



New Mexico Boys and Girls Ranches

CORRAL

The Ranches Alumni

When I came to The Ranches, I was lost and didn't have any idea of who I was or even believed that I could be anything. After my time at The Ranches, I was able to find myself and build my own future. Now I have my own family and my own life and look forward to sharing my stories with my kids.

-Alumni, JC

If your business would like extra print copies of The Corral please contact us at dev@theranches.org.

Want to receive our newsletter digitally? Sign up [@theranches.org](https://www.theranches.org)

Follow The Ranches



Rekindling HOPE for At Risk Youth - Since 1944

Summer 2024 80 Years of Stories

By Mikela Kull

As we are quickly approaching our 80th year reunion, we have been speaking to many former residents and staff as they reminisce on their time spent with us. I have been extremely thankful to hear their stories and it has served as a reminder of the importance of what we do and the impact that we can make. As I have been hearing these stories, I have an increasing desire to share these memories with all of you. It is my honor to share with you the favorite memories of a few of the people who have spent time at The Ranches.

"My name is Bill B. and I was a resident at the New Mexico Boys Ranch from 1967 to 1974. In my latter years there I spent a lot of my time tending to livestock, doing daily chores and helping Pop Barrick with the cattle herd.

One Sunday after church a large group of elderly people arrived at the ranch for a tour. Joey R. and myself were chosen to take a group down bottom to see the livestock. After briefly explaining the program as we knew it, we

asked if they wanted to see some bull riding. They were of course agreeable.

Pop Barrick had started an artificial breeding program and myself and Joey R. had the responsibility of caring for Gomer, the bull that would show us what cows needed bred. After breeding season we kept Gomer in a big pen where he got the best care possible. Unknown to Pop Barrick, Gomer was also a participant in great fun with Joey and I.

With the group of visitors lining the fence with cameras ready, Joey and I pushed Gomer to a corner and Joey produced an old long fan belt that we used to hang on to Gomer with. With the fan belt in place around his neck I jumped on and away Gomer and I went across the pen running and bucking. After my trip around the pen Joey took a turn. This was the first time we had shared Gomer's exercise regimen with anyone.

About two months after the tour event, Pop Barrick called Joey and

Continue reading on page 3



GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



Mikela Kull

President

As we are gathering to celebrate our history of 80 years in service of youth, I am grateful for the opportunity to get together with so many of those who have spent time in our program. I especially appreciate these stories as they serve as a reminder of how our program was, and how it is different now. Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on how you look at it, we no longer have stories about flipped cars or secret bull riding. However, the constant in these stories is more a testament to the lessons learned and the relationships forged through the difficult times in life.

These reunions are such a necessary reminder of the importance of what we do and how the seeds that we sew now flourish as these amazing adults establish their lives. I am blown away by the various paths that they have taken and how diverse their ambitions are.

Many times, as we are working with kids, it can be difficult to keep the big picture in mind. We can get so focused on the “ensuring” that we are doing everything that we can to give them as many resources as we are able to. In maintaining this focus, it can be easy for us as staff to get discouraged by not feeling that we are getting enough of the advice across.

My favorite part of these reunions is how quickly this concern is quelled by visiting with those who have left and continued to grow and establish themselves in the world. As is apparent to me in the feedback from those formerly in our program, the lessons that we are trying to get across now are those that they rely on much later as they navigate adulthood and parenthood.

I am hopeful that this will be another successful reunion and that we will be blessed with visits from a multitude of former staff and residents to see how they are doing and what they have chosen to pursue in adulthood. My hope is that many of you will also join us to see our campus and visit with our current group of kids and staff as well as those who formerly called The Ranches home.

Sincerely,

Mikela Kull

Mikela Kull - President

MikelaKull@theranches.org



THE RANCHES



continued from page 1

I into his quarters to explain why a picture on the front of the Boys Ranch newsletter had me riding a bucking Gomer. With so much evidence, denial was out of the question, so I asked how the picture ended up in the newsletter. We learned that some pictures from the tour were sent to be included in the newsletter and voila!

