

The Ranches Alumni

I was about a year behind in school and I never thought I'd be able to graduate until coming to The Ranches. We just started online schooling when I got there, and while it was a big adjustment, I found that I was actually wanting to complete my schoolwork. Thank you to The Ranches for pushing me and giving me the resources that I need!

Alumni J.C.

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Spring 2026 Proud of Our Graduates

By Mikela Kull

As spring unfolds around us, it brings a sense of renewal, hope, and anticipation. Across campus, there is a quiet but unmistakable energy building, felt in classrooms, in conversations, and in the steady confidence of seven remarkable young people preparing to graduate with their high

school diplomas. If there is one word that defines this year's graduating class, it is perseverance.

For many, graduation is an expected milestone, part of a natural progression through life. For the young people we serve, this moment carries a much deeper meaning. It





GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



Mikela Kull
President

In the rhythm of our year, there are moments that invite us to pause and reflect. For me, this season is less about a single event and more about the privilege of watching steady, meaningful growth unfold in the lives of the young people we serve.

Each day, we are given a front-row seat to moments that may seem small, but matter deeply. A student choosing to stay with a difficult assignment a little longer. A conversation that reflects a new level of self-awareness. A decision made differently than it might have been months ago. These are the moments that stay with me.

What continues to stand out is the quiet transformation that happens over time. Confidence begins to take root. Responsibility becomes more consistent. Possibility starts to feel real. It is not sudden or perfect, but it is steady, and it is earned.

Recently, I listened to one of our students reflect on her journey and what lies ahead. She spoke with honesty about both the challenges she has faced and the hope she now carries. It was a powerful reminder that growth is not about having everything figured out, but about the willingness to keep moving forward with courage.

I feel a deep sense of pride in these young people, not just for where they are going, but for who they are becoming. It is a privilege to witness their perseverance, their growth, and the way they begin to see themselves differently over time.

I also feel a deep sense of gratitude for this work. The opportunity to walk alongside these kids, to witness their progress, and to be part of moments that shape their futures is something I do not take lightly. It is meaningful in ways that are difficult to fully express.

None of this happens in isolation. It is made possible by a community that believes in the value of investing in young lives. Your support helps create the space where growth can take place, where challenges can be met, and where new paths can begin to form.

Thank you for being part of that work and for making these moments possible.

Sincerely,
Mikela Kull
Mikela Kull - President
MikelaKull@theranches.org



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represents late nights and early mornings, frustration and determination, and doubt that had to be overcome again and again. Most of all, it represents a daily decision to keep going.

Many of these students entered our program already multiple semesters behind in their schooling. The gap between where they were and where they needed to be could have felt overwhelming. Instead of giving up, they chose to lean in. They worked diligently to make up for lost time, often balancing the requirements of more than one semester at once. At times, they were completing more than the required coursework within a single term, carrying a workload that would challenge anyone. And still, they showed up.

There were early mornings when simply getting out of bed felt like a victory. There were long afternoons spent catching up, relearning material, and pushing through assignments that required focus and persistence. There were moments when progress felt slow and the finish line seemed far away. But step by step, assignment by assignment,

they moved forward.

And something remarkable began to happen along the way.

They began to believe in themselves.

For one student, that belief was hard earned through the challenge of learning in a language that was not their first. Every lesson required extra effort, and every assignment demanded more time. Understanding did not always come easily. There were moments of frustration, and moments when it would have been easier to give up. Instead, this student leaned in. They worked not only to keep up, but to truly understand, gradually building the ability to communicate and succeed in two languages. What once felt like a barrier became a strength, and today, they move forward with confidence built through persistence and courage.

Graduation is often seen as a single moment, a ceremony, a walk across a stage. What we see is everything that led up to that moment. We see the student who asked for help when they once would have shut down. We see the one



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who stayed a little longer to finish an assignment. We see quiet determination, unseen effort, and the willingness to try again after falling short.

We also see the way they showed up for each other. In shared classrooms and study spaces, encouragement was offered in small but meaningful ways. A reminder to keep going. A quiet “you’ve got this.” A willingness to sit beside someone else and work through a challenge together. These moments may seem small, but they speak volumes about who these young people are becoming.

We have also seen several of these students step into leadership beyond the classroom. By taking the initiative to participate in trade and vocational programs offered through the high school, they chose to stretch themselves even further. They balanced their academic responsibilities while exploring new skills and future career paths. In doing so, they not only demonstrated discipline and motivation, but also showed other students what is possible. Their example has quietly

inspired others to believe that their own futures can be filled with opportunity, growth, and purpose.

