Double H Ranch
The Health & Happiness Herald
2010 Issue 1
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A publicly supported 501(c)(3) charitable
corporation. The Double H Ranch is a
participating member of SEFA:
Capital Region #5000133
Central New York #700042

Message from Victor and Max

The late Theodore Roosevelt once said, “The work that we do for ourselves goes to the grave. The work that we do for our community lives on forever.” Our co-founders, Mr. Charley Wood and Mr. Paul Newman certainly recognized that as a society we are obligated to reach out and help those in greater need. Their vision and generosity will live on forever through their Foundations that support many worthy organizations. In the case of the Double H Ranch, our community has embraced our mission since inception with compassion and commitment. Without this level of support the Double H Ranch would not be in existence.

One of the many incredible realities associated with the Double H is the fact that the majority of individuals in our area have been impacted by our mission and our campers on some level. Perhaps it was a relative or a neighbor whose child attended the Double H or maybe they knew of someone who worked or volunteered at the camp. Consistently, feedback is filled with positive words of admiration and gratitude for the work that is being done on behalf of the amazing children and families who are affiliated with the Double H. Our Board of Directors remains strong and focused on the needs of our children. Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers continue to devote their time, resources and commitment in ensuring the highest quality of care and experiences.

The Double H team worked extra hard to meet our goals in 2009 and we were successful in meeting our budgetary objectives. We truly have accomplished a lot over the past 18 years and we are determined to achieve financial sustainability for the future needs of our families.

The creative well at the Double H never runs dry and we are always striving to enhance our programs and practices. Together we are learning more each day and we all recognize how privileged we are to be afforded this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others.

Thank you for believing so strongly in our mission and for seeing the value it adds in the lives of our families and each and every one of us that has been touched by this magical place. We are grateful for being a part of this giving community and together we will continue to fulfill the dreams of our Founders, our children and perhaps even some of our own.

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Administration Brings the Gift of the Power of the Human Spirit

Many years ago there was a young girl named Jade and she taught me the power of the human spirit and the importance of our existence.

It was a beautiful day at the Double H Ranch; I was on the grounds addressing some Administrative duties and happened to look up the hill to notice that two counselors were with Jade and had converted her wheelchair into an amazing throne. As I approached Jade we made eye contact and I simply said “Jade, you look like a princess!” and then asked as she was smiling, “What makes a princess so happy?” She thought for a moment and confidently responded “Money!” I was surprised with her response and asked her “How much money does a princess need to be happy?” and she replied “A dollar.” Without hesitation I took out a dollar and handed it to her with a smile as she happily headed off with her counselors.

Several days had passed since my encounter with Jade and later learned from her counselors that she never let go of that dollar. Tears filled my eyes as I was aware that Jade was very ill and that she would probably not make it back for another summer at the Double H. On departure day I gave Jade a big hug and she looked at me and smiled. I felt a piece of my heart break that day, but also knew that I was privileged to share a special bond with this beautiful child.

Several months passed and in April of that following year we heard from Jade’s physician that Jade wanted to come back to camp. Her physical condition was poor and her illness had progressed dramatically, but Jade’s spirit remained strong and she was determined to get back to the Double H. The team modified a schedule to welcome Jade back for one day. Her arrival was like that of a sunbeam breaking through the clouds and her smile was as powerful as ever. The Double H team took her on a special journey that day as she was able to visit all of her favorite program areas.

The following week I received a call from Jade’s father who informed me that she had passed away peacefully. He then stated that, “Jade lived to get back to the Double H!” She had fulfilled her dream and taught us the true power of the human spirit—to never say never and don’t ever stop believing!

Jade’s story is one of many and we recognize the privilege we have in working with these amazing children and their families. Our memories of times shared together are gifts and they reinforce the importance of ensuring that the Double H Ranch will be here forever!

—Max

Max Yurenda, CEO/Executive Director, can be reached by calling (518) 696-5676, ext. 224 or emailing myurenda@doublehranch.org.
“Welcome Chipmunks, Muskrats, Deer and Bobcat. A heartfelt welcome to the Wolves, Beaver, and Eagles. Let me hear those Raccoons! A campfire would not be complete without the Bear and Fox cabins, welcome! Now that we are all here, gather round the campfire as I share with you the story of the Double H Ranch and a vision made possible by Mr. Wood and Mr. Newman…”

On the first night of camp after our campers have been assigned their cabins and unpacked their belongings, we gather around the opening campfire for delicious s’mores and to watch the counselors re-enact the legend of the Double H. The fictional characters the Newmanomies retell the story of how they helped Charley Wood and Paul Newman as they created a magical place for children dealing with life-threatening illnesses. A place where opportunities are limitless and a diagnosis does not define a child or his/her abilities. The Double H was created as a place for children to believe in themselves and to believe in the power of love, hope and friendship—the very qualities Mr. Wood and Mr. Newman brought to the Double H and our campers.

