As a participant in the Vermont Leadership Institute Class of 2017, I recently had the opportunity to visit the Vermont Statehouse and Supreme Court, and meet with several people including David Potter, my local elected representative, Lieutenant Governor David Zuckerman, and Governor Phil Scott. The day was packed observing legislative action, senate proceedings, committee hearings, and a lively Democratic caucus. I came away impressed by the degree of accessibility ordinary citizens have to the Vermont Statehouse and its citizen legislature (Vermont is unique in this regard) and the high standard for how people conduct themselves (placing value on mutual respect, personal integrity, and working across party lines). I felt proud to be a Vermonter and made a personal vow to stay more attuned to what happens in Montpelier.

I also came away with the impression that government, with all of its well-intentioned elected and appointed officials, is a cumbersome machine which has its shortcomings. The issues facing our society are vast and complex and the solutions it seems to me are not only increased appropriation of funds, although I’m sure that would help. Hearing advocates and program administrators articulate their frustrations and concerns, including long emergency room waits for psychiatric patients, inadequate addiction treatment resources, and high staff burn-out and turnover rates (as much as 26% annually in community mental health) left me feeling that the solutions need to come from a greater perspective than any individual program, agency, or department. Leadership which promotes the idea that we are all part of the solution, across public and private sectors, and invites us to work together, it seems to me, is the way forward. I was encouraged to witness the beginnings of some of these ways of thinking during my time in Montpelier and since followed these initiatives in the news since the workshop.

Vermont is the first state in the U.S. to fully adopt an all-payer model for health care. Without getting into too much of the detail here, it’s worth reading about. On February 8th, Governor Phil Scott committed to trying a new way of delivery, evaluation, and reimbursement for health care services and providers with pilot project involving 30,000 Vermonters. It’s this kind of leadership and vision which will shift us from a chronic state of deficits and poor outcomes to hopefully one of better collaboration, lower costs, and healthier Vermonters.

The Ranch is somewhat insulated from these discussions by the fact that we aren’t reimbursed by insurance companies and don’t receive Medicaid or Medicare funds for...
In This Issue
FEATURE ARTICLES

Director’s Note
Cover Story
Helping Others
Page 3
Spotlight
Page 4
Story of Change
Page 5
Supported Employment
Page 7
Boathouse Project
Page 9

Board of Trustees
Linda Berryhill, President
James Alic, Vice President
Muffie Milens, Treasurer
Ludy Biddle
Dana Foster
Janet Fronk
Scott Garren
Walter Harrison, III
Dan Jerman
Bruce Maslack
Patrick McKee
Dianne Monaco
Alissa Johannsen Rubin
Kurt Shaffert

Cabin Fever
By Joyce Aaron-Funk

Under a raincoat, laying on the floor, not speaking, sometimes violent, unpredictable, an inspiring artist—from nowhere came insanity that shifted his life into another realm—the realm of mental illness.

A family who loved him, protected him, eternally heartbroken—left devastated. A cabin in the woods in beautiful Vermont; he came to this place of solace and recovery—the hospitalizations now gone.

She was assigned to care for him to see if she could reach him; connect with him. The Ranch knew she had communication skills. She sat with him, talked to him, made drawings with sugar in front of him, lit candles and drew with her finger in the hot fallen wax.

One day he said, “Whatever”—it was his hair; wild, tangled, long. A Rasta head that sat before her, smoking and rocking back and forth—back and forth. Again, “Whatever.”

She brought his meals into the small cabin. She slept in the room next to him—her door left open—unlocked.

A number of months passed. One day he said, “Cut. Cut.” She understood what he meant. He followed her to the bathroom. He sat on the toilet seat. Scissors in hand she began to cut. She cut and cut and felt God in her hands leading the way.

When she finished, he got up, walked out the door and into the Dining Room. A miracle in her midst. He came back into the cabin. She said, “You went to the Dining Room! You went to the Dining Room! You ate in the Dining Room!”

“Whatever.”

Joyce Aaron is an actor, director, and teacher who began performing in off-off Broadway productions in the 1960s, and won an Obie Award in 1976 for her work on Acrobatics, a play she co-wrote and directed. She was a Spring Lake Ranch resident in the 1980’s, and soon after returned to join the staff for a time. Read her Ranch story on page 6.

