



#### CAMP

Discovering God's love  
through a camera lens

#### CONSTRUCTION

Building homes,  
building the kingdom

#### WELLNESS

One dentist's mission on  
the margins of Pine Ridge

#### FAMILY

Walking with families  
who desire restoration

# The Good Road

Volume 2 | 2025-2026





# Special thanks

**Editorial and Design  
Support Donated by**  
PPA Agency

**Photography**  
Maddie Atherton  
Teen Campers  
PPA Agency

**Contributing Writers**  
Matt Hadden  
Camille Hernandez  
Maddie Atherton  
Čhankú Wašté Ranch Staff

**Interviewees & Featured Voices**  
Joanna Muse  
Johnye Horton  
Dr. David Rempel  
Sandra Buffington  
Rol Bradford  
Camille Hernandez

**Printing Partner**  
Citicom

**Volunteer & Donor Community**  
The faithful churches, teams and individuals who serve and give so that restoration may continue



# CONTENTS

- 1 A note from the executive director
- 2 Walking together: FAMily lane at CWR
- 4 Construction: Faith in steel-toed boots
- 8 As you do to the least of these: Dentistry with Dr. Rempel
- 11 Summer discipleship pathway
- 12 Teen photography highlight
- 17 She gave me shoes: Camille’s testimony
- 20 Introducing the Barn
- 22 Community ministry feature: Red Shirt Community Church
- 26 Wopila tanka: Great thanks
- 28 Goals for 2026
- 29 The Good Road podcast

COVER PHOTO  
Gavin Cross

BELOW  
Anthony Whiting



## A note from the executive director



### Hello friends,

I want to thank you for joining us on this journey. It is impossible to put into just a few words how good our God is. He is so very faithful and kind. What an incredible privilege we have to be invited into His kingdom work. I am so thankful for all of those who put this magazine together and have given of their time and resources so that the faithfulness of our God can be highlighted in the ministry work of Čhankú Wašté Ranch.

Because of your partnership, we have made some great strides in ministry work here. Summer camp saw new record numbers and is in a sweet place of overall growth because of the incredible camp teams that serve with us. The leadership of our camp staff making great improvements for the children in our community.

Construction is continuing to find new ways to serve our community. The Barn is such an incredible addition, and while there is still much to be done, it is already a wonderful resource to better serve our community and enable volunteers who come here to serve in this lane.

Wellness made some big advances this year, seeing a record number of dental patients while also leaning into a broader optometry service. This year we offered vision screening for every student in 16 schools in our area. During our wellness week, our optometry team set a record of seeing over 700 patients, giving them a complete eye exam and access to prescription glasses as needed.

FAMily began one year ago, and we didn’t know much of what it would be like. The Lord has been faithful to provide clarity as we navigate how to best walk with and serve individuals who desire to make healthy steps for their families and just need someone to walk with them. I personally am excited to see what strides this lane is going to take in the coming years.

I am always reminded that we would not be able to do what we do without the dedicated partners we have, both near and far. Thank you for standing with us so faithfully. As I think about you, I cannot help but think about our incredible staff serving here full-time. I recognize you would not be as equipped or as effective without the hardworking team God has called here. I am so very grateful for each of them. My life is richer because of you, as well as the team in this circle.

There is still much to do, so we press on in this work to give everyone in our community access to a restored life. A fully restored life only comes through a transformative relationship with Jesus. For that truth to become accessible, many other areas of restoration are needed. So, we will continue to look for ways to bring restoration to our community, trusting that some will be fully restored in Jesus’ name.

I am blessed beyond measure that God would call me to be a part of this great ministry.

Learning to serve the Lord,  
Matt Hadden



# Walking together

## The FAMily lane at CWR offers consistency, dignity and hope



with Joanna Muse,  
Family Advocate,  
Čhankú Wašté Ranch

**Amid children playing at summer camp, construction crews restoring homes and wellness volunteers meeting dental and vision needs, another thread is being woven into the fabric of Čhankú Wašté Ranch. On Pine Ridge Reservation, where poverty exceeds 50%<sup>1</sup> and generations have endured the weight of systemic injustice and family fracture, a new ministry lane is emerging. It's called FAMily, and its mission is simple and deeply needed: to walk with families who desire a restored life, one consistent step at a time.**

Stepping into leadership for this new lane is Joanna Muse, who has answered the call to help shape and steward its early growth.