The campfire celebration continues into the night with songs, laughter and the formation of life-long friendships. The fire is a symbol of the light that will shine throughout the week as a reminder of the promise our co-founders made to our campers. Before the night concludes, each cabin is asked to contribute something to their week at camp. Each cabin writes their special gift to the Double H on a piece of birch bark and it is burned in the fire to become a part of the night’s ceremony.


Each cabin is asked throughout the week to remember the legend and the special qualities that they have brought to their time at the Double H. It is said that these qualities are what makes Double H Ranch experiences and memories so magical.

Much like the opening campfire each of us brings a gift to the Double H Ranch. Each of us is a part of the legend and a part of the magic that provides our campers a place to feel accepted, a place to feel free and a place to feel truly themselves. As we move forward in 2010, what will you bring to help keep the light shining throughout the year and within our camper’s hearts?

“Welcome Chipmunks, Muskrats, Deer and Bobcat. A heartfelt welcome to the Wolves, Beaver, and Eagles. Let me hear those Raccoons! A campfire would not be complete without the Bear and Fox cabins, welcome! Now that we are all here, gather round the campfire as I share with you the story of the Double H Ranch and a vision made possible by Mr. Wood and Mr. Newman…”

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“I love the Counselors who help me do stuff that I cannot do. I also love the Medical staff who act more like friends than Nurses, Doctors and RT’s.”

Nick J.
The Double H Ranch is located on 320 acres of land in the beautiful Adirondacks and it takes a team of dedicated and skilled workers to keep the 50 acres of grounds and buildings we use maintained for our year-round programming. First time visitors are often taken aback by the size of our facilities and often comment how it’s larger than they had expected. They soon come to realize that everything about the Double H and our campers is bigger and better than first anticipated.

This year the Facilities Department’s main focus is preventative maintenance. In order to accomplish this task, we rely on the support of many to result in the end goal of preservation. Behind the scenes many businesses, corporations and volunteers support our mission by lending their expertise, resources and volunteer hours to our facilities.

Facilities Brings the Gift of Teamwork!

Rob Renaud, Senior Group Leader

“The first time I volunteered at the Ranch and learned what it was all about—was a real ‘eye-opener’. I not only learned about some of the lives of the children ‘campers’, and the difficulties they face, but also the many great programs and the dedication that their staff and volunteers have to make it such a great experience for them. By helping out—even if only for a few hours—you feel a sense of accomplishment and that you can make a difference and a contribution in some way. It was an amazing and very rewarding experience.”

Dean Allen, Target Executive

“This year will be the fourth year that I have participated in a Double H Ranch volunteer event! In 2008 I was asked to be the organizer and Target POC for the Double H. This role involves soliciting volunteers throughout the Distribution Center. It is truly a very rewarding opportunity to be a part of the Double H. To see what an impact the counselors, doctors and volunteers have on the campers is such an amazing feeling! Once you visit the Ranch you feel like you want to keep going back! I will always make it a priority to give time to the Ranch!”

Don Record, Target Executive

“I love having the opportunity to help out at the Double H Ranch. I find it very rewarding being able to help get the camp ready for kids and their families to forget about their problems for awhile. It’s a place where they can have some fun and just be kids.”

Joe Bovey, Target Team Member Asset Protection

Since 2000, Target Distribution Center has been one of those dedicated resources that has helped support the Double H Ranch through grants, in-kind donations and volunteer work days. Over the years Target has donated countless pallets of items from our Wish List to offset budgeted costs and volunteered numerous man/woman hours during our major events, Fall and Spring Work Days and Summer Changeover Days. Target Distribution Center’s volunteers continue to exemplify the quality of teamwork as a group and through their support of the Double H Ranch campers and their families.

“<when I volunteer at the Ranch, I get excited to do any task required because I think about the impact it may have on the kids. If I am cleaning windows, I think about how much better the view will be for a camper that may be able to see his friends swim in the pool or catch a glimpse of the lake. If I am pulling weeds from flower beds and shrubbery, I think about how much nicer it will look for a camper sitting on the porch of a cabin or strolling through the nature garden. I bring my own children with me to volunteer because I want them to feel the sense of joy and pride that helping others brings. The Double H is truly a special place.”

