



Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation



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Billings, Montana

A Girl, A Horse, and a Turning Point

For Karianne, much of her healing at Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch came through a horse named Archie.

At YBGR's Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility, progress was often measured in small, hard-won steps—moments of regulation, trust, and connection that didn't always show up on paper. But in the arena, something different happened. With Archie, Karianne found a steady place. The noise in her mind quieted. Her guarded posture softened. What began as tentative interaction – hesitant pats, unsure hands – gradually became something more grounded and assured.

Archie offered consistency in a way that felt safe. He didn't rush her or expect explanations. He responded to her presence, her tone, her energy. In learning how to work with him, Karianne began to recognize her own influence – how slowing her breathing could calm him, how steady movements created trust, how patience produced results. Those lessons extended far beyond the arena walls.

For Karianne, the time with Archie became a release and a reset. On difficult days, it was something she could look forward to – a space where she didn't feel defined by her diagnosis or her past. Instead, she experienced competence, connection, and calm. Session by session, her treatment team observed meaningful change. She was more regulated afterward, more engaged in therapy, more willing to open up.



What they witnessed wasn't just a bond between a girl and a horse – it was tangible progress in her healing.

As her time in the program came to an end, the significance of that relationship was not lost on those who had walked alongside her. Her therapist Kim Yeager Little wanted to mark the transition in a way that honored both the work Karianne had done and the connection that helped make it possible. Kim gave Karianne a small rock from Archie's hoof – something simple, but deeply symbolic.

"He was her rock," her therapist shared.

The gesture carried weight. It represented stability in moments that once felt overwhelming. It was a reminder of what steady support looks and feels like – and of Karianne's own capacity to find and create that steadiness within herself.

Wanting to preserve the memory even further, Kim also created a shadow box. Carefully arranged inside were strands of Archie's mane, along with small mementos that reflected the time Karianne had spent in the arena – the quiet breakthroughs, the earned trust, the moments of calm. It was more than a keepsake; it was a visual representation of growth.



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"It sure makes a difference when you know somebody cares."

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Greetings, Friends of Yellowstone Foundation

It is an honor and a privilege to join Yellowstone Foundation as its next President and Chief Executive Officer. I am grateful for the leadership of the Trustees and the passion they and the Foundation's staff have exhibited in building such a vital and extraordinary resource for our communities. I am thrilled to have the chance to play a part in the Foundation's future and help pave the way for at-risk youth and their families to receive the care they need.

I believe Yellowstone Foundation plays a critical role in bringing people together to promote healthy growth that will last generations. As a resident of the Mountain West for the past 25 years, I love and appreciate its richness, diversity, history, and potential for the future. Through my work in the field of law and philanthropy, I have seen first-hand the enormous energy that can be unlocked when everyone is included and is able to contribute their talents and creativity. I am committed to building on efforts already underway, so at-risk youth and mission stakeholders in this remarkable region have the opportunity to take part in advancing the Foundation's strategic vision. Mobilizing all the resources at our disposal, both human and financial, both time and treasure, will propel our work forward.

It is because of the Foundation's commitment to being a connector and convener and its commitment to increasing opportunity for youth that I chose to pursue this exciting opportunity. On this, my first article in the *Wrangler* as President and CEO, I could not be more excited to join the Foundation's talented staff, dedicated Trustees, and generous donors, all of whom bring heart in their commitment to this work. I am humbled to be part of this amazing community. I look forward to working together along with our extraordinary partners and supporters as we accelerate toward our goal of enriching the quality of life for at-risk youth in our region, and to meeting and learning from many of you in the months ahead.

“Commit your
way to the
Lord; trust in
Him, and He
will act.”
Psalm 37:5

Welcome, Kelly and Keri!



As Yellowstone Foundation's new Trust & Investment Accountant, **Kelly Tresch** supports the stewardship and financial integrity of the Foundation's assets. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Marketing & Management from Montana State University Billings and brings extensive accounting

experience from the oil and trucking industries. Her background strengthens her ability to manage detailed financial information and complex reporting, ensuring compliance while delivering strategic insight with efficiency and accuracy. Outside of work, she recharges on the trails, exploring the Beartooth Mountains with her husband and children.



