The Ranches
Rekindling HOPE for At Risk Youth - Since 1944

New Mexico Boys and Girls Ranches
CORRAL

Fall 2026

What Makes A Summer Rewarding

By Mikela Kull

If there is one thing this summer has reminded us, it is that there is no single way to spend a summer well. At The Ranches, our kids have been busy pursuing different interests, taking on new responsibilities, and putting in the work required to see something through. From college classrooms and trades programs to long days preparing animals for county fair, their summers have looked a little different from one another, but each has been filled with reasons to be proud.

For some of our kids, summer meant continuing to work toward their academic goals. A few participated in dual enrollment college courses, taking on the challenge of college-level academics while still working toward their high school



Continue reading on page 3

The Ranches Alumni

We asked our Alumni group what type of advice they'd give to a resident who is about to leave The Ranch and head out into the real world.

"Always communicate, reach out, sometimes other people see things you don't, you're never alone."

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GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



Mikela Kull
President

One of the greatest privileges of my role at The Ranches is having the opportunity to watch our kids discover what they are capable of accomplishing. We hold high expectations for the kids in our program because we believe in them, sometimes even before they fully believe in themselves. We know that with the right support, encouragement, and opportunities, they are capable of so much more than they may realize. And while we always hope to see them succeed, there is something incredibly rewarding about watching them meet those expectations and, time and time again, surpass anything we could have imagined.

This summer has given us so many reasons to be proud. From the commitment our kids have shown to their education to the hours they have invested in preparing for county fair, they have demonstrated a willingness to work hard, challenge themselves, and follow through on their responsibilities. We have watched kids take on college coursework, explore trades education, and dedicate themselves to raising and showing their animals. Each of these accomplishments represents time, effort, and a decision to keep moving forward, even when something requires more of them than they initially expected.

As proud as I am of these accomplishments, what means the most to me is seeing the determination behind them. Success rarely happens all at once. It comes from the small decisions made every day, from choosing to try again when something is difficult, accepting guidance when it is needed, and putting in the work even when the results are not immediate. These are the moments that remind me why we set high expectations in the first place. We want our kids to know that they are capable of hard things, that they are responsible for the choices they make, and that they have every reason to work toward a future they can be proud of.

Holding our kids to high expectations does not mean expecting perfection. It means believing they are worth the effort it takes to help them succeed. It means encouraging them to take responsibility while making sure they know they have people in their corner. It means celebrating their accomplishments while helping them learn from the moments that do not go as planned. Most importantly, it means refusing to let a difficult beginning define what we believe is possible for their future.

I think one of the most rewarding parts of this work is seeing a child accomplish something that once seemed out of reach. Sometimes it is a milestone that others might consider small, but for that child, it represents a tremendous amount of effort. Other times, it is watching them take on a challenge that stretches them beyond what they have done before. Regardless of the accomplishment, there is something special about seeing them stand a little taller because they know they have worked hard for what they achieved.

I never want us to become so focused on the next goal that we forget to appreciate how far our kids have come. There is always more to learn, more work to do, and another opportunity around the corner. But we must also take the time to recognize the moments when our kids rise to a challenge, exceed expectations, and remind us of just how much they are capable of doing.

I am incredibly proud of the kids in our program. I am proud of their hard work, their determination, and their willingness to keep trying. I am proud of the progress they make in the classroom, the responsibilities they accept outside of it, and the many different ways they are preparing themselves for life beyond our gates. Above all, I am proud that they continue to show us what is possible when young people are given the chance to work toward something meaningful and have people who believe in them along the way.

At The Ranches, we will continue to hold our kids to high expectations because we believe their futures are worth investing in. We will continue to challenge them, encourage them, and remind them that they are capable of more than they may see in themselves today. And we will continue to celebrate them when they meet those expectations and exceed them in ways that make us stop and appreciate the privilege of being part of their lives.
I know that every child's journey looks different, and there will always be challenges along the way. But when I look at the kids in our program and see what they are accomplishing, I am reminded that the work we do matters. It is a privilege to walk alongside them as they discover their strengths, pursue their goals, and begin to envision what their futures can hold. To our kids, I hope you know how proud we are of you. Keep working hard, keep challenging yourselves, and keep giving yourselves the opportunity to surprise even yourselves with what you can accomplish. We believe in you, and we cannot wait to see what you do next.

