Spring Lake Ranch Therapeutic Community supports and empowers people with mental health and substance abuse issues by providing opportunities to grow and thrive. Through shared experience, meaningful work and active participation in an accepting, diverse community, we help each person develop the confidence and skills to recover.

A Message from our Executive Director and our Chair of the Board

Dear Friends:

We hope that you will take time to read this year’s annual report. It gives us a reminder that Spring Lake Ranch, our wonderfully complex and vital community, is as relevant today as it was in years past. While it is a place of transition, with staff and clients moving in and out, it is anchored by a mission statement that binds the new to the old while infusing it with today’s realities. We have welcomed many new staff this year and said goodbye to some old ones.

This has been a year filled with highs and lows. The sap season was good but not great. The lack of winter snow was disappointing for winter sports enthusiasts but the summer has had enough sun for everyone. The new tennis court saw heavy use in the nice weather. The client census has been a bit lower than expected but the Ranch still finished the year with a small surplus. The trustees have been actively assessing their performance with the aid of Wayne and Debby Granquist and have begun doing a member review as well. The price of admission has had to climb a bit due to costs but there is an enhanced commitment to support more families with financial aid.

We wish to celebrate the skill, caring, and wisdom of the Ranch staff who inspire us and the clients who they assist daily to face life’s challenges. We also wish to thank the Board of Trustees and Member group for their financial support, their participation in Ranch activities, their caring oversight, and loyal dedication to the Ranch. Most importantly, thank you to the families who send their sons, daughters, nieces, and nephews to benefit from the healing community that the Ranch offers. We are all in this together and glad you are by our side.

All the best,

Lynn J. Pilcher
Executive Director

Linda Berryhill
Board Chair
I started struggling emotionally in college, with depression — ups and downs. By my fourth year, I didn’t have enough credits to graduate. I didn’t know what was wrong with me; I was in so much pain, I couldn’t do anything. I knew I needed help.

So I left school, and a new psychiatrist diagnosed me with bipolar disorder, which much later turned out to be a misdiagnosis. She put me on all this medication and it didn’t help me at all — so she put me on more medication. The meds slowed me down so much, they made me so tired. All my friends were graduating, they were all getting jobs and I was just sitting here, in and out of the hospital, not knowing what was wrong with me.

We were going to so many doctors, looking for answers. Being diagnosed with bipolar disorder, combined with not graduating and being told that these meds were having negative effects on my brain, put me in an even darker place — which made them put me on more meds. Then they put me on all these stimulants, just so I could get out of bed. The stimulants made me so anxious, they put me on Klonopin — and that didn’t help enough, so I would drink at night for the anxiety. It was just this vicious medication cycle.

For the next five years, I was functioning but I was really hollow inside. I kept going in and out of treatment, and when I was out of treatment working really really hard — but my whole identity was as a patient. And they made it sound like such a death sentence. After about four years, the stimulants started causing me pretty bad paranoia. At the same time, several therapists I had seen said, “I don’t think you have bipolar disorder.” So I knew I needed to get off everything.

I went to this place in Texas and went off all the meds, over a three-week period. I thought I could just go back to my job and my life — but there were so many issues of, like, self-love that were lacking, because of those years of thinking that I was hugely flawed. And also, your brain, when it goes off that much medication, needs time to reprogram itself and fire normally.

My parents had wanted me to go to the Ranch. At first I hadn’t wanted to, but then I realized I really needed to relearn how to live with this new brain. So I went there on a tour, with my dad, and I remember just knowing that was the place I needed to go to. We drove down the hill to where we got cellphone service, to call my mom, who was starting chemo the next day, to tell her that I was accepted to the Ranch. We were happier than the day I got into college! It was just such a happy moment.

The reason the Ranch worked for me was the community, and the sense of humanness of everyone. I was treated as a person and an individual, not as a patient, which enabled me to grow back into myself. I stayed for eight and a half months, then I moved into the Rutland program, and worked as the farm intern on the hill. I felt that I had gotten myself back — but it was more than that, because so many hard years had passed in which I had grown, and grown wiser. It felt like I was this newer, better person than I was before all the struggles, before all the medication, before getting lost.