Celebrating Hanukkah
When it was announced last year that 100 Syrians would be resettled in Rutland, Vermont, many people asked, “What can I do to help?” Some of the people asking were at Spring Lake Ranch. I had attended some of the meetings of the “Rutland Welcomes” committee, a group of people dedicated to helping refugees find a safe and productive home in Vermont. I thought the Ranch could play a role.

We organized a donation drive. People coming from refugee camps would have little to start a new life and are not given many resources when they arrive. They are expected to be self-sufficient by three to six months. They often have to sell the little they have to pay for the plane ticket to America. Refugees depend on generous donations to create a home for themselves and their families.

Rutland Welcomes asked us to collect household goods. Some were not exciting, things like cleaning products and sponges. Some were more fun, like putting together home tool kits. We collected both money and the items of the list, tracking our progress on a poster in the Ranch dining room. We went into Rutland one afternoon and purchased the remaining items, breaking off into squads of two or three people and roaming through stores in search of tool boxes and mops and alarm clocks.

Refugee resettlement is in flux. Only nine people were able to move to the area before the temporary immigration ban went into effect. Some of us went to Rutland one cold January afternoon to rally in support of the refugees and future resettlement. Seeing hundreds of people committed to helping others coming from so far away inspired and reassured us. Because so many of us trace our family to immigrants, to refugees, to people fleeing war or poverty and seeking a better life in America, the issue feels personal.

Rutland Welcomes issued a statement that read, “all donated items that have not been distributed to the two families now living in Rutland are safely in storage” and that they would decide what to do with the items when there was more clarity. The volunteer from Rutland Welcomes said the Ranch was “terrific” in rallying support for the refugees.

People come to the Ranch for help, but sometimes what is most healing is taking the opportunity to help others. I was impressed by the generosity of both residents and staff as they gave money they earned from doing chores or asked for donations on Facebook or just gave what they had to assist people who have so little. Being able to recognize the humanity in others and respond to other people’s needs, even when grappling with our own issues, is one of the hallmarks of being a healthy person. That seems like it holds true for more than just Spring Lake Ranch!
What brought you to the Ranch?

It’s sort of a funny story… I had been wanting to venture away from Minnesota after graduating from St. Olaf College. I had a friend who worked making calls for the Alumni Network at the school and she ended up getting in contact with Lynn Pilcher, a fellow alum, who shared about the Ranch and her involvement with SLR. My friend contacted me the next day, telling me all about Spring Lake Ranch! I hopped on the website and looked for employment options right away! At that point, I had been studying neuroscience in school and had some experience within the academic side of addiction and mental health. I was working in a behavioral neuroscience lab, but was really craving a more hands-on experience and wanted to work directly with people.

I came to Spring Lake Ranch for a visit and interview almost two years ago to the date! It was right in the middle of sugaring season and I instantly fell in love. I was really drawn to the Ranch because of its holistic approach to mental health, and that it was offered in a wilderness setting centered on community. It allows people to stay connected to the Earth AND each other while getting treatment. It combines a lot of different aspects that are important to me, personally. I knew from the first day of my visit that I wanted to be here.

Has the Ranch been the “hands-on” experience you imagined?

I couldn’t imagine a better setting, to be honest. In my role you get to work on crew with people, be involved on the treatment team level, and live in houses with residents. I’ve particularly enjoyed working with people and animals and seeing the connections that are built through those interactions. It is incredible and so humbling to see the growth and rebirth that happens at every level of someone's wellbeing here!

So Megan, what is your role at the Ranch?

I have the BEST job at the Ranch – I’m a HOUSE ADVISOR! I spent my first year here being a house advisor working on farm crew, which was awesome! Since this past November I have been working in the med room as the Med Room Assistant and floating on work crew as needed. I’ve really enjoyed the shift. It has allowed me to work closely with our admission and clinical teams and has been an incredible learning opportunity! I have a better understanding of the amount of work that the entire community puts into someone coming to the Ranch. It has been inspiring to be a part of the process of ensuring that an individual enters the community successfully and receives the treatment they deserve.

Is there anything that has been surprising since November?