Rob Renaud, Senior Group Leader

“You have touched my son’s life with memories he can carry with him no matter how his life changes (good or bad). My husband and I thank all of you for bringing joy into our son’s life that we could not have offered him ourselves. Thank you!”

—Camper Parent

We are thrilled to announce that Double H will once again host our Alumni Camp Session August 20–23 for those campers age 17–21. The return of alumni will allow Double H to continue to provide support to this special group of people. In 2010 we will be adding some exciting new programs for our Alumni campers. It is back and better than ever!

Conrad Fleischmann, Director of Facilities, can be reached by calling (518) 696-5676, ext. 240 or emailing cfleischmann@doublehranch.org.
Development Brings the Gift of Family!

Every day at the Double H we encounter small miracles that make up the greater experience that is the magic of the Double H. The Double H was co-founded by Charles R. Wood and Paul Newman, but it is with the support of many that we are able to continue to provide such amazing programs to our campers and their families. We are fortunate to have “true angels on earth” as Max Yurenda fondly describes Board Member and long time Double H supporter, Agnes Pompa. We are privileged to have an opportunity to learn from Agnes as she expresses her love and admiration for the Double H and our campers.

How did you and your family become involved with the Double H Ranch?

In May of 1996 a surprising call came from Charley Wood asking me to come to his Glens Falls office because he wanted to fill me in about the Double H Ranch. I was both honored and scared to death because the “big guy” had called me. Everyone knew Charley Wood. All I knew was that he was the owner of Storytown and definitely not out of my league of daily acquaintances. I accepted the invitation, met with Charley and was pleasantly surprised. I liked what I heard and proudly accepted his invitation to join the Board of Directors. Like they say, “the rest is history”.

This was the beginning of a treasured friendship with Charley and Josie, which I still treasure to this day.

What do you feel your greatest contribution to the Double H has been?

I feel my greatest contribution to the Ranch has been my time. Having the opportunity to see the campers and speak with the parents has been an eye opener for me and my family. These encounters make us realize how fortunate we are. God has been so good to us. We are all in pretty good health and you don’t take your health for granted after meeting these kids.

Meeting Paul Newman is one of my fondest memories of the Double H Ranch. I used to joke with Max after joining the Board, about someday realizing my lifelong dream of meeting Paul. Max told me he didn’t like a lot of fanfare when he visited the Ranch so they didn’t get much advance notice. I told him I didn’t care if I had work trucks backed up around the corner of the Pompa Bros. quarry, it would only take me half an hour to get to the Ranch. On the day the call came Max had given me a little more notice than that and I was able to meet Paul. As he took his place at the dining hall table I was amazed at how down to earth he was. The kids were so enthralled with the man who had his picture on the cartons of lemonade at the tables. I was impressed by the genuineness of his concern for the campers as they sat in awe of him. It was a truly amazing and moving experience. I had the opportunity to meet and talk with Paul at other occasions and again he was so humble and down to earth. It’s no wonder why he and Charley hit it off on such a wonderful expedition. I truly believe the camp is contagious...once you have been there, seen the campers, counselors and parents, you are absolutely hooked. There is no turning back.

What is your fondest memory of the Double H?

Meeting Paul Newman is one of my fondest memories of the Double H Ranch. I carried on the tradition myself. In 2008, my five grandchildren agreed that in lieu of the money they would put it towards TV/DVD combinations for three Double H camper cabins. They too realize how blessed they are and how the campers need it more. My granddaughter Kelcie has been able to volunteer at the Ranch and has even brought friends on board to help. She loves working with and hanging out with the campers and just being a friend to them. My daughter Marianne became involved early on, stating how fortunate she is to have healthy kids but realizing that you never know when that can change...not all kids are born sick. In 2010, along with myself, Nancy and Ed, and Marianne and Bill will be co-chairs at the 19th Annual Gala. It is a great honor to be a part of such a wonderful cause.

What motivates you to continue to support the Mission and the campers of the Double H Ranch?

Positive interactions with those who are most impacted by the Double H and the enthusiasm of everyone at the Ranch, especially the kids, that motivates me and my family to support the Double H.

Paul and Charley cannot be thanked enough for pursuing their vision which has affected so many lives in such a positive manner. I thank Charley for having faith in me and inviting me to serve on the Board of Directors. I have truly enjoyed my 14 years as a Board Member and look forward to many more.

