

Hope Begins Here

McCrossan Boys Ranch

Providing New Hope for a Better Life

Annual Report 2023-2024

From the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

*Thank you for viewing our annual report for
2023/2024.*

We are proud of the excellent services we provide for young men at McCrossan Boys Ranch.

The Ranch turns 70 next year and we are doing all the things necessary to ensure it will be here for another 70.

Through excellent educational opportunities and nationally accredited therapeutic programs located on a working ranch, we strive to provide “New Hope for a Better Life” for all our boys. What we do matters, and we are eternally grateful for the opportunity to serve them this way.

Executive Director
Brian Roegiers M.S.



McCCrossan remains dedicated to providing a safe and structured environment for young men facing challenges at home, school, and within their communities. Through our diverse array of services and programs, we strive to offer hope and opportunities amidst the evolving landscape of residential care and treatment. We have observed an increase in trauma, truancy, depression, and mental health issues among the youth we serve. Recognizing the critical importance of equipping our boys with essential skills, we focus on facilitating their safe and timely reintegration into their homes and communities. Our comprehensive programs are committed to addressing the needs of both our youth and their families, all while staying true to our mission.



Program Options:

- Group Care
- Transitional Services
- Independent Living Preparation Programming
- Short-term Assessment
- Community Reintegration (short-term Group Care)
- Crisis and Respite Care

Services Offered:

- Accredited, year-round school
- Individual therapy (qualified mental health professionals)
- Chemical dependency services
- Psychiatric and psychological care
- Spiritual and Cultural offerings
- Livestock, 4H, Equine therapy programming
- Recreation, interscholastic sports, and intramural sports
- Community service, world of work, and paid work opportunities



In Their Own Words...

We recently asked our boys what was most helpful about the Ranch, and this is what a few had to say:

"Way better at explaining things to me, I got grades better than ever before."

"Having support from staff."

"Saving money!!" and "Making money!"

"I am learning and have a place to stay."

"Staying sober."

"I like it here."

"Support system."

"Them (staff) being there when I need them."

"Someone to trust."

"My teacher and just those who truly care or are really there for me."

"They have given me a way of seeing how you can improve instead of living in the past."

"Support, Kindness, and Friendship."

"Helped me stop talking back!!"

Working with the "animals".

"My therapist."

"It is helpful to help me take care of myself a little- brush my teeth, wash my face, remember to make my bed."

"School- catch up with my grade level."

"Staff."

Taught me to "think more before I act. And just be more respectful to older people. I was treating everyone the same way- like my friends."

We also asked our boys what they enjoy most about the Ranch, and the list of favorites quickly grew long!

Barn, basketball, football, listen to music, phone calls, spending time with family, video games, workouts, track, lifting weights, walking, cookouts, roping, spending time with my brother, movies, reading, drawing, frisbee golf, singing, bowling, skateboarding, sleeping, culture group, running, dodgeball, playing outside, Legos, friends, hiking, creating stuff, working in public, Wild Water West, Galaxy Gaming, talking to mom and dad, push-ups, watching tv, riding horses, making money, shopping, going out to eat, puzzles, going to the park, making friends, good conversations, swimming, riding bike, breaking colts, having home visits, this is a fun place, building stuff, cross country, cardio room, and the list goes on and on and on!!!

We work hard to find the strengths of each individual young man that comes to be a part of the McCrossan Family, so we can make a difference in their lives.



Finding Hope at McCrossan Boys Ranch: **Nate's Journey**



In 1995, a young man named Justin came to McCrossan Boys Ranch. He spent his time working in the barn, developing a strong work ethic while working with horses and other animals. Though a bit rough around the edges, Justin completed his program and went on to build a family. Years later, however, his son Nate began to struggle following his parents' divorce.

Nate's life took a difficult turn. He faced challenges at school, conflict with both parents, and began using alcohol as a way to cope. Seeing the same struggles Justin once faced, his parents decided to reach out to McCrossan Boys Ranch, hoping Nate could find the same guidance his father had years earlier. In June 2022, Nate arrived at the Ranch.