She didn't set out to become a family advocate. In fact, when she first stepped onto the ranch as a teenager in 2014 for a summer camp trip, she couldn't have imagined that this land would eventually become her home — and her calling.

"I started coming out to CWR back in 2014...and while I was here in the summer of 2022, I was asked to come back as the church intern," Joanna recalls. "Then in 2024, we launched a new lane of ministry called FAMily."

As staff served through construction, wellness and camp, they began to see what families were already carrying: the

quiet weight of reunification battles, kinship caregiving and generational trauma. The FAMily lane was created to advocate for families as they face these challenges, honoring their strength while offering support, hope and practical help. The FAMily lane emerged as a way to say, "You don't have to carry this alone."

Families on the reservation face immense challenges, especially those navigating the foster care system. Native American children represent nearly three-quarters of the children in foster care across South Dakota, despite making up only 13% of the state's child population.<sup>2</sup> The numbers are staggering. But behind every statistic is a story, and Joanna feels called to enter those stories with tenderness and truth.

"He has been teaching me to be consistent," she says of the Lord. "I see how He is consistent in my life. No matter how many times I ignore Him or I turn away...and He's still right there with me."

That became the foundation: kind, unwavering consistency. The FAMily lane exists to walk alongside families, individuals and couples who are navigating complex, often heavy paths with strength and courage. They need resources, yes. What they also need, and deeply deserve, is presence. Advocacy. Someone who shows up faithfully, without judgment, again and again.

“

**Carry each other's burdens,** and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

GALATIANS 6:2

"Sometimes, I'm just the one consistent person cheering them on," Joanna explains. "Helping them get to court, filling out paperwork, finding their documents...but also just being the one who says, 'You're worthy. You matter. I'm proud of you.'"

What makes this ministry so special is that it doesn't exist in isolation. At CWR, every lane of ministry connects. Camp brings children joy and safety. The wellness center cares for physical needs. Construction builds and repairs homes. And now, FAMily ties it all together, offering Christ-centered support that speaks to the whole person.

"We are here to give everyone in our community access to a restored life," Joanna says. "It's amazing how each lane of ministry works together. Camp, wellness, construction — they all feed into what we do through FAMily."

It's the kind of restoration that mirrors the gospel: a God who meets us in our mess and walks with us toward wholeness.

When the FAMily lane launched, the goal was simple: walk with three to five families by March 2025. But God had other plans. They began walking with a family by December 2024, months ahead of schedule.

"I kind of laughed," Joanna says. "Like, okay Lord...what are You doing here?"

With God's help and the support of the CWR team, she dreams of generational change as this ministry grows.

But with every dream comes a plea for prayer.

"We need more people," she says. "More family advocates. More strength. More wisdom. This is heavy work. Beautiful work, but heavy."

And yet, in that weight, there is purpose. There is joy.

There is a God who walks beside them all: consistent, faithful, ever-present.

"It's an honor that the Lord allows me to walk with these families in this way," Joanna says. "To be their little personal cheerleader, and to remind them: You're not doing this alone." ✨

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>2</sup>South Dakota Searchlight, December 9, 2024. Native kids remain overrepresented in foster system; SD plans to invest in prevention, kinship care.



