



## Rainbow Acres

A Residential Christian Community  
Serving Adults with  
Developmental Disabilities

### INSIDE:

- *Wagner marks 25 years of leadership*
- *Fall Festival held in lieu of F&F Weekend*
- *Patience is a virtue; To forgive is divine*

*...and more!*



## Letter from the President

# ‘Standing at the threshold’ for the next season in life

**T**his March, I’m celebrating my 25th anniversary as President & CEO of Rainbow Acres! It seems like yesterday that I was driving into the Verde Valley for the first time to experience the miracles that Rainbow Acres provides for adults with special needs (and their families).

In 2019, Gloria, one of our many faithful volunteers, sat across the table at an event and said, “You can’t ever, ever leave Rainbow Acres!” Her heartfelt enthusiasm and generosity of love touched me! I wish that were possible! I just had another birthday last fall – a reminder of my human limitations.

With this letter, I am sharing with you that I have communicated with our Board of Trustees that I will not pursue the renewal of my contract as President & CEO of Rainbow Acres in 2022. The Board currently is engaged in the search for Rainbow Acres’ next President & CEO.

For 25 rewarding years, I’ve been privileged to build, guide and collaborate with our talented team on delivering excellence in programs

with the highest level of quality care, in addition to expanding Ranch facilities to best serve our Ranchers and community. I believe that the coming year is the right moment for a change in leadership to continue our traditions while growing the great works and unique services of Rainbow Acres. A new leader, inspired by Rainbow Acres’ vision and mission, will ensure a bright future for the Ranchers and our team. You are blessed to have a professional, wise and committed Board of Trustees. I am confident the Board will ensure an inclusive and smooth process to welcome the new CEO.

Thank you for the privilege of serving with you at Rainbow Acres these 25 years. My time with you includes some of the most memorable and rewarding work of my career. Together, we touched the lives of so many people with the purposes of God at Rainbow Acres. I share this decision with ambivalent feelings, knowing I will miss you, many relationships, and the inspiring and meaningful work we do together. My decisions are not about “retirement.” That is not a Biblical concept. It is

about being open to God’s leading in my life. Temple Grandin described it well, “Standing at the threshold” for the next season or challenge in life.

In times like these, the Ranchers, staff and I need your unfailing love and generosity more than ever. So please stand with the Ranchers and me with strength and confidence, and in ways you have never done before. You make a difference! I have always believed “the future is as bright as the promises of God!” That is true for Rainbow Acres, you, and me, too! Together we can prepare the way!

The Ranchers and my friend, benefactor, and Rainbow Acres board member, Linda Roos, have taught me to express love and say out loud, “I love you!” To the Ranchers, their families, our employees, the Board of Trustees, and our Circle of Friends, “I love you!” You have transformed my life with joy and purpose! It is all about the Ranchers!

For the Ranchers!

Gary W. Wagner  
President & CEO



## Rainbow Acres

A Residential Christian Community  
Serving Adults with  
Developmental Disabilities

*The Promise*  
Spring/Summer 2021

***The Mission of Rainbow Acres is to serve as “a Christian community with heart that empowers persons with developmental disabilities to live to their fullest potential with dignity and purpose.”***

Founded in 1974, Rainbow Acres is an independent, non-profit Christian ministry related to the American Baptist Churches USA. Licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services, Rainbow Acres is governed by an independent, self-perpetuating Board of Trustees from Arizona and across the nation.

Rainbow Acres has earned and was awarded EAGLE accreditation by the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare.

Rainbow Acres is made possible by generous contributions from numerous churches of all faiths, as well as individuals, foundations and corporations. Rainbow Acres has been designated a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization by the Internal Revenue Service. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the IRS code.