Pop Barrick gave us a stern talking to and we had to stop riding Gomer. I could tell he thought it was pretty funny." Bill B. 1967-1974

"I'm thankful for the encouragement and guidance to be successful in what ever you place your mind on." Boomer Johnson

"My favorite memory from The Ranches would be when the entire campus would get together to play volleyball or basketball. It was nice to be allowed to be kids and enjoying each other's company, it is something I will never forget. For a little while time stopped, and we were just kids having fun." Amber 2018-2019

"I'm thankful for the life-long family that was built. I'm thankful for the experiences I can carry with me and share with others. I'm thankful for the program because I wasn't in my youth, but I am today as the adult I am happily married and with 4 beautiful children." Brittney B. 2007-2009

"I'm thankful for everything that The Ranches has done for me and the other residents that were there while I was there. Whether or not we had issues with each other, at the end of the day we were all there for one another. It was always a weird relationship with all of us but if one fell down, we helped them up. And the house parents were always there regardless of whether we wanted them

or not. They never once gave up on us. They taught us something about ourselves that brought out the best in all of us."

Joe Solano 2004-2008

"I was at the Ranches for 5 years I have lots of memories, one of my favorite ones was having the opportunity to work at the Palace of Governor Museum in Santa Fe it was such a fun job. I always enjoyed riding the horses and going to 4H, showing my animals and then getting paid by selling them, Because of the Ranches I was able to do so many fun things; they would drive me to Gymnastics practice, Track and Cross-Country. Had it not been for the Ranches I would have never known the talent that I had simply because I had a bad girl attitude. The scariest memory I had was when I was racing with other girls in a ranch vehicle, and I flipped it. The staff there didn't get mad at me but spoke to me with respect. After that the corner I flipped the car was called Kasey's corner. After it was all said and done it was funny we still drove that car around the Ranches all beat up." Kasey Fosdick 1990-1995

"I have so many, but my favorite memory was on parks trip in Colorado. I specifically remember this because of Heath. It was our second day I believe. We were at the campfire after a long day of activities & we were talking about our highlight of the day eating cookies. I can't remember the exact topic of conversation, but I do remember Heath pointing at all of us individually & telling us that we have potential to be something great. I also remember being at a point in my life where I didn't even believe that about myself & then I



Continue reading on page 4



#RAISETHEMUP

continued from page 3

finally realized in the moment that I was somewhere where I was gonna be appreciated & celebrated for the good things I did. I knew I had The Ranches to depend on. It was a reality check for me & I always kept that in the back of my mind even to this day. It was a core memory for sure." Raelyn M. 2016-2017

"As a teen, I lived at The Ranches for about four years. These years were some of the most crucial of my life, filled with lifelong bonds, good decisions, mistakes, and overcoming significant challenges. One pivotal memory stands out as a day that changed my life forever.

It was a hot day. Everyone had just returned to the cottage from VoTech and was setting up for dinner. I was about an hour late, as usual, after working with Alfonzo down-bottom, irrigating the corn fields, and helping round up some of the neighbor's cows that had gotten through the fence—just a typical Tuesday. When we finished, he drove me up to BSI in his old 2003 Chevy. Walking up to the cottage's front door, I noticed Frank, our RA, sitting on the front porch swing, waiting for me.

"You need to wash up fast and see Heath in the front office," Frank said. My heart sank. The only time people went to "see Heath" was when they were in massive trouble. "Do you know what this is about?" I asked. He shrugged and ushered me inside. From the time I stepped in to clean up to the time I opened the front door of the main office, I had probably run through a thousand

scenarios in my head. Did they find my cigarette stash again? Do they know about my "office" behind BSI (cottage)? However, all that mental preparation didn't prepare me for what would happen next.