Heather was my advisor at the Ranch, and I remember realizing that I was 100% sure she loves me. And that was something I hadn’t been able to feel for a while, because I was so beaten down. I realized, “I know Heather loves me, and she’s a real person and I’m a real person.” The relationships at the Ranch are real — and I needed to be able to experience that. Staff here can express their humanness, they can express struggle. Relationships aren’t real if they’re not two-way.

I don’t really have regret, because I have learned so much from everything. Regret isn’t worthwhile. It’s more about embracing what you can learn, and what makes you stronger from an experience. So today, I’m just living that mindset.
Woods Crew

Each season calls on a variety of community involvement and this year, particularly, felt engaging. I was privileged to work alongside an enthusiastic crew of wood choppers whom kept me busy with the chainsaw just trying to keep up. The myriad of woodpiles up along the Ridge is testament to their efforts. The Ridge Loop area was one of the most beautiful we had worked in since my start at the Ranch (’99) with its sense of being at one of the Ranch’s highest points.

As Winter melted into Spring, we began our tree tapping. The sap started flowing early this year but we were quick to catch up and capitalize on the late February runs. With a very warm early March, it seemed dire to the season we could expect. But, a significant cool down kicked everything into gear and we made 560 gallons of syrup. This year we made about 80 gallons of Golden Delicate and my first tastes of it were astounding.

Onto Summer, which is great to me because it provides us the opportunity to exercise our more delicate sensibilities in caring for the many flowerbeds across the Ranch landscape. This, in addition to the variation of jobs (slate walk, stone walls, path upkeep, lawns) makes for an ever-changing plate of options. I could really see how much care my crew put into this more detail-oriented work and the result is this beautiful setting many of us call home.

These seasonal shifts feel so much a part of my own inner rhythms after living and working here so many years and I feel fortunate to experience how changes in the land and air around me can inform me to needs that a time of year require. It resonates as connection. By embracing this connection, we as individuals have the power to heal communities starting with our own.

Doug Patton, Woods Manager

Many thanks to Echo Nowakoski

Recently retired, Echo has offered pottery instruction, a warm heart and a listening ear to Ranchers young and old for the past 21 years. Many is the resident who has found solace in the Art Room at the bottom of the Greenhouse steps. We will think of you when we spend time in the pottery studio, when we use your beautiful serving bowls, and every time the kiln blows a heating element!

Best wishes for the future!

2,000 feet of new sugarline upgraded one of our sap collecting systems
About 100 flowers in bloom that Woods crew planted near the garden
25 tons of new gravel laid on our walking paths
Over 20,000 gallons of sap collected and boiled
120,000 pounds of wood moved and burned
Pressed our first 10 gallons of apple cider
33 mowing crews throughout the summer
35 rocks pulled from new tennis court lawn
5 rocks used to build steps to tennis court

Ranch pottery studio
Ranch pottery supplies
This past year has seen many renovations at the Townhouse in Rutland. Remodeling projects included several kitchens, a bathroom and the floors. A new med room space was created that can accommodate staff and clients and allow privacy to store and pour medications. Our lounge area was upgraded with new furnishings, decor and a stereo to be used as a meeting and hangout space for colder months. A new shaded outdoor sitting area was created with wood taken from dying pines cut down on site and clients and staff co-created a new mural. The Royce Street garden began producing vegetables this past year!

There were 26 admissions to the Rutland Program

Our 12 foot paddle board, built in the Boat Shop, required:
38 feet of copper wire
34 feet of fiberglass cloth
3 gallons of epoxy resin (which is the glue for the cloth)
92 person hours went into building the board which, at this writing, is ¾ finished!

Fred Godley died this year and since receiving that news I have had time to reflect on the impact he had on Spring Lake Ranch and on me. Fred and Mary were incredibly generous to the Ranch when I was the Executive Director. They supported our effort to purchase and rehab the Townhouse as we grew the Rutland Program. They were the major donors when we launched the first major capital campaign for Spring Lake and we dedicated Godley House to them. They never asked for recognition nor would you realize during their visits that they had such a critical position in the Ranch’s success.

