on your lives, families, ongoing education, and/or careers. After 48 years of serving youth, we're curious to hear what you've been up to. Feel free to send us a written testimony, and we'd love to get pics of you, your family, graduations, weddings, etc., for the magazine.

If you're not already on the HCYR Alumni page, a private group with 750+ members, and would like to join to find others from your era at the Ranch, please message me your Facebook profile link so we can invite you to become a member (and be sure to include your name when you were at the Ranch).

~ Rochelle Engleman Flowers '89, feedback@youth-ranch.org



Looking for a few GREAT people!

by Jerome Perry, Community Engagement Manager

Working at Hill Country Youth Ranch is more than a career, it is a purpose-driven and meaningful calling into servitude. Our three campuses nestled in the beauty of the Texas Hill Country are a proven solution that provides individualized care, enrichment programs, and long-term support for children and their families. A vision to provide an all-encompassing and inclusive ranch for children has withstood the test of time and now enters its 48th year of providing quality care for those who are most vulnerable.

We are seeking those who feel called to join our team for a meaningful purpose, and who are de-

voted to the mission. We have live-in houseparent positions open for married couples and singles, as well as night staff positions on our campuses, to bolster our commitment of fulfilling a mission of serving children and young adults. There are also opportunities to volunteer or to be an intern for the summer. If you or someone you know feels that nudge, or senses the calling to do more; please contact me for more information. You can reach me by email at jerome.perry@youth-ranch.org or by calling my office at 830-367-6111.



Left: Community Engagement Manager Jerome Perry (far right) with the staff of Ker-ville Pediatrics, who care for all of our kids' health needs. Above: Jerome on the recruiting trail, interviewing potential houseparents and case management interns.

A piece of Ranch history from 26 years ago . . .

Big Springs in the making



Volume 21 Number 6

December, 1998

Foundation Poured at Big Springs . . .

First Homestead Going Up on Frio



The first children's residence, called a "homestead" to match the pioneer spirit of the new village being built along the Frio, is underway at Big Springs Ranch near Leakey. The foundation was poured on November 18. Scheduled for occupancy in March, the 4,200 sq. ft. structure will house up to twelve children, ages 6 to 18.

A gift of Oma Bell Perry and her family, the 7,000 acre Ranch will become home to a new educational village for abused and orphaned children in 1999. Then, over the next ten years, HCYR will add a school complex, retirement village and youth care retreat center, along with more homesteads.

"This will become a multi-purpose complex of villages and programs," says HCYR Founder Gary Priour. "Oma Bell's vision is to reconnect generations so that each will help the other."

Says Miss Perry, "I had such a wonderful childhood. I want other children to experience this life, especially those with no place to go."

Left, top: Oma Bell puts her hand print in slab of first homestead.

Left, lower: L-R, Leakey Operations Director Michael Priour, Miss Perry, Gary Priour, HCYR Pastor Sharon Horne, and builder Lane Smith.

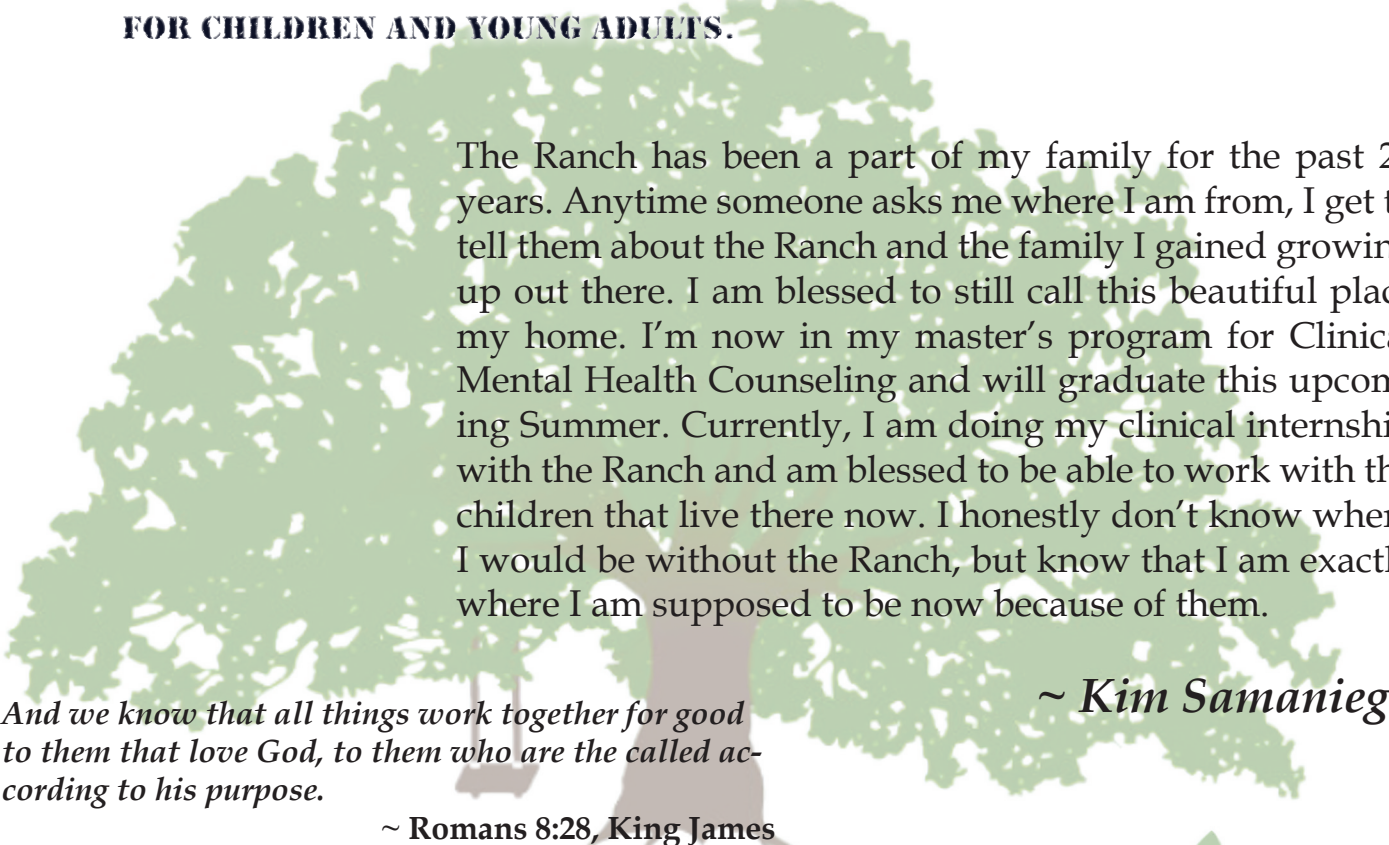


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Since 1977

**OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE A SAFE, LOVING, AND
LIFE-ENHANCING CHRISTIAN ENVIRONMENT
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS.**



The Ranch has been a part of my family for the past 29 years. Anytime someone asks me where I am from, I get to tell them about the Ranch and the family I gained growing up out there. I am blessed to still call this beautiful place my home. I'm now in my master's program for Clinical Mental Health Counseling and will graduate this upcoming Summer. Currently, I am doing my clinical internship with the Ranch and am blessed to be able to work with the children that live there now. I honestly don't know where I would be without the Ranch, but know that I am exactly where I am supposed to be now because of them.

~ Kim Samaniego

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

~ Romans 8:28, King James

HILL COUNTRY
YOUTH RANCH