



*You're safe now*



**Big Oak Ranch**

A Christian home for children needing a chance



*Big Oak Ranch  
gives abused, abandoned  
and neglected children  
a solid, loving  
Christian home.*



*Courage*



## *The Need...*

Today our country is full of children who are literally orphans, whether physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually. They have no one who wants to meet their needs in these essential areas. As you look through this brochure, carefully see each child's face and think of how much the statement "*You're Safe Now*" on the cover means to them! These children's faces could easily be your child. Only by God's grace are your children with you and our children call Big Oak Ranch their home.

## *Meeting the Need*

Since 1974, John and Tee Croyle, along with the Big Oak Ranch staff, have been called to meet the needs of over 1,800 children by giving them a solid, Christian home and a chance to fulfill God's plan for their lives. Like every family, we've enjoyed great successes and heartbreaking failures. Yet the "cornerstone," and even the name of Big Oak Ranch, has remained fundamentally rooted in Isaiah 61:3, "*And they shall be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He may be glorified.*"

## *A Normal Life...*

Our children live in as normal a setting as we possibly can create. As many as eight children live in each of the Ranch's comfortable two and three-story brick homes with a dedicated, Christian couple serving as "Mom and Dad." Our houseparents give their lives to provide the consistent love, discipline and direction that the children need. Ages vary in each home so the younger children will have big brothers or sisters to look up to; likewise, the older children can develop a caring and responsible attitude toward their younger siblings.

Each family works together, plays together and attends a local church together. We know children listen with their eyes, and our spiritual emphasis is on witnessing by example. We believe this is the best means of ministering to children.

# *Harmony*



## *Specific Ways to Help...*

### *Prayer Support*

We know the true source of our power is your consistent prayers. Please pray daily for our staff and our children. *“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Is the Lord’s power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not.’”* Numbers 11:23

### *Monthly Support*

Gifts of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more on a consistent monthly basis help make a difference in our children’s lives. These gifts help with our daily need for food, clothing, education and medical needs throughout the year and are the “bedrock” of our annual budgetary needs. This support can be made in the form of a check through the mail, or we can draft your bank account on a regular basis as you direct.

### *Memorial & Honorarium Program*

The Memorial Program gives you the opportunity to remember a deceased loved one or friend. The Honorarium Program allows you to honor special friends or relatives on occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries or holidays. In each case, we will send an appropriate letter acknowledging the gift. Please phone the Business Office at (205) 467-6226, ext. 123 for information regarding these gifts.

### *Big 12 Club*

Your membership in the Big 12 Club covers the cost of raising one of our children for one full year, including food, clothing, shelter, education and insurance. Each member pledges \$12,000 over a one year period (usually paid in increments of \$1,000 per month). For more information, please phone (205) 467-6226, ext. 104.

### *Other Gifts*

For gifts of personal/real property, trusts, life insurance, marketable securities, gifts in kind, or estates, phone the Business Office at (205) 467-6226, ext. 122.

### *Making a Difference Now and Beyond*

Our long-range plan is to have our already established endowment as a source of perpetual support, thus ensuring the future of our children and the children who will some day call Big Oak Ranch home. For information about our endowment, please phone the Business Office at (205) 467-6226, ext. 122.



*Faith*

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q:** *When I meet your children, they seem so happy and normal. Why?*

**A:** When you know you belong to someone who really wants you in their family, it makes all the difference in the world.

**Q:** *How are your children referred?*

**A:** All of our children are referred by private sources. For example, our children are referred by parents and guardians who are unable or unwilling to care for their children.

**Q:** *Are all the children at the Ranch abused or neglected?*

**A:** All of our children have been physically, emotionally, verbally and/or mentally abused or neglected in some way. Of course, each child's circumstance is unique, but every child has some type of dysfunctional background.

**Q:** *How do you discipline so many children?*

**A:** II Timothy 2:24-25 states *“God’s servant must not be argumentative, but a gentle listener and a teacher who keeps cool, working firmly but patiently with those who refuse to obey. You never know when God might sober them up with a change of heart and a turning to the truth.”* Based upon this scripture, our discipline is fair, firm, loving and consistent.

**Q:** *How do you meet their educational needs?*

**A:** All of our children attend Westbrook Christian School in Rainbow City, Alabama. Westbrook Christian allows us to raise our children in a consistent Christian environment.

**Q:** *What happens to the children after graduation?*

**A:** Each child determines his or her own path. Some of our children enroll in college or technical/vocational school. Others enlist in the armed forces, and some join the work force. Those who choose to may live in our Lifeskills Home, which is similar to an apartment complex. In the Lifeskills Home, residents work while attending college full or part-time. The children pay bills just like any other college-age student; however, they are supervised by our Lifeskills Director. This program better prepares our young adults for life on their own.

**Q:** *How are the children supported?*

**A:** Since the Ranch takes no state or federal funding, all of our support comes from concerned individuals, corporations and organizations, such as yourself, who give most graciously of their prayer, time and resources. Our Board of Directors reviews and approves all of our financial statements on a monthly basis, and we are audited annually by an independent accounting firm.

*Honor*



## *How Big Oak Ranch Began*

John and his wife Tee have seen their dream of building the best children's home in America grow into three separate facilities in Northeast Alabama: Big Oak Boys' Ranch in Gadsden; Big Oak Girls' Ranch in Springville; and Westbrook Christian School in Rainbow City.

Big Oak Boys' Ranch grew out of John Croyle's desire to give hurting children a chance. John successfully played football at the University of Alabama under the legendary Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant. Faced with one of the most important decisions of his life – whether to play professional football or to start a children's home – John followed the Lord's leadership and established Big Oak Boys' Ranch in 1974.

John's vision for the Girls' Ranch evolved from a court case involving Shelley, a 12-year-old girl who had been physically and sexually abused by her father while her mother held her down. John pleaded with the judge who handled the case to let Shelley live at the Boys' Ranch, but the judge refused and gave Shelley back to her parents. They beat her to death three months later. Big Oak Girls' Ranch was built in 1988 after John felt the Lord's calling to start a home for girls in Shelley's memory. As Genesis 50:20 states, *“And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”*

Westbrook Christian School opened in 1990, and it exists to provide a quality education in a Christian environment for the children of Big Oak Ranch, as well as children from the community. Westbrook Christian is a privately funded 501(c)(3) educational institution depending solely on student tuition, special fundraising events, and the generosity of concerned individuals and groups for support.

**Big Oak Ranch exists to provide a solid Christian home for children needing a chance.**

*You're safe now*



*John and Tee Croyle*



*Big Oak Ranch has been home to  
more than 1,800 children since 1974.*

*Happiness*





# Big Oak Ranch

A Christian home for children needing a chance

Post Office Box 507 • Springville, AL 35146

(205) 467-6226

[www.bigoak.org](http://www.bigoak.org)

In order to continue being good stewards of God's blessings, this brochure was created by the staff of Big Oak Ranch.