

All The King's Horses Children's Ranch



THE TRAIL RIDER

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Blessed are they
who have the gift of
making friends, for
it is one God's best
Gifts. It involves the
... power of going
out of one's self and
appreciating
whatever is noble
and loving in
another.

Thomas Hughes
1822-96 Eng Reformer

JUST WHAT I ALWAYS WANTED

Acres, acres everywhere and not a home in site for a large number of children .. as yet. Our single wide is home; but not large enough to host a party. So with a \$10.00 payment, we rented the new Senior Center in town for our annual Christmas Celebration. Food, games.... and even Santa!

The two youngest five-year olds were astonished to see Santa up close. The older pre-teens looked embarrassed. Each child took a turn to reveal their heart longings. Then at Santa's command, the elves passed out the presents. We handed each child a gift that did not belong to him /her so they could have the joy of giving to someone else.

Then a proclamation was heard. A hush settled on us as we all turned in unison to gaze gently upon one little five-year-old girl.

Her face lit up with a great awe. She grasped the box; and the clear cover revealed an infant baby doll. With the purest look of innocence and delight, her little voice trembled, "Just what I a l w a y s wanted."

After we recovered, the other children opened their gifts as well. Thanks to Cochise Terrace RV in Benson and Fina Companies of Tucson the children had two or three presents each. The generosity of Christmas flowed through the room, through our hearts; and hopefully, will continue through the new year.

As we settled down, I asked, "Who has never heard the Christmas story?" The same five-year old child raised her hand. With that CJ leaned over to her, "You'll love it. It's about a baby."

The Christmas story: a celebration of a Baby. Let's grasp this Great News and proclaim with my five-year old friend,
"JUST WHAT I A-L-W-A-Y-S WANTED"

Thank you for helping to make Christmas a time of rejoicing and giving and helping children many of you have yet to meet. You are a gift to me.

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personal gain.
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GOOD LIKE MEDICINE

You may have had to be there for this laugh. Picture this. You're riding along in the car with several young people. All of a sudden, the teen in the front passenger seat starts nodding his head around; up and down; up right, down; up left, down, again and again. With vigor he announces, "Ok, everyone. Be bobble heads." The youngsters joined in. Well, this cracked me up. But like I said, maybe you had to be there.

The spontaneity of youth can be frustrating. Like when they make an announcement at 7:00 a.m. that

they promised you'd have cookies made for a Christmas party at school that very day. How long ago did they promise? Three weeks ago. I remind the kids, as an adult, I need notice. At least two day's notice. A week or two notice is even better.

But in the case of bobble heads bobbing along in the car, the spontaneity of it all surprised my soul with a good hearty laugh. Laughter doeth the heart good like medicine, says the Lord. Did this story give you a healthy chuckle?

COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS

- (1) **Dave is a surveyor out of Tucson. He believes (and so do we) the Lord sent him as the man to do the much-needed survey. Dave is volunteering his expertise.**
- (2) **A professional soil conservationist is volunteering to sample our soil and see where is best to grow crops and where is best to build.**
- (3) **Trinity, a company of heavy equipment and construction, are in the area. They have volunteered to come over one morning and do what's needed.**
- (4) **The Building-'n-Trades teacher, Michael, at Benson High School has his class doing a scale model of the property and The Vision.**
- (5) **Rick Parr, general manager of the Tucson Sidewinders, is hosting our fund raiser; along with Christian comedian Normand Marini, who performs at the Gaslight Theater in Tucson.**
- (6) **Benson Rodeo Committee presented The Children's Ranch with a \$3,000 check.**
- (7) **Fina Company of Tucson and Cochise Terrace RV of Benson contributed first-class presents for the children's Christmas party.**
- (8) **Your prayers! Your support.**

We sure can praise the Lord for all He is doing.

ACQUIRE THE FIRE

My 15-year old foster daughter arrived sick of heart and soul. Her restlessness and uncooperativeness kept her on the brink of the law. Her first night with me she ran away. I called the police to report a runaway. This infuriated her even more. There was no talking to her; no reasoning; no compromising. She was determined to be sad and miserable.

The first weekend she stayed with me the Wednesday Teen Group was to attend Acquire-The-Fire, a Christian event in Phoenix targeted at youth. The other youth urged my girl to go. With just twenty minutes left to departure, she agreed to go. There was one seat left. The Lord had saved it just for her.

The theme of the event was Forgiving Your Parents. It was an ideal topic for the children to whom we minister. All of the Benson group went forward. Children who'd been abandoned, neglected, abused by their parents fell on their knees with weeping. They sought God's help to forgive. They rose to their feet renewed and encouraged in God.

And my 15-yr old? She's a new creature in Christ! Cooperative, happy, helpful, communicative. See? That is what the Lord can do. It is what He alone can do.

ANOTHER ATF STORY

ATF - Acquire The fire - touched my young friend's heart. CJ is a big help around here. He is Susie's 17-year old grandson. He had gone forward to forgive his father for abandoning him and his siblings. After returning home, CJ decided to e-mail his dad

and let him know he'd forgiven him. CJ sat down at the computer. Clicked on his mail. And there before his very eyes was an e-mail from his dad! Goose bumps ran up and down CJ's spine. CJ knew the Lord had heard his plea.

Acquire-The-Fire is a \$60.00 investment in the lives ... in the eternal souls... of young people. The Children's Ranch sponsors children to go to ATF. It is your dollars that make it possible. It is your dollars that put children in a place where the Lord can reach them. Your reward is part of this harvest of young souls.

God bless you for helping us!!!

OUT OF GAS

Good thing Susie was right behind us in another vehicle. Bubba, our van, was carrying five children, a mom and me. We slowed to a stop. "Hey, Sue, Bubba acts like he's outta gas; but the needle says a quarter tank." Sue and her sister, Jan, left to get 5 gallons of gas.

Bubba's passengers took a hike. Off to our left were three small hills with which I was familiar. Atop the furthest one rests a grave. The two ten-year old boys set off without delay. Their six-year old brother followed. Their two little cousins made their way along at a goodly rate, in spite of the slipping dirt and moving stones.

By the third hill, we were expert mountain climbers. Finally we'd reached our destination: an old grave with a wooden marker too weather-worn to read; enclosed on all four sides by a thoroughly-rusted, two-rail fence.

Who is it? How long has he been here? Was he a hero of some kind? I'd been told the old grave was there as long as anyone could remember. One 80-year old lady told me her grandfather knew of it; but didn't have a clue who was laid there all alone.

Susan & Jan were back. I saw them on the horizon. Whistling and hooting and running back, we called to let them know we were not too far off. With a fresh five-gallons in the tank, Bubba started right up.

We learned two good lessons that day: when Bubba is at a quarter-tank, he's empty. And going on hikes - even a short one -- can be an adventure.

GOD IS GOOD GOD IS GOOD GOD IS GOOD GOD IS GOOD

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