



- developmentally focused
- family involved
- relationship based
- trauma informed
- competence centred
- ecologically oriented

## Top employer 13 years running

Ranch Ehrlo Society has once again been selected as one of Saskatchewan’s top employers. This is the 13th year the agency has been recognized as an exceptional place to work.

Natalie Huber, Ranch CEO stated, “We are incredibly honoured to be recognized as a top employer again. The programs and services we offer are of the highest standards. We are only able to achieve this because we attract the best and most compassionate staff by being an agency that offers a Total Rewards package that includes educational assistance, room for professional development, matching pension, and competitive salaries.”

“But working at Ranch Ehrlo is more than a job, employees have a passion for making the lives of people better for people in this province,” she added.

## Ranch Ehrlo’s Total Rewards package includes:

**Paid education leave and assistance** – We not only offer staff the opportunity to take time off work to complete their studies, but we also help them pay for ongoing education.

“I started at the Ranch as a frontline worker in 2008 and with a high school diploma, I went on to achieve a Bachelor of Social Work degree in 2017, fully supported by the Ranch. Today I am currently working on my master’s degree and maybe even a PhD,” said Damon Weigl, caseworker.

Our Vocational Training Employment Program crew recently travelled to Corman Park to help beautify the campus with the help of our property management team.





**Paid leave** – We offer paid bereavement, vacation, caregiver, and family leave every year. We also recognize the commitment of an employee’s years of service with additional leave in the form of loyalty days.

“I have always considered myself fortunate to work for Ranch Ehrlo due to their commitment to their employees. This commitment is demonstrated in the amount of paid time off I am granted. This allows me the time I need for a healthy work/life balance,” said Chandra Skerjanec, education assistant.

**Sense of purpose** – Our staff can impact lives from the first days on the job.

“I really appreciate seeing the smiles on these kids’ faces when they achieve or overcome an obstacle in their lives. Knowing that I had a part to play in their success makes this work that much more gratifying,” said Andrew Banerjee, youth care leader.

To read more about our Total Rewards or to see our top employer video, visit [ehrlo.com](http://ehrlo.com).

## Former youth stays the course

A bumpy pathway can lead to the straight and narrow, so long as you follow the right directions along the way.

Former Ranch youth Aaron Gilbert said he’s grateful to Ranch Ehrlo for giving him strategies and strength to choose the right path when he came to a fork in the road.

Gilbert was a troubled youth in the late

1990s, living in extreme poverty and in a household of alcoholics. He said it was extreme anger, not peer pressure, that ruled his life and ultimately led to poor choices and bad behaviours that landed him living at Ranch Ehrlo Society.

“I was scared at first,” he said candidly. “I lived on the reserve most of my life and had never been to the city but being there opened my eyes to the possibilities the world had to offer.”

Gilbert moved into Ranch Ehrlo’s Pilot Butte campus at age 14 and attended school at the Schaller Education Centre. He later moved on to a Regina group home and attended a public school before being discharged at age 16. He said returning to the reserve was difficult, but Gilbert stayed the course and chose a happier, healthier pathway.

Gilbert said proudly, “Some of the people that I got into trouble with are not here anymore, and some of them are in and out of prison. I think that could have been me, I could have gone down that path.”

“ I never forgot what I was taught at the Ranch, and how to handle myself,  
- Aaron Gilbert, former youth ”

Gilbert has gone on to live a happy and fulfilling life alongside his wife. He is fulfilled by a career and by the company of his three sons and four grandchildren. Despite some 30 years passing, Gilbert said he still feels connected to the Ranch.

“If I could see all the people that helped me, I would just tell them thank you. I think about them often, and I love them for what they did for me. They were an amazing part of my life and they really helped change me for the better.”

## Therapeutic music program doubles capacity

Ranch Ehrlo has successfully expanded its therapeutic music program, doubling capacity and substantially increasing its reach to include more programs, participants, and session time.

The agency was afforded the opportunity to grow its therapeutic music program late last year when the National Music Centre (NMC) announced Ranch Ehrlo as the recipient of a \$50,000 grant.

To date, the therapeutic music program has grown capacity by 110 per cent. There are now 160 Ranch participants benefitting from music therapy each month over the period of 35.5 hours per week, with



additional hours to soon be added.

Whereas the program was previously only available to Supported Living Program (SLP) participants, it now serves participants from the Family Centred Addiction Program (Moose Jaw), the Family Treatment Program, youth in the Group Living Services, and youth and young adults who belong to the Ranch's 2SLGBTQI+ True Colours support groups in Regina.



Music therapy intern Emma Cameron working with a participant

Melanie McDonald, accredited music therapist, has worked with Ranch Ehrlo for nearly 13 years and said she's always had a strong desire to introduce music programming to families.

“At first everyone has a bit of uncertainty and hesitancy because people haven't engaged with music therapy before and aren't sure what it is, but when they get comfortable you immediately see these barriers come down,” she

explained. “I love the family sessions because you see families playing together, and you see families connecting in a way that is easier and comes more naturally. It feels very safe, it feels very playful and fun.”

