



***Our Vision...**For every child to experience redemption.*

***Our Mission...**LOVE the child, SAVE the horse, enable children and their families to realize the **HOPE** they can have in Jesus Christ.*

**MARCH 2022**

## **What Goes on at the Ranch in Winter?**

You may wonder, what goes on at the ranch in the winter? Let's just put it this way, farm life is not for everyone. If the animals aren't breaking something, something is breaking down. Many of you have grown up on a farm or currently live on a farm with your menagerie of cows, pigs, horses, goats and chickens, so I know you completely understand.

It isn't just how the cold affects your body, it's how the cold affects everything else. Once we're in the 20's every day, it freezes water pipes and spigots so....no water. Sometimes we can use a propane heater to thaw the pipe, and sometimes we just have to haul buckets or run hoses. Whatever it takes, the horses need the water. And of course, they drink more in winter as they eat more hay to stay warm. For the horses that need to live outside instead of in the barn, the cold freezes the poop to the ground so it makes it difficult (impossible sometimes) to "chisel" it up. But there again, they need a clean dry area for their feet otherwise they get hoof infections.

Then there's the snow. At that point, we convert to using a toboggan (in lieu of a wheelbarrow) to haul hay down to Oreo & Cassidy's outside, run-in area. It can make life a little easier. And there's always that one fun-loving volunteer that will ride the bale of hay on the toboggan down the ramp. Usually the snow is harmless, but when we got 10 inches in one night, it made for a fun day of chores. First, you have to shovel paths from the barn to the manure pile so the wheelbarrows have access. Then you have to shovel a path so that you can open the stall doors (Mini horse stalls are outside of the barn). Then the snow stays around for a while, melts and turns into ice, things get a little hairy around here.

There are many times when volunteers can't get here due to road conditions so my daughter Savannah, son-in-law Cody, hubby Matthew and myself are grateful that we live next door. I have to admit, we do have some truly faithful volunteers though. One mom and son team come to mind. Angela & Luke travel 40 minutes to volunteer twice a week. On this particular day, it had begun to snow but not much was expected. Sometimes' its not the depth but the kind of snow that makes for difficult travels. They had arrived within ¼ mile of the ranch when they stopped at a stop sign and slid off the road and got stuck in a pile of snow on the side of the road. In lieu of calling for a tow and going home, they walked the rest of the way to the ranch and still helped with barn chores that morning! Savannah helped pull them out of the ditch with virtually no damage to their vehicle. Praise God for his goodness and for bringing us people with such amazing servant hearts. God bless all the volunteers that have stayed with us through winter, how could we have done it without you all?!

# People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care

My pastor has said this a thousand times and I find it's so true. We set out to have summer mentoring sessions to give kids hope but it's pretty obvious, right off the bat, that the needs are so much greater than we could have ever imagined. This need compels us to do more. But what does that more look like? We probably should have defined hard limits when it comes to more but does God have limits on his love or blessings on us? We had no idea where more will take us but God has worked in our hearts and guided us.

We mentor so what does that mean? I recently read a Daily Bread devotional that hit the nail on the head. It said, **"Mentors need to support, challenge and inspire, but "first and perhaps foremost, a good mentor sees you. Recognition, not in terms of awards or publicity but in the sense of simply "being seen," is a basic human need." People need to be recognized, known, and believed in."**

## *"You're dead to me."*

"You're dead to me." Were the words her father said to her. She didn't know what it meant so she asked me to explain it to her. This very young lady was shocked when she thought she was sick, went to the emergency room and the doctor told her she was 5 months pregnant. She now understood the consequences of her actions. Her immediate need was a crib. I shared the need and one of our volunteers donated a crib she had been saving. It was a crib that cradled all five of her children and she was saving it for grandchildren, but her heart felt that this crib would serve this young lady's need much more. This loving volunteer donated a new mattress and bedding items to go with the crib. I made this young lady's need known and people donated money to buy more baby items.