Keri Perez, Yellowstone Foundation's Executive Administrative Assistant, is a Montana native who joined the Foundation in 2025, bringing with her a lifelong dedication to community service. With an Associate's Degree in Paralegal Sciences, her diverse career spans restaurant management and

public health at RiverStone Health, where she served as a Special Projects Coordinator. Keri is passionate about helping others and enjoys the outdoors and time with her grandchildren. Her warmth and experience make her a valued part of the Foundation team.



Changing Lives and Strengthening Futures

Every organization has many moving parts, and at Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch, those pieces come together in a way that is both intricate and deeply purposeful. Our mission, Caring People, Preparing Youth for Life, is lived out every day through the faith, integrity, relationships, and stewardship of an extraordinary community. From the working ranch in Billings, where we care for both kids and cattle, to the hundreds of staff serving families spread across Montana, YBGR is a complex operation that depends on many hands and hearts working together.

Most importantly, at the center of all this activity are the children and families we serve. Through therapeutic residential and community-based services, we walk alongside young people as they heal, grow, and discover strengths they may not have

known they had. This work is not easy. It asks a great deal of our staff, our youth, and their families, but it is profoundly meaningful. Every step forward a young person takes is a reminder of why this mission matters and why our commitment to caring relationships and faithful stewardship makes such a difference.

I am deeply grateful for the incredible staff who live out our mission with compassion and integrity every single day. They are truly heroes.

I also want to thank you, the donors and supporters, for your generosity, encouragement, and prayers. Without you, we simply could not keep all these balls in the air. Your support allows us to do this hard and hopeful work well, ensuring that Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch remains a place where lives are changed and futures are strengthened. Thank you for being Caring People, Preparing Youth for Life.

Where Service Meets Purpose – Volunteers Strengthen the Heart of the Ranch

From tiny helping hands to dedicated adults, volunteers of all ages give their time to keep the YBGR Ranch Campus in good shape.

Thank you to the Faith Chapel volunteers for pouring time and energy into campus. Earlier this spring, they detailed the Franklin and Merle Robbie Chapel, sanitized the Uihlein Recreation Center, swept the Auto Barn, and deep cleaned the Donald Nutter Dining Hall.

Thank you also to the Rocky Mountain District Church of the Nazarene who brought over 170 volunteers to the Ranch Campus on a beautiful spring Saturday to refresh the landscaping around the Administration Building, clear the outdoor volleyball pit, and improve the areas around every youth lodge.

Because of these volunteers, spaces are cleaner, brighter, and more welcoming to the kids served and to the teams who care for them each day. They didn't just clean buildings and landscapes – they created a lasting impact that brought people together for kids, and that is what helps define a community.



Nazarene volunteers help clean out the outdoor volleyball court.



Snow in late March meant the Faith Chapel volunteers mostly worked inside the buildings which was much needed and greatly appreciated!



Church of the Nazarene volunteers, tools in hand, head out across YBGR's McFarlane Plaza to start their assigned projects.



Faith Chapel volunteers clean the beautiful Robbie Chapel.



Faith Chapel Executive Pastor Brooks Rice and YBGR PR Coordinator Liz Campoy in front of the Robbie Chapel, "enjoying" the spring snow.

Spring at YBGR: Rooted In Care, Growing Toward Change

Spring at YBGR arrives with a quiet kind of momentum. What begins as thawing ground and longer days quickly turns into something much more meaningful for the youth who live and learn on the Billings Ranch campus. Across the Ranch, signs of new life are everywhere, each one offering opportunities for connection, responsibility, and growth.

In the greenhouse, the season begins early. While winter may linger outside, youth plant seeds, water trays, and track progress as vegetables, flowers, and herbs begin to grow. The greenhouse becomes more than a growing space. It is where patience is practiced and small, consistent efforts turn into visible results. As the weather warms, that work extends into the garden beds, where youth help prepare soil, plan, and plant, building teamwork and a sense of ownership. The Indigenous Garden adds another layer of learning, offering a space to explore native plants, cultural traditions, and a deeper respect for the land.

