

## The Ranches Alumni

*Celebrating the holiday season at The Ranches was a meaningful experience that created traditions I cherish to this day. From decorating the tree and the cottage with the staff and other residents to gathering around the table for hearty, home-cooked meals, every moment was filled with a sense of belonging and togetherness that I didn't find elsewhere. These simple yet significant rituals taught me the value of family and the joy of spending time with loved ones. Now, as an adult, I pass these traditions on to my own children, ensuring that the spirit of the holidays remains alive in our hearts and home. At the time, I thought The Ranches was teaching me to be a normal teenager; however, I now realize they were helping me become the best version of myself to share with my kids that I now have.*

-Alumni, S.D.

If your business would like extra print copies of The Corral please contact us at [dev@theranches.org](mailto:dev@theranches.org).

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

Follow The Ranches



## Winter 2025 What Our Traditions Look Like

By Travis Yoakum

Navigating the Christmas season at The Ranch is similar to most family holidays. It is filled with joy, traditions, and most of all chaos. There is the dip in weather, which inevitably comes with banter about when it's appropriate to bundle up in a jacket and gloves. Ending with mismatched gloves and disappearing jackets at the same rate of speed as dryers eating socks. Christmas traditions of hanging lights and decorating the tree bring a whimsical sense of wonderland that seems to erase the reality of our life stressors. All wrapped up in the comforting presence of charitable causes and the gift of a promise of eternity given to us all.

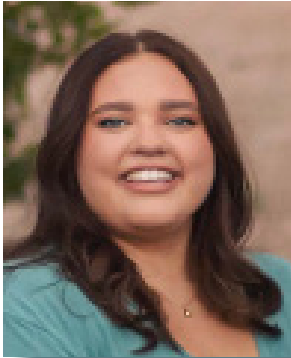
Now that we have covered the similarities between our organization and your home, where the same items are growing legs and disappearing, we can cover the shadow of differences that hangs over an "at-risk teen".

A community of folks like you who go above and beyond to support our organization and the residents we serve. People like you who decide that Santa Claus is in fact real. Creating lifelong memories for kids who have never had the opportunity to open a present, and being showered in thanks and appreciation for existing as human beings without any expectation of a return. Challenging a lifelong thought process that they're not worthy of receiving anything nice or having anyone care for them. This year our residents had the opportunity of grilling hamburgers and hotdogs, watching me embarrass myself by squeezing into a Shriner car and blasting that iconic horn, learning how to retire a United States Flag, getting fitted for a dress up outfit, ice skating and an Ice Wolves game, etc.. For some what has become an every year tradition of opening gifts. At The Ranch, we get to see the

*Continue reading on page 3*



# GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Mikela Kull**  
President

As 2024 came to an end, I am deeply thankful for all that we were blessed with during the year. We were able to come together to celebrate our 80th reunion and share the completed Beaty cottage with all that were able to visit. The blessings that we received throughout the year brought to mind our mission of rekindling hope.

The tragedy that we faced in 2023 was deeply felt throughout our organization both personally and professionally. The loss of Heath was impactful to not only the staff but also the kids who lost his guidance and wisdom. As we navigated the incredible pain that came with grief in late 2023 and through 2024, there was a sense of hope that also emerged. Staff and kids alike were able to find hope through the process of mourning and looked towards future opportunities to improve their circumstances despite their feelings of profound loss.

While we were celebrating our 80th anniversary, this sentiment was repeated as individuals who were once in our program became determined to use the advice once given to them as motivation to reach their goals. This was never the intended motivation to provide to kids that we work with, but I believe that it demonstrates the resilience of hope for these young people. Despite the difficult circumstances that they have all faced, they are able to cling to hope through the darkest of times.

The importance of our mission remains at the forefront of my mind as we begin 2025. The goal for every kid who spends any time in our program is for us to help them find hope and inspiration to persevere through difficulties and make decisions that will help them to be successful and find happiness in their lives.

As I look forward to 2025, I am excited about the opportunities that the new year holds and the impact that I know we can have on the kids we are so blessed to work with. I look forward to helping each of them find hope for their futures as they discover the endless possibilities that are available to them as they mature.

I am deeply thankful for each and every one of you that helps us to fulfil our mission and support these kids through their hardships. I pray that you also find hope in the possibilities of this new year and that you have joy as you share with friends and family. I look forward to sharing the successes of the kids of The Ranches with you throughout this upcoming year! Your generous gifts make hope possible for the residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mikela Kull".

Mikela Kull - President

MikelaKull@theranches.org





# THE RANCHES



*continued from page 1*

childhood glimmer of Joy, Gratitude, and HOPE in a child's eye. Hope that the future doesn't have to resemble the past and somewhere out there is a joy for life and others that glows larger than the darkness they carry.

Christmas traditions are not bought but instead are lived, taught, created, and experienced. May you rest easy knowing the least of these in New Mexico are blessed to be given those opportunities because of you.







