

The Ranch Report



September 2010

StrongTowerRanch.org

3rd Annual Harvest Hoedown

Mark your calendar for the 3rd Annual Harvest Hoedown on Saturday, November 6th. The event begins at 3:30 pm with the original story "Not Just a Pony" that is sure to entertain the young and the young at heart.



While Bill the Pony is thrilled to have center stage at this event, he has agreed to share the responsibility of entertaining you with all his horse and pony friends at the Ranch. After all, there is only so much a pony can do. Following the show, we will ferry everyone on hayrides to the pavilion area for the Chili Cook-off and a knee-slappin', old-fashion country square dance. Ticket sales will begin on October 1st.

Letter from a Parent

2010 Day Camp Report

What a fantastic summer we had! Everyone, kids and workers alike, enjoyed the Western theme and the activities with it; even the cowboy-inspired lunches got huge raves. The truth of God's Word and the love of God's people went out, and lives were changed. There are three ministry stories to tell; the first one being the most obvious--

--the campers



We had a record attendance of 331 children ages 7-14 coming from as far away as Truxton in the west, Elsberry in the north and St. Peters in the east. Over half were sponsored and the rest came at the very reasonable cost of only \$60 for the week which included snacks, lunch, and transportation for most of the sponsored children. No one could say they couldn't come because of a lack of funds. We welcomed every child that needed the help, and trusted that by the end of the summer God would supply our need - and He did!

The Bible teaching this year was about the Disciple's Cross. The children learned how they can



I have heard of this camp for years but have never been able to do it. We either didn't have a car or our daughter with special needs would be "self injurious" and we didn't feel we could drop her off. This year we spoke to several people who told us they would help my daughter's day be more comfortable. Every time she was "high needs" the staff just called me...no judgment...no come pick her up...just questions. My son begged to come back, saying he could feel God's love from his teacher, and my daughter has found love for horses.

She has been ill her whole life and never had a passion for any activity. God has blessed us a million times over. This Ranch is AMAZING! The workers for my daughter and son are sent straight from heaven. This ministry is shaping, helping, and possibly saving lives.

We cannot thank you enough.

Michelle

A Bit from the Barn



Dragonflies and Grace

What a fantastic summer we experienced out at the ranch! The bounty of God's blessing continually takes my breath away.

Adequately staffing the barn for eight weeks of camp seemed a bit daunting this past springtime, but by June the miracle of God's provision proved faithful. We had a grand total of thirty-two volunteers who came to serve at the barn this summer. One came all the way from Florida, one from New Mexico, and several drove a far distance from within the state!

The smiles and positive attitudes in the not-so-pleasant conditions were a testimony of God's love and grace. Providing trail rides for over 350 children, our volunteers and horses definitely exhibited those traits all summer long. Working in 90-100

know for sure that Jesus is God and the Bible is God's Word. Then they learned about prayer, being in a fellowship of believers, and witnessing. Our key verse was Luke 9:23 "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and come follow me." We didn't offer an easy salvation that could be viewed as a "get out of jail free" card, but salvation that involves a commitment to true discipleship. Around 25 children that we know of made that important decision. Other children expressed the desire to commit to a higher level of discipleship. Creation lessons once again helped to give children confidence in the dependability of God's Word and in the amazing Creator God that is also our Friend.

--the workers



The second story is about the workers. Much ministry goes on among the workers as they encourage each other and grow in their own walk with Christ as a result of serving, and listening to or teaching the lessons. It was amazing how workers came to us this year; we didn't have to go begging for volunteers! We asked of course, but didn't have to "beat the bushes" like we've had to in the past. Around 147 different people helped in some way this summer. All the volunteers were so helpful and selfless that it was a blessing to be with them.

Two churches brought groups to staff camp as their church's mission trip. It takes over forty people to staff a camp week, so having a chunk of that taken care of is a blessing. Calvary Church St. Louis brought 18 people the third week and Marysville Berean Church (in Kansas) brought 24 the fourth week. If you would like to bring a group next summer, go to our website and get information from the "Mission Opportunity" page.

A special blessing was to have seven married couples serve together as team counselors this summer. Many children don't normally get to see healthy marriages. One couple is making a special effort to follow up with everyone in their group by holding monthly fellowships for them at the ranch.

--the teens

degree temperatures is hard, but even more frustrating for horses and humans were the flies! The pestering, buzzing and biting were enough to send the calmest of equines into a bucking fit. We did our best with fly spray, fly predators and flytraps, but the flies kept coming in record numbers!

On one particular evening I was standing in helpless dismay, watching the horses running, bucking and rolling, trying their best to escape the relentless attack of the flies. But there was no escape. Feelings of despair and frustration had me in tears because I believed I had tried everything, to no avail. In a prayerful moment, I pleaded with God to send relief to His poor creatures.

When I returned the next day, I was amazed at the number of dragonflies hovering over the horses' domain. There were so many, nearly everyone who came to the barn noticed them and asked, "Are those dragonflies? Don't they usually hang out around water?" The Wranglers did some high-tech research via cell phone to find out what dragonflies eat and - you guessed it - they eat flying insects! Day by day the dragonflies came and the pestilent flies decreased in number.



The dragonflies hovered over us in graceful suspension, not intrusive or annoying, but a welcome sign of God's grace. What a picture of His character: gentle and caring, staying close and waiting for our cry of surrender so He can come to the rescue and save us from the biting, pestering "flies" in our lives. We try to fix the problems ourselves, but at times they seem relentless.

We can be assured that if God cares



Yes, they are "workers" but they need their own commentary. Over the years we've come to see it as a real mission to train young people in how to lead a child to Christ by example as well as with their words. The quality of our training has continued to improve, and we are committed to work with our teen volunteers through the week to grow in their service to our Lord and His children. Adults benefit from this emphasis as well, but we're finding that it's a great investment to work with the teens. We've received wonderful testimonies from young adults that their experience with us as a teen was a great stepping stone. Our campers also look at the teens and aspire to become leaders when they reach 15.

Praise God!

I know God loves the ranch ministry because I see Him provide for it time and again. The right people show up at the right time, the funds have been there even though the economy is weak, other resources show up in the nick of time (from little pigs to leather punches), big scary thunderstorms go around us, and the love and unity of the volunteer staff is solid even though we encounter challenges. It's not about us, it's about His unfailing love and grace. We are privileged to experience it at His wonderful ranch.

Lydia Kaiser
Day Camp Committee Lead

Tower Thrift Shop

The shop is always a bustle of activity as it is that time of year where we are switching out the summer clothes to winter wear. It is astonishing to see the amount of donations which God has abundantly given us. We have received a gift of free bread to pass

that much about His horses, how much more He cares for us! God sent His one and only Son, over 2,000 years ago, to provide grace to all who put their trust in Jesus. "For it is by grace we have been saved, through faith—and this not from ourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Eph. 2:8) Thank you, Lord, for your magnificent grace - and for dragonflies!

Lori Brooks
Horsemanship Committee Lead

along to our customers without cost, which has blessed our community. Having new guests stop in weekly to look around is always a pleasure, in addition to the time we get to visit with our faithful customers. Our heart is to continue giving as we have received from our gracious Lord.

Feel free to stop by for the best prices in town. Store hours are Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10:00am-3:00pm, Saturday 9:00am-Noon.

Alta Palmer
Tower Thrift Shop Manager

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