

Growing Hope Through Strong Families

In 1961, The Buckeye Boys Ranch opened on 35 acres along Hoover Road, South of Grove City. At the time, most of the surrounding property was corn fields which made the property perfect for the intended use. The Ranch was a place for “troubled” young boys to live and be nurtured into fine young men. For many years and for many, many young boys The Ranch became “home,” a place they would always credit for their personal success. “Hope” was the product at The Ranch from the beginning and it has continued to be even as we have grown in our ability to serve an ever-growing number of young people and their families.

Today The Buckeye Ranch (name changed in 1992) has become one of Ohio’s leading providers of behavioral, emotional and mental health care for children and adolescents. Ranch staff operates from locations in not only Grove City, but also Cincinnati, Newark and three locations in the Columbus area.

After working with literally thousands of young people at The Buckeye Ranch, we have learned that the most effective way to offer hope is through strengthening families. We have learned that even families struggling with enormous challenges have amazing strengths that they can use to support their children through difficult times. Because we believe that ALL families have strengths, I would like to share what we have learned that makes a family strong.

The wide variety of family structures today looks very different from the traditional family of 50 years ago. Nevertheless, there are shared characteristics that help a family withstand the storms and stresses they encounter. Years of research on families has revealed qualities present in strong families. These include: Adaptability, Appreciation, Clear Roles, Commitment, Communication, Encouragement of Individuals, and Shared Time. These characteristics transcend family type, and the good news is that all families can strengthen these qualities and enhance their ability to nurture all family members.

There are some simple things you can do to accomplish this. Make a commitment to spend individual time with each child at least once a week. This can be as simple as cooking a meal together. Make an effort to respectfully listen to your children’s concerns – no matter how trivial they may seem. Help your child identify their individual strengths and abilities by encouraging all family members to share and celebrate their accomplishments. Eat a meal together as frequently as possible. If your schedule does not allow you to sit down to a family dinner each evening, create a “together mealtime” that works for you (maybe Sunday breakfast or Friday night pizza). Hold regular family meetings that encourage open and honest communication. This teaches your child to express ideas and disagreements in constructive rather than destructive ways. Lastly, develop and maintain family traditions. This is a powerful way to help children know that they belong to a special and strong group – your family.

The Buckeye Ranch is proud of our Grove City heritage and we continue to thrive because of all of our wonderful friends.