

The Ranch Hand

Volume 44, Number 2

Spring 2025

“Under the guidance of the Catholic Church, provide a safe home for all youth who have experienced physical or emotional trauma, where every act is done with love to help them discover the dignity of the human person and learn the skills to manage life’s challenges.”

It's a BIG Anniversary!

As Home On The Range celebrates 75 years of helping children, the organization shares and reflects on the facility itself, all the buildings, the ranch, and how it has changed.

The first building was built in 1950. This building had a kitchen, dining room, Father’s office and rooms and bathrooms for the boys. As Home On The Range grew over the years, new buildings were needed.

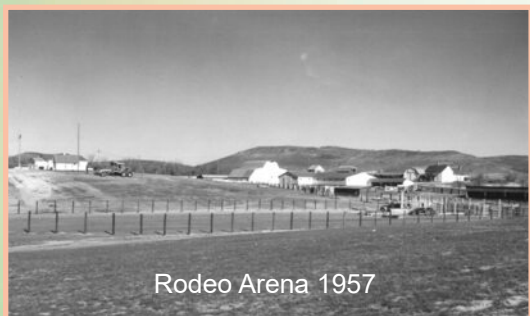


Home On The Range 1982



Home On The Range 2024

In 1957, the first rodeo arena was created. The arena has been updated a few times. First, in 1991 where bucking chutes were added to the south end of the arena. Later, in 2021, the old arena was torn down and a new one was put in its place. The arena panels and pens were made of iron and sucker rod, new bucking chutes and announcer’s stand were built, and we added new concession stands.



Rodeo Arena 1957



Rodeo Arena 2021

The next big project was Eagle Hall - the boys’ dormitory. Fundraising and construction began in 1960. The building would have two separate wings, a full-size gym, chapel, classroom/library and a recreation room.

The next couple of years improvements included the addition of a butcher shop, barns for milking cows and laying hens, a horse barn, and a shop building to teach the boys different trades. We also built an addition to the boys’ dorm to create a larger kitchen/dining area, and laundry rooms in the basement.

In 1992, Clem Casey Hall was built. This new building started out as staff housing with a kitchen, dining area, and rooms in the basement. In later years, it was designated as an independent living dorm to help boys prepare for leaving Home On The Range.

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HOTR Ranch Hand

Official Publication of
Home On The Range



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Financial Support

HOTR does not receive direct financial support from the Bismarck Catholic Diocese. Care rates charged for services cover approximately 75% of the actual cost. The remainder must be raised through gifts, grants, our agricultural operation, fundraising events, and investments.

Financial Statements Available

A copy of the most recent HOTR financial statement is available to persons or organizations upon request. Please contact our business office at (701) 872-3745.

Member:

Association of Children's
Residential & Community Services



- Equal Opportunity Employer -



ACCREDITED COUNCIL
ON ACCREDITATION OF
SERVICES FOR FAMILIES
AND CHILDREN, INC.

DAKOTA SCRAMBLE GOLF TOURNAMENT FOR HOME ON THE RANGE

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2025

**Bully Pulpit Golf Course
Medora, ND**



For more information, email joleneo@hotrnd.com



HOME ON THE RANGE IS

CELEBRATING

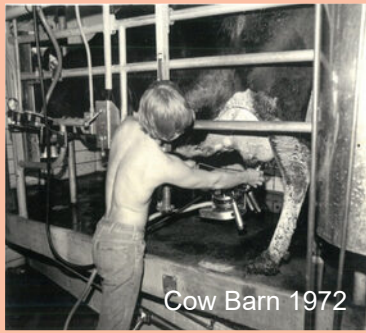
75TH

ANNIVERSARY

AUGUST 2 & 3, 2025

Mark you calendars and save the date!

The 75th anniversary is planning a big celebration at Home On The Range. More details and information will be shared as plans are finalized.



Cow Barn 1972

Butcher Shop 1972



Brunet Hall 1982



Clem Casey Hall 1982



Fahnlander Hall 2021



Home On The Range began serving girls in 1993. A two-level staff housing unit was converted into the dorm. Later in 2001, a fundraising campaign was underway and money raised to construct a much larger dormitory. Fahnlander Hall has two separate wings, a dining hall, laundry room, recreation rooms, offices and a conference room.