Eileen Nash, Director of Development, can be reached by calling (518) 696-5921, ext. 226 or emailing enash@doublehranch.org.
“The Double H is a perfect place; it is a place where life is lived fully, where wishes become realities and where the atmosphere of love overcomes all. Double H is concrete proof that human beings are kind and generous, that smiles beget bigger smiles and that we are put on earth to see each other through. Every trip to camp has its own set of memories and smiles to go along with it, and each child has a unique place in my heart.” —Timothy Driscoll

A true Double H Ranch Camp Chameleon, Tim Driscoll spends the coldest days of winter cruising down Robb Run and the hottest of summer days splashing in the indoor pool. This past winter Tim was chosen as a “13 Kids Who Care” by the WNYT/Channel 13 and St. Peter’s Hospital for his selfless work at Double H. This summer Tim will once again set an example for other area teens as a Leader in Training at Double H.

2010 marked our 13th year of the Adaptive Winter Sports Program. In addition to our regular winter sports days, we hosted 2 night skiing events, 4 family weekends and were awarded 6 gold and 3 silver medals at The Empire State Games in Lake Placid. We thank the children, families, volunteers, instructors and National Ski Patrol for all of their support in making 2010 another truly successful season on the slopes.
The secret of our success is out; there is magic at Double H. There is no denying that the energy at camp helps to provide an experience of a lifetime for all of those who are fortunate to walk the grounds. A common question is where does the magic come from? Our children teach us the true meaning of life and the importance of enjoying life as you should, as a child. But there is a special group of individuals who make the dreams of our children a reality by giving of themselves whole-heartedly to the mission of Double H—our staff and true Double H heroes.

Our summer team is given the incredible opportunity to change a life, to make a difference, to teach others that the power of true compassion and kindness can be found on the longest day of the shortest summer of your life. This successful team is a group of many hands, but of one mind with one shared vision. The goal to make magic happen at Double H.

Who are these summer staff heroes? Here is a brief glimpse into some of the incredible stories behind the team of over 100 summer staff members. Without the love, dedication, and support that these extraordinary young people provide for our children, Double H would not be possible!

David Chidyllo:

For some staff there is no greater role to prepare you to be a part of our admired summer staff team, than living the experience as a camper first-hand. Dave Chidyllo began his time at camp in 1997 as an excited, but nervous camper. Not quite sure knowing what to expect in the beginning and falling in love with camp in the end. It was a love that has now spanned over a decade. He spent seven summers as a camper learning from his counselors, watching the compassion for all, and experiencing the magic of the Double H. Years later Dave was able to return that favor and has spent the last six summers creating this same experience for so many other children. He is a mentor for our campers and we are fortunate to welcome him back to the 2010 team.

Carolina Leiva:

This past year Lina celebrated her 11 year anniversary of being Cancer free and what better way to celebrate this milestone than spending another summer at camp. Life lessons learned at Double H have helped Lina to realize that in her words, “she feels lucky to have had Cancer because it allowed her to find camp.” This powerful statement is a true testament to the passion and commitment Lina brings to camp each summer. She has been an amazing role model to our campers for the past three summers!

Stephen King:

Stephen knows the power of the Double H experience better than most; he was a camper for nine years starting back in 1994. After his time as a camper ended, he continued to help make camp possible for other kids from his hospital. Stephen served as a chaperone for the bus ensuring the next generation of kids from Dartmouth Hospital had the privilege of the Double H experience. This year he will now take that next step as a first year counselor - helping to show other children the power of Double H.

The greatest gift of generosity is not only giving what you have, but giving who you are and this group gives all they have and more. Our summer staff is selected from over 500 qualified individuals all passionate to provide the experience of a lifetime. Whether it is green, blue or purple, they will each work hard to earn the coveted 2010 summer staff t-shirt. A simple t-shirt that over the three months of summer will bear the triumphs and rewards of their roles as counselors enjoying all those little moments spent laughing in the hot summer sun at a magical place—the Double H Ranch.

