

# Beauty Ablaze

The Newsletter of

★ BLAZING HOPE RANCH ★

## MY ONLY HOPE

It can be discouraging, knowing how much sin has devastated this world and how little it feels one person can do to help. Thankfully, **I've learned that life is not about me, but about God, who so-patiently chooses to work with us to bring restoration to His creation.**

There was a story I heard growing up, about a small town having an auction. It was to be a prestigious affair where items of great import were to be sold--paintings and pearls, artifacts and antiques. Abuzz with excitement, the town crowded the auction hall on the day of the event, excitedly clamoring with bids for the valuable items available.



Halfway through the auction the auctioneer opened the next crate, frowning in confusion at the single item inside. It was a violin--an old one, at that, ugly and scarred and hardly worth his time. But still, he held it aloft with his salesman's smile.

"And now," said he, "Who'll start the bidding?"

The room fell silent. Then, when enough time had passed to realize it

wasn't a joke, someone offered a dollar, another two, then three.

"Going for three," the auctioneer called, waiting to see if anyone else would make a bid, doubting anyone would.

A man in the back of the room stood and walked to the stage, grey hair shining in the dim light and footsteps washed out amidst the confused chatter while every set of eyes turned and stared. He stepped onto the stage and wordlessly took up the violin, adjusting its tuning, raising it to his chin, and lowering the bow to the strings.

With the pull of his arm the violin sang, as somber and sweet as an angel. Its voice lilted through the now-silent hall, ebbing and flowing, gentle as the tide. All too soon the music ended, the melody fading in one final, captivating phrase, one last note, then silence.

The man handed the auctioneer the violin, and walked back to his seat without a word as the auctioneer once more held up the violin.

"And now," said he, with a voice low and reverent, "what is the bid?"

One thousand, someone offered, then two thousand another, then three. At last the item was sold--the most valuable one by far, though it was the same cracked and dusty thing worth scarcely three dollars only minutes before. This story is one based on the poem *The Touch of the Master's Hand* by Myra Brooks Welch. The final stanzas read as follows:

*"The audience cheered, but some of them cried, "We just don't understand. What changed its' worth?" Swift came*

*the reply, "The Touch of the Master's Hand." And many a man with life out of tune all battered and bruised with hardship, Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd much like that old violin. A mess of pottage, a glass of wine, a game and he travels on. He's going once, he's going twice, he's going and almost gone. But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd never can quite understand, The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought by the Touch of the Masters' Hand."*

I've learned a lot this past year, but perhaps the most reassuring thing I've learned in my time working at Blazing Hope Ranch has been that it isn't about me. It's about God, the Master and Creator who breathes galaxies, shatters mountains, and heals hearts with so little as a caress. **My only hope is to facilitate an environment in which the Master can work, and then to get out of the way and stare in wide-eyed wonder at the beautiful music He can create.**

- by Abby Meyer



HOPE artwork by Karis Joy Fezell

## MORE PRECIOUS THAN PEARLS

Easter was all about Jesus' resurrection. I couldn't wait to wake up before dawn to attend sunrise service with my family. My doting grandma always found joy in giving me an Easter basket. She knew I was not fond of chocolates and sweets, so instead she placed porcelain dolls, figurines and two or three pearls in my basket. After many Easter's had passed, the pearls were strung into a necklace. Those pearls, mostly worn on Easter and other special dates, were stolen when I was a young woman in college. Several years after marrying my husband he bought me another string of pearls, along with earrings and a bracelet. The gift exponentially grew, and I was blessed.

Last summer, our church provided the opportunity for a trip of ministry to Blazing Hope Ranch. As a registered nurse, I had worked specifically with women in crisis at a clinic for several years. **My husband and I felt the call to go and I immediately asked God to train me and prepare me. I so clearly felt Him speak to my heart to take jewels.** He reminded me of a small



polished wooden box tucked in the back of a drawer with pearls. He spoke to my heart what was on His heart and exactly what to say to the recipient of the jewels.

**We were a small band of**

**Californians going to do ordinary work with an extraordinary God. We simply wanted to be obedient and bless our sisters in Tennessee.** No one knew about the pearls except God, my husband and I.

Our brothers and sisters in Christ at Blazing Hope Ranch were as warm and welcoming as the green, wide open and spacious acres of the ranch itself. We began our long days of work eagerly. We knew the hours and talent invested was accomplishing needed building and refurbishing on the property, but also the needed refurbishing of our own hearts. Most importantly, we were building relationships.

