



2022 NEWSLETTER



**El Ranchito  
de los Niños**

*Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together*

## FUNNY THINGS KIDS SAY:

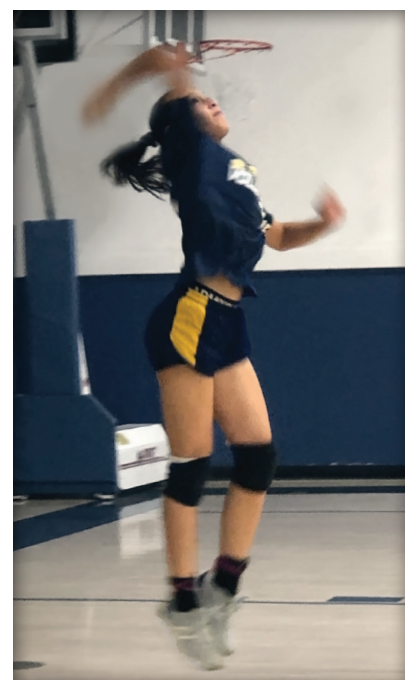
Molly, one of the younger kids, coughed at the dinner table. I asked her (in a joking manner), "Do we need to give you the Heimlich?" One of the other young kids, Jack, replied, "Yes, give her the Heimlich!"

I proceeded to ask Jack, "Do you even know what the Heimlich is?" Jack quickly replied in a know-it-all tone, "Yes! You have to lick her."



## HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR YEAR

- Our family is busy! **Over the past** year our kids have participated in soccer, T-Ball, cheerleading, volleyball, flag football, cross country, basketball, 4-H, church choir and guitar lessons.
- We had 1 child receive her **1st Holy Communion** in the spring. We are so blessed to be a part of her growing faith.
- We may not have added any new kids to the family this year, but it is very exciting to report that we have had our fourteen children for the past two years. This **consistency in our family** has been such a highlight, providing them with a stable home.
- Our oldest **became a teenager** this spring. It's official. It's hard to believe that she will be off to high school next year and driving before we know it!
- We **added four pigs and three goats** to our list of animals this summer. The kids raised them for the Valencia County Fair in August. Many of the kids also participated in 4-H sewing, wood working, leadership project, photography, baking, dog projects and showed rabbits. It was a busy, 4-H filled summer! Thank you to everyone that came out to support the kids at the fair.



# RESTORING A CHILDHOOD

KATHY MEHENBIER,  
PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER

We are continually asked why we started the home. Many of you may know that while working with a variety of charities to help families in need, we saw that often times the kids continued to suffer and their needs were not being met. We had a vision for a home that restored the lives of children. The big picture was to provide these children with a safe, loving and stable home. What we didn't realize was that the true gift we are giving these children was restoring their childhood.



we joked, we learned about each other and I got to experience the greatness of each of these kids. Don't get me wrong...they drove me crazy some mornings when their pace was no faster than molasses, but I learned so much spending the summer "working" with the kids.

Through our daily morning/evening talks, I learned their likes, dislikes, interests, things they look forward to doing and each of their unique personalities. I got to know the kids on a much deeper level. I learned that our oldest is a little boy crazy and I learned that another girl (after three months) really hates pigs. I learned that our oldest boy is truly one of the most helpful kids I have ever met (and it makes me so proud). I learned that one of our boys tends to be a little nosy at times and one of our young ladies can be quite the whiner. And I saw them working through their difficult past and the leaps and bounds that they are making.

This summer I learned that we are restoring the childhoods of each of these kids. While the bigger picture is always important, I got to see the smaller differences that we make. I saw the gift of being a kid again. We often take being a kid for granted. So, now I think that's the reason we started the children's home, to restore childhoods, one kid at a time.

I saw firsthand the difference that we are making in each of our kids' lives this summer. We had seven children raise 4-H animals; four pigs and three goats to be exact. This being most of the kids' first experience with livestock animals, I made the commitment to go to the home every morning and every night to help feed animals. Along with another volunteer (we call her the Goat Whisperer), we fed, we walked, we weighed, we slathered them in lotion, we brushed, we trimmed and we worked hard every day. Beyond that, we laughed,





# THE HEART OF THE HOME

AMY KINDRICK,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been said that the kitchen is the heart of the home and at El Ranchito de los Ninos, we believe it's true. The kitchen is certainly the hub of our home. It is where the meals are created, birthday candles are blown out and connections are made between the children and our staff/volunteers. Celebrations are centered around food-fueling bodies, minds, and souls.

Many of us have fond memories of our family members cooking our favorite meals or teaching us how to prepare a special recipe that has been passed down for generations. Kids in foster care often come from a situation where they weren't always sure where their next meal would come from let alone have warm memories associated with meals.



The kitchen at El Ranchito has been the site of over 22,000 meals and 14,000 snacks in our 20+ years of serving kids and the wear and tear is showing. The kitchen is undergoing a full renovation with new cabinets, flooring and countertops, so we can continue providing nourishment and connection.

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Our kids stand side by side and learn how to bake cookies and cakes for 4H, cook a variety of meals from the many backgrounds of our staff/volunteers and discover the art of cooking, the joy of preparing a family or holiday meal and create true memories that will last a lifetime.

There are many doors into the home at El Ranchito, but I always use the door closest to the kitchen when entering the home. Some of my favorite moments, in doing so, are seeing a child on a step stool helping stir something in a giant pot, or sneaking a taste of batter while making cookies. These are the moments that I get to see the kids being kids and building new memories around food and connection.

We are very grateful for every volunteer, donor, staff member and guest who have taken time to “break bread” with our kiddos throughout all the years. Many of our residents’ fondest memories are centered around these celebrations and so are mine.

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## REVITALIZATION

Over the years we have done many repairs to the home, replaced furniture and patched things to hold us over another year. This year, patching is not going to cut it. We are doing a full kitchen renovation. With the generosity of Builders Source Appliance Gallery, Mohawk Flooring and United Stoneworks we will replace the floors, appliances and countertops throughout the living, dining and laundry rooms. But, the revitalization of the house hopefully will not stop there. We want to extend the new flooring through the hallways and bedrooms as well as replace vanities in all the bathrooms. While we have worked with many businesses to secure in-kind donations, we will still need funding for the overall project. We hope that you will consider a donation to help us with the two phases of our renovation project.