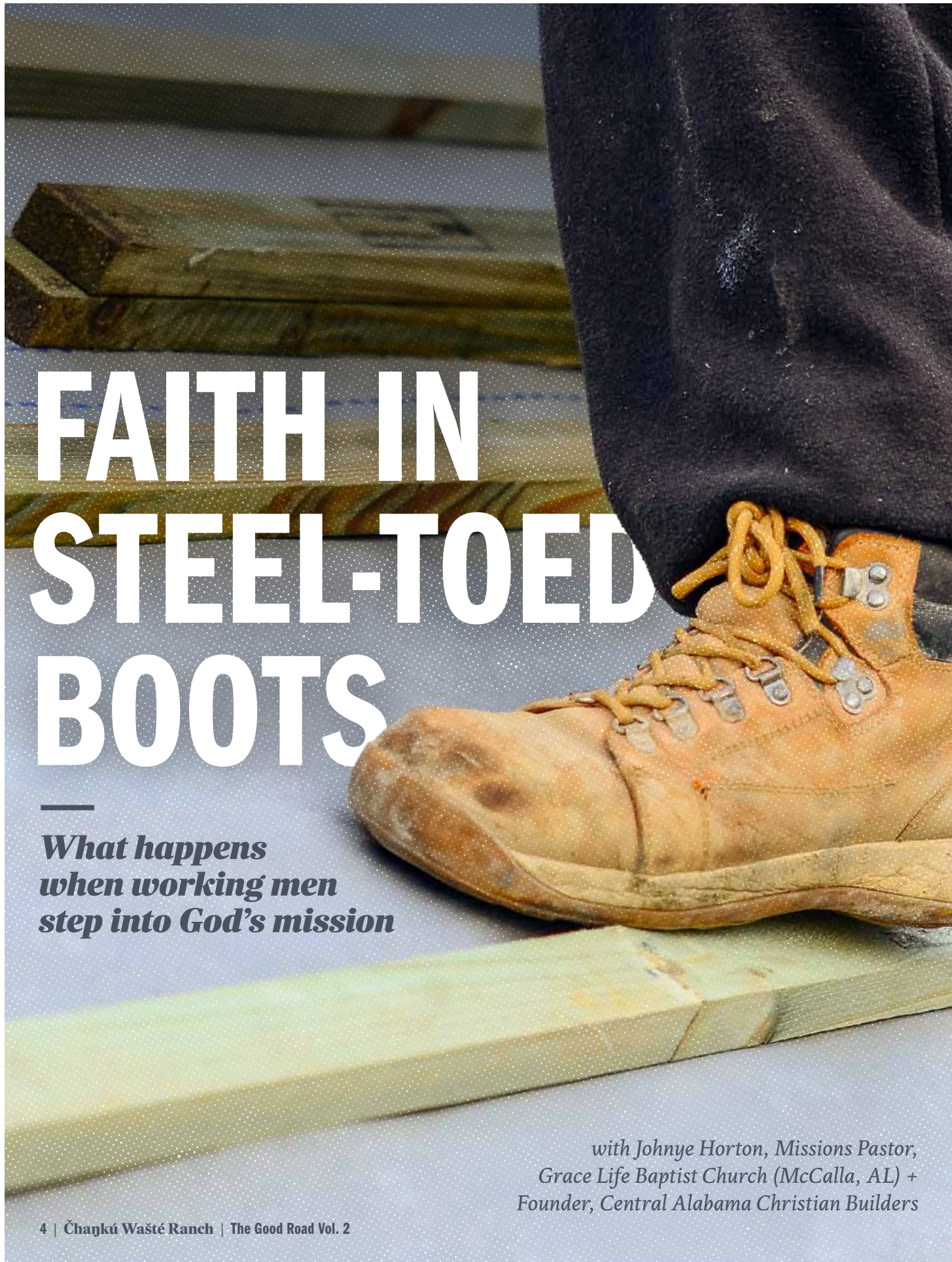
FAMILY FUN DAY  
2025



Scan the QR code to hear more about the FAMily lane at CWR with Joanna







# FAITH IN STEEL-TOED BOOTS

*What happens when working men step into God’s mission*

*with Johnye Horton, Missions Pastor, Grace Life Baptist Church (McCalla, AL) + Founder, Central Alabama Christian Builders*

It started with a hammer, a pastor and a job that needed doing.

Johnye Horton showed up to help. And he kept showing up, wherever he was needed.