*Contacts and Credits*  
Rainbow Acres

2120 W. Reservation Loop Road  
Camp Verde, AZ 86322-8408

Phone: (928) 567-5231 • Fax: (928) 567-9059

Website: [www.rainbowacres.com](http://www.rainbowacres.com)

E-mail: [info@rainbowacres.com](mailto:info@rainbowacres.com)

Photography courtesy of  
Larry Kane Photography  
Additional photography  
by Rainbow Acres staff

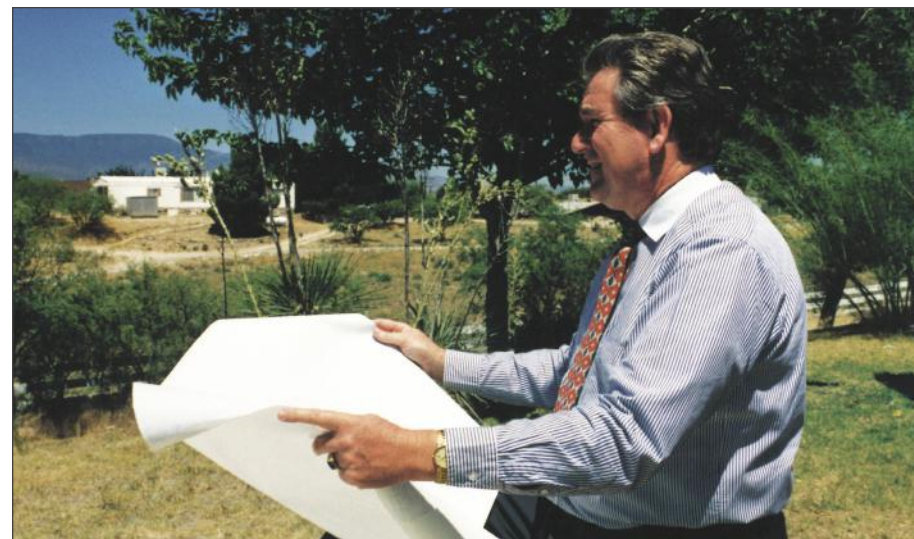
Notice: **The Promise** is a copyrighted publication of Rainbow Acres.

# Rainbow Acres recognizes Wagner's 25 years of leadership, service

**T**his spring, Rainbow Acres celebrates Gary Wagner's 25th anniversary as President & CEO. Since March 1996, his vision and leadership have enabled Rainbow Acres to steadily improve the quality of life for the Ranchers through new facilities, innovative programs, and strengthened staff support.

Throughout his tenure, progress has been guided by the principle that everything should be done for the Ranchers. "As I look back on the past 25 years, we have kept the Ranchers at the center of every decision we've made," Wagner said. "In response to their needs, we upgraded the homes and other buildings, created programs that expanded their horizons, and involved them in surrounding communities to a greater degree."

At the end of 2021, Wagner will pass the torch to a new President & CEO. Last October, Wagner communicated to the Board that he didn't intend to pursue the renewal of his contract in 2022. As a result, the Board is engaged in the search for Rainbow Acres' next leader.



*Shortly after his arrival, Wagner reviews plans for future development (1996)*

## **MODERN FACILITIES**

As President & CEO, Wagner elevated Rainbow Acres to a new level of achievement in caring for adults with special needs. Over the years, he traveled widely among Rainbow Acres' support family while investing himself in the daily lives of the Ranchers. These efforts reaped dividends with a growing family of individuals and congregations who supported Rainbow Acres. In due time, Wagner worked with the Board of Trustees to reimagine Rainbow Acres as a campus with modern buildings and a wide spectrum of programs. Progress on both fronts would come in phases over the years, as Wagner raised close to \$36 million for Rainbow Acres.

In 1998, Rainbow Acres began the process of modernizing the campus by adopting a new strategic plan that called for the construction of 12 homes positioned around a community center. As funding became available, modern buildings replaced trailers and wide-open spaces. The first three houses (Baldwin, Dakin and Frese) were completed in 2002, followed by four more in 2004 (Koinania, Evergreen, Hoover and Agape). Nash House was finished in 2006, followed by Patrick House (2008); and the Palmer Community Center (2011). Three more houses followed: Aria House and Wagner House in 2014 and Oikos House in 2015.

With their southwestern-style architecture, the new buildings were perfectly suited for their Verde Valley surroundings and gave

*Continued*



*Cleaning up Sunburst Farm to prepare for its sale, with help from the Ranchers (1998)*

*One of several groups of Ranchers that Wagner led on Mission Trips to Brazil (2003)*

*Dr. Robert Schuller receives a hug from Rancher Tommy Banta after speaking during the Open House (2003)*

*Rancher Steve Brehm and Wagner with the first EAGLE Accreditation Peer Review Team (2004)*

**Wagner's 25 Years, Continued**

the campus a true sense of community. In its central location, the Palmer Community Center provided an easily-accessible, multi-purpose, state-of-the-art facility with large communal spaces for daily lunchtime gatherings, group meetings and special events; a professional-quality kitchen for food preparation; and a stage with lighting/sound for performances by the Ranchers and outside groups.