The transition wasn't easy. Nate struggled with being away from his family and found it hard to adjust to the structure and rules at the Ranch. He was

placed in group care, living in Hope Cottage with boys his age. Though full of energy, Nate often expressed it through sarcasm and disregard for rules. But beneath the defiance, staff saw a young man with potential and a great sense of humor.

With time and consistency, Nate began to make progress in his program. He discovered a deep connection with the barn, just like his father had years before. Working with horses became his passion, and soon he was excelling. He learned new skills, won state competitions for showing and driving draft horses, and even broke a colt – an achievement he was extremely proud of. Nate found that working in the barn not only gave him new talents but also instilled a work ethic and life skills he knew he would carry forward.

Nate's ultimate goal? To become "the best farrier in the Midwest." When asked

how he planned to achieve that, he confidently replied, "by going to farrier school and working my butt off."

Aside from his barn work, Nate dedicated himself to his education, attending school year-round and earning his high school diploma in just two years. He learned how to "buckle down" and found new respect for his family, as well as self-control and responsibility. As he transitioned into McCrossan's Independent Living Program, Nate honed life skills like saving money and balancing independence with responsibility. He left the Ranch with a plan – to work with horses in Florida through the winter and continue pursuing his dreams.

While McCrossan may not have always been Nate's favorite place, he'll tell you it gave him his life back. Working in the barn and with the staff helped him discover his "New Hope for a Better Life."

Hope Begins **Here...**

93%

of our boys showed significant improvement in their CANS (Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths)

An impressive nearly **93%** of our boys showed significant improvement in their CANS (Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths) scores from intake to discharge. The CANS assessment is a comprehensive tool used to evaluate a youth's emotional, behavioral, and social needs, while also identifying their strengths. This improvement highlights the positive impact of the individualized support and therapeutic services provided at McCrossan, helping our boys build the skills they need to overcome challenges and succeed in their futures.

89%

of the individuals we serve reported that they gained valuable skills

89% of the individuals we serve reported that they gained valuable skills during their time at McCrossan Boys Ranch, equipping them for success in the community or in their next level of care. This reflects the effectiveness of our programs in preparing our boys for a brighter, more independent future.

7

of our boys now have dedicated mentors outside of McCrossan Boys Ranch!

Thanks to an exciting new partnership with Lutheran Social Services, **seven** of our boys now have dedicated mentors outside of McCrossan Boys Ranch! These mentors provide a fresh source of support, offering someone to confide in, share life experiences with, and guide them along their journey. This partnership is making a meaningful difference in the lives of our boys, giving them the extra encouragement they need to thrive.

96%

of our boys participated in equine therapy this past year

96% of our boys participated in equine therapy this past year. Our horses help promote healing. We have three equine therapists that work with our boys using the Egala Method.

100+

hours have been put in volunteering for local charities including The Banquet, Union Gospel Mission

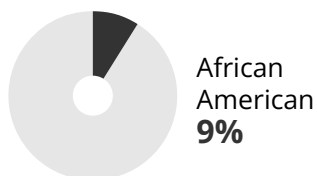
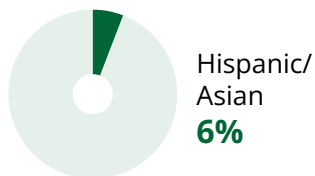
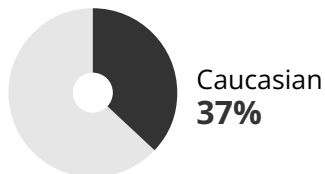
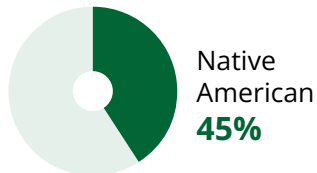
Hundreds of hours have been put in volunteering for local charities including The Banquet, Union Gospel Mission, Moving Assistance Program, Owen's Outfitters, Siouxland Renaissance Festival, Feeding SD, Lion's Club Pancake Days, Amazon Marion Road Clean Up Project, Rake the Town, 4-H Stand at the Sioux Empire Fair, German Fest, Food to You Mobile Food Pantry, Highway Clean-up, Optimist Group Flag Project, Dow Rummel Cleaning Day, South Dakota Trucking Association Food Stand, Backpack Program, Achievement Days, local churches and so much more!