A former coach and high school teacher, Johnye had spent 28 years pastoring churches before stepping into “retirement,” which, for him, meant more time on the road, more mission trips, more boots on gravel. “We were working at a church helping a pastor,” he says, recalling the first trip that set everything in motion. “They needed some cabins built up at their state camp, and I had a construction guy with me. I said, ‘Would you lead the carpentry team if I do the logistics of getting the team together?’ He said yes.”

That was the first yes.

It hasn’t stopped since.

## A brotherhood of builders

What grew from that single trip is now a vast, informal brotherhood of skilled tradesmen: guys who fix HVACs, hang sheetrock, weld barn doors and wire up entire buildings. Most aren’t preachers. Some have barely cracked open a Bible. But every one of them has found something

sacred in the grind of labor and the rhythm of serving.

“You show a man how to serve God with the skills he already has, and something changes in him,” Johnye says.

He’s watched it happen again and again: men who are masters of their trade, but strangers to church culture. In the field, they’re confident. On Sunday, they shrink.

“They’re carpenters, plumbers, electricians, welders. They’re HVAC people, technicians, general contractors. They’re good at what they do,” Johnye explains, “But when they come into the church, especially if they’re new Christians, they’re intimidated because they don’t know a lot about that environment. And they’re coming from an environment where they know a lot. So when they come into a Christian environment, they may be willing or excited, but they’re very timid to step out in the church because they look around and see people who know so much more than they know biblically and about serving the Lord.”

But give them a hammer in Jesus’ name, Johnye says, and something shifts.

“They begin to see their worth in the Kingdom.”



## Where obedience leads

Johnye’s connections aren’t typically made by spreadsheets. They’re woven by the Spirit. Take the time he stumbled across a name in the North American Mission Board (NAMB) Prayer Calendar. “I was flipping through it, trying to pick something for the church to pray over,” he says. “And I see this guy Matt, out in South Dakota, talking about a ranch. I thought, We’ve built in Wyoming and Montana, we even did a church in South Dakota. I’m intrigued by the ministry out here.”

He emailed Matt that week.

“I said, ‘I’d like to bring a team out.’ And so we talked throughout the year, and he set the date for us to come. We came out last year for the first time.”



TOP  
Johnye and Bit Horton at a job site

LEFT  
The Central Alabama Christian Builders team frames a new home for a Pine Ridge family in April 2025



## Right skills, right time

Johnye didn't handpick every man on this year's trip. In fact, some he barely knew. "I knew their pastor," he says, "but I didn't know them." One young man from his own church had only recently joined the team, and though Johnye knew he worked in air conditioning, he didn't even think to mention it.

"I didn't tell Matt," he says. "He signed on late."

But when they arrived, it turned out the ranch had a pressing need: AC repairs. Chris, the new guy, stepped in and spent the week solving problems no one had planned for.

"God seems to always provide that," Johnye says. "It never fails. We seem to have what we need."

It wasn't just Chris. A man who installs metal buildings was the perfect fit for sheet metal work and welding in the barn. Plumbers helped in multiple

houses. Carpenters tackled the mini-house, which would be fully framed by the next morning. And thanks to a last-minute call from a long-time friend, six more volunteers joined the crew — each of them filling a gap Johnye didn't even know was there.

Johnye's seen it before. He's seen it for nearly four decades. And he's still amazed, but not surprised.

"You never cease to be amazed that He continues to provide exactly what's needed."

## Devotions in work gloves

What drives this mission team, and many other mission teams, is the spiritual growth that happens among the studs and sawdust.

"A lot of men share their testimony for the first time on a mission trip," Johnye says. "They lead a devotion for the first time. They pray out loud for the first time."

One young man, barely known to the team before he joined, read a handwritten devotion one morning on-site. It wasn't polished. It didn't have to be. It was real, and it was his first.

"Men connect with their hands," Johnye says. "Coming on a mission trip, they're using their skills, but they're also having conversations — hopefully with a man like Paul."

In the New Testament, Paul was a church planter and apostle who mentored Timothy, a young pastor he called his "true son in the faith" [1 Timothy 1:2]. Paul taught him how to lead, how to stand firm under pressure and how to serve with humility and courage. Their relationship became a model of spiritual mentorship: older believers discipling the next generation.