**EXPANDED PROGRAMS**

Under Wagner's direction, Rainbow Acres emphasized programs that addressed the Ranchers' developmental needs. In 2002, the Worden Life Long Learning Center was created by renovating the old Industrial Building, which had been used for woodworking and product assembly. The building was outfitted with classrooms, the Taber Computer Lab, and a multimedia library to accommodate new programs focused on living skills, vocational training, and artistic pursuits.

Some of these programs are "firsts" in terms of their introduction to a residential facility for adults with special needs, including Clavinova Connection (which uses programmed keyboards to enable the Ranchers to play music) and the Fine Arts Painting program (which empowers Ranchers to create their own paintings, with instruction provided by Sedona artists).

In 2012, Wagner brought horses back to Rainbow Acres following a years-long hiatus. A new Barn/Equestrian Center (featuring a classroom, indoor stables, and a riding arena) was constructed for the

Animal Science program to provide access to horses as a therapeutic experience for the Ranchers. In time, the program expanded to offer classes on grooming, tacking, walking and riding. Because of the Ranchers' keen interest in horses, the Barn's programs now cover a wide range of equine topics.

Raising vegetables for on-ranch consumption has always been a priority at Rainbow Acres. In 2017, two greenhouses were moved to the Agricultural Area near the Barn. In 2018, those greenhouses were destroyed by a wind storm, but were replaced with a greenhouse and shade-house that enable the production of vegetables year-round (with help from the Ranchers). Now, the horticulture program produces a steady supply of lettuce, cabbage, beets, squash and more for the Ranch's kitchen. In recent years, the program expanded to include courses in which the Ranchers learn about ecology, soil science and other topics.

Wagner also increased opportunities for the Ranchers to engage in practical arts that provide opportunities for personal creativity. While weaving was among the first craft activities at Rainbow Acres, the programs blossomed to include stepping stones, woven rugs, beaded hangings, and seasonal crafts. The Music Program evolved as well, from the Rainbow Acres Choir that has traveled the nation, Clavinova Connection and Drum Circle to (during the pandemic) more individual instruction, including violin and cello classes. In 2020, the Weaving and Music programs moved into new, expanded spaces following facility renovations.

*Continued*



*Mortgage burning with host Wagner and founder Ralph Showers at Rainbow Acres' 30th Anniversary celebration (2004)*



*The Nash family with Wagner at the dedication of Nash House (2006)*



*At the PCC groundbreaking - Wagner, Ralph Weiland, Ginny Palmer and Rev. Duane Gibson (2008)*



*Wagner tours board members through the PCC construction site (2010)*

**Wagner's 25 Years, Continued**

In the last several years, Wagner has focused on transitioning Rainbow Acres into a more-active learning community. The new "Rainbow Academy" (launched in 2018) consolidated existing and new programs into a unified curriculum, and created schedules for each Rancher based on their personal needs. Rainbow Acres expanded its education staff to accommodate the new offerings and, in 2018, for a second time, renovated the Life Long Learning Center, which was renamed the Worden Taber Center. This renovation enhanced the classrooms and computer lab, and added a new sensory room, restrooms and office space.

**ENDOWMENT/AWARDS**

Over the years, Wagner worked with the Board of Trustees to increase the non-profit's endowments and board-controlled investments from \$36,000 in 1996 to \$4.3 million today. In 2013, Rainbow Acres joined the Arizona Community Foundation's Endowment Building Initiative, which helped the board and staff examine how to grow endowments even more. "We developed a new, robust investment policy, increased our communication about endowments, and began more intentionally recognizing those who make advance plans to give to Rainbow Acres," Paul Higgins, Vice President of Finance, said. "Since then, we've gone from eight endowment funds to 15, which generate over \$110,000 each year for programs and Ranchers in need."

