



# FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

*Latest news and impact from CBR YouthConnect*

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**MISSION:** To achieve excellence providing troubled youth with the means to become hopeful and productive citizens.

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## Letter from the President

First, I want to thank you for your interest and support of our important mission. We have a tremendous legacy! Over our 55 year history, **Colorado Boys Ranch Foundation** has now served more than 14,000 youth and thousands of family members!

Today, known as **CBR YouthConnect**, we are serving more children, youth and families across Colorado than ever before. And, the needs are great. Disturbing trends (outlined below) in homes, schools and communities remind us that our society - and especially our youth - are desperately searching for direction and struggling to find hope.

**We remain committed and able to help.** In this newsletter, you will be updated on the many services we are providing and the partnerships we are creating. You will learn about our focus on four areas of "youth connection": Home and Family; School and Education; Values, Ethics and Purpose; and Animals and Nature. Each is vital to the health and growth of our youth and nation.

Please enjoy the new format of our newsletter. And, thanks again very much for your interest and support. We do need your help.

Sincerely,

Charles M. (Chuck) Thompson, LCSW  
President

### Disturbing and growing trends in society that our mission addresses:

Abuse and neglect filings  
Domestic court filings  
Child/Teen suicides  
Autism spectrum/genetic maladies  
Childhood obesity and diabetes  
School aggression and violence

Truancy and school drop-out rates  
Internet and social media pressures  
Sexualizing of children / teens  
Nature deficit disorders  
Adult values and ethics  
Children on psychotropic medications



# P ROGRAM OVERVIEW

## CONNECTING YOUTH WITH *Home & Family*

CBR YouthConnect is committed to offering exceptional in-home and community-based services that inspire and support children, youth and parents to keep families together.

### ● HOME-BASED CARE

Our Home-Based Care program, based on the Preventative After-care model, is growing. We are currently serving 12 Colorado counties and recently added services to rural areas in southeast Colorado. Over the past six years, we have served over 1,500 boys, girls and family members.

The goal of the program is to strengthen and protect children, youth and families experiencing

traumatic situations, losses, abuse, neglect and other special needs. Our work promotes self-reliance, prevents family disruption and reduces the need for state funded services. Our cases come to us as referrals from the county child welfare departments. Currently, CBR YouthConnect is being asked to provide more services to teen parents.

### ● THERAPEUTIC SUPERVISED VISITATION

Through this program we work directly with parents who have been separated from their children due to safety issues. We observe and

supervise their interaction and teach basic parenting skills such as nurturing, daily routine, household management and discipline.



## *The Impact of Caring*

It was the second foster home in a year for Shauna, 7, and Robert, 10. Our home-based services were requested by county child welfare because of concerns about parental neglect and abandonment. Dad was in jail. Mom was overwhelmed and emotionally distraught. Grandma was the steady influence in their lives. As the county caseworker brought a police escort, our staff helped

transport the frightened children to their new foster home, comforted grandma and then designed a plan to help mom manage her life and responsibilities.

Four months later, the children are settled in school and mom has gained self-confidence and is doing well both at home and in her job. Grandma is helping care for the children after school. The fam-



ily is reunited, living together and doing well.

## CONNECTING YOUTH WITH *School & Education*

We are committed to improving the high school graduation rate for troubled youth who are at a higher risk of dropping out. We currently have two initiatives underway that will serve over 100 students by the end of the 2014-2015 school year.

### ● DROP-OUT EDUCATION

We have partnered with GOAL Academy, the state's most successful education provider for youth who have dropped out of traditional school. Together, we are developing specialized services and support structures to improve educational outcomes for youth in the foster care system.



### ● SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COURSES

We provide courses at school districts, alternative schools and treatment centers to help students learn skills to build strong and healthy relationships, manage emotions, make responsible decisions and develop

concern for others. Courses involve a combination of expressive arts, journaling, story-telling and animals. To date, our work has served nearly 1,000 boys and girls.

### *The Impact of Caring*

As a 16 year old, Derek has been in residential treatment programs and dropped out of school. His biological parents abandoned him and he lost hope. Derek began attending GOAL Academy, a new type of school combining on-line education, an academic coach and the support of a drop-in center where CBR YouthConnect offers The STORY class.

Although Derek is incredibly talented with art and music, he was quiet and withdrawn. Through STORY, he began expressing himself through art and music and started to write down his hopes and dreams. Derek blossomed. He not only completed THE STORY class and developed his personal code of ethics, but he began helping others.





## CONNECTING YOUTH WITH *Values, Ethics & Purpose*

Today's youth are confronted with the unique challenge of developing values and ethics in the face of negative influences from technology, social media and entertainment. We are committed to inspiring and equipping youth and parents to establish positive personal principles to guide their lives.

### ● STANDING UP IN A KNOCK DOWN WORLD

This program is tailored to parents, adults and community groups. Participants explore how to understand and help today's youth. They reflect on what they want to stand for, what kind of person they want to be and how to help youth "stand up in a knock down world." The course applies "Code of the West" principles from *Cowboy Ethics*, by Jim Owen, and information from

*The Hero Within*, published by the Colorado Boys Ranch Foundation.



### *The Impact of Caring*

For the past 5 months, Jake, age 15, was homeless, sleeping wherever he could find a bed: sometimes with a friend, sometimes at a shelter, sometimes on the street.

"My parents yelled and fought all the time. I just wanted to get out of the house and on my own," he told our staff member. Feeling hopeless, he stopped going to school.