The pride we feel in these graduates runs deep. It is not only about the diplomas they will receive, though those are well earned. It is about the strength they have built, the resilience they have discovered, and the courage it took to reshape what their future could look like.

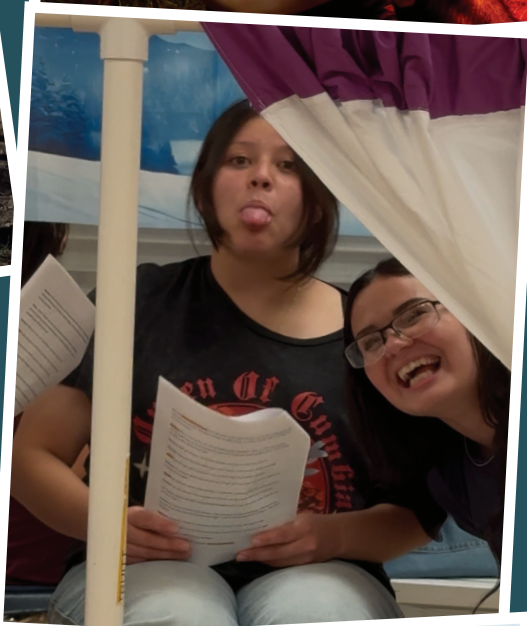
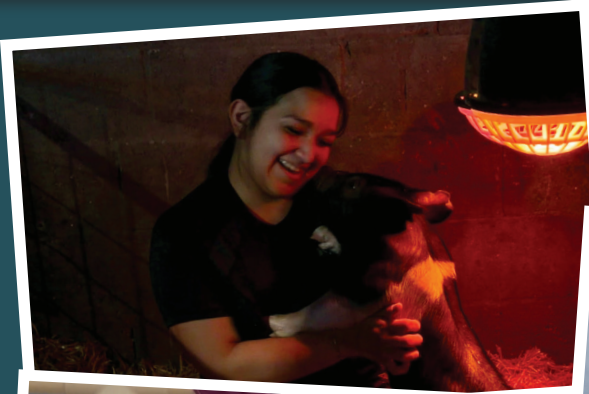
For many of them, earning a high school diploma is more than an academic achievement. It is a turning point. It opens doors that once felt out of reach and provides a foundation for the next chapter of their lives. Whether they pursue higher education, enter a trade, or step directly into the workforce, they do so with a renewed sense of possibility.

This moment also reflects the power of community. Behind each graduate stands a network of people who believed in them, sometimes before they believed in themselves. Staff who showed consistency and care. Educators who met them where they were and





THEIR JOURNEY





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helped them move forward step by step. Supporters and donors who made it possible to provide the stability and opportunity these students needed.

Transformation does not happen in isolation. It happens through connection, trust, and a shared belief that every young person deserves the chance to succeed.

As graduation approaches, there is a growing sense of anticipation. There is excitement in their conversations as they begin to talk about what comes next. Each of these students is looking toward the future with hope. Their paths will look different. Some will pursue college, others will enter trade programs, and others will step directly into the workforce. While their directions may vary, they share a common motivation to find their place in the world and contribute something meaningful through their unique gifts and perspectives.

There is also courage in the unknown. One graduate has asked to give a speech at the ceremony, wanting to reflect on her experiences and what it means to step

beyond high school and into what comes next. It is a powerful reminder that while they may not have all the answers, they are ready to take that next step.

When each student walks across the stage, it will not simply mark the end of high school. It will represent every obstacle they overcame to get there. It will represent perseverance.

To our seven graduates, we want you to know this: we see you. We see the effort that others may have missed. We see the moments when you chose to keep going. We see the growth, the strength, and the courage it took to reach this point.

We are incredibly proud of you.

As you step into what comes next, carry this truth with you: your past does not define you. It has shaped you, and it has given you a perspective that can help you navigate the world with strength and empathy. You have the ability to build a life that reflects what you want, not one that is simply a reaction to what you have experienced.





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Each of you is capable of achieving great things. You have already proven that through your perseverance, your hard work, and your willingness to keep moving forward. The life you are creating is your own, built on a foundation of determination and hope.

This is not the end of your story. It is the beginning of something new.

This spring, we are not only celebrating graduation. We are celebrating transformation. We are celebrating hope that has taken root and grown into something real. We are celebrating seven young people who refused to give up.

And because of that, the future in front of them is full of possibility.



Thank you to all the businesses, organizations, and churches that made monetary gifts in excess of \$150 during the period of January 1st - March 31st. We deeply appreciate your commitment to children and families!

THANK YOU

Alamo Ranch Company	Deming	NM	NAVHDA Zia	Albuquerque	NM
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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.

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