As I walked up to the front office, heart pounding, I opened the door and saw Heath, the most intimidating staff member, sitting in the main lobby holding the keys to one of the vans. "You ready? Let's go!" he said. "Where are we headed?" I asked, wondering if I was in trouble but not wanting to push my luck. "I'll explain on the way." His tone gave me a sense of relief; he didn't sound disappointed or angry.

During the drive, he mentioned we were going to the mall in Albuquerque to get some clothes. He had chosen me as one of the residents attending the governor's charity ball, and I would need a suit for this event. My mind started racing again. Why me? I had never been to a fancy event in my life. What if I mess this up? What if everyone there finds out that I'm not one of them? I was never meant to be "fancy." I was a poor ranch kid from northern NM who was repeatedly told he would amount to nothing. What should have been good news turned into panic, but I remained silent for the rest of the trip, trying not to push my luck with Heath. Although I hadn't interacted much with him before then, the other residents would talk about how strict



THEIR JOURNEY





THE RANCHES



Continued from page 4

and unforgiving he was compared to the rest of the staff.

I followed Heath into the store, where he asked an employee to take my measurements. After that, they both took a step back and looked at me while discussing color options. The employee went off and, after some time, came back with three different combinations: a black coat, a grey coat, and an off-white coat, all with a purple shirt and tie. "Try that one on," Heath said, pointing to the white suit. I took the suit into the dressing room and got changed. At that moment, all of my anxiety about the ball went away. It was the first time I had put on properly fitting clothes. I stepped out of the dressing room and walked over to the tall mirror on one of the walls.

"How does it feel?" Heath asked. "Good," I nodded at him through the mirror. It didn't just feel good. It was one of the best feelings I ever had. Seeing myself in a fitted suit for the first time, I stayed there for a while. The more I looked at myself in the mirror, the more overwhelming the emotions became. It went from a smile to fighting tears to completely losing control and bawling my eyes out. I couldn't understand why. Why now? I should be happy; I looked perfect in this suit. Heath allowed me to compose myself before changing back into the clothes I came in with. Judging by my reaction, I think he knew it was the right suit for me.

I took the clothes to the counter, and the cashier

started ringing them up. I watched the total climb: \$100, \$150, \$250... all the way up to \$350. I was shocked. That suit was worth more than everything I had in my room combined. Heath looked at me with a smile as he reached into his wallet, grabbed his credit card, and paid. I smiled back at him, feeling the tears pulling at my eyes while I tried to fight them back. Not this again. I bit my tongue and fought the tears back with all my might. Why now? I just got a free suit; I shouldn't be feeling all of these negative emotions right now. The ride home was silent. I felt embarrassed for crying in public, especially in front of Heath. He knew that and allowed me to work out my thoughts.

Heath dropped me off at the cottage, told me to be ready for the upcoming Governor's Ball in two weeks, and drove off. I didn't see him again until he picked us up for the ball. For those two weeks, I would wake up every night after everyone went to bed, pull the suit out of my closet, put it on, and stare at myself in the mirror. It was a whole different version of me. This version of me was confident, sophisticated, and proud. When I wore that suit, I felt like I could do anything. That suit was my superhero cape; it made me invincible. When the ball came around, I was more than ready. I introduced myself to everyone I could at that ball. I had many conversations with the "fancy" people I was so afraid of (they are just regular people).





THE RANCHES



continued from page 6

I was so invincible in that suit that I mustered the courage to ask Miss Teen New Mexico to dance ... I didn't know how to dance.

It was a fantastic event, but I knew I wouldn't wear that suit for quite a while after it was over. Fortunately, the feeling of confidence and worthiness didn't fade with the suit. I knew that was the person I wanted to become—someone who isn't afraid to take risks and is confident in who they are. That suit had given me the power to overcome some of the hardest obstacles by dealing with them head-on.