Fred had served in the Navy during World War II and he told me during a time that we were waiting in the Rutland Hospital ICU that the experience had accustomed him to death. This was very “matter the fact” in the way Fred typically conducted himself. He had a modesty and an almost old world sense of decorum and a good sense of humor. Even with his success in life he still enjoyed sharing with me the successful purchase of a flannel shirt at K-Mart at an incredible price.

Fred also shared with me an interest in reading and over the years we would send each other books that we thought matched each other’s interest. He was usually on target. Fred understood the Ranch and what it could do for his family. He wanted that to continue to be available to his family and to others. He was a good friend to Spring Lake Ranch and we all owe him a debt. He was a good man.
An interview with new Shop Manager, Ray Pratt

By Lisa Gardner

L: What’s it been like so far, working here?
R: It’s a tremendous change of pace. I enjoy that. The greatest thing is that it’s human centered, it’s a people centered place. The goal is to empower people.

L: What are some of the projects that Bruce (retired in July) worked on this year with the crew?
R: The biggest project of the year was a beautiful post and beam hay barn in Joan’s Meadow. They also built furniture during the winter months in the Shop. They repaired innumerable broken tools around the Ranch and continuously fixed Navy Trucks. Bruce is still coming back to work on one last tractor engine.

L: What about the projects you and the crew are working on now?
R: Our big thing is the platform for a sap tank that holds a thousand gallons.

L: People loved that! It was so cool to see so many people working on it at once.
R: You know when a project is right. You can tell. There were good skills learned, too. Some people got a chance to weld and to become familiar with power tools. Another project we did was build a wood shed off the pole barn that holds at least three cords of firewood. And it got filled the day after we finished it! Woods crew was ready to go.
L: What are you looking forward to for next year?
R: I’m looking forward to building paddle boards and spending time on the lake.
L: Shop crew sounds like it’s going to be fun!

198 trips up and down the hill during barn construction
12 gallons of stain were used to preserve the new barn
6 desks and beds built
4 benches were built for the tennis court
Replaced 1 shop manager
1,000 sap buckets tested for lead
1,500 sap buckets washed
1 livestock corral at the upper barn was re-built

Constructed 9 picnic tables in 3 days for the 4th of July celebration

Happy Retirement Bruce!

Building the new hay barn

Bruce’s retirement party

Canoeing the Battenkill

Swimming in the lake
Years ago, a House Advisor who had spent time on Gardens crew declared after twelve months of gardening, sewing, and baking that she had gone through “housewife boot camp.” She meant this as a compliment to the crew. I’d call four seasons on Gardens crew something else. I’d call it “Homesteader boot camp.” Homesteaders are people whose whole way of life is to survive off the land and from their hard work. Like homesteaders, Gardens crew spent the summer growing vegetables and then preserving our harvest through canning, pickling, and freezing. With the whole community, we collected hay and made maple syrup. We shoveled snow and split, sawed, and moved wood every Friday afternoon with Woods crew during the winter months. We wove belts and scarves, often using wool from our own sheep. We started seeds in the greenhouse while the snow was still on the ground, proving to ourselves, as John Keats said, “if winter comes, can spring be far behind?”

A common thread throughout all our projects is that we can talk while we work, sharing stories, telling jokes, supporting each other through hard times, finding successes in the everyday and celebrating victories when change happens. The other day I asked a crew member what he felt he had learned on crew, and he said he wanted to grow his own vegetables in the future. Maybe we’ve even cultivated a future Homesteader!

Lisa Gardner, Gardens Manager

We made 1,300 lbs bags of granola to sell at market and 500 lbs for us to eat.

We wove 17 chenille scarves to sell at market, wove 19 belts, and wove 11 dog leashes.

In the hoophouse, we used 35 bags of potting soil to start plants - 2,100 quarts of soil!

We made over 100 containers of pesto in one day this summer.

We planted 33 kinds of vegetables in 150 varieties.