Also, during Wagner's tenure, Rainbow Acres has achieved continuous accreditation by the EAGLE Commission of the United Methodist

Association (UMA) since 2004 and has won multiple awards, including the ALFA Shining Star Award for innovative programming in 2013; the Spirit of Sedona Non-Profit Organization of the Year Award from the Arizona Community Foundation of Sedona in 2015; the EAGLE Best Practice Award for the Fine Arts program in 2015; and the 2018 Shining Star Award for Outstanding Non-Profit Management from the Arizona Community Foundation of Yavapai County. Wagner also served on the EAGLE Commission Board for six years and participated in six peer reviews of other UMA-member organizations.

**LASTING LEGACY**

Looking back, Wagner counts among his major achievements the reorganization of the Board of Trustees, a successful capital campaign that raised \$3.5 million, construction of Rancher homes and the Palmer Community Center, and completing over \$20 million in capital investments. Over the last 25 years, Rainbow Acres has had an economic impact of more than \$100 million on the Verde Valley and Northern Arizona.

Board Chair Kathy Houser remembers the first time she met Wagner at a Missions Fair hosted by her home church in Des Moines, Iowa in 2003. "What impressed me the most about him was the tremendous passion he had for his work at Rainbow Acres," Houser said. "Eighteen years later, I would still say that passion is what impresses me the most about Gary. Rainbow Acres and the Ranchers are not just part of his job, they are an integral piece of his life. It has been an honor

*Continued*



Gary Wagner and Board Chair Claudia Ault after receiving the Spirit of Sedona award for outstanding non-profit leadership (2015)



Rev. Wagner preaches at Verde Community Church following a performance by the Choir (2016)

#### Wagner's 25 Years, Continued

and a pleasure to work with him. During his tenure, Gary has grown the original vision of Rainbow Acres into the 21st-century standard in its field."

Wagner credits each of the board members, employees, Rancher family members, and volunteers who have provided their time, talent and resources to Rainbow Acres over the past 25 years. "I have had the privilege of meeting incredible people and discovering their compassion and concern for individuals with developmental disabilities, ultimately becoming involved in the well-being of the Ranchers and Rainbow Acres," Wagner said. "I will always cherish those relationships." Wagner said that he is blessed by his family, especially his wife, Jussara, his son, Isaac, and his daughter, Abigail, who welcome him home even when he is exhausted and spent. They are known for their volunteer involvement and support on the Ranch, in churches and in the community.

A native of Iowa, Wagner was educated at Sioux Falls College, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, and Colgate Rochester Divinity School. He also pursued doctoral studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. Ordained an American Baptist minister, Wagner served at First Baptist Church in Sac City, Iowa from 1972-74. Prior to Rainbow Acres, he served as Director of Development at Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma; Director of Development for the American Baptist Assembly at Green Lake, Wisconsin; Director of Development at Alderson Broadus College in Philippi, West Virginia; and Vice President, Institutional Advancement at Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma.

## First Lady enhances spirit of Rainbow Acres community

By Gary Wagner, President & CEO

In 2004, Jussara Pinto Coelho from Boston and I were married. As the new First Lady of Rainbow Acres, she has shared her gift of gracious hospitality generously for 17 years. Trustees, volunteers, members of Church of the Red Rocks, and community leaders always have been welcomed in our home. Baptist historian, friend and frequent guest Bill Brackney said, "Good things happen when guests gather around her table!"

During her second year at Rainbow Acres, Jussara invited her mother and two good friends from Boston to come to Arizona and assist her in presenting a Brazilian Churrascaria-style dinner for 200 guests on Family & Friends Weekend. The Ranchers loved the desserts. Everyone gave her a standing ovation! When our son Isaac was six months old, Jussara prepared a Brazilian meal for 80 guests including 27 members of the Nash Family, the Nash House designers and board members.

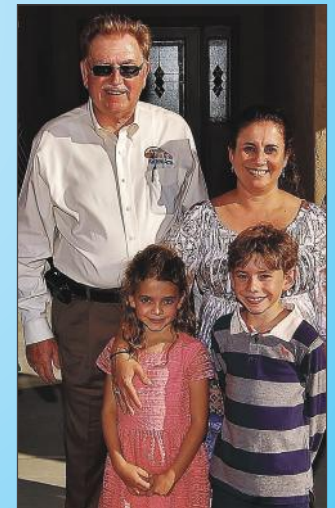
Jussara is always ready to join in the preparations of holiday meals at Rainbow Acres. Her life hasn't always been easy, but she loves the Ranchers and they love her too. One All-Ranch Christmas Dinner had a theme of the Nutcracker Ballet. After the young dancers presented familiar scenes from The Nutcracker, she presented the Ranchers with desserts of handmade sweets in the image of the Mouse King!