## *"Its ok, I'm ok."*

Kids feel connected here and they keep in touch. I had a young man contact me to come visit the horses. I picked him up and brought him out to the ranch. His summer at the ranch was spent with Oreo. It was the summer that motivated him to live, after several suicide attempts. During our conversation, I discovered that he had begun going to church. He didn't understand everything he was learning but it was a start, praise God. But as he went on, my heart ached for him. Through a combination of bad circumstances and bad choices, he was now homeless. This would explain why he looked so thin when just two summers ago, he was chubby. He had been sleeping in a car and couch surfing at friends' houses. This is February, the high temperatures during the day were in the 20's. I wept for him, openly. All the while he smiled, hugged me and said, "It's ok. I'm ok." He is not even 18, how can this be "ok"? I bought him something to eat and put gas in the car so he would have heat to keep warm at night. The following day, I found him temporary work on a nearby farm. Because it was outside work, he needed warm gear. I took him to Rural King and got him some insulated boots (his boots had holes in them), thick wool socks, insulated bib overalls & work gloves. He was late the first day but worked hard and did a good job. I was proud of him, I had hope that he would recover so I made local inquiries on his behalf. I found him help with housing, another job and even free job training programs towards a career. He didn't show up the second day. He didn't respond to any of my messages. I had no other way to reach him. He either didn't want the help or he wasn't ready. Without sharing his name, I am asking that you pray for him, God knows who he is, He will know exactly the soul you are praying for.

## *"You're stupid."*

When you mentor, you find some connections with kids are stronger than others. Natalie is one that I was drawn to. I saw a light in her. So you follow up and keep in contact with them. A court case came up and she asked me to be a character witness. I agreed and sat in the back of the courtroom, watched and listened. In the end, I was not needed so I did not speak on her behalf. As I followed this

young woman down the hall, I listened to her father say repeatedly, "You're stupid." I lost count after the third time. He pointed out to her the many times she should have spoken up in court. I can tell you that this judge was not one that would have taken kindly to that. In the end, I think Natalie did the right thing. Slow to speak, quick to listen. Though she was eighteen, she was still a child inside. In one sense, she was lacking in life experience and in another sense, she had experienced so much that a child should not have experienced. After this court appearance she was willing to trust me and open up to me. We would meet to talk and she shared her struggles. Most of the time, she just wants someone to "see her." She feels like she is stuck but she has hope that things will change but she's not sure how. The cost of living makes it almost impossible to live independently at this young age. The "average" family provides the support network kids need to transition to adulthood. Things like getting a driver's license, saving for a car, opening a checking account and learning how to budget and save while working and living at home. When kids don't have this support for transition, it hinders their growth. Sometimes it's a choice they make or the circumstances of their life, but much of the time, kids are shoved into figuring it out for themselves. This leads to them to a stunted life. For Natalie, who's still in school but graduating this year, this stunted life means getting a job within walking distance because she doesn't have a driver's license. Relying on someone else to drive her to cash her paycheck or use their debit/credit card to pay her phone bill. Her inability to gain independence puts all kinds of strain on relationships and dampens the spirit. Stepping into the gap is not as easy as it would seem (or so I am learning). Like I said before, I had no idea what "more" would lead to but I just keep saying to myself, "baby steps." I have this young lady that has this little flame left inside her and I need to help fan that flame before it goes out. She's willing to step up and do her part, she's already shown me that. So I will do what it I can to help her break the cycle of the dependent life that she leads. Step one, we went to the bank and she opened her first checking and savings account. Step two, get a driver's license. I told her to study for the test, print out and fill out the application for a driver's permit. She made the doctor's appointment for the physical needed to get the permit and I drove her. You know how you're only allowed to get so many of the questions wrong before you fail? Well, she passed her permit test without getting a single question wrong. This is the girl that has been told most of her life, "You're stupid." The first driving lesson in an empty parking lot was a little scary (Haha) but each time we meet to drive, she learns and improves. She has begun saving for a car. She realizes that a car is more expense & responsibility but it opens the door to a whole world of opportunities she had not thought of before. With a car, she is not limited to where she can work or live. Natalie knows that I "see" her and I believe in her. And ever since then, I've seen the hope that has grown in her. I still hear about the strife in her life, but lately, I have noticed our conversations are more about her dreams for the future. "I'm gonna have my own house someday." And I believe her.

