



O'CONNELL YOUTH RANCH

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1646 North 1320 Road
Lawrence, KS 66046

785-842-9356

office.oyr@gmail.com

From our Executive Director, Gina Meier-Hummel

Greetings from all of us at the ranch. We pray you and your loved ones are all safe.



We have had a pretty great fall in spite of the pandemic. We brought the arts to the ranch, thanks to our good friends at Eva Reynolds Fine Arts Gallery and the young men have enjoyed riding horses thanks to our friends Karen Glotzbach and Diana Frisbie. As you can imagine with the pandemic we have really limited our outings so we've had to get creative at keeping the young men busy.

The fall also allowed us a great opportunity to do some much needed work on the ranch. We've been working on the barn area, clearing trees, cleaning out storage areas and planting flowers, with our ranch hand TJ and volunteer Susan Andersen. It's been fun to see the young men show pride in the facility when their case managers or visitors come out. We now have 1 dog on the ranch, 6 horses, 7 potbelly pigs, 2 goats, 5 cats and the young men take care of all of these animals. It is true that animals bring so much healing. We also have equivalent to about 23 full time employees, and on most days about 23 young men are placed with us, so things are busy.

We opted to keep all men online learning and while this has been hard, the young men and staff have really stepped up to the challenge. We now have one of our staff and a volunteer working with the young men when they need tutoring, and one of our staff is holding an exercise class on the ranch which we intend to intensify over the winter months. We received a grant from the county Cares Act funding to bring high speed internet to the ranch to keep the systems working for the young men. A special shout out to John Harris who has been instrumental in guiding us through these IT challenges.

We work really hard to be a placement for the young men we serve for as long as they need our services. In the last year only 26 young men have left our facility and the average length of stay for those who left was 10 months. 93.7 percent of those young men went to some type of home environment. This means our work is making a difference. We aim to be a stabilizing force for the young men and for them to go to a less restrictive environment when they leave us.

Please know that absolutely none of this is possible without the fantastic support we receive from so many of you. Every time we put out a need, you respond. It is humbling. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you and God bless you and your family. Merry Christmas!

Our Success Stories

Within the last month we have seen two of the young men we have served for some time now move into their pre-adoptive placements. And we had a sibling set of brothers who were new into care and stayed with us a brief time while their relatives got approved through the state process. We really aim to help place siblings together when we can.





LIST OF NEEDS

Art Kits

Slippers

Crossword Puzzles

\$5 Gift Cards to Sonic

Sweatshirts
Sweatpants

Ornament Making Materials

Hats and Gloves

Bring donated items to O'Connell Youth Ranch - 1646 North 1320 Road
Please call in advance of delivery so we can ensure someone is there to meet you.