God's preparation in all of us was apparent as hearts of strangers were immediately melded together. Our time at BHR was amazing, full of glory stories. **Buildings and fences were enhanced, landscaping was beautified, but the long lasting and eternal refurbishing and beautifying was done in each one of our hearts.**

God made the way for us to meet those for whom Blazing Hope Ranch was created. I was blessed to personally give those pearls to a very precious daughter of Christ Jesus. What was clearly put on my heart to tell the recipient of those pearls was, "God pushes aside all jewels, precious stones, silver and gold, and says, I choose YOU above all else and above all things and

**GOD PUSHES ASIDE ALL JEWELS, PRECIOUS STONES, SILVER AND GOLD, AND SAYS, I CHOOSE YOU ABOVE ALL ELSE AND ABOVE ALL THINGS AND I WILL MAKE YOU WHOLE!"**

**I WILL MAKE YOU WHOLE!"**

He does make us whole. Often, this occurs not by receiving, but by giving things away and emptying ourselves. **I went to BHR to bless and give but left more richly blessed and whole than ever before.** Our Heavenly Father gives each of us gifts and talents. The world will often steal them away, but if we give them away, God can use them exponentially for His glory.

- by Melanie West

## THE REAL DEAL

In the summer of 2018, I just completed my freshman year of college and volunteered at Camp Run Free for both weeks. Right away, it was easy to tell that these people were genuine and authentic.

That following fall, I transferred schools and moved away from where I grew up. I didn't know anybody in the area, and I rarely saw my family and friends. **I fell into a depression that was much worse than any I'd ever had, becoming more and more isolated. I tried everything I could to get better.**

Camp Run Free has a theme for each day of the week. The three that I kept reminding myself of were "You are unique," "Choices have consequences," and "You were born to fly". *They reminded me of who I was, that things wouldn't change if I just sat around, and what I was capable of.*

I continued to struggle, but slowly got better. Summer came and it was time for Camp Run Free again. I volunteered both weeks and the second week of camp I began to realize how far I came. I wasn't the same shy, reserved kid battling depression anymore; I had become more outgoing, much happier, and had a clearer mind. **Most importantly, I had forged a stronger relationship with God,** and the Ranch had played a huge part in all of this.

The target at camp is the kids, and the target overall for Blazing Hope Ranch is survivors, but they helped me too. They're the real deal, and it's easy to tell.

- by Jeremiah Eastman



**Inspired to volunteer or give back at the Ranch?**

**Find out how at <https://www.blazinghoperanch.org/how-to-help>**

# BEYOND THE GATES

For the past two summers at Camp Run Free, my children have enjoyed learning about horses, growing their relationship with God, and discovering ways to protect themselves against various forms of harm. The camp has been a blessing to our family and our children look forward to it each summer.

My youngest child is autistic (high functioning) and doesn't like social situations but the horses drew her to camp and she discovered that the leadership was incredibly loving and kind. This made me do some animal therapy research and I discovered that BHR is doing it right!

When **Jo** asked me later if I'd be willing to lead a Celebrate Recovery group with the ladies at the ranch, I had no hesitation and began praying about it. I knew it would stretch me and cause me to continue to grow in my own recovery from addictions and alcoholism. (My sobriety date is May 26, 1991.)

What I didn't expect was how God would use my time with these women on the ranch to show me how much my own story is more than just something He will use to encourage others, but also to show that His grace is for everyone. The answer is still the same, it's always the same...with God all things are possible because Jesus paid it all!

In January I got to share a difficult, yet amazing life experience with one of the ladies at the ranch. God showed up BIG in her life over those few days! She was able to mend relationships that were roadblocks in her recovery. God also rekindled my fire that week in a way that I didn't expect. Your dollars impacted her life, my life, and others lives who will hear this story of God's faithfulness.