At Rainbow's 40th Anniversary fundraising auction, Jussara offered one of her renowned Brazilian Dinners. To her great surprise, auctioneer Jim Ledbetter sold her "Brazilian Dinner" multiplying it times three! To Jim's surprise, he found her Brazilian Chocolate Truffles irresistible.

Jussara has provided faithful support on the Ranch, in my travels and in building relationships with friends and benefactors. Our children, Abigail and Isaac, have engaged in life on the Ranch, appearing in Talent Shows and other activities. My older sons, Nathan and Caleb, who came with me to Camp Verde as adolescents 25 years ago, have been supportive of me and the Ranch through the years. I cherish the support that my family has given so unselfishly. I am blessed by their love and grace.



Gary and Jussara on their wedding day (2004)



Gary, Jussara, Abigail and Isaac at the Wagner House dedication (2014)

# COVID-19 UPDATE

## Rainbow Acres applies quarantines, offers vaccination clinics

As we go to press, Rainbow Acres has successfully contained several small outbreaks of the COVID-19 virus in Rancher homes (after notifying the families of the Ranchers impacted). The affected houses were placed under quarantine to contain the virus within that house. Over the winter months, several Ranchers and Caregivers contracted the virus. Fortunately, all have recovered without developing serious symptoms.



Vaccination clinics for Ranchers and employees began in late January. The first Covid-19 vaccination clinic was held January 31 on the

Ranch, with 84 Ranchers and employees participating. A second vaccination clinic was held on March 1. CVS Pharmacy sent pharmacists to Rainbow Acres to administer the vaccine. With approval from families and guardians, most of the Ranchers were vaccinated at these two clinics.

At this time, Rainbow Acres remains closed to visitors, volunteers and non-essential personnel. We continue to follow directives from health agencies to minimize the risk of contracting the virus. On-staff nurses monitor the daily health of the Ranchers and employees, who have remained diligent about infection control practices.

Rancher travel remains restricted to medical appointments and emergencies. If outside travel is necessary (to/from families), returning Ranchers are required to provide proof of a negative test within 72 hours prior to their return; must return in a state of wellness; and must have daily wellness checks for up to two weeks.

Rancher activities continue to be oriented to each house, where the Ranchers are sheltering in place, with no congregate activities. Groups from each house attend programs in the Worden Taber Center, participate in Arts & Crafts and Music classes, visit the Barn and Greenhouses, and go for walks. Also, each house hosts “special topics” activities every day (enrichment activities created by the Education team and Caregivers).

As changes arise, Rainbow Acres is guided by its own matrix for risk management and mitigating the spread of the virus based on the level of infection in Yavapai County (and subject to the advice of health officials). This matrix has guided the decision-making process as conditions have changed on the Ranch and in the county.

Please stay safe! Thank you for your patience, prayers and support! We are dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of the Ranchers and our employees as we endure this pandemic together. Blessings!



## Agricultural Area offers Ranchers ways to enjoy outdoors



During the pandemic, more Ranchers have chosen to get involved with the Agricultural Area on the Ranch. The Greenhouse and Barn have been buzzing with activity, providing new Rancher experiences every day.