Sincerely,

Mikela Kull

Mikela Kull - President
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continued from page 1

diplomas. Others spent time in trades classes, gaining hands-on experience and exploring practical skills that may one day lead to a career. These are different educational paths, but both reflect something we love to see: kids beginning to explore the possibilities in front of them and taking their next steps toward a future of their own.

These commitments require more than simply showing up. They ask our kids to manage their time, meet expectations, and stick with assignments and responsibilities even when the work becomes challenging. We know that balancing these demands is not always easy, which makes their willingness to take advantage of these opportunities all the more encouraging. Every course completed and every new skill practiced represents time and effort invested in what comes next.

And academics were only part of the story this summer.

Anyone familiar with our 4-H program knows that county fair season begins long before the fairgrounds fill with exhibitors, families, and spectators. For our kids, much of the summer was spent preparing for those few important days. Feeding, caring for, and working with their animals became part of the daily routine. Building a successful show animal takes consistency, and the relationship between a child



Continue reading on page 4

continued from page 3

and an animal develops through repeated practice, patience, and time spent together.

There is a great deal of work that happens before an animal ever enters the show ring. Kids must learn how to handle their animals, recognize their needs, and work through the challenges that inevitably come with raising livestock. Not every practice goes perfectly, and progress does not always happen as quickly as they would like. Still, the work continues, day after day, until it is finally time to put everything they have learned into practice.

This year's county fair season gave us plenty to celebrate. Our kids had an abundantly successful season, and it was wonderful to see their hard work recognized. Their accomplishments were a reflection of the time they had invested and the commitment they had shown throughout the summer.



Fair season also brings people together in a special way. Buyers, community members, families, and supporters have the opportunity to see firsthand the effort that goes into these projects. When our kids step into the show ring, they are representing more than an animal. They are representing hours of preparation, the responsibilities they have taken on, and the determination it takes to finish what they started. We are grateful to the people who take an interest in their work and help make these experiences so

THEIR JOURNEY

















Photos by Jennifer Dansie and Julian Chavez

Continued from page 4

meaningful.

What makes this summer especially rewarding is the variety of things our kids have been working toward. There is no single accomplishment that defines a successful summer, just as there is no single path that will lead each of our kids toward a fulfilling future. One child may discover an interest in a particular trade, while another finds excitement in the challenge of college coursework. Another may find confidence in the show ring after weeks of preparation. Each experience offers something different, and each deserves to be celebrated for what it means to the child who accomplished it.

At The Ranches, we want our kids to have the chance to explore these possibilities. We want them to experience the satisfaction of working toward a goal, the confidence that comes from learning something new, and the pride of knowing they have contributed to their own success. Just as importantly, we want them to have people around them who notice their efforts, encourage them when things get difficult, and celebrate with them when the hard work pays off.

As we turn the page on summer and settle into another school year, we do so with plenty of wonderful memories and accomplishments to look back on. Our kids have kept busy, taken on challenges, and given us many reasons to cheer them on. We are proud of what they have accomplished, but we are equally grateful for the everyday effort that made those



Continue reading on page 7

continued from page 6

accomplishments possible.

Summer may be over, but the work these kids have put in is carrying forward into the months ahead. New classes, new responsibilities, and new experiences are already waiting for them. We look forward to seeing what comes next, knowing that each child is bringing something valuable from this summer into the next chapter.

For now, we are happy to celebrate a season filled with hard work, new experiences, and a county fair season worth remembering.



Thank you to all the businesses, organizations, and churches that made monetary gifts in excess of $150 during the period of July 1st - September 30th 2026. We deeply appreciate your commitment to children and families!

THANK YOU

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

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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.

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