There has been so much! The most unexpected thing is how much I love administrative work. I’ve always loved connecting with and getting to know people, but it has also been extremely gratifying to contribute to people’s experience in a different way. I actually love the “desk job” part of things, which came as a total surprise to me!

What do you do when you’re not working?

I really enjoy alone time when I have it. I do a lot of reading and have recently been getting into Sci-Fi literature, thanks to encouragement and suggestion from a few residents. I also journal regularly. My favorite thing to do outside of work, though, is spend time with other house advisors! It can be a big challenge to create time for self-care considering we...
From the Ranch Kitchen

Korean Beef

Makes: 10 servings
Prep: 20 mins
Cook: 15 mins

INGREDIENTS

1 cup beef broth
½ cup soy sauce
½ cup brown sugar packed
4 cloves garlic minced
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
Sriracha to taste
1 onion chopped
3 pounds beef cubes
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon sesame seeds
2 green onions thinly sliced

DIRECTIONS

Whisk together beef broth, soy sauce, brown sugar, garlic, sesame oil, rice wine vinegar, ginger Sriracha and onion.

Place beef cubes in a large baking pan. Stir in beef broth mixture and mix well. Cover and bake 2 ½ hours or until tender.

In a bowl, whisk together cornstarch and ¼ cup water. Stir into beef mixture and cook in oven or on stovetop until sauce thickens.

Garnish with green onions and sesame seeds.
I had a lot of work and I was a single mother at the time. I was adopted, and I had found my family, through much searching; and at the same time I went through a difficult personal transition. A friend of mine called and said, “You know, you’re really a mess.” I said, “I know — I can’t take care of my son, it’s just terrible.” I had a caretaker for him, because I was in the theater. My friend said, “Look, I just came back from Spring Lake Ranch. It’s an incredible place — you get incredible support and all the care you need, and when you’re finished, you leave. And Joyce, you need a break.”

My son stayed with his caretaker, and my friend drove me to the ranch. I remember waking up in the morning and going, “Where am I and why am I here?” I was so confused. And then they began to talk with me. They said, “It sounds like you’re very depressed. You can feel better if you want to.”

There I was, part of this community. I went to the breakfast room, and there were all kinds of people. I just thought, “This is a very interesting place! This is fabulous, all these people coexisting, and everyone helping each other in some way.” You could see it.

They gave me the work program, and medication. I thought it was a good idea that people had something to do — but when I was there, I said, “Look, guys, you have to let the residents choose what they want to do.” And they changed the work program, to let people choose among the crews. I felt terrific about that.

I’m from the theater, so I have a lot of communication skills, and I began to be very interested in relating to the people who were most distant, the hardest to access. I found it to be very rewarding — any little step I could take to get close to someone. I was feeling much better, but I knew I wasn’t ready to go home yet. There’s an enormous amount of support; there’s always someone you can talk to.

I stayed about four or five months. My child and his father visited me at Christmas, it was all very nice. Then I left, but Spring Lake Ranch called me: would I be interested in being on the staff? I said yes. My son was 12 or 11, and I felt that he needed his father. So I came back to here, and I was a house advisor.

I stayed probably three years. I ended up with a resident, he had been hospitalized, he was nonverbal, he rocked and he smoked, and I became his caretaker. I had him talking, we
Spring Lake Ranch has had supported sheltered employment such as internships and the maintenance crew in Rutland, but now we will be offering Supported Employment.

Supported Employment helps people with mental illness, dual diagnosis, and substance abuse issues find regular jobs of their choice with individualized long-term support.

I’m Diane Northrop, a case manager in the Rutland Program for the past 6 years, and I was given the position of SLR’s new Employment Specialist. A beginning stage of the process will be for me to have an introductory meeting with each client to go over details such as writing or upgrading their resume. I will also meet with clients/residents to learn about them and their work history in order to gather information to develop a job profile. It will be imperative that I find out things about the client/resident such as what do they do in their spare time, what are they passionate about, does a quiet or busy work setting work best for them? Placing a client/resident in a “regular” job will require work from the person’s whole team to ensure it is a good experience. Some clients/residents who have been out of the work force for a period of time or not emotionally ready for a paid job, may need to start by volunteering.

