



RANCH EHRLO SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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50 years - a look back

June 1, 2016 marked Ranch Ehrlo Society's 50th anniversary. In the past half century, we've experienced many successes and much growth. But in order to know where we're going, we must look back at where we've been.

When Ranch Ehrlo was established in 1966, Otto Dreidger was the director of child welfare. At that time, residential treatment facilities in Saskatchewan had been shut down, leaving only the boy's school – now known as Dojack Centre.

“When I became director of child welfare in 1965, (the late) Geoff Pawson was the treatment supervisor of boy's school,” explained Dreidger. “He came to me one day and said he'd like to develop a private centre, because there was a real gap (in services).”

The approach

What Geoff saw at Dojack Centre bothered him – he believed a different, less punitive, approach was needed for many of the children and youth currently housed there, but in Saskatchewan there were no other options available. The solution, he believed, was a private centre.

Dreidger readily agreed, with two caveats – the first was that the centre took the youth that no one else would. The second was that this new

program develop a continuum of services that allowed the youth to be in care long enough to form an identity with the institution.

“Troubled youth often have no security, no identity, because they've gone from foster home to foster home, treatment centre to treatment centre. So Geoff's private centre had to offer long term services,” Dreidger said of his second condition.

Work begins

An agreement was reached and a proposal was soon developed.

The pair continued to work together, selecting a property out at Pilot Butte owned by Cliff and Julia Ehrle to become the site of the first group home. The pair also agreed that the home would use an open custody model.



50th
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It opens

Finally, on June 1, 1966, the first of the 12 boys arrived at the Ranch. Within six months, the agency had grown to 20 boys.

Today, the agency employs over 800 and serves thousands through residential, educational, and community programs. It's come a long way from Pawson's simple but powerful vision of a better place for the youth of the day.

We invite you to join us in celebrating the start of our next 50 years at our 50th anniversary celebration, Sept. 29th at the Queensbury Convention Centre. Tickets are \$85 and can be purchased online at ehrlo.com or by calling Shelley at 306-781-1800.

Powwow planned

A powwow is a celebration of life. Is there any better way to honour the past and celebrate the future of Ranch Ehrlo Society?

A mini powwow has been planned for Aug. 30th at the Pilot Butte campus in conjunction with the agency's 50th anniversary. The event is open to our staff, clients, and anyone interested from the community.

In addition to competitive dancing, carnival style games, face painting, and bingo have been a few of the ideas discussed in the early stages of planning. Supper will be provided and a canteen is available.

The event begins at 1 p.m. with a grand entry. Closing ceremonies are at 9 p.m.

Successful conference

On May 16th and 17th, mental health professionals from across the province gathered at the Queensbury Convention Centre for two days of learning, listening, and talking – all in the hopes of going back to work a little better prepared.

The conference was hosted by Ehrlo

Counselling and the Psychology Association of Saskatchewan.

Conference presenter Martha Straus, PhD., shared her extensive knowledge on treating adolescent attachment trauma. But more than that, she hoped that each participant would go home with the awareness that the knowledge, skillset, and passion they have as therapists, counsellors, and psychologists, was enough.

“We have many talented psychologists, counsellors, and caseworkers at the Ranch. But more than that, each one of our staff is passionate about helping and we pour ourselves into our clients.”
-Natashia Schroenroth, Ehrlo Counselling

“The therapy relationship is an attachment relationship. So it's specific to who you are, and how you work in the room with families and clients,” she explained. “You can't end up working just like I do. You have to learn to work the way you do, and embrace it,” she said.

For Ehrlo Counselling staff, the message was received loud and clear.

“We have many talented psychologists, counsellors, and caseworkers at the Ranch. Each one of our staff is passionate about helping and we pour ourselves into our clients,” Ehrlo Counselling's Natashia Schroenroth said. “Having Martha validate that the selfless nature of our work is in fact healing, is a huge boost.”



Natashia Schroenroth and Dave Weibe (Ehrlo Counselling), Dr. Martha Straus, and PAS representative

New strategic plan

Ranch Ehrlo Society is pleased to announce the completion of a three year strategic plan. The plan was created through collaboration with employees, senior leadership, and the Ranch Ehrlo Society board of directors.

“We undertook a more robust strategic plan consultation process, looking



at the history of the agency as well as the direction we see for the future, which resulted in a new vision for the agency,” explained Andrea Brittin, Ranch Ehrlo CEO and president.

The resulting plan includes a new mission statement, directly linking the mission back to our highly qualified and passionate staff. The new mission statement reads: “To provide quality prevention, restorative, and advocacy services to vulnerable individuals and families through highly engaged and professional employees.”

The full plan, which remains in effect until 2019, is available online at ehrlo.com.