"They may be a Timothy having a conversation with a Paul, and that encourages them."

## When missions get personal

Many of the men on these trips come from Southern Baptist churches. They've heard the names Annie Armstrong and Lottie Moon in annual giving campaigns. They've dropped checks in offering plates, believing in missions from a distance.

But this — this is where it becomes real.

"This may be the first time people get to see the results of their giving firsthand," Johnye says. "They get to see tangible results from the money they're giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO) or to the International Mission Board (IMB) or just to missions.

They see that it's real, and it changes their thinking. And then they come to Čankú Wašté and they meet Matt, his wife and his family. These are real people just like they are, but they've been called to serve."

And when it clicks that the dollars they gave are helping build real homes for real people, they don't go home the same. Some increase their giving. Some invite others to join. Some become champions for missions in their own churches.

"I've had people go on mission trips and go back to their churches and want to increase their mission giving because of what they saw."

## Step out or miss out

When asked what he tells someone who is on the fence about joining a mission trip, Johnye doesn't hold back.

"If you've got the time and the money, then what are you waiting for?"

He's seen too many people say "Let me pray about it" as a polite way to back out.

"Pray while you pack," he says. "Step out. If you get there and hate it, you can always go home. But I've been doing this since 1986, and I've never once heard a man say, 'I wish I hadn't gone.' Not once." 🌟

Give a man a hammer, and he'll build a house.

***Give him a purpose, and he'll build the Kingdom.***

# 2025-2026 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## On the property

### Bunkhouse addition:

Should be completed in the spring of 2026

### Camp improvement:

New team hangout spot at the swings

### Outreach expansion:

Podcast studio finished, up and running!

## In the community

### Camille's house:

3 bed, 2 bath home

### Cornell's tiny home:

1 bed, 1 bath tiny house with kitchenette and living area

### Millie's tiny home:

1 bed, 1 bath tiny house with kitchenette and living area

### Ongoing community support:

Several other community projects including home repairs, church renovations and other projects as needed





# As you do to the least of these

## One dentist's mission on the margins of Pine Ridge



**By the time Dr. David Rempel first arrived at Pine Ridge Reservation, he'd already spent more than four decades in private practice in Rapid City. He had no plans for a second act. Just a phone call from a man named Matt, and a scripture that had always guided his life: "As you do to the least of these, you do for me." [Matthew 25:40]**

**That was four years ago.**

"I've been a dentist for 48 years this August," Rempel says. "Hopefully, I've got a number of years ahead of me." But here, in this small clinic carved out of one of the most underserved regions in the United States, Rempel isn't counting time. He's measuring impact.

The reservation ranks among the poorest areas in the country. The rates of diabetes, kidney disease and unemployment are staggering. The need is overwhelming. "No matter how the tribe or the Indian Health Service (IHS) or the national programs try to help them," he says, "they barely scratch the surface."

The Čhankú Wašté Wellness Center is modest in appearance, but well-equipped. "We're as modern as we need to be," he says. Digital x-rays, updated tools and three fully functional patient rooms allow visiting dental teams to meet the community's needs with efficiency and care. "We don't do the extreme fancy dentistry. We're bread and butter, basically. We provide the essentials and get people back on their feet again."

TOP  
*Dr. Rempel sees a patient in the Wellness Center*

BOTTOM  
*Raegan Blain, Dr. Carla Heino, Camille Hernandez, Dr. David Rempel, Tranna Thunder Hawk*



*Dr. Rempel and Raegan, former Wellness Director*

Those essentials, though, can be life-changing. One patient he saw recently was on dialysis, unable to receive a kidney transplant without functional teeth. "She won't get her kidney unless she has a set she can wear," Rempel says. "She did get a set last year [from another source], but she can't wear what they built her. So she's still high and dry waiting on the list."

He pauses, letting that settle.

"Physically, for the whole body, dental care makes a big difference. There's no life in dialysis three times a week."

The work, though critical, is exhausting. Rempel only gets down to Pine Ridge once a month now. "I also work in the state prison system, providing dental work to around a thousand patients between two prisons," he explains. "The need is great and requires a lot of time. With the exception of another dentist, there is no other primary dentist."

