

Fall 2013



ARKANSAS SHERIFFS'

**YOUTH  
RANCHES**

*a place to call home...*

# The Ranch Report A 40 Year Journey

Published by the Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches, Inc.



## 2 - Ranch Report

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Jim and Teresa Fortner

**Gratton Hall**  
Lori Turner

**Faith Hall**  
Ricky and Cheyenne Ingram

**Keith Hall**  
Chris and Tracy Stump

Our mission is to address, remedy, and prevent child abuse and neglect by creating safe, secure, and healthy homes for children.

## Meet Our New CEO

“Nancy’s deep knowledge and expertise will be a great asset to the Ranch and we are pleased to have her continue our mission of creating safe, healthy and permanent homes for the children of Arkansas,” said Doc Holladay, president of the Ranch board of directors. “On behalf of the board, I welcome Nancy to the Ranch and have every confidence in her leadership abilities.”

With more than twenty years of mental health experience, Weaver is committed to the highest level of quality care and service to the community. Before joining the Arkansas Sheriffs’ Youth Ranches, she served as regional clinical director at the Pointe Outpatient Behavioral Healthcare in Hot Springs. She also worked for APS Healthcare for nearly five years as the quality manager for Arkansas, where she directed all internal and external quality and regulatory compliance functions.

Weaver received her bachelor’s degree from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro and a master’s of social work from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She is also a licensed certified social worker (LCSW) by the Arkansas Board of Social Work.

“I am excited and honored to join the Arkansas Sheriffs’ Youth Ranches as Chief Executive Officer,” said Ms. Weaver. “Throughout my professional career and volunteerism, I have seen the pain that many Arkansas youth have experienced. Many children and teens, who are referred for mental health services, involved in juvenile courts, or placed in DHS custody, find themselves in those situations through no true fault of their own but because of repeated failures of their family systems. I join you in the effort to alleviate the pain these children and teens experience by providing them with loving, supportive, safe, and nurturing homes.”



A

Closer

Look

Nancy Weaver

### Our History

In 1976, the Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches was originally founded as the Arkansas Sheriffs' Boys Ranch for as an exclusively charitable and educational organization for "the prevention of cruelty to boys, by providing a home, ranch, and training school for underprivileged boys." The organization was created to provide a non-governmental residential childcare program for boys from all Arkansas counties. Today, the Ranches provides residential and non-residential services to both boys and girls.

The organization was incorporated on January 6, 1976, after two years of planning. In the early 1970s, a group of sheriffs asked the seventy-five-member Arkansas Sheriffs' Association (ASA) to help develop a children's home that would rely on the generosity of Arkansans. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, some of these sheriffs had helped with the placement of boys in area residential group homes and had been very disappointed with the results. They felt with their ongoing involvement, they could assure the public that the children would be well cared for.

The sheriffs voted in 1974 to create the Sheriffs' Boys Ranch Committee to research the practicality of establishing a ranch for boys. Additionally, the committee researched and visited other ranch programs established by sheriffs in other Southern states. The committee decided to involve the business community and to use the states' sheriffs for community support. The committee wanted to make sure that the home it established would address the educational, health, and spiritual aspects of a boy's life. The committee decided that a separate, freestanding non-profit organization should be established—if all Arkansas sheriffs would support it. Pope County Sheriff Bill Abernathy was chairman of the committee, and Johnson County Sheriff Donald Meek was secretary. The ASA voted to support the new organization unanimously and chose

for the organization to be funded through private donations opposed to governmental funds to guarantee more freedom in program development. Abernathy, Meek, and other members of the committee spent three months traveling to every county in Arkansas and meeting with each sheriff to gain support. In late 1975, an incorporation document with the signatures of all seventy-five sheriffs was presented to the ASA.

In January 1976, ASA president Floyd Johnson of Craighead County announced the creation of Arkansas Sheriffs' Boys Ranch, Inc. The organization was incorporated in Russellville with headquarters in Jonesboro. The initial twenty-eight-member board contained thirteen sheriffs in addition to businesspeople from fourteen counties.

A search committee was formed to find property for the first campus. The committee chose a 528-acre site on the White River near Batesville. The corporate headquarters was moved to Batesville in 1977. Two boys (ages seven



and five) were admitted to the program during construction of the first cottage, which was dedicated on October 10, 1977. In December 1977, the Ranch signed a ten-year lease on a facility near Harrison for a girls' ranch. The organization began doing business as the Arkansas Sheriffs' Boys and Girls Ranches in 1977, and legally changed its name to Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches, Inc. in 1998.

In 1985, the organization developed a donated site on the Spring River in Sharp County to replace the leased Boone County campus. A third campus on DeGray Lake in Clark County began

*(continued on page 12)*

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### Life on the Ranch: A Place To Call Home

It's a place where Saturday afternoon's are spent down by the lake with a fishing pole and a tire swing. A place where dinner's on the table shortly before sundown, and feeding the horses is soon to follow. Every day here offers a reason to give thanks.