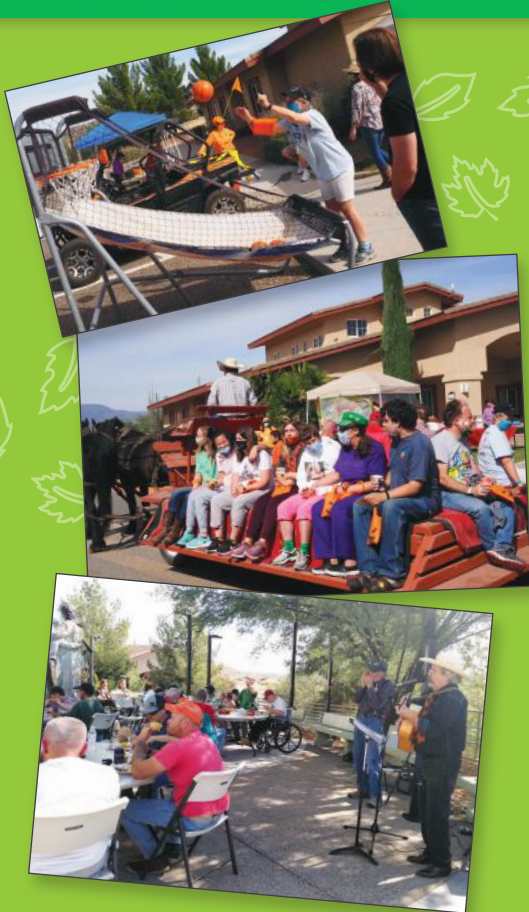
In the Barn, new Rancher Gary made himself at home! He loves working with the animals (especially our pony, Crystal) and jumps right into any barn task that needs to be completed. It's been a while since Rancher Greg has been part of the Barn activities but he's enjoying spending time working with the horses again. And Rancher Kelly rode Danny with a bareback pad – the first time she's done that in years! Her balance and feel for the horse have greatly improved over the past few years. Interacting with the animals gives the Ranchers a chance to renew and refresh their perspectives, as well as enjoy some fresh air and sunshine.

In the Greenhouse, many Ranchers have engaged in the cycle of transplanting seedlings from the Shadehouse, watering new plants in the Greenhouse, and harvesting radishes, lettuce, spinach, cabbage, broccoli, beets, turnips, carrots and more! Ranchers Brent and Keith are among those who are doing Greenhouse activities for the first time ever. They enjoy harvesting veggies and delivering them to the kitchen. Ranchers Michelle and Hailey also are first-timers, transporting wheelbarrow-loads of manure to our composting site. Working in the Greenhouse gives the Ranchers the peace of mind that only interaction with nature can provide.



# Fall Festival and Holiday events lift the Ranchers' spirits

During the pandemic, hosting traditional events on the Ranch, like Family & Friends Weekend, Christmas gift-giving, or New Year's Eve celebrations, has prompted challenges that have been met with incredible creativity and enthusiasm by the staff, Ranchers and donors.



In October, after having to cancel F&F Weekend, Rainbow Acres hosted the Fall Festival for Ranchers with outdoor activities including carnival-style games, wagon hayrides, and a barbecue lunch with live music. The Ranchers were divided into groups that switched off between the areas. Everyone had a great time. Thanks to Jackpot Ranch for providing the hayrides, which circled the campus. Hopefully, we can host F&F Weekend this October!



During Christmas, we were blessed to have many Ranchers sharing the holiday together instead of traveling. The Ranchers received an amazing outpouring of love, gifts, cards and resources. On Christmas Eve, assisted by Santa Claus, the staff delivered almost 300 packages, stockings and other gifts. In addition, the Ranchers and staff held gift exchanges in their homes. The week also included music and carolers, a decorating contest, and drives through town to look at Christmas lights. Thank you to everyone who made this holiday season bright and festive!



On New Year's Eve, optimism and good spirits ran high for a promising, healthy year! The New Year started off with a special surprise for Ranchers, made possible by long-time supporters, George and Claudia Ault. They assembled and delivered celebration kits for all of the Rancher homes to ensure a lively New Year's Eve that included appetizers, sparkling cider, decorations and party favors. Thank you to the Ault family for making our spirits bright every day!





# Patience is a virtue; To forgive is divine

By Brenda Redel  
Director of Organizational Development

Recently “patience” has taken on an entirely new meaning as we’ve endured this pandemic. I am reminded of the need for patience every time a Rancher asks me, “When will we be able to use the Fitness Room again?” or, “When will we be able to eat lunch in the Palmer Center?” I wish I had the answer. Instead, I reply with, “I don’t know. We just need to be patient and pray that God lifts the pandemic soon.”