The Baertsch indoor arena and canine kennels were added to the campus in 2007 and 2008. This facility was uniquely designed to conduct equine and canine animal assisted therapy. Later, insulation and heating were added to the arena so that it could be used all year-round.

The most recent building which has been added to Home On The Range, is the Alwin C. Carus building. The purpose was to design a building with an employee training room, alternative classroom, employee offices, and a weight room. This building now houses our campus school, Badlands Learning Center.

Baertsch Arena 2008



Alwin C. Carus building 2015



There have been many changes in the campus layout and buildings over the past seven decades; changes, additions, removing of some buildings, etc. Tours of the facility are welcome by scheduling appointments.

Home On The Range is located in southwestern North Dakota on more than 1400 acres. It is licensed to help boys and girls, ages 12-17 years old. For more information, visit hotrnd.com.



Home On The Range is celebrating 75 years!

Home On The Range is celebrating its 75th Anniversary of helping children and families. Over the more than seven decades, there is a rich history of significant events and people. One such individual had an important impact on children, and built the foundation of Home On The Range to make it become what it is today - Father William J. Fahnlander.

It all started in 1955, wherein Bishop Hoch assigned Father William J. Fahnlander to become the Parish Priest of St. Michael's and assistant to Father Cassidy of Home On The Range (HOTR). In 1958, Father Cassidy suffered a heart attack and Father Fahnlander was assigned the position of Acting Superintendent. Sadly, Father Cassidy died from a second heart attack in 1959 and Father Fahnlander was named as full-time superintendent of Home On The Range.

Father Fahnlander had to quickly learn how to "fundrasie" to keep the fledgling organization operational. He was uncomfortable "begging" for donations. He learned fast that once he started talking about how many children were at Home On The Range and things they needed, people and organizations responded with "how can we help?"

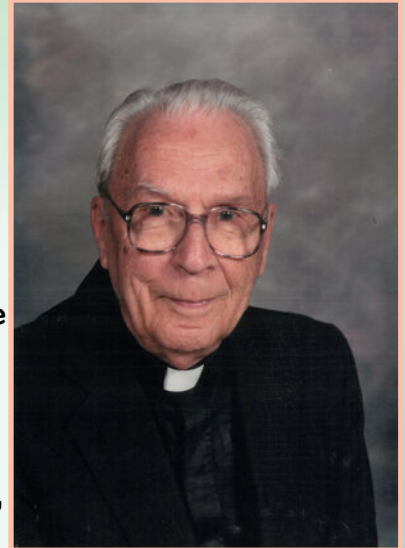
In 1960 and 1961, Father Fahnlander oversaw the construction of a new boys' dormitory, named Eagle Hall. The capital campaign was spearheaded by Eagle members in their "buck for a brick." This new building would provide housing, a Chapel, full gymnasium, library and recreation rooms. By 1964, Eagle Hall was completed and it housed 48 boys.

Over the next several decades, donations came in and major milestones developed. The support always seemed to come at a time when it was needed most. He was known for saying "Somehow the Lord took care of us." The Eagles auxiliaries presented Home On The Range with a brand-new school bus; a dairy barn and chicken coop provided milk and eggs for the boys, as well as income to the ranch; a trade shop was completed to teach the boys various trades; and an addition was put on Eagle Hall for a new kitchen, dining room, and laundry area in the basement.

Father Fahnlander often traveled across the country and wrote 100's of letter acknowledging donations, raising money and updating friends and organizations on HOTR's progress and successes.

One of his travels even took him to the National Finals Rodeo. In the rodeo world, some of the cowboys called Father Fahnlander the "Cowboy Priest." Father would wear his cowboy hat, be found behind the chutes or visiting with contractors and cowboys, or sometimes presenting the awards at the rodeo. In 1996, the employees got together to give him tickets to the Finals, and the Benians Horseshoe Casino and Hotel donated a room. The "Cowboy Priest" thoroughly enjoyed the trip and being with the notable cowboys and personnel of the era. In 2000, HOTR applied to the North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame for the Champions Ride Match to be considered as an inductee. The Champions Ride Match was given the Special Achievement Award. Father Fahnlander attended the ceremonies and proudly accepted the award with Duane Howard, Tom Tescher, Jim Tescher, and Alvin Nelson.