Still, Pine Ridge stays with him.

"You just have to honor those [open doors] and walk through them," he says. "They didn't have to drag me."

Much of what makes this clinic function is the trust earned over time in a community that's seen plenty of outsiders come and go.

“ Jesus said to *love your neighbor* as yourself.

"[The Lakota people] have been exposed to enough in the past, and they can read you if you don't have the heart behind what you're doing," Rempel says. "[Hadden] is very protective of his community, as he should be, and he makes this a safe space."

He credits the small, committed team around him, especially

those like former Wellness Director, Raegan Hadden Blain, who helped set up the clinic's supplies and digital systems when it was first getting off the ground. "She is basically the founding developer who put all this together," he says. "Early on, we didn't even have internet. Matt's friend came and put us on satellite so we could actually function again."

Today, alongside Wellness Director Camille, the clinic runs lean, but effectively. "It's a very professional setup. We manage with minimum staffing," Rempel says. "We're thankful for all those who contribute and bless us with gifts and so forth, because we make every dollar count."

When people ask Rempel why he still does it — why a nearly-retired man continues to fill cavities and pull teeth on a remote reservation once a month — he doesn't hesitate.

"The purpose is to spread the gospel and glorify Christ. Jesus said to love your neighbor as yourself," he says, "and for the fact that many people look away from the Native Americans. Thankfully, we have other dentists coming on board. More and more, I'm hopeful. As we increase our staffing, we'll be able to expand and deal a little better and deeper into the needs of the surrounding area."

That's the reason he rushed to get dentures made for a patient before Christmas last year. The reason he sits with

dialysis patients, not just cleaning their teeth, but helping them reclaim their health and hope for a restored life. The reason he keeps showing up.

In a world quick to look away, Dr. Rempel keeps looking in. ⚙️



PHOTO CREDIT  
Juliette Yellow Thunder

OPPOSITE  
TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Chad Deible, Colby Leonard, Jake Harlan, Timmy Watkins  
BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Riley Dickson, Haylin Ownby, Emma Skinner, Sarah Deible

We are on  
mission to  
give **EVERYONE**  
in our  
community  
access to a  
**RESTORED LIFE**—



THE  
SUMMER DISCIPLES



DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

## CULTIVATING THE CALLED

A platform of missional **EXPERIENCE, EQUIPPING & EMPOWERING** by way of immersive opportunities, practical coaching and spiritual development.

This pathway provides a platform for going deeper with Jesus, developing leadership and teamwork skills, implementing the Living Word in real time and ultimately growing in serving the Lord and His people.

Discipleship is a foundational aspect of the mission of Chankú Wašté Ranch and a calling we as believers all share: both to disciple and be discipled. The roots of our Discipleship Pathway were planted over a decade ago and have invested in the lives of 20+ participants along the way. Some of those individuals returned multiple times, and several found their path to full-time ministry — around the world and right here alongside of us. ✨

“

My time at CWR will be a memory I cherish forever and a **learning experience I can implement in my everyday life!**”

“

I don't know if I would have the same level of trust in God or belief in His plans for me if I hadn't served with the Chanku Wasté Ranch in South Dakota. **It's the best thing that has happened to my life!**”