This year one of our employees started a **CHOIR** at the Ranch. Several of the boys are picking up other instruments too.

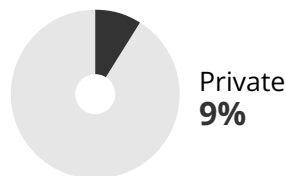
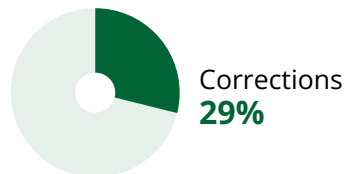
Every year, McCrossan employees and boys plant and tend to our bountiful garden, and this year has been no different. Monthly, we bring plants and/or vegetables to the Hartford Farmers Market. Much of the produce is used in our own kitchen but we also share our abundance with Feeding South Dakota and other local charities. Did you know that we grow enough potatoes to supply the Ranch foodservice staff with potatoes for **six months!**

Who we serve...

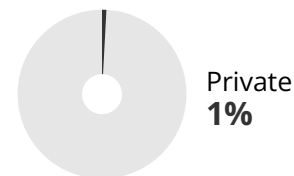
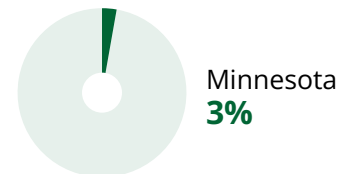
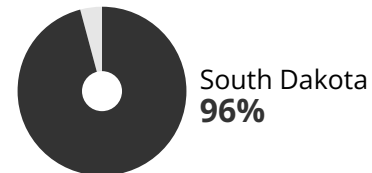
Racial composition:



Referral Source:



Where do our boys come from?



Number of Residents Graduating High School



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Average Score - 5.4 (out of 10)

Anyone with a score of four and higher generally have more social and mental anxiety, stressors, trouble in their lives, drug and alcohol abuse, out of home placement and the scariest risk – early death. As you can see McCrossan serves many kids with significant trauma.

