



The Ranch Community Stewardship Letter

September 2023



Dear Friend,

There is so much to celebrate at The Bishop's Ranch!

Thanks to your loyal and generous support, The Ranch has emerged from recent challenges with renewed clarity and commitment. Your contributions have enabled us to focus on forging a sustainable future for The Ranch in every way: spiritually, financially, and environmentally. These priorities are fundamental to our core values, and with your continued partnership, we are already taking decisive action to preserve this place of rare beauty.

Over the last few years, we've invited you to share words and stories you associate with The Ranch. Through deep listening and careful compilation, we've discerned consistent themes that resonate across our community:

Place, Beauty, Spirit, Hospitality, Community, and Nourishing.

Earlier this year, guided by the generous gift of services offered by non-profit consultant Kendace O'Donnell, a special task force set out to update our mission statement, informed by feedback gathered from The Ranch Community. While the task force concluded that our core mission remained the same, they agreed that the existing 55-word statement needed trimming for clarity. I'm excited to share our new mission statement that succinctly embodies our purpose:

"To share a place of rare beauty through hospitality that nourishes spirit, body, and mind."

The task force also articulated a new vision statement from their work together. While our mission statement illustrates our purpose, our vision statement sets an intention for the impact of our work. Our new vision is:

"A place where lives are changed."

Your annual support plays a vital role in securing our financial stability. Operating The Ranch comes with significant expenses — currently exceeding \$50,000 each week. These costs rise each year with the rate of inflation, including land and facilities maintenance, competitive salaries and benefits, utilities, food, supplies, and stewardship of The Ranch Community, to name a few.

Fees from groups, programs, and events cover roughly 75% of these weekly costs, while institutional grants account for about 5% — primarily funding our annual camp activities, including an annual camp grant from the Diocese of California. The remaining 20% comes exclusively from generous Annual Fund donations from individuals like you. As you can see, your faithful support is not just appreciated — it's essential. Your support ensures The Ranch remains a sanctuary for all seeking respite and renewal today and for future generations.

Stewarding and operating The Ranch each year is a complex undertaking — a labor of love carried out by our passionate and dedicated staff. You are an indispensable partner on this incredible journey. Your generous contributions are more than just a financial resource; they're the sustaining force that ensures The Ranch is not only surviving, it is thriving!

We're delighted to share an attached list detailing the transformative impact of your support over the past 18 months, along with spotlight summaries below that showcase some of our key collective achievements.

Volunteer Host Program

Our Volunteer Host Program has quickly become essential to the Ranch's mission of hospitality. Volunteers undergo comprehensive training and commit to at least two annual hosting assignments. These dedicated individuals enrich The Bishop's Ranch guest experience while deepening their connection to this special place. Contact Kaitlin Horvath, Director of Ranch Hospitality Operations, at kaitlin@bishopsranch.org for more information.

Refectory Generator Installation

Through the generosity of a dedicated donor, The Ranch has purchased and installed a generator that will power the kitchen and refectory during power outages, allowing us to continue providing meals, prevent food spoilage, and provide a safe, well-lit space in an emergency.

Revitalizing the St. George Chapel Community

With Father Brendan at the helm, supported by Bishop Marc and our newly-formed Chapel Advisory Committee, we're breathing new life into our spiritual offerings. We aim to ensure the Ranch's unique spirituality remains welcoming and relevant for everyone who visits. Thanks to the generous support of The Chapel Community, this vital part of the Ranch's legacy is continuing to grow and evolve.

\$350,000 CalFire Fire Resiliency Grant

The Ranch, in collaboration with Westside Road neighbors and led by the Northern Sonoma County Fire District, has worked with the Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE) group to successfully secure a \$350,000 CAL FIRE grant. A portion of this grant will go directly to implementing essential fire-safety initiatives at The Ranch, featuring us as a demonstration site for best practices in forest management and facilitating the creation of shaded fuel breaks by removing roadside vegetation along Vacherie Way.

By The Numbers

Because of your support, The Ranch is fully operational today, serving a diverse community where lives are changed. This year, we expect to welcome more than 5,200 individuals, including more than 400 individual retreat participants — the most since 2019. Returning groups include 52 Diocesan groups and 76 non-profits, and we have welcomed more than 22 new groups to The Ranch Community. The First Responders Resiliency group has held four retreats this year, impacting the lives and well-being of approximately 200 first responders. Additionally, we were excited to host 44 students from Westside School to participate in Gina's Orchard Watershed Education program for the first time since 2019.