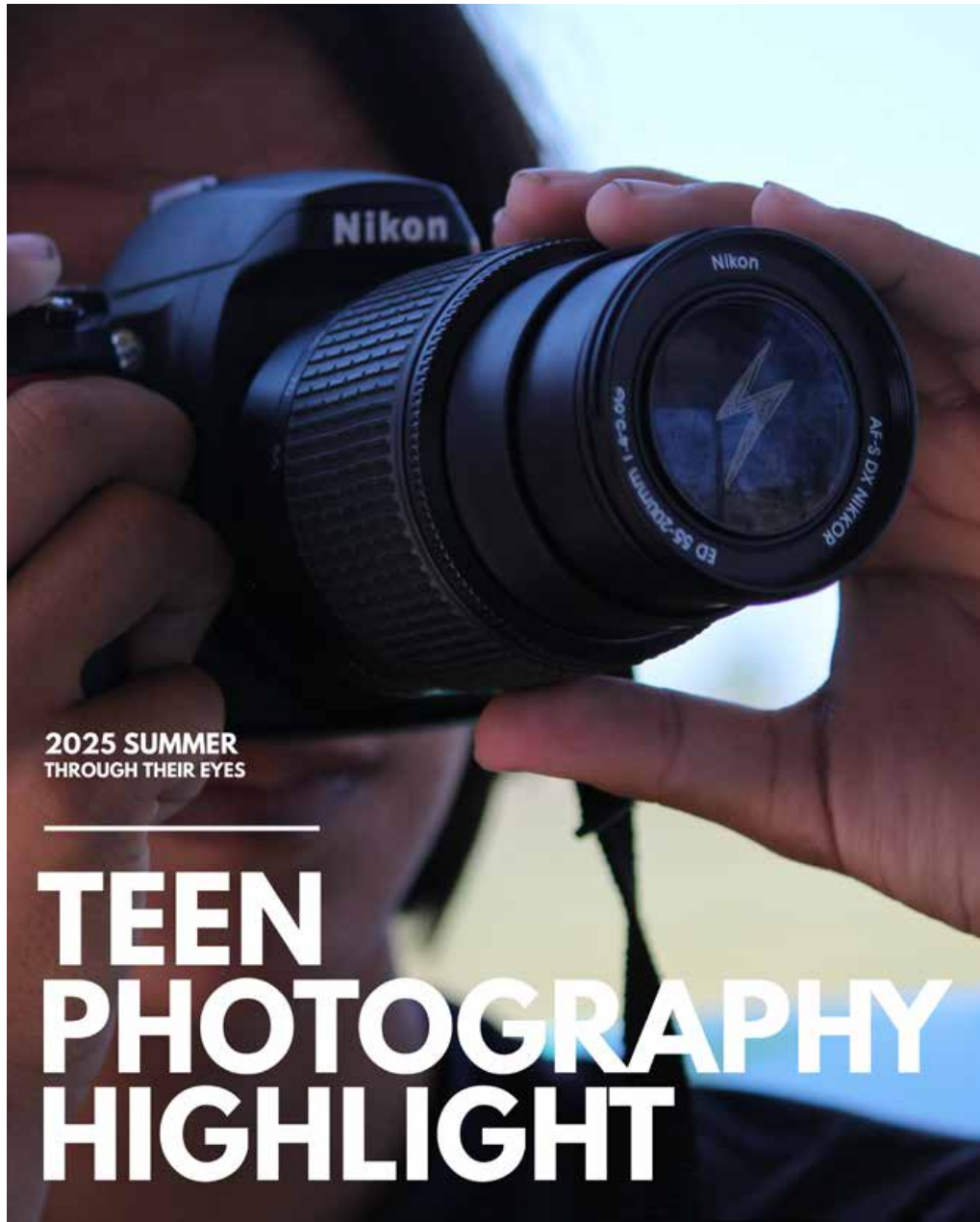
“

I would encourage someone to explore Summer Discipleship at CWR, if they want to be **challenged to follow the Lord's call to act with compassion and love in a way that points to the Father's heart.** A summer at CWR is an incredible experience to see what putting your 'yes' on the table looks like and offers a glimpse into what it means to **leverage your life for the good news of the gospel message.**”

o o o o o SUMMER STAFF!

Contact [info@chankuwaste.com](mailto:info@chankuwaste.com) to learn more about our discipleship pathway.





# CREATED ON PURPOSE, *to create with purpose*

A GALLERY OF MOMENTS THAT REVEAL JOY, DISCOVERY AND THE GOD WHO IS PRESENT IN IT ALL



Foreword by  
Maddie Atherton,  
NAMB Journeyman,  
Čhankú Wašté Ranch

Art offers us an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the love the Father has for His people: the very people He created. It extends an invitation to not only enjoy the beauty around us, but inspires us to seek it out, discover the God of the universe and recognize that He is in the details. He created us with a purpose, on purpose.