Out at the equestrian center and surrounding pastures, spring



Youth start both flowers and vegetables from seeds before planting them around campus.



The winterized strawberry bed in the Heptner Garden beginning to show green growth.



One of the newly arrived calves sticks close to mom.

brings calving season. Youth work alongside staff to care for new calves, gaining hands-on experience and a sense of responsibility that builds confidence and purpose. Work crews also play an active role during branding season. This year, with cold temperatures and snow, branding took place inside the equestrian arena, where youth continued to assist with meaningful, hands-on tasks.

Nearby, pheasant chicks mark another new beginning. Starting in incubators, youth observe early stages of life before helping care for the chicks as they grow. These experiences reinforce consistency, attentiveness, and pride in their work.

Together, these springtime activities reflect what makes Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch unique. Growth happens in many forms, and with the right support, young people are given the opportunity to truly thrive.



Staff and youth work together to secure the next calf for branding.



YBGR Ranch Manager Gary Adams demonstrates how to work the calves.



This donated incubator holds up to 1,500 pheasant eggs.



Two of the thousands of pheasant chicks that hatch each spring at the Ranch.

Breaking Ground on Hope: New Therapeutic Home in Boulder

Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch broke ground in February on a second new Therapeutic Group Home in Boulder, Montana, marking an important milestone in the continued expansion of residential care for youth across the state. This new development reflects the organization's ongoing growth and its commitment to providing safe, structured, and healing-centered environments for young people who need intensive therapeutic support.

The additional Boulder Therapeutic Group Home will help ensure more youth can receive care closer to their home communities. Designed with a strong focus on stability, therapeutic support, and daily living skills development, the home will offer a family-style setting where youth can build trust, strengthen relationships, and gain the tools needed for greater independence.

This expansion further reinforces Boulder as a key location for Therapeutic Group Home services and strengthens Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch's ability to meet the growing need for care across Montana and beyond. It reflects a continued commitment to ensuring that caring, trained professionals are present in safe, supportive environments where youth can heal, grow, and move toward brighter futures.



Contractors broke ground on the new home in early spring.



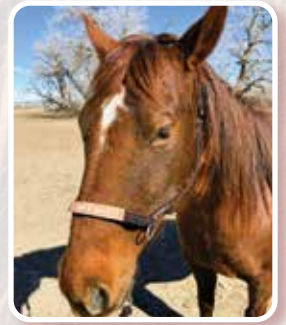
Once completed, the new group home will offer residents beautiful views of the mountains surrounding Boulder.



The new group home takes shape under the Big Sky.

A Girl, A Horse, and a Turning Point

Continued from page 1



When Karianne received it, her reaction said everything. She beamed. She carried it with pride, showing it to staff and peers, eager to share the story behind it. It wasn't just about Archie – it was about what she had accomplished. The connection she formed became part of her identity in a new way: not as someone defined by struggle, but as someone capable of healing, of trust, of resilience.

For youth like Karianne, Equine Therapy provides more than an activity. It creates an environment where healing can take root in ways that feel natural and sustainable. It bridges the gap between clinical intervention and lived experience, turning abstract concepts like trust and regulation into something tangible.

Moments like this are happening every day – quietly, meaningfully – because of those who believe in and support this work.

HOMES FOR HEIFERS & CALF ROUNDUP

A special thanks to all the donors listed below whose generosity supports the vo-ag program.

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For more information about contributing a calf or to inquire about YBGR's other farm programs, please contact Gary Adams at 406-855-5230.

Winter Young Life Camp - February 20-23, 2026

Winter Young Life Camp once again provided an impactful and memorable experience for the youth served.

Over four days, the campus was transformed into a vibrant camp environment filled with structured, high-energy activities including laser tag, glow-in-the-dark dodgeball, Pool Olympics, and a Silent Disco. Each element was intentionally designed to promote emotional regulation, strengthen peer and staff relationships, and create opportunities for youth to lower their guard in a safe and supportive setting. For many participants, this was their first experience of a traditional camp atmosphere.