We can't say it enough — we are deeply grateful for your loyal partnership. Your support, generosity, and faith serve as a cornerstone, instilling us with confidence and optimism for the future of The Bishop's Ranch.

With gratitude,



Aaron Wright
Executive Director



Our Mission

To share a place of rare beauty through hospitality that nourishes spirit, body, and mind.

Our Vision

A place where lives are changed.

Our Values

Spirit — We foster spiritual life, nurturing contemplation, discovery, and renewal. We find strength in our identity as a camp and conference center of the Episcopal Diocese of California to provide a place of spiritual growth for people of all faiths - or no faith tradition. We offer our chapel and prayers to all, making room for varied expressions and experiences of the spiritual life.

Community — We practice abundance through our hospitality to enrich community. We believe that hospitality is a powerful tool to create a more inclusive, diverse and equitable society. The fullest way to experience The Ranch – our lodging, meals, and programming – is in community.

Equity — We seek to promote equity in all we do; to treat all who visit, work and volunteer at The Ranch with dignity and respect; to remove barriers that would prevent any person from experiencing this sacred place; and to celebrate each other's uniqueness as we build community.

Beauty — We appreciate, value and celebrate natural and created beauty. Our setting among the rolling hills overlooking the Russian River Valley and the Mayacamas is one of rare natural beauty. We foster the experience of that beauty by maintaining an atmosphere where obstructions are minimized. We pursue beauty in everything from buildings, to furnishings, to meals, art and experiences at The Ranch. We seek to be co-creators of beauty wherever possible.

Sustainability — We honor this place of rare beauty – its natural setting and the campus – through our commitment to promote sustainability in every way – environmentally, financially, and spiritually. It is fundamental to our core values to preserve this exceptional part of creation for future generations.



The Impact of your Generous Support

September 2022 to September 2023

Land and Environmental Stewardship

- Hired grazing sheep and goats that provide essential annual fire fuels reduction
- Named the Lookout Loop in honor of Bishop Marc and Sheila Andrus and installed a commemorative stone — The Bishop Marc and Dr. Sheila Andrus Lookout Loop
- Worked with Men of Grace during their semi-annual service project to lay down six tons of gravel in the arbor, lay down wood chips on the path to the AIDS Memorial, and to weed the labyrinth
- Completed annual tree-trimming and removal work that promotes a healthy and safe natural Ranch environment
- Trimmed vegetation on trails, providing safe hiking conditions for guests

Facilities Care and Improvements

- Upgraded outdated wifi infrastructure for improved connectivity throughout The Ranch
- Replaced Refectory ovens with new, more efficient models, and upgraded kitchen mixers
- Replaced the outdated and failing heater in the Swing Pavilion in preparation for the Winter months
- Installed electrical infrastructure in the Creative Arts Casita to house a donated kiln
- Ran power to the parking lot in anticipation of installing additional EV charging stations

Guest Hospitality

- Replaced 26 mattresses, and purchased new sheets and quilts
- Updated and restocked utensils in all guest kitchens
- Replaced four Dyson Ball Vacuums and bought a new Bissel ProHeat Revolution Pet Pro Carpet Cleaner
- Implemented new protocols for gathering feedback and suggestions from guests

Staff Development

- Promoted several existing kitchen employees and hired several new additional kitchen staff
- Relaunched the Counselor in Training (CIT) program for youth ages 15 and up
- Hired 17 total camp staff including six new staff and CITs from Healdsburg High School

Summer Camps

- Hosted 166 Campers over five weeks, through READ Camp, BREAD Camp, and Intergenerational Camp, with more than 75% receiving some form of scholarship
- Offered READ Camp to 50 local children providing joy-based literacy activities combined with unrestrained summer fun
- Purchased a five foot slingshot for gleeful campers to launch water-soaked sponge balls at Camp Staff

The Spiritual Community

- Established the Chapel Advisory Committee, a volunteer group focused on long-term sustainability, advocacy, and planning for our worship community.
- Due to tremendous interest, our Prayer Residency Program is booked through 2024, offering a rare opportunity to deepen one's own prayer life and further the contemplative tradition of our Chapel; contact Rev Brendan at chaplain@bishopsranch.org for information

The Ranch Community

- Launched a new supporter-centric series of events called Gratitude Gatherings designed to celebrate the generous spirit of The Ranch Community and provide a behind the scenes look at Ranch operations.
- Completed the transition to a new unified donor platform that provides state-of-the-art database administration, fundraising, and communication solutions

The Bishop's Ranch

Life at The Ranch 2023



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