The client/resident and I will put together an employment plan to start the process of finding a job. One of the main factors of this process is that I, as the employment specialist, will provide support to the client/resident by working with their employer, their case manager, and our psychiatrist. I will be closely involved with the employer to be sure they are comfortable with their new employee and are aware of any accommodations they may need. Of course, I will work with the client/resident on understanding disclosure so he/she will know what to share about their mental illness.

After I have met with a potential employer, we will set up a meeting to bring the client/resident in for an interview. If the client/resident is hired, I will have an ongoing relationship with the employer. If someone is hiring a person with mental illness, possibly for the first time, it will be imperative that they don’t feel abandoned by me. I will be available to them and stop by to be sure things are going as planned.

In summary, the most important goal of supported employment and the employment specialist position is to support all involved. By getting to know both the employer and the client/resident, I can be sure to be available and help make accommodations that are necessary. As stated in the beginning, this is an endeavor that requires long-term support.
NEWS BITS

A big welcome to Kyra Richardson and Ben Lachman who have been joining up on crew since January. Kyra and Ben are students at Green Mountain College, currently enrolled in a Field Placement course with the purpose of working with people within the helping professions. They are getting to experience direct service paired with interpersonal reflection out on crew as well as engaging in the communal milieu. They have also joined in on weekly knitting club! Ben’s mom, Linnea Lachman was an Antioch Intern at Spring Lake Ranch years ago, too!

We said goodbye to cook Aaron Haupt who has made weekends full of delicious meals. We’ll miss your infectious laugh and homemade pizzas, Aaron! Don’t forget to visit!

Congratulations to Business Manager Liz Karle on her and Adam’s marriage!

Our Med Room has been buzzing with the energy of Megan Norby—House Advisor turned part time Med Room Assistant. Megan has been splitting her weeks between crew and the med room, helping out Cynthia throughout our search for a new nurse. Check out the Staff Spotlight to hear more about Megan!

Assistant Business Manager and Shrewsbury native Ingrid Wisell will soon be moving! Her husband Jason began building their home in June 2016 and they anticipate a big move this Spring! Cooper, their dog, is especially excited!

We said goodbye to Jess Novak, our Admissions and Outreach Coordinator. Jess was a house advisor turned admissions person.

A big congrats to Mischa Weisman for his new position as Program Support Coordinator. Royce Street is lucky to have you!

Former staffer, Mikaela Whitaker graduated from Castleton's nursing program in the spring, after which she and (husband and former staffer) Cole decided to go on an international adventure for about 9 months, spending time in Europe, Asia, and Central America. Mikaela has a job at Duke Hospital in the orthopedic unit starting in April, and Cole is looking for work in Durham.

Cynthia Hanson, who staffed the Med Room for the winter, has joined us as a Clinical Team Leader.

In August we welcomed Ray Pratt to Spring Lake Ranch as our Shop Crew Manager. Tinmouth native and long-time friend to Ranchers, Ray energetically joined the community. We are grateful for all of the intentionality and patience he has brought to Shop Crew—he has made it a place where residents feel excited and secure learning and sharing new skills.

Wendy Currie has joined the staff as our new Nurse! She comes to us from Brattleboro Retreat where she worked for 5 years. An avid knitter and lover of horses, she is bringing some fresh energy to the Med Room.

NEW HOUSE ADVISORS
Theo Goodall Sam LaBlanc Ro Pembroke
One of the unique features of Spring Lake Ranch is the lake for which it takes its name. The Sarcka/Man family showed real foresight in buying and preserving the land around the lake, and we are the beneficiaries of their vision.

On fall days, we can see the colors reflected off the water. In winter, we have the lake mostly to ourselves for ice-skating or cross-country skiing. Spring brings the return of the loons. But it’s summer when the lake means the most to us; swimming, boating, bird-watching, and paddle-boarding in the afternoon and evening.

There’s a small structure at the edge of the lake known as “the Ranch Boathouse”. Honestly, I don’t know who built it or how long it’s been there. I’m going to guess it was built by Ranchers, probably from mostly recycled materials, in the year 1960 or so, when the Ranch officially incorporated as a Non-Profit Corporation. It has served us well over the years, but at this point time, moisture, and wood-eating insects have taken their toll. The building is decayed and dreary, taking something away from the experience of spending time in one of the really serene and beautiful places that remain in our world.