While that answer may sound like a platitude, practicing patience with the understanding that God is in control may help us all weather this storm. Even under circumstances less extreme, research has shown that practicing patience helps us live healthier, happier lives. Some examples, include:

- Being a better friend. Experts say that patience is the key to greater empathy and forgiveness toward others. We reap the benefit of being less lonely!
- Experiencing better overall mental health. In a 2007 study, Professors Sarah A. Schnitker and Robert Emmons cited that patient people have fewer negative emotions and less depression.
- Achieving our goals. Schnitker found in another study that those who demonstrate patience make better progress towards their goals. And they express more satisfaction once their goals are met.

Another Biblical characteristic that can be challenging to express is “forgiveness.”

As difficult as it is to be patient, perhaps it is more difficult still to forgive because of serious hurt or disappointment. Still, the effort may be well worth it. There are amazing health benefits to forgiveness, such as:

- Decreasing cortisol levels. Our bodies produce cortisol when under stress such as when we have bitterness or hold grudges toward others. Among other undesirable results, cortisol causes us to store body fat, as indicated in a University of California, Berkeley study.
- Boosting your energy. Two separate studies found that participants who knowingly forgave past wrongs, as compared to those with resentment, more successfully performed physical tasks.
- Lowering anxiety and pain. A Duke University study revealed that people with chronic pain, after taking a course on forgiveness, love, and kindness, reported significantly lower levels of anxiety and pain. The control subjects, who only took pain medication, reported unchanged pain levels.

At Rainbow Acres, we endeavor to live out these unmistakable truths. These concepts are provided here for informational purposes only – this is not medical advice. Yet, isn’t it encouraging that research has begun to prove the medical value of Biblical standards like “patience” and “forgiveness”?



WTC Patio

## ‘Wish List’ addresses need for Ranch improvements

Spring is here! It’s time for Rainbow Acres to address its “Wish List” of capital improvement projects that would benefit the entire community. In recent years, these lists have generated an incredible response from our donors! They have funded LED lighting for the Palmer Community Center, provided a small vehicle for one-Rancher medical trips and a two-seat electric scooter, and are in the process of raising funds for hand chimes and a new audio control board for the Ranch’s radio station. Thank you all!

Still, a number of “small projects” remain – some of which require the support of donors to move them forward. This spring, these are the top items on our “Wish List” of projects that need funding:

### Outdoor Patio Furniture - \$1,800

We’re nearing completion of the Worden Taber Center’s new outdoor patio and a high priority is to acquire new furniture to finish the space, including one lounge area, several rectangular picnic-type tables, and one round picnic-type table. We originally needed \$3,000 but received a \$1,200 donation last fall for this furniture, which will equip the patio for a multitude of uses (meetings, breaks, activities and classes).

### Furniture/Appliances for Koinania House - \$8,000 each

After 17 years, it’s time to replace the living-room furniture in the common area and the appliances in the kitchen and laundry room at Koinania House. The furniture includes a new sofa with heavy-duty upholstery, four gliders, a dining table and chairs, and a flat screen TV (\$8,000). Appliances include an electric range, dishwasher, refrigerator, heavy-duty washer and dryer, and four electric water heaters (\$8,000).

### Water Project for Greenhouse/Barn – \$23,700 total

Currently, the well that provides water for buildings also provides water for irrigation in the Greenhouses and Barn. This water is being treated for human consumption, which adds to its cost. We have a separate well for landscape irrigation, but the water needs to be accessible to the Greenhouses/Barn. The project costs \$23,700 (\$9,600 for the water line from the pump house to the Barn; \$3,200 for the water line to the Greenhouses; and \$10,900 for a 5,000-gallon storage tank). Donors can contribute to one or more of these components.

If you would like to grant any of these wishes, please visit our website ([www.rainbowacres.com](http://www.rainbowacres.com)) and click on the Donation tab, or call Dawn Jones, Donor Relations Manager, at (928) 567-5231 for more information.

# Two caregivers mark 25 years of service to the Ranchers

In recent months, Rainbow Acres celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> work anniversaries of two caregivers: **Starlene Brogdon** and **Sandy Koonce**. Both of these ladies have provided outstanding support for the Ranchers and staff through their creativity, enthusiasm and hard work.