Number of Boys Served 2023-2024: 113

From the **Business Office**

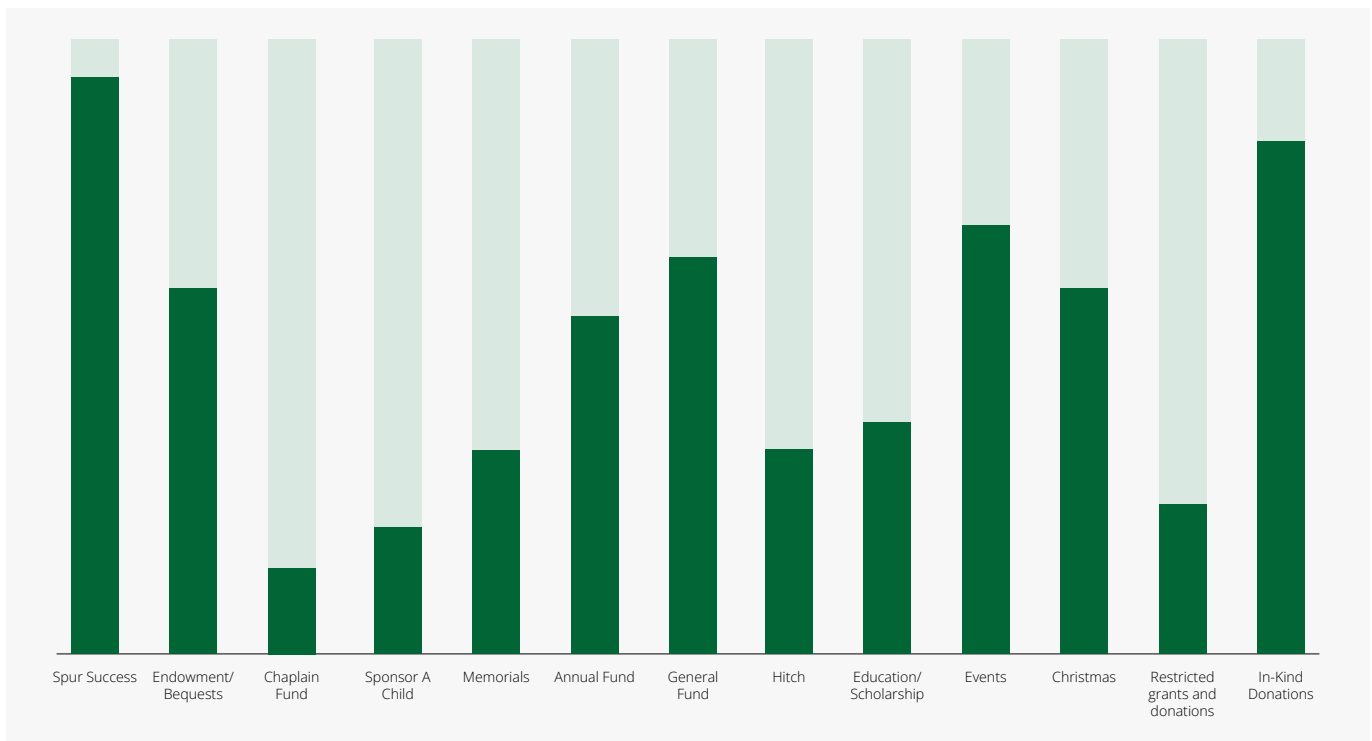
The Ranch is blessed to have a strong McCrossan Foundation behind them. The Foundation continues to support the Ranch in its operations and in covering scholarships for some young men who otherwise would not be able to come to the Ranch. The ranch showed an operating loss this year, but the foundation ended the year with an unrealized gain of \$952,000.

The 2023-2024 annual operating budget projected an average daily census of 50 residents and exceeded the projection with an average of 50.95. The school was budgeted for a daily census of 44 students and ended at 43.58. One living unit is currently closed to house a make-shift school which will be re-opened next fiscal year to serve more boys.

The annual fiscal audit was completed in August 2024. The audited financials for June 30, 2024, year-end will be presented at the October 8, 2024, board meeting which will include both the Operating and Foundation Board of Directors.

From the **Development Office**

Funds Raised 2023-2024



Total Cash/In-Kind Donations:

\$2,204,447

Highlights from **this year**

- We are proud to announce that McCrossan Boys Ranch has earned a 3-year reaccreditation from CARF International, a testament to our commitment to excellence. This achievement reflects our ongoing conformance to more than 1,500 rigorous standards for child and youth services. It highlights our dedication to providing the highest quality care, ensuring the safety, well-being, and positive development of the boys we serve.
- McCrossan Boys Ranch is nearing the completion of an 8,000 sq. ft. expansion and renovation of the McCrossan School. Boys will be moving back into the updated facility this fall, with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony planned. The new addition includes a modern art room, a state-of-the-art science lab, an expanded space for school conferences, and a refreshed teacher's lounge. It also features a new gymnasium/multi-purpose room designed for physical education, presentations, and a variety of other activities.
- Ground has been broken on a new track facility, providing boys with a dedicated space for physical fitness, team activities, and track events, encouraging healthy lifestyles and teamwork. This will give the McCrossan Wranglers a home field for track and cross country practices and meets. The project will be completed in 2025.
- Gavin Zempel, a remarkable McCrossan Boys Ranch alumnus, shared his powerful life story at our annual Banquet Auction, reflecting on the profound impact the Ranch has had on his journey. Overcoming immense hardship and trauma, Gavin is transforming into an exceptional individual. In May 2024, he graduated from the University of Minnesota-Morris and earned a prestigious full ride scholarship to Harvard University. Gavin is now pursuing his PhD in American Studies, where his dissertation will focus on the history of the Lower Sioux Indian Community. He plans to incorporate Indigenous research methodologies, the Dakota language and philosophies, as well as oral histories and communal knowledge into his work.
- This year, we proudly celebrated the graduation of seven young men from our Moral Reconnection Therapy (MRT) program, with an eighth soon to follow. MRT plays a crucial role in helping our youth develop better decision-making skills, strengthen their moral reasoning, and overcome negative behaviors. These graduates have made significant strides in their personal growth, and we are excited to see them continue on their journey toward brighter futures.
- We are proud to recognize our Ranch nurse, who has advanced from an LPN to a Registered Nurse (RN). This achievement not only reflects her dedication and hard work but also enhances the level of care and support we can provide to our youth. Her expanded expertise is vital in addressing the medical and emotional needs of the boys, ensuring they receive the highest quality care on their path to healing and growth.
- We are excited to announce that we have now raised over \$4 million towards our Spur Success track and school project! This incredible support is bringing us closer to creating enhanced educational and athletic opportunities for the boys at McCrossan. The project will provide a state-of-the-art facility where they can thrive both academically and physically, helping to pave the way for brighter futures. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to making this vision a reality!
- This year, we had the privilege of hosting three highly successful events—our annual Banquet Auction, the McCrossan Rodeo, and our McCrossan Golf Classic. Our Banquet Auction and Rodeo had incredible turnouts, showcasing the generosity and spirit of our community. The Banquet Auction raised critical funds to support the boys at McCrossan, while the Rodeo offered thrilling rodeo action in a family-friendly atmosphere. Our Golf Classic was another highlight, bringing together supporters for a fun day on the course, all for a great cause. These events not only help sustain our programs but also reflect the strong support for our mission to guide at-risk youth toward brighter futures.

- Our McCrossan Boys Ranch 4-H Program is shining brighter than ever. This summer, the boys showcased their talents at several shows, including Achievement Days, Southeast Horse Show events and the State 4-H Show in Huron, bringing home an impressive array of awards and ribbons. Showing horses is more than just a competition at McCrossan Boys Ranch; it's a vital part of our program that teaches responsibility, discipline, and teamwork. One boy, when asked about what he likes about showing horses, said "I just like working with them. Leading a horse is like walking with a friend." McCrossan's is still raising Hereford cattle along with some sheep, donkeys, a llama and our well-known horses.
- The McCrossan School has been reaccredited through 2028-2029. Joan Frevik, Teachwell Administrator, shared, "What strikes me the most, is just how smoothly the reviews go. It's a testament to the fact that you always keep the academic, procedural and behavioral standards high. You've practiced that standard for years on end and the integrity of that effort is apparent."
- Our Cross Country team is the largest in the Cornbelt Conference, which includes schools from Canistota, Freeman, Hanson, Howard, Irene-Wakonda, and Viborg-Hurley. With several recent medalists, both the Junior Varsity and Varsity teams are showing great promise. We are hopeful to have a team qualify for the state competition in Rapid City this year. Additionally, our track team saw record participation from the boys last season, and they're eager to practice on the new track.
- The Ranch maintains a strong partnership with Southeast Technical College through the vet tech program, bee program and our dual credit classes. Several of our recent residents have also been fortunate to be accepted into the college to continue their higher education.
- The McCrossan Independent Living program is thriving, empowering our boys to truly flourish as they prepare for life on their own. Recently, one of our residents left with not only his diploma but also his own car and an impressive \$40,000 in the bank! This program is changing lives, giving our boys the essential skills and confidence they need to achieve independence and build a bright future.