We planted 13 kinds of flowers in 30 varieties.

We harvested LOTS of vegetables.

We sewed 275 holiday syrup bags

The Ranch in Numbers

231 applicants for House Advisor positions, 8 hired!

23 families received financial aid totaling $330,712

16,504 bills were processed

2,135 resident chores were paid

459 charitable gifts were made to the Ranch from 295 generous donors

$31,100 was raised for the Sarcka Scholarship Fund through the sale of Ranch-made products

2 septic tanks were replaced

We canned...

16 quarts and 3 pints of salsa

5 quarts and 4 pints of pickled jalapenos

13 quarts of bread and butter pickles

15 quarts of dilly beans

3 quarts of pickled beets

10 quarts of pickled carrots (yes, these are delicious).

As of this writing, we are making hot sauce from 60 serrano peppers. This is our first attempt!

We are also in the process of making pickled radishes from 48 radishes.

Dancing!
Farm Crew

Farm Crew 2016 started warm and productive in the newly renovated Hangar (previously known as “The Roost”), complete with new garage doors and a wood-burning stove. Here, we enjoyed many hours of tractor repair, tool organization, and turned skirted wool fleeces into workable roving batts for dying, felting, and spinning. We had much help from the maintenance team, adding support rafter jacks and cables in the upper barn, and from shop crew, rebuilding the cattle chute, in preparation for summer hay and cattle vaccinations.

In August, we welcomed six beautiful, healthy calves born in the early to mid morning hours, as well as one late bloomer arriving in September. New additions to the farm also include two llamas, Bart and Smokey, who live happily behind Elliot house and enjoy (mostly) long walks and grooming. Our pigs have flourished in their new pasture, “Porklandia,” and come bounding in from forest foraging to the promise of slop, apples, and belly rubs. From turkey mucking, to sheep shearing, to cattle moving, farm crew has delighted in keeping our animals, and ourselves, happy and healthy.

Carl Mancivalano, Farm Manager

50 Turkeys gobbled 3 pallets of grain
18 Pigs home again home again jig-ah-de-jig
6 Calves frolicking in the fields
23 Cattle grazing in the pasture
2,800 Bales of Hay hauled and stacked
14 Fleeces carded by hand
16 Sheep shorn with care
110 Round bales fed out in the winter
1 Mile of water line patched every 25 feet
64 Chickens laid 10,500 eggs
ADMISSIONS & OUTREACH

September 1, 2015—August 31, 2016

Where Residents Came From

- Home: 39%
- Hospital: 15%
- Education Consultant: 6%
- Rehab: 15%
- Other Program: 16%

Where Residents Discharged To

- Rutland Program: 29%
- Home/School: 28%
- Other Program: 22%
- Higher Level of Care: 15%
- Other: 15%

Length of Stay

- 1-3 months: 34%
- 4-6 months: 10%
- 7-9 months: 2%
- 10-12 months: 34%
- 12+ months: 20%

Resident Age

- 18-20: 11%
- 21-29: 11%
- 30-39: 28%
- 40-49: 11%
- 50+: 39%

Ranch contrandance
**OPERATING FUND**

Revenues 2015-2016*

- Fees: $3,725,000
- Financial Aid: $330,700
- Endowment Grant: $73,000
- Development Grant: $100,000
- Washington St. Rent: $65,750
- Other: $37,690

**TOTAL**: $4,332,140

Expenses 2015-2016*

- Compensation: $3,044,390
- Administration: $389,880
- Physical Plant: $262,280
- Program: $409,170
- Dining & Other: $173,950

**TOTAL**: $4,279,670

*Unaudited

**CONTRIBUTED INCOME & INVESTMENTS**

Contributed Income 2015-2016*

- Annual Individual Giving: $416,620
- Program Income: $31,100
- Capital Gifts: $10,150
- Other: $4,140

**TOTAL**: $462,010

**Investment, Endowment, & Annuity Accounts**

- Years: 2001-2016
- Wells, Spear, Annuity

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Spring Lake Ranch is grateful for these gifts received between September 1, 2015 and August 31, 2016.

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