

All The King's Horses Children's Ranch



THE TRAIL RIDER

Jan '08

Volume 9 issue 1

*True happiness
renders men
kind and sensible;
and that happiness
is always
shared with others.*

Montesquier
1689-1755
Baron
French Philosopher
& jurist

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JESUS' BIRTH CELEBRATION

Do you ever wake with a pre-dawn knot in your gut? December 26th about 3:30 the dark cold got hold of my insides as I grasped the magnitude of The Children's Ranch plans for the Jesus' Birth Celebration. The day before had held such a windstorm it was a wonder any trees or buildings had held fast. It had been very cold, too. Very cold. I moaned out to the Lord and y'know what He whispered?

"Do not fear. I have a day of fun planned for you."

I crept out of the bedroom so as not to wake my mom, who was visiting from New York, She was not asleep on the couch; but fully awake and readying herself for the day of children, volunteers and family. At our morning devotions mom and I asked the Lord for a "dome of calm" over my mind and over the land. Dear Lord, we prayed, even if the weather was contrary everywhere else, let a dome of calm be over this place.

A dozen volunteers arrived with smiles and confidence. They brought & set up tables for crafts and for a little girls' beauty salon, for food and for fellowship. Some men stood to point cars to the parking area, my brother Gerald readied his go-cart track, my nephew-in-law and friends saddled horses, the inflated Jumping Castle buoyed with festive gestures. Everyone looked at me with peace and joy. As I absorbed the light-hearted gazes, my heart took courage. With a word of prayer toward God and a word of praise toward the God-given volunteers, we headed to our stations.

I set up the registration table. Here came the children. About sixty young'ens signed in and received a ribbon of green, red or gold. I instructed,

"Hold on to this carefully. You'll find out 'why' later."

Promptly at noon we opened with prayer. My sister-in-law, Teri, sang three songs: two about the coming of Christ; the other as a tribute to the veterans who volunteered among us. Then three YAG teens (see next article) came to the front – each had either a red, green or gold ribbon. Children got in line behind their ribbon-color to form three teams. One team went to the horses; another to the go-carts; and the third stayed with me for group games: egg-on-a-spoon race, toilet-paper race (ask me if you're curious); and tug of war. Teams rotated as the children completed their turns.

Even though the previous day and the following day were stormy, cold, gray and windy, the Lord blessed us with a Fun Dome of Calm! No wind, no injuries, no accidents, no arguments, no pouting. Volunteers said they had a great time. Mom had kept a watchful eye out the window and saw one child who seemed to have the most fun: her daughter. Thank you for helping us put on this grand event. I believe Jesus was glorified during His Birth Celebration among laughing children of all ages – like me.

Y. A. G.

Who knows the young better than the young? Since The Ranch inception in 1999, five young people are still with us: Stacy and Stephanie, 14-yr old twins; Rebecca, 15; and Stephen



& Bradley, 12-year old twins, who now make up ATKH's recently-formed YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP.

These precious youth helped me think through the practical steps of hosting the Jesus' Birth Celebration. With an opening prayer & agenda in hand, I presented my questions: what time of the day should we hold the event, what should we do while children wait to ride horses or go-carts, what do you think of the insurance-release form, how do we determine who rides, what about enough helmets, who do

we invite? I think you'll agree their responses were impressive: hold the event in the warmest part of the day -- noon to 5:00 p.m.; have three YAG members be team leaders to break into groups by color (not by name I was told because young people argue over The Perfect Team Name); riding should depend on maturity level and attentiveness to rules; everyone should bring their own helmet; the insurance form should indicate proper attire: adequate shoes, long sleeves and pants; invite good listeners = no one with challenging attitudes. We have had two YAG meetings so far. The meetings end with a fast-food meal. The hours YAG is involved on The Ranch will be credited toward graduation recognition for community service. For YAG and for The Children's Ranch this is a win-win situation. Thanks Youth Advisory Group for helping me think.



CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT A CHILD GIVEN TO US

What a better time to celebrate an adoption than at this glorious season of the Birth of The Christ Child. Our dear houseparents, Brad & Carmen, had a special Christmas Eve when the Circuit Court Recorder's Office called them in to formalize the final paperwork for the judge to sign the adoption of their four- and five-year old. The Recorder asked the girls, "Do you have any idea what is being done here?" The five-year old answered with an award-winning smile, "My last name will be Martin!"



With this gift, the Martin's will now have their own three girls in The El Caballo Blanco, the home they share at The Ranch. Thank God for His gift of children ... especially His Own dear Son, amen?

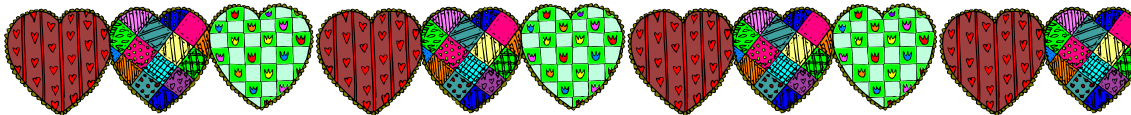
TWO HAPPY HOLIDAYS



The quote about happiness on the cover page has a special meaning for The Children's Ranch. Montesquier's quote defines many of our Trail Rider readers: those who share with others. Around Valentine's Day ATKHCR hosts a fund-raiser. This event is now in its fifth year linked with a holiday we claim: "For Those Who Have A Heart To Share

With Children". The February 15th fund raiser will be held at our neighbor's, Turquoise Hills Family Golf Course. For a reasonable cost, Turquoise Hills will prepare and serve a hot dinner in an adequate room for a hundred folks. We hope to raise the necessary dollars to continue with our theme of WATER IN / WATER OUT. A special evening of information and entertainment is scheduled. Please – come join others who, in this most practical, sharing way, will help make 2008 a Happy Year, indeed, toward preparing this Ranch for children.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

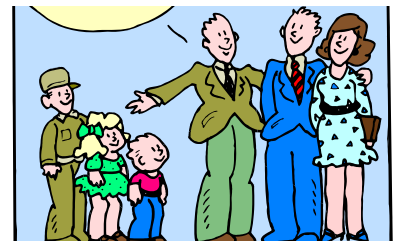


PASS THE WORD – MISSIONARIES NEEDED

Do you & your spouse yearn to give yourselves away to further The Kingdom of God? Do you love children? Have you ever envisioned yourselves on a mission field? Would you like to live in a Christian community? Do you have the spirit of pioneers? Or do you know a couple who have these longings? If so, The Children's Ranch may be God's call on your life.

Please contact me so we can pray together to beseech the Lord if He would have you be fathers and

mothers to the fatherless. Parenting children-in-need is not easy – but it is, I promise, rewarding. Contact info is on the cover page of the newsletter.



YOU THINK YOU'RE CONFUSED?

The Directorship of this mission takes almost every waking moment. As a result, I 'grandparent' children now and then. I have reminded our Dear Omniscient Savior, "*Lord, my favorite part of working on The Children's Ranch is when I actually work with children.*" (Case in point, the fun "*yours truly*" had during The Jesus' Birth Celebration.)

In December I had the privilege of grandparenting six children for a day while their mom and dad went Christmas Shopping. The children were various ages with the youngest being twin toddler boys – whew! The oldest is a 14-year old girl. When I asked her how she liked being fourteen, her face showed a definite blend of giddiness and grave concern. From her deepest heart, she sighed, "*Well, Ana. I'm a teenager. That means I'm confused a lot. In fact, I am so confused some times, I don't know what I am confused about!*"

What a joy to know my unrestrained burst of laughter didn't affect her sincere love of me even slightly.

Or add to any confusion!

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If we also send you the Trail Rider
via postal service,
please share it with someone who loves
children
and homeland missions.
Thank you.