**IF YOU LIVE LOCALLY AND LIKE TO DELIVER A DONATION, these are items we need now or will need soon:**

<https://www.homedepot.com/p/Suncast-15-Gal-Portable-Resin-Gray-Lawn-Cart-LC1250L/303269254#overlay>

These lawn & garden carts save our backs when taking sawdust to each stall. They are cheaper to buy in the stores "in season" the Home Depot seems to Have the best prices \$35. You can check your local store for stock:



**BOX CUTTERS – for cutting bale twine**  
**GATORADE – 12 oz bottles any flavor**

**WATER BOTTLES – 8, 16 or 20 oz**

**SNACKS & BREAKFAST BARS – cereal bars, snack mixes, gold fish, pretzels, chips, etc.**

# Ranch Life in numbers....

I see all the donation requests that I get in the mail and email so it drives me crazy when I do the same to others. Believe me, it's not because I am prideful, it's because I never want our supporters to feel like they're a vending machine. I appreciate every single supporter of our ranch, I really do. From the little boy who donated his proceeds from recycling aluminum cans to the generous donations of the elderly that give abundantly, to everyone in between. But the reality is we need your help. We need prayers and donations. As far as activities, this is a quiet time of year for us and unfortunately, the same goes for donations. This winter started out calm & quiet, and we've stretched our finances as best as we can, however, we've had a rash of breakdowns and the cost of EVERYTHING has increased. We really depend on all this equipment to run the farm. With a shortage on parts, we've not been able to repair our tractor. Recently, our truck has made it evident that it is in need of service. I fear we will run into the same parts shortage. Please pray we can get this equipment repaired and our financial needs be met.

Below is a small snapshot of some of our expenses. If you are in a position to give anything, we would truly appreciate your donation. Thank you!

## ***INSURANCE - \$7,561.42***

Annual renewal in February - Auto, Equipment & Liability Insurance

## ***ELECTRIC - \$986***

Last 3 months \$986 without any heat. We do see an increase because of the heated water buckets and water tank heaters we have to use to keep the water from freezing.

## ***SAWDUST - \$720***

Last 3 months \$720

## ***MEDICINE FOR ARTHRITIC HORSES - \$1,530***

Last 3 months \$1,530 (Calvin, Juliet, Tyler, Athena & Oreo all require Equioxx)

## ***HAY-LARGE ROUND BALES - \$1,080***

Last 2 months \$1,080

## ***FARRIER - \$620 each visit***

This is the cost every time the farrier comes to trim the horses' feet. Their hooves grow faster in warmer weather so summer/fall the horses are trimmed every 6 weeks and in winter/spring every 8 weeks. Believe it or not, this is only 60% of what we have paid in the past years as we currently have horses with fewer hoof issues that would require shoeing.

## ***GRAIN & OATS - \$600***

\$600 per month

## ***VETERINARIAN - \$2,240***

Last 3 months \$2,240

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**To order ranch gear:**

<https://ryyr.spiritsale.com/>

## SERVING....It's a family affair



Meet Team Phillips! Cindy (from left to right), Terry, Grant (16) and Paige (14). I ran into Cindy Phillips at a local festival called Garrison Days in Beaver, PA about five years ago. I think Paige was drawn in by the miniature horse and donkey we brought. Of course, what little girl wouldn't be? The ranch was young then and we were desperate for help so I tried attending local fairs and festivals to find volunteers and bring awareness about the ranch. Barn chores require a minimum of three volunteers working 3 hours each for each, morning and evening shifts 7 days a week. Let's do the math:

**3 volunteers X 3 hours each X 2 shifts X 7 days a week =  
6 volunteers per day (42 per week) & 126-man hours PER WEEK.  
Let that sink in.**

You can imagine how much work it takes to run this ranch but the numbers show you the reality. And that is just barn chores. That doesn't count the mentoring programs, the day camps, the hours to clean, repair, paint and build things around the farm. All to use for God's glory. Which brings us back to this family of servants, the Phillips.

What I love about Cindy & Terry is that they are simple people. They are the classic American family. They try to live quiet lives, they work hard, love God, sacrifice for their kids and community. They may seem perfect but they (like the rest of us) will tell you they are far from perfect. Like all families, they have their issues but they keep Christ as their compass. When their lives are turned upside down and they don't know which way is the way out, He gives them the "true" north so they can figure it out.