Father Fahnlander wore several other hats during his years of service at Home On The Range. Many of the boys admired Father Fahnlander as a father figure.



A former resident recalled this, "I remember Father Fahnlander as an average-size man who commanded instant respect as he walked into a room. He wasn't loud. He was very straight forward and his voice was always steady. And if Father asked you to do something, he expected you to do it. Like "get a haircut" or "do your homework" or "be nice." He would usually check back with you for an answer. There was praise if you completed the task. And a silent gaze that reached inside you if you did not. He was very "reverent" in my opinion. You knew he served God first. He always took time to interact with the residents. Especially in the dining room."

He was also still Priest of St. John's and St. Michael's. In 1979, the HOTR Board of Directors went ahead and hired someone to specifically be just the Director of HOTR. Father Fahnlander stayed on as the HOTR Chaplain. He officially retired from the parishes as their Priest in 1991.

There are reminders of Father Fahnlander's legacy all over the campus of HOTR. His portrait hangs in Eagle Hall near the Chapel and looks fondly over the staff and boys; his Mass Vestments are on display in a glass case in the kitchen; a trophy case of some of his plaques, special awards and letters are on display in the girls' dormitory; and the girls' dormitory itself proudly bears the name "Fahnlander Hall."

Father Fahnlander passed away March 26, 2001 at the age of 80. A vigil service and funeral liturgy were held at the Church of Christ the King in Mandan, with Most Reverend Paul A. Zipfel presiding. Father Fahnlander was buried at HOTR on Cassedy Hill, next to Father Elwood Cassedy. Both priests now watch over HOTR from atop the hill. Guests, staff and children hike the trail to the top, stopping at the Stations of the Cross along the way. Many people hike to pay their respects, meditate and have a quiet, spiritual moment, or have a private memorial service in the presence of the cross and entombments of the Priests.

After his death, Father Fahnlander's life was documented in a book entitled "An Ordinary Disciple of Christ" written by Rev. David G. Morman and Jeri L. Dobrowski. Copies of the book are still available from HOTR. All the proceeds from the book sales were given to the HOTR Foundation.

As Home On The Range celebrates all year round their 75th anniversary, purchase of the books or financial contributions to the Foundation in honor of Father Fahnlander's legacy, memory, and dedication to youth will enable HOTR to continue his vision and work.

Home On The Range is licensed to care for 26 boys and girls, ages 12-17. It is located in western North Dakota near the small town of Sentinel Butte. The facility is under the Auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Bismarck. The Most Reverend Bishop David D. Kagan serves as the President of the Board of Directors. To learn more about Home On The Range and the children they care for, visit www.hotrnd.com.

Eagle Hall 1960



Father Fahnlander with Brad Gjermundson



"Two greatest satisfactions are to see a kid turn out good and finding so many people who are willing to help us." Father Fahnlander

"As I review the past 32 years, I find I've been doing what God chose me to do, even though in the beginning it wasn't what I wanted to do. I'll never regret my decision about staying at HOTR and the lesson I have learned is very meaningful to me. Sometimes we humans don't want to do something, but feel a force to do so anyway. Doing God's Will is all that matters and that has been the greatest lesson of my life." Father Fahnlander

69th ANNUAL
HOME ON THE RANGE
CHAMPIONS RIDE
SADDLE BRONG MATCH

AT THE OPEN A ANGUS ARENA



2024 Champion Brody Cress on
J Bar J's Straight Moonshine 90 pts

AUGUST 2, 2025 ~ 1:00PM

GATES OPEN AT 11:00AM ~ GRAND ENTRY AT 12:30PM

16351 I-94 SENTINEL BUTTE, ND

INTERSTATE 94, EXIT #7

**ADVANCE
TICKETS**



\$20 - ADULT

\$13 - STUDENT

For more info or tickets, call 701-872-3745 or go to:

HOTRND.COM

Each monthly gift helps a child!

We are grateful to all our benefactors and donors. You all make a difference and provide support for services, programming and care for our youth.

If you donate each month, maybe it's time to consider setting up an automatic donation online. Most people already use automatic payments, e.g. to pay utilities, internet or cell phone service, insurance, etc. So why not set up a safe and secure monthly donation to Home On The Range? It's simple and convenient; no more writing checks, using expensive stamps, or wondering if the check got lost in the mail and if the charity received the check. It's all automatic and at the end of the year, you will be sent a summary of the donations.