The NMC grant must be used by the end of August, however, there is an opportunity to have funding renewed. A new grant application is currently in the works.

## First jobs and life lessons

Two boys and a dream, that's what it started as for two children in the Treatment Foster Care (TFC) program at Ranch Ehrlo Society.

The boys, ages 11 and 13, had high hopes of making their own money and decided the key to making those dreams come true was a good ol' fashioned flyer route. And they were able to make that dream a reality with the support of a special family.

The Ball family has fostered the boys for the past three and four years respectively. Last spring the boys started working, delivering flyers in the neighborhoods of Prince Albert, two days per week, with their accompanying foster parents Doug and Joyce.

“The motivator for getting both boys involved in a flyer route was to teach them an appreciation for their personal belongings, especially the more expensive items,” explained Joyce Ball.

Fast forward nine months and the kids are still out pounding the pavement.

“Most kids won't get that first job until 14, 15 or 16 years old so for them to do this at a very young age, with lots of their needs and struggles they've been through, is just so amazing to me,” said Dianna Stang, TFC program manager. “I think it has been good for their self-esteem. It teaches them good work ethic, money management, budgeting, and all those really important life skills.”

With some financial help from their foster parents, one of the boys proudly purchased a Nintendo Switch, while the other was a tad more conservative, saving his earnings until two weeks ago when he bought a brand-new electric scooter.

Ranch Ehrlo's TFC program is a community-based program that provides homes to children who require a more intensive level of care than traditional foster care. TFC works with the families of children placed in the program to help support healthy relationships, thus promoting family reunification or helping to find alternative placements if reunification is not possible.

## Welcoming elders into our homes

Representation is important. Youth have been given the opportunity to see themselves, hear their languages, and understand their cultures more than ever before, with the help of dedicated knowledge keepers.

Jamie Lerat, Ranch Ehrlo's Indigenous advisor has appealed to the hearts of local elders and kohkums, forging invaluable relationships to benefit youth and programs. Elders and kohkums now visit many of our homes, on a bi-weekly or monthly basis, to connect and share with the youth.

“This really helps connect the youth to their culture, to their identity and to their true self,” said Lerat. “We have had the voice of the Indigenous community within the

agency for a long time, and we're very grateful and fortunate to now have these (knowledge keepers) share their voice directly with the youth.

In 2023, 86 per cent of Ranch Ehrlo participants identified as being of Indigenous descent. It's important to have the support being offered by the elders and kohkums because it gives such enrichment and empowerment to the lives of the youth we serve, added Lerat.

Sarah Ovens, a program manager in Saskatoon, said she has seen the positive effects of the elder-youth relationship firsthand.

"Our staff and youth absolutely adore him," she said of the elder who visits May and Welke House monthly. "Over time, the youth have become more and more interested in spending time with him. The benefits to both youth and staff have been immeasurable."

There are now nine programs working with elders and kohkums on a frequent basis. Lerat is working on growing the relationships for two additional programs, with the anticipation of more to follow this year.

"It is through initiatives like these that we make a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve," said Lerat.

Each of the knowledge keepers making a difference will be introduced in a special series presented over the next several months.

## Thank you to our sponsors and donors

Thank you to all of our donors and sponsors who helped Ranch Ehrlo in the past two months:

- Jumpstart grant \$10,318 for the OHL
- KLM Ventures \$ 5,000 general donation to Ranch Ehrlo
- Regina Construction Association \$500 general donation to Ranch Ehrlo

## Hardware in hand



Ranch participant David Sanguais joined Team Saskatchewan to compete in the Floor Hockey Nationals at the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games Calgary 2024. The team brought home the bronze in the big game!

## Colourful campus



Our Corman Park campus was recently adorned with artwork by Ranch staff Dustin Ritter, who is a art facilitator for Paper Crane expressive arts services, alongside youth participants. These colourful additions are just a small sample of the creative project.

## Make your Mark



Special guests, staff, and participants got to watch their favourite fictional characters come to life at the kick off to the Make a Mark art show. Ranch Ehrlo has once again partnered with the Regina Public Library to present the third showcase dedicated to sharing the artistic talents of program participants. The show ran until April 30th at the George Bothwell Library.

## Pipe ceremony



A pipe ceremony was held at Ranch Ehrlo's new Emergency Receiving program in Prince Albert. The new home will provide temporary, emergency care to children ages 0 -11. L to R: Sean Bader, Elder Liz Settee, Barclay Batiuk, Elder Curtis Breaton, Chris Shynkaruk, and Jill Kusisto.

## Inclusivity in the classroom



Ranch Ehrlo Teacher Terry Burgess created a special cultural project for her all-female class, with the intent to provide cultural education and build practical life skills through the art of ribbon skirt making. The students were able to follow the lead of a step-by-step tutorial – completing all cutting, measuring, sewing, stitching, and ironing themselves.