Many of the children who come to the Ranch are often the product of a broken home of abuse and neglect, lacking the nurturing relationship of a loving family. The Ranch provides a healthy home environment filled with emotional support to help each child learn to trust those around them and cope with their emotions, all the while learning responsibility and building self confidence.

When children enter the Ranch, they are surrounded with individuals who care about their immediate needs and their future aspirations. It is the Ranch's commitment to every child – a commitment that extends from the Board of Directors to management personnel, administrative staff, house parents, support staff and volunteers – to help them believe in themselves and lead fulfilling, meaningful lives. Residents may stay at the Ranch through post-secondary education until they are socially and

*(continued on page 12)*



# Memoirs of a Rancher

By Roger Wright

I should preface this with I have enough memories to write a book, but not being a descendant of William Shakespeare or Ernest Hemingway this will have to suffice for now.



It was a warm July morning and like most days that summer Sheriff Ed Hall pulled up to check on my younger brother and me. When he stepped out of

the car he was different, he had a big smile on his face and immediately bypassed us heading to the front door of our run down little house.

The next couple of hours were somewhat of a blur. We were rushed into the backseat of the sheriff's car and after what seemed like an extremely long ride through many hills and around many winding curves we stopped on a hilltop occupied by two small trailers. Unbeknownst to me this new place would be my home for the next 11 years.

We were greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Post, who we would soon come to call Mom and Pop Post. I can tell now looking back that the Ranch was not quite ready for two new arrivals but they made accommodations and we, along with the Post's two boys, squeezed into one of the little trailers and called that home until later that fall. For the first time we were part of a family that had rules and responsibilities.

We had to help with meals, both prepping and cleaning up after, which I didn't mind at all because another first was that we had three meals a day and occasionally a snack. Little did I know

that this was the start of many firsts for a scared 7 year old little boy whose only enjoyment in life up until now was seeing his little brother smile when he was lucky enough to get some extra food for him.

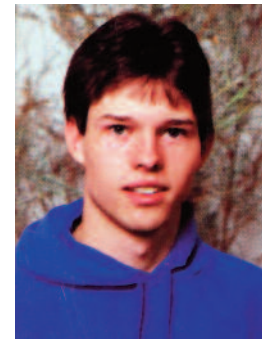
A couple months after arriving in early July, 1977, there was something big happening: the opening of Gratton Hall. There was a big ribbon cutting ceremony with a lot of important people. Pictures were taken and put in the paper, and it seemed like we were minor celebrities for a while. None of that left the impression of once we "moved-in" for the first time (Like I said, many of these happened at the Ranch) in my life I had a bedroom of my own. I still had to share a bedroom with my brother. We had our own bathroom (a first) until new boys started showing up. Before long what seemed like a big empty house filled up fast. Several of the names I remember – because they hung around.

I think the first boy to arrive was Dennis Workman followed soon by the Townsend Trio - Jeff, Howie and Gene. In my 11 years I saw many boys come and go, along with a number of house parents. The latter being the tougher, because now that we had a warm house to live in and were being fed three meals a day there were really no steady mom and pop. Each of the house parents touched the boys' lives in one way or



another, however brief their time at the Ranch was. Mom and Pop Post were replaced by the Matthews and their son Keith. Everyone associated with the Ranch knows what relief house parents are – and this is where the Polletts came in to play as relief parents for the Matthews.

Finally a boy my age – Brad Pollett was around and we became good friends



and still keep in touch to this day. (We spent summers exploring the large acreage the Ranch provided when we were not doing chores). The most

dreaded chore of the summer was to repaint the entrance wooden fence to the color of the license plate for the year. It seemed like it took us a month to completely scrape all the paint off that old fence. Then it took us a few weeks to repaint that old fence. I think the house parents must have just finished reading Tom Sawyer and thought us boys needed to spend more time painting fences than trying to chase Becky Thatcher.

Soon after we filled the first house, there was rumor of building a second house. Faith hall as it came to be known was built on Faith that the money would be provided to complete construction. With the new hall came new parents and relief parents. Probably the two most memorable couples ever in the boys' lives started at Faith – those being Rick and Cheyenne Ingram and Roger and Paula Alpers. I believe someday these people will be either knighted or made Saints.





1970's

**1976-1981** Bill Nash, Executive Director



**1974** Seven sheriffs' get together to establish the beginning of the Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches: Homer Purtle-Union, Mike Grady-Praire, Larry Morris-Monroe, Donald Meek – Clarksville/Johnson, Ed Hall – Woodruff, Floyd Johnson – Craighead, Bill Abernathy – Pope.