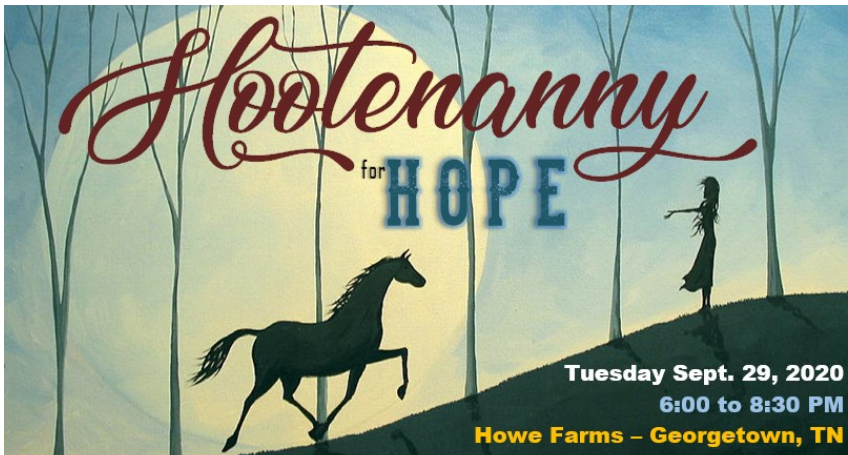
**This is more than a ministry to help the women who live at the ranch. This goes beyond the gates of BHR. God is using this ministry to change lives so that He**

**can be glorified** throughout our land! You're part of something bigger than you may realize.

- by Kara Teichroew



## FUNDRAISER RESCHEDULED



Tickets & Info at: [WWW.BLAZINGHOPERANCH.ORG](http://WWW.BLAZINGHOPERANCH.ORG)

We are excited to announce that our 5th annual Hootenanny for Hope event has been rescheduled for September 29th! Please mark your calendar and plan to join us for an amazing event with live music and dinner.

### You are Needed more Now than Ever!

During these challenging times, Blazing Hope Ranch remains open to serving survivors and committed to paying our dedicated support staff.

**As God blesses you, would you consider a special one time gift to support the mission?**

Send your gift to:

Blazing Hope Ranch  
PO Box 164  
Dayton TN 37321

Or give online:

[www.blazinghoperanch.org](http://www.blazinghoperanch.org)



## BLAZING HOPE RANCH

PO Box 164  
Dayton, TN 37321

Phone: 423-667-3820  
Web: [www.blazinghoperanch.org](http://www.blazinghoperanch.org)  
E-mail: [blazinghopetn@gmail.com](mailto:blazinghopetn@gmail.com)

WHERE HOPE RUNS FREE

## FROM ASHES TO BEAUTY

There have been times when I have wondered why God allows certain circumstances to happen. I was born with cerebral palsy and for many years I was angry at God for allowing this. How was that fair or just? Now, I have to deal with the daily struggles of my cerebral palsy and birth defects. After contemplating suicide for several years, I reached a low of not caring about my life at all. This was a truly dark time in my life. However, I have learned that only I have the power to truly limit myself in life

Because of my tremors and birth defects in my hands, art is a way I can challenge myself to create something beautiful. This is the area in my life where I believe God's strength is seen most. Through art, I have learned to turn my disability into an ability. Art is one of the ways I overcame my cerebral palsy. **When I turned my mentality outward and began helping others overcome their obstacles I began to experience freedom and joy.**

Two years ago, at my first annual benefit art show for Blazing Hope Ranch, Jo asked me if I would teach art to one of the ladies at the ranch. I agreed but had no idea what this new part of my life would entail. These lessons would be geared towards art therapy to help the woman find her creativity and love for art again. I could not imagine what she had to walk through in her past, but I could see that she was continuing to walk forward in faith and healing, I saw her beauty and strength increase.

There were times that I was beyond happy on my drive home from the ranch, and then there were times I cried my eyes out on the way home. I began to ponder, again, why God allowed certain circumstances to occur in people's lives. Through my student at the ranch, **God reminded me that He does not make mistakes, and whatever the enemy plans for evil, God will use it for good.**

Bad circumstances are inevitable, what is important is how we overcome. Are we going to continue to walk forward, even when it seems like there is absolutely no hope or are we going to cower in fear until we are consumed? My relationship with the resident at the ranch reminded me that no matter how dark a season in life may seem, light will always come to those who have faith and continue marching forward.

**God showed me through the ranch that the trials we face do not have power over our lives unless we allow it.** In the end, if we put our hope in God, He will give us the strength to soar on eagles wings. There are many questions that God has not answered; however, He has given me a truth that I can rest in... "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). He will make beauty from ashes. He has done that in my life time and time again.

- by Karis Joy Feezell