#RAISETHEMUP

## The Littlest Angel, But A Big Show!

By Taylor Truitt

To bring in the holiday season this year, The Ranches decided to do something a little different. Led by our Counselor Lina Garcia and fellow staff member Linda Couch; the kids put on a puppet show based on the classic children's book "The Littlest Angel" by Charles Tazwell. In the story, a four-year-old boy goes to heaven and becomes an angel. He has trouble fitting in; he's always late, sings off key and causes all sorts of mischief. He doesn't fit in with the other angels and feels lonely and left out. When it comes time to announce the birth of the Christ child, all the angels bring lavish gifts to the feet of God in an offering. The littlest angel only has a small, sad box filled with his treasures from his life on Earth. God sees how the little angel offers his most valued possessions and turns the little box into the star of Bethlehem to welcome the birth of the Savior.

For weeks, the residents spent their free time writing scripts, sewing puppets, rehearsing, and building an entire stage- all to prepare for two showings at a local elementary school, and one showing for our guests and board

members who attended a Christmas gathering on campus. Every resident on campus had some hand in the creation of this project, and in the end, it was a raging success. After the shows at the elementary school, the kids rushed over to meet and greet with the puppets and to ask questions, and our residents loved giving back to their community.

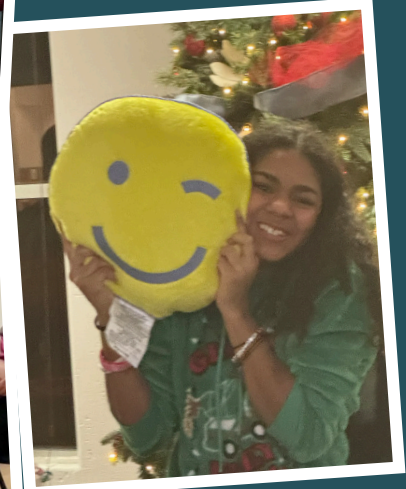
The project was a huge undertaking from our residents and several staff on campus. We thank each and every one of the children and staff involved for reminding us what this holiday season is truly about. It may sound cliché, but it is easy to forget every holiday season when we are wrapped up in presents, shopping, planning, and cooking- that the true spirit of this holiday is about giving thanks for the blessing of Christ. The Littlest Angel taught us that it's what's in your heart that truly matters, and the residents showed us that it's up to us to use that heart to give back.







# THEIR JOURNEY







## I'll Be Home For Christmas

By Dawn Goodrum

The sanctuary of First Baptist Church in Rio Rancho was filled with holiday cheer the first week of December as residents and employees of The Ranches gathered to watch the musical, *I'll Be Home for Christmas*. The production, set during the Golden Days of Radio, offered a nostalgic journey through a heartwarming story of faith, family, and tradition.



The musical's lively characters and period-inspired costumes transported the audience back to the 1940s, a time when radio was the centerpiece of entertainment and a unifying force in American homes. The story intertwined classic Christmas carols with original songs, celebrating the resilience and hope that characterized the era.





continued from page 6



The performers did an amazing job with the reenactments of the radio broadcasts from 1941. The residents were awestruck with the original recording of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech.

First Baptist Church has a long tradition, 25 years of producing holiday musicals that engage the community, and this year was no exception. Both the residents and the employees enjoyed the experience and were grateful to be part of it.

Thank you to all the businesses, organizations, and churches that made monetary gifts in excess of \$250 during the period of August 1st, 2024 - December 31st, 2024. We deeply appreciate your commitment to children and families!

## THANK YOU

AF & AM Temple Lodge 6  
 Alamo Ranch Company  
 Albuquerque Community Foun.  
 Armstrong Equine Services  
 Broken Arrow Ranch  
 Buck Duncan Construction Inc.  
 Cash for Contracts Inc.  
 Clark Trucking Equipment Co.  
 Colquitt Company  
 Gas Company Of New Mexico  
 Greeman Ranches  
 Harper Cattle LLC  
 Hillsboro Union Church

Albuquerque NM  
 Deming NM  
 Albuquerque NM  
 La Mesa NM  
 Albuquerque NM  
 Albuquerque NM  
 Las Cruces NM  
 Albuquerque NM  
 Anthony NM  
 Albuquerque NM  
 Tishomingo OK  
 Arlington TX  
 Hillsboro NM

Ken Brudos Insurance  
 Libby Holman Foundation Inc.  
 Navhda Zia  
 Old Mill Western Mercantile  
 Quality Liquors Inc.  
 Reynolds Enterprises  
 Slayton Foundation  
 Standerwick Real Estate  
 Star Paving Co.  
 T&T Trailer  
 Tucumcari Altrusa Int. Club  
 United Church Of Los Alamos  
 Valencia Power LP  
 Valley Tractor

Albuquerque NM  
 New York NY  
 Placitas NM  
 Belen NM  
 Roswell NM  
 Parker CO  
 Roswell NM  
 Rio Rancho NM  
 Albuquerque NM  
 Belen NM  
 Tucumcari NM  
 Los Alamos NM  
 Denver CO  
 Belen 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](http://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/](http://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

### DIRECTORS

Nick Costales  
Maria Rivera

### THE RANCHES

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

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

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