That's when child welfare got involved and asked for our help. The parents accepted our counseling. They decided to save their marriage and started to focus on helping Jake. Together we helped Jake get re-settled in school. We found a tutor to help him get to grade level. He thrived in our STORY program. Today, the family is together and Jake is no longer at risk of dropping out!

### ● STORY CLASS

*STORY* is a course that provides youth with the opportunity to reflect on their personal story and the stories of those around them. Youth learn to discover and express their story through creative projects using iPad programs for music, art, journaling, story boarding and movies. Here, students also learn about the ten principals of the "Code of the West." The program is provided in partnership with Cherry Creek School District, Denver Public School District, Denver Juvenile Diversion, GOAL Academy and Community Reach Center. We are also integrating this approach into our Home-Based Care.



## CONNECTING YOUTH WITH *Animals & Nature*

Our 55-year legacy of award winning, human/animal interaction programs continues to thrive! We involve animals in teaching lessons about life and personal responsibility. We also use our 1800-acre mountain property, Thunderbird Ranch, to teach nature skills to children, youth and families.

### ● ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY

We are providing Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) to children and families in Boulder, Douglas and Arapahoe counties. The therapy is effective in treating clients struggling with trauma related fears and anxieties, frustration, communication, responsibility and self-confidence. The service is provided in homes, community settings or offices.



### ● THUNDERBIRD RANCH

We are collaborating with Colorado Youth Outdoors to help connect youth, parents and families via outdoor and nature-based activities at Thunderbird Ranch. Activities include adventure trails, hiking, fishing and mountain crafts in the beautiful wooded area, complete with a rustic campsite and small lakes.



### ● PAWSITIVE CONNECTION

We are working with Community Reach Day Treatment Center in Thorton and DPS Compassion Road School providing dog training courses and humane education. In ten weeks, youth interact with dogs, practice responsibility and respect, and learn to show empathy and concern for others. By focusing on the similarities and differences between people and animals, youth become more aware of their own lives, develop confidence and a sense of gratitude. To date, the program has been provided in 16 treatment centers and schools.

### *The Impact of Caring*

At the beginning of the Pawsitive Connection course at the treatment center, Gina, age 13, was nervous and afraid of being around dogs. She had been victimized by a cruel parent that used an angry dog to keep her from disclosing his abuse of her sexually. Over the ten week period, she began to interact with Scotty, a gentle and cuddly dog. This led to her talking more openly with her therapist and interacting more with other children. Today, Gina is living with an aunt and moving on with her life.

# NEWS & UPDATES

## BOARD NEWS

A big “thanks” to Board members **Tom Miller**, **Leonard Pruett** and **Jim Wallace**, who are finishing their terms. Each have been tremendous leaders, guiding the organization through the economic recession and its transition from residential services to the exciting home and community based programs now offered. Tom and Jim were officers and volunteered countless hours of Board leadership. You are each part of the CBR legacy!

*A Job Well Done!*

Welcome back to **Cindy Landsberg** and **Bob Bruce**, who rejoined the Board of Directors this past year. Bob has a strong passion for our Mission and was recently re-elected as Board Chair. Cindy Landsberg, coauthor of *The Hero Within*, again shares her expertise and commitment to our future direction.

*Second Time Around*

## PARTNERSHIP NEWS

A new partnership began when our Board met with Board members of GOAL Academy to finalize their purchase of the La Junta campus. A permanent Colorado



Boys Ranch Heritage Center will be established on the campus. GOAL Academy works with high school drop-outs. We are now working together with them to develop new and innovative programs across the state.

## EVENT NEWS

Over 260 participants and volunteers enjoyed our 5th Annual “Bust’n Clays for Kids” sporting clay challenge, chaired by Doug Harris (pictured right with his family) of Axia Energy. Many businesses and individuals came together to support the event. Be sure to hold next year’s date: **May 29th, 2015**.



6th Annual Bust’n Clays  
for Kids Event  
May 29, 2015  
Quail Run Sports | Kiowa, Colorado

## A NEW GIVING OPPORTUNITY

Interested in sponsoring some of our powerful programs and courses for youth and families?

- **Pawsitive Connection Course** – 8 to 10 week course for youth helping students gain respect, responsibility and compassion for themselves, animals and others. Through humane education and our ethics curriculum, this program provides improvement in social emotional skills and character development.
- **STORY Class** – 10-week course focused on teaching youth personal values and ethics.

For more information, Contact Karen Snow, Director of Operations, at 303-653-6458.





## CBR YouthConnect

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## OUR LEGACY SINCE 1959

The hallmark legacy of the Colorado Boys Ranch Foundation is our commitment, results and resilience to the mission of serving troubled youth. For more than five decades, CBR has evolved and adapted to successfully meet the changing needs, funding constraints and demands of our society. In the 1960s, we provided orphanage care and child welfare services. In the 1980s, we evolved into a national psychiatric residential treatment and education center.

Today, our expertise and resources are devoted to helping Colorado boys, girls, parents and families right in their homes, schools and local communities. Our modern name,

CBR YouthConnect, was chosen to more clearly reflect what we do. "CBR" refers to our legacy. "Youth" refers to our focus. We "connect" them with the help and resources needed to become hopeful and productive citizens.

The legacy story is available in our book, *The Hero Within* (Fulcrum Press, 2007), authored by Cindy Landsberg and Judith Pettibone. The story, decade-by-decade, is also available in our 50th Anniversary Newsletter. And, we are very excited to announce that a Heritage Center will be established on the La Junta campus to permanently honor the legacy.



Board member emeritus, Tom Sutherland, rides with the boys during a visit to the campus



Founding Board of Directors