First Ranchers come to the Ranch, brother Roger and Ralph Wright – See page 5 for Roger's memoirs.



Oct. 16th- Gratton Cottage is opened and named after Alice Gratton, who's donations made it possible.



**1976** The first Ranch newsletter announces the site for first boys ranch.



**1977** Feb. 20th – Groundbreaking for first cottage.



**1978** Girls home is opened in Harrison, AR with plans to open another home for the girls.

**1979** Then Governor Bill Clinton, accepts plaque commemorating lifetime membership with the Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches and agrees to serve on Honorary Board of Directors.



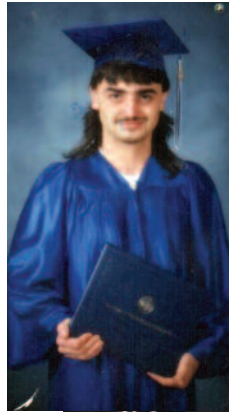


# 1980's



**1980** April, Faith Hall is dedicated for the "Adventure in Faith with the help of many donors"

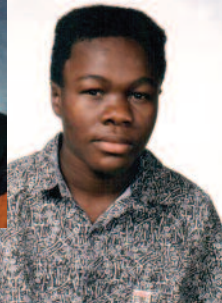
**1982-1995 John Pollett, Executive Director**



**1981** First graduates of the Ranch, Jeff Townsend graduates from Petti Jean Vo. Tech. and his sister Laura Townsend graduates from High School.



**1983** First boy graduates from High School, Howie Townsend.



**1985** August, Keith Hall is dedicated in the name of donors Mr. & Mrs. E. L. Keith

**1986** First Country Christmas Craft Fair



**1987** Perkinson Chapel is dedicated in the name of Mr. & Mrs. M.T. Perkinson







# 1990's

**1995-2013** Mike Cumnock, Chief Exec. Officer



**1990** Harmon Cottage dedicated in the name of Mr. Frank Harmon for the new Hardy Campus

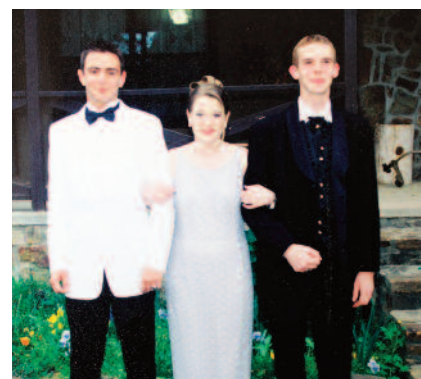
**1994** Houseparents Ricky & Cheyenne Ingram received the Thomas E. Roberts Award recognizing them as outstanding caregivers in residential childcare.



**1998** June 4th Groundbreaking ceremony for the new Administration/Tutorial Center, The Emergency Shelter/Receiving Home, And Interactive Center



**1999** Administration/ Tutorial Center, Emergency Shelter/Receiving Home, and Interactive Center is finished



**1996** First Annual Arkansas Children's Award Dinner – Senator Mike Beebe is the 1st recipient







# 2000's



**2000** 1st Annual Arkansas Cowboy Association Rodeo in Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches Ronnie Welch Memorial Arena

**2000** Ranch purchases land in Clark and Crawford Counties to prepare to add two more campuses



**2001** Groundbreaking at DeGray Lake



**2003** Groundbreaking at Crawford County/Alma Campus



**2005** Grand Opening of Donald W. Reynolds/ Mulberry Campus



**2005** Oct. 27th Groundbreaking ceremony at DeGray Lake for Troy D. Tucker Guest Lodge, Walter S. Morris Chapel, Eutha Olds Library, and Jane Ross Education Center







# 2010's

**2010** - December, The Ranch starts an equine therapy program, in recognition of the healing that can come from spending time with a beautiful animal you can tell all your problems to.



**2011** - Spring, Ranch celebrates 35 actual years of supporting children.



**2011** - Summer, The new and improved Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches website launches.



**2011** - Ranch launches its own Facebook and Twitter accounts to help spread the wonderful news at the Ranch.



# NEEDS LIST

People often ask us what kind of things we need at our campuses for the children. The following is compiled by our houseparents and staff. For more information, call Jenny at 870-793-6841 ext. 300. Interested in getting Christmas gifts for the kids? Call the office at 870-793-6841 for more information.