Family baskets a hit at Dalla-Vicenza



While all of our programs work hard to reunify youth with their families or communities, Dalla-Vicenza House in Regina is special because it is a family reunification unit. Families are encouraged to come stay with their children, and there are monthly family meeting days. The other thing that makes the house special is their hamper program.

“We’ve been giving families hampers since we were established,” explained housemother Susan Craig. Initially, the hampers were distributed at the family Christmas meal, an annual tradition.

“The families would get a wicker basket filled with household supplies, crafts the kids had made, and baking from our kitchen,” said Craig. “The supplies were purchased throughout the entire year.”

Three years ago, clinical director Kate Langen learned of a new project started by the Food Bank. The program allowed non-profit organizations to visit the Foodbank’s non-food items warehouse to pick up large quantities of household items to give away to families in need. This allowed Dalla-Vicenza’s hamper program to grow and they began offering hampers three or four times per year.

“Our families love to receive these little tokens from us. It’s our way of showing our families that they are valued and cared for by the staff here at Dalla-Vicenza House,” Craig added. “We use them as a stepping stone to forming stronger relationships.”

Ranch employee helps save a life

Shaun Silzer, a Ranch Ehrlo unit manager in Regina, received a Red Cross Rescuer Award for performing CPR on a three-year-old girl while on vacation in Mexico in 2014.

Ranch Ehrlo requires all of its front-line employees to have First Aid and CPR training, but Shaun proved the training is useful outside of work, as well.

“A few seconds later, there were screams and the little girl was being pulled out of the water and laid on the pool deck.”

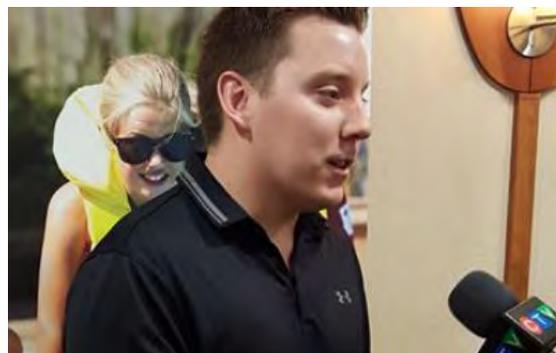
-Shaun Silzer

“We were spending our first day at the pool. Around 4 p.m., I was in the pool with my wife and her parents and we heard a mother asking people if they had seen her daughter,” he explained. “A few seconds later, there were screams and the little girl was being pulled out of the water and laid on the pool deck.”

The toddler had no pulse, so Silzer and another Good Samaritan immediately jumped into action. Silzer did chest compressions while the other individual kept the airway clear and provided breaths for nearly fifteen minutes while they waited for emergency services to arrive.

The toddler went to the San Diego Children’s Hospital and recovered, actually returning to the resort with her family before the end of his stay.

“The award is very humbling and it is nice



to have recognition of the event that took place, but I'm just happy that I was able to help a child, a family, and create a long-lasting relationship with a group of people," he added.

Kenyon House grand opening

It is perhaps fitting that the newest home on Ranch Ehrlo's Pilot Butte campus is named for past chair Jim Kenyon. After all, his involvement with the Ranch began in the early 2000s when he lent his structural engineering expertise to the design and construction of several group home projects.



Jim and his family

Jim joined the agency board in 2007 and served as board chair in 2012 and 2013. He stepped down in 2015. During his tenure, Jim led the board through a period of transition with the sudden passing of Ranch founder, president and CEO Geoff Pawson in early 2012.

"This new building is another example of the commitment of the Ranch to building a better community for everyone," Kenyon said at the opening. "Thank you all for this great honour."

The newest home is a replacement for the outdated "old Mitchell" house, which became a temporary home to emergency receiving services when the program expanded. When the short-term contract with the ministry became permanent in Sept. 2014, it became apparent that a new house was needed. Construction was completed in December 2015.

The Emergency Receiving Program provides emergency receiving services for children ages 12 to 15 on a short-term basis.

3 mile race north



Buckland campus' youth and staff traveled to Corman Park to take part in the annual northern 3-mile race.

Basketball wrap up



The Ehrlo Basketball League wrapped up with at tournament. Thank you to the coaches for another fantastic season!

Awards Night south



MLA Laura Ross brought greetings at our southern Awards Night this week. We're very proud of each of our clients and love having an opportunity to recognize them for the work they do all year.

Volunteering



Some of our youth at Matheson House in Prince Albert volunteered to help with the Relay For Life clean up.

Traditional crafts



Youth at Alex Guy House had the opportunity to learn how to create moccasins from scratch! Over 12 weeks, they did everything from cutting the material, sewing it together, and completing their moccasins with intricate bead work. It was a great opportunity and we're proud of our youth for sticking with it!