Cindy and Terry have been married 23 years and they all live in Center Township. Terry works full time so this hinders his ability to volunteer as much as he would like. What I love about Terry is his non-stop "get 'er done" attitude. Whether it's stacking hay or fixing something, I know it will get done no ifs ands or buts. Terry works alongside these young men, influencing them with his quiet, strong leadership and his work ethic, and he doesn't even know it.

When I asked the kids, "With many other options for activities to fill your time, why would you choose to volunteer at RYR?" For Grant, at first, it was the horses. After all, they ARE just like really big dogs, right? As many of you know, Don Peffer, our seasonal missionary does the majority of maintenance & repairs around the farm. Don calls himself our "Maintenance Technician" but that's just code for "gopher" if it leaks, breaks, needs built or fixed, it's all on Don LOL. Grant's curiosity was peaked as he watched Don build and repair around the farm. I think it may have been the sound of power drills and saws as well as tractors and UTVs. I have seen it in men as well as boys. The moment you mention power tools and motorized equipment, their eyes light up. And when they hear the sounds of a running tractor or a drill or saw, it makes their hearts flutter. By now you're giggling a little, but you know exactly what I'm talking about. Anyways, I have watched over the years how Grant became Don's apprentice. Grant said, "There's a lot of practical skills and knowledge that I've acquired." This will all serve him well as he grows older.

For Paige, the ranch has become a haven. "It's really quiet here." She was drawn in by the horses (of course) but what she has cherished even more is that she feels like she can be "real" at the ranch. Being a shy person can make it difficult to make friends. However, she says she can be "herself" serving alongside other kids her age. She loves the peace that is evident here, even when there are 4 or 5 volunteers moving about to care for the horses. Paige was shy (and still is) and lacked confidence in



general. I remember when she started volunteering. She was this little waif of a child, very timid. She always seemed younger than her age because she was so petite. But after a short time, I would see her handling a rude horse and correcting him to get out of her space. It's something to behold, a little 80 lb human (soaking wet) directing this 1200 lb creature, and he listened. It seemed forever before one summer, she finally grew! I now watch Paige mentor these broken kids with such gentleness, patience and kindness, and it melts my heart. She seems to be a magnet for the really difficult kids but she handles them effortlessly.

For Cindy, personally, the weekly barn chores is therapeutic for her mental health. As a parent, her heart's desire is to cultivate a servant's heart in her children. There aren't a lot of places you can serve and have fun doing it. Cindy loves that they can all serve together and grow their bond as a family. She's also seen how serving has naturally alleviated the anxiety levels for both of her kids, allowing them to avoid medications as a part of their family's health goals. Cindy is an Occupational Therapist so she had an immense amount of knowledge when it comes to handling many behavior problems. I personally see it as her super power, a true gift and a blessing for us here at the ranch.

It takes so many hearts like the Phillips to meet the needs at RYYR and there aren't words to thank them enough for all they do here. But my prayer for them and all our volunteers is that God would bless them immeasurably for all their kindness.

## **Mentor Training is about to begin!**

April is the beginning of our mentor training. This gives us eight weeks to prepare for the summer season. If you have the heart to mentor 1 child, once a week (for 90 minutes) we surely could use your help! Because of the great number of children and the shortage of mentors, we changed sessions last year from 10 weeks to 2 – 6 week sessions. In trying to facilitate all the children with the number of mentors we had, we found that six weeks just isn't enough for the new kids. We understand that not everyone is able to serve but please share our need with others, you never know who will have the ability to help! Thank you!

### **DON'T FORGET OUR WISH LISTS:**

Check our website wish list or our Amazon wish list, just click the links below:  
[https://smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/180CQA2RZXKG8/ref=nav\\_wishlist\\_lists\\_2?encoding=UTF8type=wishlist](https://smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/180CQA2RZXKG8/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_2?encoding=UTF8type=wishlist)

Our Website Wish list: [Supplies Needed — Ready Yourselves Youth Ranch \(ryyr.org\)](https://www.readyyourselvesyouthranch.org/Supplies-Needed)

**Don't forget to select us as your Amazon Smile beneficiary!**

# **THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND PRAYERS – please don't stop!**