Evenings concluded with chapel, where guest speaker Rebecca Vondra delivered messages grounded in Scripture and personal testimony. On the final night, youth were invited to respond by placing written prayers on a cross, signifying either a first-time commitment to Christ or a renewed commitment to their faith. The responses reflected sincerity, vulnerability, and hope.

Thanks to our donors, camp created space for joy, belonging, reflection, and spiritual growth - planting seeds that will continue to influence the lives of youth long after the weekend concluded.

Kids gathered in the Chapel for evening messages and prayers.



Guest speaker Rebecca Vondra shares her message with the youth.



Memorial Listings

December 15, 2025 – April 15, 2026

A special word of thanks to all donors listed here who support Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation through their memorial and honor gifts.

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By naming Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation in your will, you can guarantee that your legacy of caring for troubled and abused children will continue for generations to come.

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Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Gifts are tax deductible.

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Memorial gifts can also be made online at yellowstonefoundation.org

Gratitude Through Art

Artistic expression is just one of the many opportunities youth in YBGR's programs have to express themselves and find joy in beauty. Recently, youth in the Residential Treatment, Day School, and Community Based Services were given the chance to compete in a Birthday Art Contest to express appreciation to donors. Winners received prizes for their efforts, and the Foundation is the beneficiary of some fantastic new art!



A Safer Space for Today's Students

When Yellowstone Academy's Casper Education Center was built in 1965, Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch was a facility for troubled boys. Today, YBGR is an accredited youth mental health treatment center, and the boys *and* girls who now attend YA require a higher level of care than in the mid-1960's.

The bathrooms in Casper were designed like most school buildings with boys' and girls' bathrooms each having multiple stalls, allowing several kids to use the bathroom at the same time. However, more than half of the students at Yellowstone Academy have a classification of Seriously Emotionally Disturbed and require a higher level of supervision. An adult must accompany these youth to the bathroom and stand outside the bathroom door in the hallway. Therefore, only one youth can be in the bathroom at a time, often causing long wait times for students to use the bathroom and tying up staff as they wait in the hallway.

Recently, thanks to generous donors, the main multi-stall bathrooms in Casper were converted into four single-use bathroom units and a monitoring area for staff to wait. In addition, portable panels are available to be used in any one of the bathrooms to provide privacy for students who are on suicide watch and require an increased level of supervision. This needed remodel increased the safety of the most at-risk students attending YA, and reduced time away from the classroom for both students and staff.

Thank you to all donors who supported the project with a special thanks to the Charles M. Bair Family Trust, Dottie Bracken, the Helen M. Sloan DAF, the Alice Lee Lund Charitable Trust, Big Sky Bird & Birdie, and the William H. and Margaret M. Wallace Foundation.



Students heading to their next class at YA.



One of the four new bathroom units.



The new basketball court and other sports equipment courtesy of the US Bank Play Grant.



Western Security Bank volunteers cleaned and painted much of the River's Edge interior.

A Fresh New Look for River's Edge Therapeutic Group Home

The River's Edge Therapeutic Group Home in Billings has recently undergone a series of renovations designed to strengthen both the safety and therapeutic environment for youth served by Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch.

The project began with the installation of new energy efficient windows and expanded to include significant exterior upgrades such as a new roof, siding, doors, and gutters. Additional updates throughout the interior have helped create a warmer, more welcoming living environment where healing and growth can take place. These improvements were made possible by a grant from the State of Montana 872 Commission.

In addition, River's Edge now boasts an outdoor basketball court and a new handicap accessible sidewalk. Special thanks to the U.S. Bank Play Grant for the new basketball court and activity equipment, and to Yellowstone Valley Parts and Equipment for the new sidewalk to improve safety and accessibility.

We are also deeply grateful to volunteers from Western Security Bank whose time and effort in painting and updating interior spaces helped refresh the home. Together, these partnerships demonstrate the power of community collaboration.



The new sidewalk makes the lower level of River's Edge accessible to those with mobility issues.

Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch
Foundation

Wrangler

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