As I grew older, I realized that suits don't give you powers (go figure). Although wearing that suit felt amazing, it wasn't the thing that helped me find confidence and self-worth. It wasn't the thing that changed my negative outlook for my future. It was never the suit. It was the act of buying the suit. It was Heath, someone that I had hardly interacted with, who showed me that I was worth taking to the governor's ball to represent The Ranches, I was worth spending

an afternoon shopping with, and I was worth buying a suit for. I had never felt worthy of anything until that moment, which explains my emotional reactions that day. Heath's decision to take me that day changed the course of my entire life, but I'm sure he knew it would.

As for the suit, I still got a lot of use out of it. I wore that suit to my high school graduation. A couple of years later, I married the love of my life in that suit. Although it shrunk a couple of inches on me, I still have that same suit in the back of my closet. It is a reminder of how giving, no matter how big or small, can have such a life-changing impact."

Lucas C. 2010-2014

[We received so many comments from former residents, we ran out of room for this Newsletter, but we plan to include the others in future editions. My thanks to those who responded. Your comments were such an encouragement.]

Thank you to all the businesses, organizations, and churches that made monetary gifts in excess of \$150 during the period of April 1st 2024 - June 30th 2024. We deeply appreciate your commitment to children and families!

THANK YOU

Alamo Ranch Company	Deming	NM	Legacy Church	Albuquerque	NM
ABQ Community Foundation	Albuquerque	NM	NAVHDA Zia	Placitas	NM
Cash for Contracts Inc.	Las Cruces	NM	Old Mill Western Mercantile	Belen	NM
Forrest Community Church	McAlister	NM	Reynolds Enterprises	Parker	CO
Greeman Ranches	Tishomingo	OK	Southwest Piping Supplies Inc.	Albuquerque	NM
Harper Cattle LLC	Arlington	TX	Standerwick Real Estate	Rio Rancho	NM
Hillsboro Union Church	Hillsboro	NM	T or C Moose Lodge #2050	T Or C	NM
Ken Brudos Insurance	Albuquerque	NM			





Become a Partner

Become a Partner

Have you ever wondered what it means to be a Partner of The Ranches? Our Partners commit to a monthly gift which allows us to provide hope for the kids in our care. The Financial needs of an organization which is dedicated to providing HOPE for "the least of these" can be daunting. By making an affordable automatic gift, each month, you can help bring HOPE to the children who, through no fault of their own, have been hurt and have lost hope.

We want to make becoming a partner as easy as possible.

You can go directly to our website at

www.theranches.org/partners

or call us direct at 505-881-3363 or 800-660-0289

or fill out the form below, return it, and we will call you.

We appreciate your continued support of The New Mexico Boys and Girls Ranches.

Help Us Share Our Story

Representatives of New Mexico Boys and Girls Ranches are available to meet with clubs, civic organizations and fellowship groups, either in person or via the web, to share our story of bringing hope to hurting youth.

If you are interested in arranging a speaking engagement for your organization, simply give us a call at (505) 881-3363 or (800) 660-0289.

YES! I would like to Become a Partner!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: You may contact me by email. My email address is:

My Monthly donation will be: (a minimum gift of \$25 a month is required to become a Partner)

\$25 a month (\$300 yearly)

\$100 a month (\$1200 yearly)

\$50 a month (\$600 yearly)

Other: _____

If you would like to make a Donation by credit card
please visit us at

www.theranches.org/invest-in-our-youth/

or call us direct at (505) 881-3363 or (800) 660-0289.

Please contact me at the number listed above to set up monthly payments by Credit Card or Electronic Funds Transfer.

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

David Hartenbower
Chairman

Mikela Kull
President

Tommy Sanders
Secretary

Linda Yates
Vice Chair

DIRECTORS

Nick Costales

Maria Rivera

THE RANCHES

P.O. Box 9
Belen, NM 87002-0009

(505) 881-3363
(800) 660-0289

www.theranches.org