This summer, our Shop Crew plans to re-build it so it will be more pleasant, solid and welcoming, a project that we are estimating will cost $20,000. We’re asking for your financial support to provide the crew with the materials they’ll need to bring this project to fruition. Thank you in advance for your help!

Support the Boathouse Project by making a gift at springlakeranch.org/support
In the end, the ranch was what I needed to heal. I really needed that time. I came back to New York, and two weeks later I was in an off off Broadway play.

Spring Lake Ranch is so valuable. It’s so supportive, yet it’s so inventive — you’re able to use your imagination. One thing I did was the bucket wash, after we’d collect the maple syrup. I put on music, and I got people dancing — I was known for that. But that’s what you were allowed to do, you were allowed to be creative. If you went in some direction they didn’t want you to do, they’d have a meeting. But you were never told just not to.

The time spent at the Ranch was one of the richest times of my life, ever. Being in a play is being in a play, and it could be a great play; but being at Spring Lake Ranch, every moment was high drama. And they had great people on staff. I’m so grateful for that place.
Pure Vermont Maple Syrup

Since 1932, people affected by emotional and psychiatric problems have come to Spring Lake Ranch to participate in a simple rural life which fosters growth and healing. This 100% pure Vermont Maple Syrup is produced by staff and residents at the Ranch. Your purchase of this syrup benefits the Spring Lake Ranch Saraoka Scholarship Fund.

Vermont Grade A Syrup
Golden Color with Delicate Flavor
Amber Color with Rich Flavor
Dark Color with Robust Flavor
Very Dark Color with Strong Flavor

Substitutions will be made if supply runs out

* YOU MAY ORDER BY PHONE OR INTERNET USING A CREDIT CARD *
Phone Orders: 802-492-3322(Monday-Friday 8-4) • Online—www.springlakeranch.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIL ORDER PRICES</th>
<th>INCLUDES SHIPPING &amp; HANDLING — ALL GRADES SAME PRICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2 GALLON</td>
<td>QUART</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$49</td>
<td>$34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name_________________________Phone_________________________
Address________________________City________________________State_________________________
Email________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal

Tax-deductible donation to SLR

Grand Total

☐ Please package my syrup in a decorative bag. If you wish to have a gift note put in your package please give us the exact wording to use.

Shipping and Handling: Our syrup is packaged and sealed in accordance with Vermont law and shipped directly to you in sturdy cardboard boxes via Priority US Mail. We do not ship gallons. For shipping to more than one address, please attach a separate sheet with delivery instructions. Please allow two weeks for delivery.

Payment: Checks or money orders should be made payable to Spring Lake Ranch, Inc. Please no cash or COD’s.

Mail order to: Maple Syrup Orders
Spring Lake Ranch
1169 Spring Lake Rd.
Cuttingville, VT 05738

Member of Vermont Sugar Makers Assoc.
Questions? Call 802-492-3322 or Email us at syrup@springlakeranch.org
live and work in the same space, however, I’ve gotten pretty good at it especially with the support of other house advisors. Even if it’s something simple like grabbing a slice of pizza in town, I love making time to spend with HAs outside of the Ranch setting. I would say that my number one support is my relationship with other House Advisors. I am able to lean on them as friends and co-workers, and I think that makes us stronger as a group.

**What is your favorite thing about being a House Advisor?**

Oh my gosh, I LOVE being a house advisor; it really is the best! You’re able to have truly authentic interactions with people without clinical expectations. Residents are really able to open themselves up because it is less formal and you are more of a peer support. It is an honor to see people’s authentic sides.

I also REALLY love taking trips off the Hill with residents. I can remember I once took a weekend trip to a sheepdog herding contest and it was really awesome because it was something new for me and something new for residents. I love being able to experience things for the first time with people, as a group.

**What is your favorite Ranch tradition?**

The all Ranch canoe trip is my favorite thing of the entire year! I love that it pushes everyone out of their comfort zone all at the same time. Everyone always ends up having fun even if people are scared at first. I believe that the best way to bond is doing something uncomfortable together and nothing beats the feeling of triumph at the end of the day!