Jacqui Royael, Director of Operations, can be reached by calling (518) 696-5676, ext. 225 or emailing jroyael@doublehranch.org.
Join Team Hole in the Wall and Support the Double H Ranch—here’s how

Join us for our Inaugural Camp Challenge Ride
It’s time to dust off your bike in the garage and gear up for the Double H Ranch’s Inaugural Camp Challenge Ride—September 12, 2010. Whether you are a casual rider or a seasoned cyclist, all levels are welcome! Ride through the beautiful Adirondacks with 100% of proceeds benefiting the campers of the Double H. Participants can choose from a 15 Mile, 30 Mile or Metric Century (62 Mile) ride. Once registered through Team Hole in the Wall, participants will receive their own personal fundraising webpage, training tips, online discussion groups and training blogs. Each rider will also receive Team apparel. The day will begin with a pre-ride breakfast and end with a post-ride BBQ all at the Double H Ranch. Registration fee to participate is $25 per rider and all participants are required to commit to an additional $250 fundraising goal. Family and friends are welcome to cheer riders on and attend the post-ride BBQ celebration for an additional $10 per person. Additional corporate sponsorship and volunteer opportunities are available.

Visit www.teamholeinthewall.org/rideDoubleH to register today as an individual or as a team.

Participate in a National or Regional Race
Through athletic events Team Hole in the Wall participants support Hole in the Wall Camps, to provide children dealing with a life-threatening illness a chance to experience the magic of camp. Join today and you will receive guaranteed entry into specific races, invitations to pre and/or post race events, training tips, team apparel, fundraising tools and support—plus the knowledge that by challenging yourself you are changing the life of a child.

Upcoming Team Hole in the Wall Races
Chicago Marathon, October 10, 2010
Marine Corps Marathon, October 31, 2010
ING New York City Marathon, November 7, 2010

Coordinate Your Own Team Challenge
Through this program Team members can compete in their own event or an event in their area while receiving the same benefits that our featured event participants receive. Participants may also choose the individual Hole in the Wall Camp that they wish to support.

Become a part of the TEAM today! For additional information or questions please email Kimberly Checchia, Development and Communications Coordinator at kcheccio@doublehranch.org or call (518) 696-5921, ext. 239.

“Lisa and I are thrilled to be running in this year’s Boston Marathon to raise money for Double H Ranch. We have both run marathons before, but never in Boston. So along with this being a huge treat for us, we are also so grateful to be able to raise money for the camps. We have an aggressive goal of $10,000, but we’re confident we will get there. Wish us luck!”

Ed Mitzen, Double H Ranch Board Member

Upcoming Events—Save the Date
Check out our online Calendar and Event Registration at www.doublehranch.org

June 25, 2010
19th Annual Gala, Great Escape and Splashwater Kingdom

July 23, 2010
Partners Boogie Off Broadway, Saratoga Winery

September 12, 2010
Double H Ranch Inaugural Camp Challenge Ride, Double H Ranch

Follow the Double H Ranch on Facebook and Twitter, and be sure to sign up for our quarterly e-newsletter at www.doublehranch.org.
Keeping the Promise!

Thank you to those who donated to the “Be a Deliverer of the Promise” initiative and for helping to keep our promise to our campers that the Double H will be here always.

Ms. Florence Andresen  
Mr. and Mrs. Zigmund R. Brzezinski  
Ms. Ariel Cohen  
Mr. Patrick Festa  
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Fitzgerald  
Mrs. Margaret Guise  
Mr. Charles S. Hart and Ms. Mary J. Prahm  
Ms. Lisa Huber  
Ms. Kirsten E. Johnson  
Ms. Karen M. Keast  
Ms. Jeanie Loyola  
Mr. Marc Lustick  
Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Madwed  
Mr. and Mrs. Dominic A. Martino  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Palazzo  
Mr. and Mrs. Wilder Tasker  
Ms. Donna Turner  
Mr. and Mrs. Louis J. Vendetti Sr.  
Sarah Gryga Benefit Fund  
In Honor of Justin Halstead  
In Honor of Harry Webster  
In Memory of Dominick Chrzan  
In Memory of Daniel, Irv, Val and Cindy Iversen  
In Memory of Stan Thomas  
In Memory of Gertrude Whitmore

Spirit
It’s not every day in which you see such a light,  
Such a small body, but a soul of such might.
A rare person who emanates love,  
A brilliant smile that is remnant from above.
He was a warrior at heart, but battled with grace,  
Turning within with a smile on his face.
Bringing joy to all who were around,  
Having a demeanor that was fervent and sound.
May we not forget his family, who loved with such care,  
Allow our camper’s spirit to be your tour guide of life,  
one that requires no fare.

Health and Happiness,  
Christopher Well  
Camper turned Counselor

Ben S. 2000–2009  
Tyler W. 1995–2009  
Matthew H. 1989–2010