After a brief stint as a volunteer, **Starlene** started working at Rainbow Acres in August 1995. She oversaw the lunch program for 16 years, which she really



enjoyed, and later became a caregiver in Nash House. "The kitchen was very small but there was more love in that little kitchen than anywhere I ever worked," she said. When an opportunity arose to serve as a full-time caregiver, Brogdon jumped at the chance. She wanted to be involved with the Ranchers on a more personal level. After becoming certified, she worked as a floater between two homes for three years, then became one of the caregivers in Nash House, where she has served for nine years. "In the kitchen, Starlene had the ability to see the potential in every Rancher who worked with her," Gary Wagner, President & CEO, said. "That quality carried through in her role as a caregiver. There isn't anything the Ranchers won't do to assist her."

In October 1991, as a fresh graduate and single woman from Wisconsin, **Sandy** arrived at Rainbow Acres, eager to serve and discover God's plan for her life. "The Ranchers were attracted to her contagious sense of humor and youthful energy," Wagner said. "She could care for some of the most difficult Ranchers and make it look easy." Sandy quickly bonded with other house parents too, especially Mitch Koonce. After they married in 1994, they took some time off, then returned to Rainbow Acres in 1996 as caregivers! Sandy has taken the lead in many projects, partnering with caregiver Mary Schulthies for years to maintain the food storeroom and ensure an adequate supply of groceries on the Ranch. Koonce's organizational skills also have equipped her to serve for many years as the Special Olympics Coordinator for Rainbow Acres. Ultimately, Sandy became a regional leader in Arizona Special Olympics and often accompanies Ranchers to National Special Olympics events.



"I could not envision Rainbow Acres without Starlene and Sandy," Wagner said. "Their devotion to the Ranchers and dedication to the core values of Rainbow Acres have contributed to our success these past 25 years!"

## IN MEMORIAM: Long-time volunteers Winston and Phyllis Worden

On October 23, 2020, Rainbow Acres' lifelong friend Winston Worden of Cottonwood passed away. His wife, Phyllis, had passed several years earlier. They are survived by two sons.

Prior to volunteering at Rainbow Acres over several decades, Winston was an ordained Disciples of Christ/Christian Church pastor, semi-retired and doing bi-vocational work. Raised an American Baptist, Phyllis had served for 28 years as Assistant Director of Colorado State University's Cooperative Extension Service. She had a PhD. in counseling and higher education administration and was a certified teacher in Home Economics.

After retiring to Cottonwood in the 1970s, the Wordens first volunteered as "house parents" to provide relief so regular house parents could take two-week vacations. Rainbow Acres' housing model at that time was more like foster care, with the Ranchers living in homes with couples who served as house parents.

As a full-time volunteer, Winston served in a variety of capacities, including as Scout



Master of the first Boy Scouts troop at Rainbow Acres. He guided the Ranchers through earning merit badges and led overnight camping trips. Scout meetings were attended by nearly 90 percent of the male Ranchers at the time.

Phyllis served as a leader (along with Marge Taber) in developing the new Learning Center. Worden and Taber helped the staff create programs based assessments designed to measure each Rancher's cognitive ability and potential. Even today, the learning facility on campus (Worden Taber Center) is named in their honor.

This year, a memorial service will be held and Winston's ashes will be interred in the Columbarium near Glory Hill. Rainbow Acres greatly appreciates the Wordens' efforts to improve the quality of life for the Ranchers.

## SAVE THE DATES (FOR POST-PANDEMIC)!

### THE IMAGINE GALA honoring George and Claudia Ault

Saturday, October 9th, 2021 (new date)  
at Enchantment Resort in Sedona

This event will recognize the Aults for their leadership in the Verde Valley at the beautiful Enchantment Resort. Proceeds will benefit the planning process for Sedona Lago Gardens.

### FAMILY & FRIENDS WEEKEND

Friday, October 22nd & Saturday,  
October 23rd, 2021  
at Rainbow Acres in Camp Verde

Events will include the Legacy of Love Luncheon and "Rainbow's Got Talent" Show on Friday and the Open House, Rancher presentations, Picnic Lunch and Arts/Crafts Sale on Saturday.



# Rainbow Acres

*A Residential Christian Community  
Serving Adults with  
Developmental Disabilities*

2120 W. Reservation Loop Road  
Camp Verde, Arizona 86322

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
FLAGSTAFF, AZ  
PERMIT NO. 163