



O'CONNELL YOUTH RANCH

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From our retiring Executive Director, Deanie Hayes

In July 1989, I began my relationship with O'Connell Youth Ranch. I began as the OYR social worker, and then in 1992 became the OYR Director. It has been a most wonderful experience!



Through the years, I have worked every position at OYR. Particularly enjoyable was being a House Parent (along with my husband) where we worked directly with the boys in the homes. They taught me so much and helped me grow and gain knowledge in understanding through the various generations. I have had the privilege of working with many house couples and dedicated staff. It has been quite a ride!!

After 30 years of excitement, I decided it was time for me to retire as Director of OYR on July 1. This has been a difficult decision as OYR has literally been my family and ministry. I am most grateful for the years here and so appreciate the Board of Directors who so diligently supported me, the boys and the ministry of this wonderful facility.

My prayer is that the wonderful supporters who have made OYR the success it is today will continue throughout the years to come. There are more wonderful years ahead and OYR needs YOU!! May God richly bless the board, the new administrator, staff and boys present—as well as the boys to come. There is still work to be done and rewards for those in this ministry!!

With heartfelt appreciation to all! Deanie

From the new Executive Director, Gina Meier-Hummel

Hello, I am thrilled beyond belief to be the ED at O'Connell Youth Ranch. I have long admired the work that has been done to help at risk young men around our state by the ranch staff. As one DCF worker recently said to me, "I had heard OYR was a model program, and that is what I have seen today." Indeed as a young social worker, some 25 years ago, when I was lucky enough to get one of the youth on my caseload placed at OYR, I knew they were in good hands.



I appreciate the foundation laid by those who went before us and Ms. O'Connell herself, understanding the very important aspect of faith in healing. Having been in the child welfare, social service business for 27 years, and having worked in many environments, I am excited to be in an environment where I can openly express my faith and the important foundation this provides in my life.

As many of you know, in late April OYR was hit by the tornado that went through southern Douglas County. We are grateful only damage occurred to our buildings and all youth and staff were safe. Since I have arrived at the ranch we have been working to rebuild house 3 and get the ranch cleaned up. We're also working towards accreditation and making the ranch a working farm again.

I hope to see many of you at our celebration in October, to give rightful thanks and praise to Deanie. I can't wait to meet all of you, and thank you in advance for all your support. If I can ever do anything for you, speak to a group and share our good news, or if you need any information about what's happening at the ranch, please don't hesitate to call on me. We want and need you involved in the ranch.

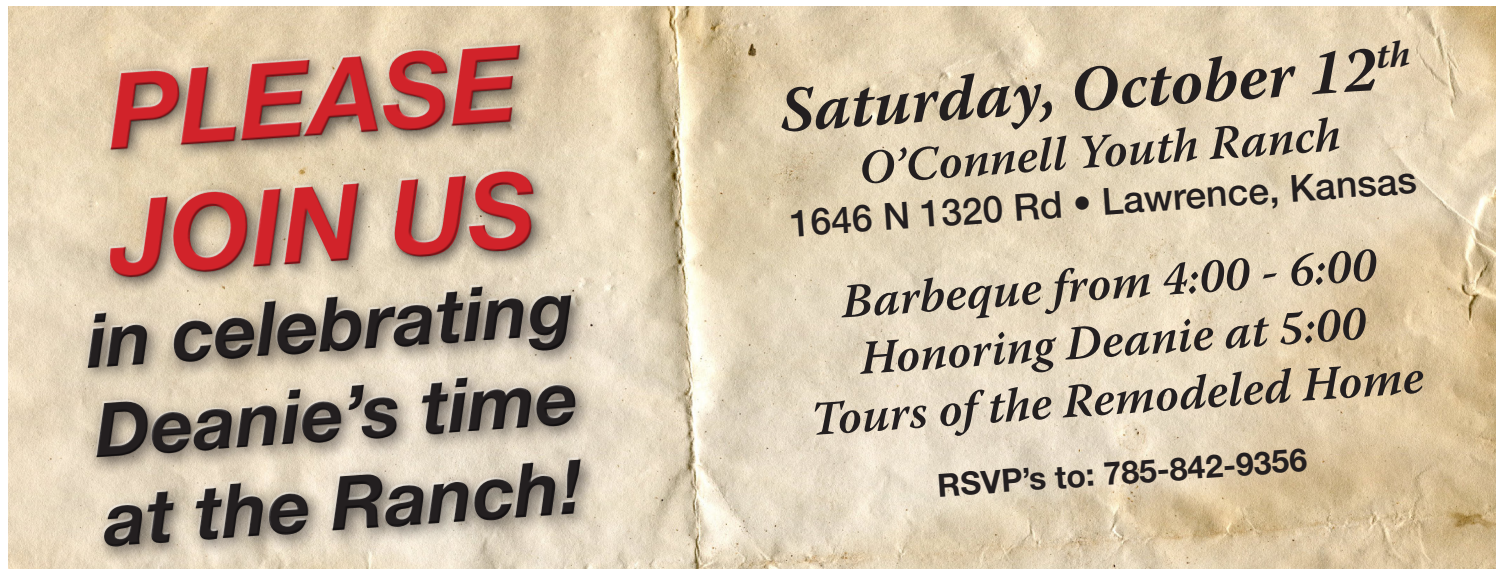
God Bless, Gina

From the Board

It is a season of change at OYR. Deanie, our long standing Executive Director retired July 1, and we hired Gina Meier-Hummel to now lead the Ranch. We are grateful for Deanie's years of service to our youth. Deanie has a heart of gold and has faithfully served OYR for 30 years. In the time Deanie was with the ranch she has helped hundreds of young boys become men through love and discipline. Deanie's husband, Larry, continues to work around the ranch so we know they will remain part of our ranch family.

Gina comes to us with a wealth of knowledge about child welfare in Kansas. She is in her 27th year being a social worker in the state of Kansas. She has worked in leadership roles at other Not for Profits and in large state agencies. She most recently served as the Secretary of the Kansas Department for Children and Family Services and currently does some part time work for the Attorney General in addition to her serving as our ED.

Please join us in celebrating Deanie's time at the Ranch and her retirement. We will celebrate on Saturday, October 12, at the Ranch with a barbeque from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. We will honor Deanie at 5:00 and will talk about the future of the ranch. Tours of one of our recently remodeled homes will be available. Turn in the drive at OYR (under the archway at 1646 N 1320 Rd.) and come all the way to the back to the East. RSVP would be helpful for food planning. RSVP's at: 785-842-9356



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