## Office

Letter folder  
Water cooler

## Farm

Buckets  
Feeders  
Water Troughs  
Saddle Blankets  
Rakes  
Shovels  
Wheelbarrow  
Water Hoses  
Horse Brushes  
Fly Spray  
Work Truck

## Gratton Hall

Outside Furniture and Picnic Table  
Vacuum Cleaner  
Emergency Lights/Flashlights  
Large Mixing Bowls  
Large Microwave  
Medium Drinking Glasses  
Plates and Cereal Bowls  
Tupperware Storage Containers  
Twin Size Bed Sheets  
Baking Dishes (casserole)  
Dining Table with Chairs (seating for 10)  
Curtains  
Non-Stick Cookware  
New Jeans  
Couch  
Board Games  
Curtains (12 panels)

## Faith Hall

New Cabinets for Kitchen  
New Linoleum or Laminate on Floors  
Commercial Washer and Dryer  
Lawn Mowers  
Weed Eaters  
Curtains

Outdoor Furniture  
New Grill  
New Jeans  
New Shoes  
Recreation Equipment: Baseball Gloves,  
Skateboards, Basketball Goal, Bikes

## Keith Hall

New Shoes and Boots  
New Jeans  
Kitchenware (cookware, bakeware,  
cooking utensils, serving dishes)  
Microwave  
Vacuum Cleaner  
Lamps  
Curtains  
Grill  
Outdoor Furniture  
Weather Station/Clock/Thermometer  
Hammocks  
Recreation Equipment: Fishing Gear, Tents  
and Camping Gear, Trampoline, Basketball  
Goal, Kickballs, Air Pump for Bike Tires  
and Balls

## Olds Cottage

New Longer Shaft Chainsaw  
Leaf Blower  
Sprayer Cart with Sprayer System for  
Tractor Hitch  
Bush Hog  
Gas Powered Log Splitter  
Cattle Panels  
Fencing

## Tutoring

Large Sturdy Backpacks  
Spanish Language Computer Software  
School Supplies  
Frisbees  
Card Games  
Small Items (Toys, Make-up, Puzzles,  
Journals, etc.)

## Address Change

To submit an address change, call Diana at 870-793-6841 ext. 301. You can also e-mail her at [Diana@youthranches.com](mailto:Diana@youthranches.com)

## Want to leave a Legacy for a child?

Please consider naming the Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches in your will to provide abused, abandoned, and neglected children a future. Contact Matt Cleveland, 501-940-3440.

## Memorial Request

To establish a memorial for a loved one, or to honor someone with a donation—

Send in his/her name to Diana Holland at the Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches, P.O. Box 3964, Batesville, AR 72503. Please include: name and complete address of those to be honored so they may be notified, and the name and complete address of the person to receive the notification of a memorial.

## Our Speakers' Bureau

can provide someone to tell "the Ranch story" at your meeting or event. To schedule a Ranch representative to speak, please contact Candy Davis, (870) 793-6841 ext. 315

## Privacy Policy:

The Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranch is very sensitive to protecting the privacy of our donors. We do not sell our list and we do not participate in any telephone solicitation schemes.

We only call donors when we have a question or wish to thank them.

Non-Cash donations to the Youth Ranches are tax deductible.



## **2013 Board of Directors**

**Ronnie Baldwin**  
Arkansas Sheriffs' Association

**Beau Bishop**  
Arkansas Farm Bureau

**Larry Carpenter**  
Holiday Inn Presidential

**Robert Dill**  
Simmons First National Bank

**Dennis Farmer**  
Arkansas Beverage Association

**Tom Garrison**  
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## **Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches, Inc.**

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## *Life on the Ranch*

*(continued from page 4)*

financially prepared for independence and have stable employment. More than 1,200 children have experienced life at the Ranch, and for those and many in the future, the Ranch will always be a place to call home. For almost 40 years, the Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches have given abandoned, neglected and abused children a second chance at childhood to help them realize their true potential – one with proper healthcare, emotional and spiritual health, educational opportunities and safety.

Life on the Ranch teaches behavioral accountability, positive work ethic and how to find faith in both yourself and others. Ranchers (those living on the Ranch) live with house parents and other children and are given daily chores, and responsibilities, many involving care for animals.

Each child is also guaranteed a quality public school education, and the Ranch provides all the necessities – school supplies, technological infrastructure and tutoring – to help them reach their goals of a post-secondary education.

The Ranch began as two mobile homes on several acres in Independence County. Through the support of Arkansans, the program has expanded to include three campuses in Independence, Clark, and Crawford counties, and a multitude of outreach programs. What began as a safe haven for two boys has become a current home for 40 or more boys and girls. It costs approximately \$30,000 to care for a child on an annual basis, and 95% of those funds comes from private donations.

## *Our History*

*(continued from page 4)*

admitting children in 2003. The Donald W. Reynolds Campus near Mulberry opened in 2005. The mission of the Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches was expanded in 1994 to address, remedy, and prevent child abuse and neglect by creating safe, secure, healthy, and permanent homes for children. In 1991, due to the demand for services, the program was expanded to include non-residential services. Through 2013, the Ranch has provided residential care to more than 1,200 children.