

# SUMMER AT JOY RANCH

JUNE 2020

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Joy Ranch

A Christian Home for Children

## UNSPEAKABLE JOY

by Erin Austin, Program Assistant

Joy. This is a word we're all too familiar with at Joy Ranch. Although we've understood the power of joy, it has come to have a much deeper meaning during this time of isolation and restrictions. Happiness is different from joy. It is based upon circumstances, but joy comes only from God and gives us the ability to laugh in the midst of problems. Our kids understand the difference between happiness and joy all too well. To be honest, none of them come from happy circumstances. Their hearts and minds are bruised and wounded from experiencing trauma after trauma. Many of them struggle with anxiety and depression because of all they've faced. Helping them heal and become healthy children remains at the root of what we do. However, due to current guidelines and restrictions, how we go about this looks very different from what we're used to. As the country prepares to open, Joy Ranch is still under restrictions due to being a children's home. We are required to keep our kiddos away from others outside of the Ranch, which means no summer camps, no family visits, and no beach vacation. Admittedly, everyone is

disappointed. It's safe to say no one is happy about the changes, but joy is obvious as you walk around campus. Since our area of Virginia has entered Phase 1, we can take the kids to state parks and hike trails they've never seen. We can rent a boat and take the kids to the lake away from others. We can camp in a secluded area. We can have new experiences and adventures. Even better, we can love our kiddos and help them see that even though we don't always like the problems that come our way, we can choose how we respond. One of the greatest opportunities which has come from this pandemic is our staff living out our faith in Christ. While God has always been at the heart of what we do, being unable to attend church has changed how we operate. We now have a time every Sunday evening where we teach our residents how to worship God outside of church, and the kids love it. Even better, the one time we planned to not do it, the children asked us to have it like normal. We gather around the flagpole during the week at 1:00 and pray as a campus and sometimes, a kiddo is brave and volunteers to pray. Last week, one of our girls gave an impromptu piano recital, complete with wearing her Sunday best and played a song for the entire campus. Every day kids play in the circle, and their sweet laughter can be heard in all buildings. Bikes are being ridden, kites are being flown, and best of all, children are learning to find joy in being a kid again. No, we aren't always happy about our current limits, but joy is quick to come by. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)



Joy Ranch  
Christian Home for Childr



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Our mission is to provide a safe, caring, and Christ-centered home to meet the spiritual, physical, emotional, and social needs of children in crisis.



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Due to your generous donations, our kids are continuing to thrive as we enter into the summer months. We still ask for your continued prayers as we find our way through these different times. Over the past few months, we have enjoyed a lot of neat activities, including (but not limited to):

- Picking & eating wild onions
- Growing & releasing butterflies
- Playing new board games
- Making Jonah & the big fish balloons & cups as part of a Bible lesson
- Each child planting their own garden plot
- Washing our vehicles inside & out
- Giving the girls' house mom a mohawk
- Raising baby chickens (from a generous donor)
- Praying around our flagpole regularly
- Participating in a tea party
- Making friends with the 17 year cicadas
- Playing outside A LOT!

*Please be sure to like our page on Facebook ([facebook.com/joyranchfamily](https://facebook.com/joyranchfamily)) and check out our "Tales of a Houseparent" blog ([talesofahouseparent.com](https://talesofahouseparent.com)) for frequent updates and lots of pictures. We love to keep you in the loop about our happenings. God bless you this summer!*

