

Mike Peterson
3635 Homestead St.
Rapid City, SD 57703-1234

January 28, 2016

Dear Mike,

Sometimes a horse can help a hurting child.

Let me tell you about a boy and his horse

“David’s” first memory of home was a broken-down car parked on the side of a bridge. He and his three younger siblings lived inside with their parents. He shared,

“We didn’t have food. We’d have to steal. They would use me to steal so they could get money for drugs.”

As a result of the family’s chaos and neglect, David and his brother and sisters were put into foster care when he was five years old. Eventually, David was separated from his siblings as they moved from family to family. His longest stay with any family was only seven months!

Finally, he learned he was going to be adopted by a family.

David can still envision the first meeting with his new parents. He remembers feeling hopeful about his new life, but his unresolved problems soon caused tensions.

Wanting to help David, his adoptive parents tried many treatments and therapies before he arrived at the Ranch. He said the caring staff members at the Ranch made him feel at home. After having spent nearly three years at the Ranch, he has also formed



a special relationship with a loving 22-year-old quarter horse named “Cheerio”.

“Cheerio” Made a Difference

David said he noticed the other horses at the Ranch picked on Cheerio. “I was telling her that she needs to stick up for herself. I could tell she understood.” Cheerio’s situation was very familiar to David. “I kind of knew how it felt for people to bully you. I was always, like, picked on because I was the smallest. Kids would tease me and not be nice to me and just kind of leave me out of everything.”



Communicating with Cheerio during equine therapy was healing for David, who suffers from Bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and reactive attachment disorder. “Cheerio inspired me to push on because I saw her doing just that.” They enjoyed each other’s company, and David even learned to gallop bareback on Cheerio.

“Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch changed me.”

In order to help David work through the pain of his past, his treatment plan included equine therapy. “Now I watch what I say and understand how it could hurt someone,” he said. “Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch changed me.”

He’ll be leaving the Ranch soon, but he won’t forget his strong connection with Cheerio. “Horses are just like us,” he said. “They don’t look like us, but they have thoughts and feelings, too.”

The Ranch is blessed to be located on a 410-acre working ranch with horses, cattle, therapy dogs, and other animals. Children put down their smart phones, computers and video games and are allowed to spread out and enjoy the beautiful, peaceful surroundings. The horses are pastured just north of the large, indoor equestrian center where equine program goes on year-round.

The Ranch is able to offer equestrian activities to youth because of the generous support of people like you. The Ranch receives no government support for the program. By partnering with the Ranch, you are ensuring that these invaluable equestrian activities will continue. Please consider making a gift today!

For the Kids,

Handwritten signature of Kurt Alme in blue ink.

Kurt Alme

P.S. Please let us know if you would like a tour of the Ranch’s equestrian facilities. The staff would love to show them off!