

Ranch to take in its first group of troubled youths

By JILL GOLDEN
Reporter

When Still Creek Ranch takes in its first group of troubled boys this month, it will be the beginning of an ambitious new family counseling program for The Answer.

The Answer began 12 years ago with almost no staff or facilities, but with the determination to provide psychological counseling in a Christian context. Today The Answer has a new building, eight counselors and an established place in the community.

But Still Creek Ranch is something new. The 500-acre ranch, purchased by the money received from selling a donated farm and contributions, cost \$1.3 million. The ranch will provide a home for boys between 10 and 17 years old who no longer can function in their families. Both the boys and their families will be counseled

in attempts to solve their problems.

While at the ranch, the boys will receive individual and group counseling conducted by the house parents — a couple who specializes in child care. The boys will continue going to their local schools and will work with a registered Brangus herd that The Answer is assembling. Some of the animals will be bought at a special auction this spring and others will be donated.

Because counselors at The Answer believe a problem with a boy also affects the entire family, the family will be counseled at the Family Life Counseling Services, the clinical branch of The Answer. The family will learn ways of getting along with the child and ways to work out their problems.

"It's not an alternative for the youth to get away from his family, but a chance for him and his family to have some space to

think and work out their problem," Frances Rinehart, director of development at The Answer, said.

Rinehart said Still Creek Ranch evolved from the 10-week summer programs M.B. Flippen, director of The Answer, developed in 1976 for troubled boys. Flippen had realized that office counseling sometimes was not enough to solve family problems. In some cases, the youth needed to get out of the unstable home environment before the family could be helped.

A troubled boy may stay at Still Creek Ranch anywhere from six to 18 months, depending on the seriousness of the problem. During his stay, the boy will visit his family periodically, Rinehart said it would be a gradual process.

"Although they're not living together, the family is not separated," Rinehart said. "This process will acquaint the family with each other gradually until the family is healed and can be put back together. We emphasize the wholeness of the family."

Although only boys will be living at the ranch at first, The Answer plans to build six to 10 homes more homes on the ranch to include girls in the program. Funds for the next

two homes already have been committed, Rinehart said, "but you have to crawl before you walk." When completed, Still Creek Ranch will be able to care for 75-100 troubled youths.

Counseling fees vary depending on how much the families can afford to pay.

"We don't turn anyone in need away just because they don't have money," Rinehart said. "We do like Jesus did; if he saw someone hurting he'd help. That's what this organization does. We meet their needs."

The ranch will operate from the income it receives from its Brangus herd, from donations, and from counseling fees.

Family Life Counseling Services also relies on donations and counseling fees to operate, Rinehart said. It receives no state or federal funds.

"The community has supported this organization for 12 years," Rinehart said. "We've grown because of individual and group support."

Rinehart said the support is proof that the community cares about what The Answer is doing.

This counseling service has grown rapidly. Four times as many cases have been counseled since Flippen talked with young people in a room at a College Station church. Today,



Photo by BILL HUGHES

Charles Laird is the ranch manager at Still Creek Ranch. Laird is a 1973

graduate of Texas A&M with a degree in animal science.

clients do not go to that church to talk to Flippen but to a spacious, secluded office at 1401 Sandia Plaza in Bryan.

Family Life Counseling Services hears about 350 one-hour sessions a month, said Dr. Dale Simpson, a counselor at the clinic.

"There's about 150 different cases now, so we're in contact with about 400 to 600 people a month," Simpson said. He said he sees that number continuing to grow to about 400 cases a month within the next few months.

Because most of Still Creek Ranch's funding is through do-

nations, The Answer sponsors a benefit house shower to be the first residential house with household items. Feb. 12 at the College Station Community Center. Rinehart said the shower was a success and that the community has most of the items needed to stock the first home.

Guides match children to right summer camp

United Press International

If your kid sister or brother is one of 9 million looking forward to a camping adventure this summer, now's the time to get moving, says Armand Ball.

The picking isn't easy. There are 9,000 camps in mountains, in valleys, beside rivers or lakes, where a tent can be pitched or a sleeping bag tossed.

Ball is executive director of the American Camping Association. The ACA is publisher of "The 1984 Parents' Guide to Accredited Camps" and also accredits camps.

The catalogue lists camps by states and tells what camps offer: archery, boating, finger-painting, hiking, crafts, music and computers.

Ball estimates costs at the

sleep-aways range from \$35 to \$55 a day among the for-profit camps and from \$20 a day on down among non-profit camps such as those operated by Ys. There also are free camps for the disadvantaged.

"The news this season," Ball said, "is that there's no new surge of specialty camps. Computer camps peaked in the past two years and now I think we're settling into a time when there's renewed interest in your basic camp with hiking, campfires, swimming and, well, camping."

"I also think prices have stabilized."

The ACA catalogue also lists camps for children with emotional or physical handicaps. There are camps for the asthmatic, blind, deaf, diabetics — so called "special clientele."

Other camps available are for children with epilepsy, emotionally disturbed, hemophiliacs, learning disabled, mentally retarded, mobility restricted, overweight or wheelchair bound.

New this season are camps for children with cancer.

"The camps for children with cancer are so new that we didn't get to list them in the 1984 catalogue," Ball said. "But if you write, we'll give them what we have on these camps."

Here are some things that suggest parents consider: "The camper's interest. That is critical to success in given activity. Desire by the parents for their child to be a camper is not reason enough to choose a certain camp."

—Age and maturity. "A certain physical and psychological maturity level is necessary to attain certain levels in some activities."

—Present skill level. "If the camper is a beginner, it is likely that as long as a camp has an instructional program in an activity with a competent instructor, the camper will gain necessary beginning skills the first summer."

—Staff. "Inquiries into background and experience of the instructional staff are important."

—Look into experience of the camp. "As public interest has grown in specialty camps, many new camps have set up overnight. Many of these are reputable. The reputable ones gladly will provide references to parents who have had campers at the camp."

—Look into "The 1984 Parents' Guide to Accredited Camps," available by mail for \$6.95 from American Camping Association, 100 Bradford Woods, Artinsville, Ind. 46015.

Personalize Your Party!

We do imprinting on

- Napkins
- Party Glasses
- Decorative Matchbooks

Party supplies and decorations for all types of parties.

THE PARTY SHOP

Culpepper Plaza 693-8276
(next to Godfathers Pizza) Open 10-6

Walk, Cycle, or Shuttle. It's only 8 Blocks.

Eff. 1 & 2 bedrooms starting at **240.00.**

3902 COLLEGE MAIN

country place apartments 846-0515

Weapons In Space

A National Teleconference

Dr. Carl Sagan
Dr. Henry Kendall
Adm. Noel Gayler
Dr. Richard Garwin

THURSDAY, APRIL 5

RUMOURS

6:45 pm

FREE

HONG KONG RESTAURANT

香港餐廳

Fresh, authentic Chinese cuisine at reasonable prices

"Quality Health Food"
Taste our Lemon Chicken!

LARGE OR SMALL PARTIES AND BANQUETS WELCOMED

Serving wine and beer

846-8345

Mon. - Sun. 11 am - 2 pm
Mon. - Sat. 5 pm - 10 pm

3805 TEXAS AV. - BRYAN

Alfredo's

Now Under Younger Management to further serve the needs of the Students of Texas A&M. We have changed our atmosphere and format.

Now Open till **Midnight 7** days a week

Checkout our new pool tables & video games!

-Grand Opening Special-

Beer Pitchers \$1.43
Cup of Beer 48¢