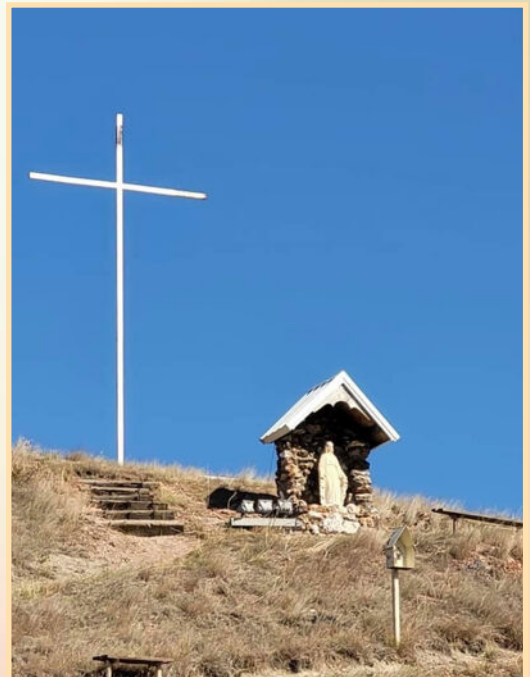
To become a monthly donor, simply visit our website at www.hotrnd.com, click on "Donate Now" and select the "monthly donation" option when you sign up. You can enter the amount you wish to give, \$10, \$25, \$100 or any amount you choose. It all adds up and makes a difference. You can set up the donation to be applied to your credit card or deducted from your bank account. It's convenient and hassle-free. You choose the date that works best for you. All the monthly donations add up to support our mission and ensure that we can continue to make a positive impact on our children.

If you are uncertain on how to set up a recurring monthly donation, just call the Home On The Range development department and they will help set it up for you.

Spiritual Update submitted by Nathan Gentry, Pastoral Assistant

In truth, coming to know God and following Him is the most important thing we can do with our lives. That is why we provide residents with several opportunities to participate in faith-based activities each week. Both boys and girls have the opportunity to go to what is called youth group; during which, they will have a Biblical lesson and play a game. They also have the option to partake in a Bible study. Our local priest comes out once a week to meet with and be available to our youth. The girls have prayer group every week, if they attend, they come and have hot chocolate or tea and spend time in prayer. Since late November we have been regularly taking our youth to church. We hope and pray that while our youth are at Home On The Range, that they would come to know God and desire to follow Him.

Outside of our normal weekly options, there are special events planned periodically. One of the local churches has put on and will put on more worship nights for all of the youth. The youth and many of our staff get to come out for a night of worship and have an ice cream social afterwards. We also have several faith-based guest speakers coming up soon, sharing their powerful testimonials and compelling messages. The most exciting event coming up soon is the Home On The Range Bible camp we are putting on for our youth. We are going to have many recreational activities intertwined with compelling guest speakers to share about God. Our hope is the kids will have a few days of fun camp activities and more importantly, find Jesus.





HOTR Ranch Hand
Home On The Range
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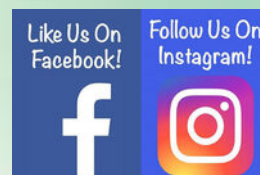
Upcoming Events

*8th Annual Dakota Scramble Golf Tournament
Sunday, June 22, 2025
Bully Pulpit Golf Course - Medora, ND*

*Champions Ride Calcutta
Friday, August 1, 2025 at 6:00pm
ND Cowboy Hall of Fame in Medora, ND*

*69th Champions Ride Saddle Bronc Match
Saturday, August 2, 2025 at 1:00pm
Open A Angus arena at Home On The Range
Interstate 94, Exit #7*

Home On The Range is on Facebook and Instagram! Become a fan by searching for “Home On The Range” and “Home on the Range Champions Ride Match” and stay informed of our events and activities.



Our organization provides a therapeutic ranch environment for boys and girls who are disadvantaged, neglected, problematic, predelinquent and delinquent. Children of all races, creeds, and colors are served at our facility located in Sentinel Butte, North Dakota.