## A dream to a reality and newfound passion

Graciously giving of both time and connection, lifelong photographer Steve Gowan joined us as we kicked off Summer Photography Fun! He taught the basics of photography and carried with him four cameras, kindly donated by a store back in Texas. With this, we had around 20 teenagers taking photos each week during the summer.

The photos speak volumes about the joy and freedom of being a kid at camp. Our hope and prayer is that this would carry into their everyday lives. God gives us eyes to see — and He is a God who sees us! For our campers to see Him and come to know Him, the One who is always present — is our prayer.

When we take the art of capturing a moment and apply it to life itself, we learn to be present—to notice that God is at work everywhere, if we take the time to look around. This is just the start of a Creative Ministry within our community, and we are excited. As God leads and provides, we look ahead to what

He has in store for next summer and beyond.

We wrapped up the summer with a Family Night! Leading up to this, each photographer selected and edited three photos from the summer to display at the event. Enjoy some of the gallery entries submitted by these talented teens.



ABOVE: PHOTO CREDIT  
Tanya Two Crow





LEFT  
*Theo Coleman*

BELOW  
*Duane Cross*



LEFT TOP  
*Emily Weston*

LEFT BOTTOM  
*Taylor Lone Elk*

BELOW  
*Braylee Pourier*



ABOVE  
*Theo Coleman*

RIGHT  
*Shayla LeBeau*



LEFT  
*Abilene Runnels*



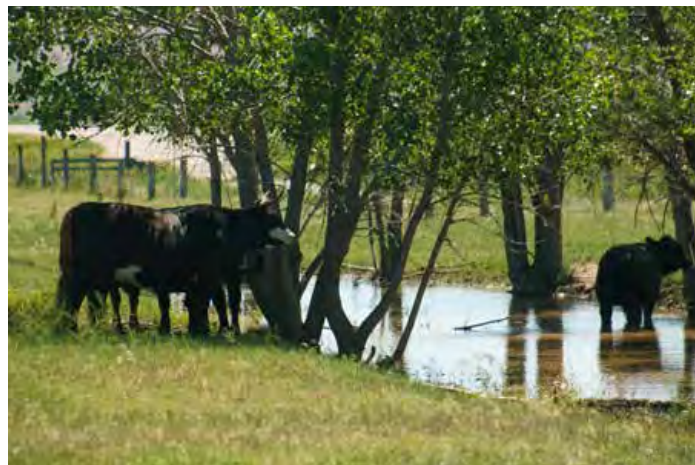
LEFT  
*Kaia Hunter*



RIGHT  
*Bella Ecoffey*



BELOW  
*Tehan Witt*



ABOVE  
*Kailyn Braveheart*

LEFT  
*Harleigh Bissonette*



*By Camille Hernandez,  
Wellness Director,  
Čhankú Wašté Ranch*

As a young Lakota girl, I grew up in Rapid City, around alcohol, drugs and violence. That kind of life becomes normal when you're born into it. My mother and my grandmother raised me. It wasn't easy. My mom was deep in her own struggles and didn't show me love. My grandma told me, over and over, "Your mom doesn't love you." Between the two of them, they did a number on my spirit.

That kind of upbringing leaves a hole in your heart. I carried that emptiness with me everywhere. I remember feeling it even as a little girl. It was like walking around with a hollow chest. I didn't know then that it was meant to be filled by God.

# *She offered me shoes, Jesus gave me life*

*God used a stranger's gift to show me I was never forgotten*

At 11 or 12, I tried to take my own life. My grandma was in the hospital after a heart attack, and she left her pills out. I took them all. I was sick for a month and couldn't get out of bed, but no one knew what I'd done. They thought I was just sick or something. But really, I just wanted the pain to stop.

As I got older, I found ways to try and numb that pain. I was into drugs and alcohol, and I was into bad men. Had two children in the process. Every man I met was an addict, too. And I thought that was love, because that's all I ever saw.

My mom eventually got sober and stepped in to raise my kids. Time passed, and they grew up and had their own kids.

I was still lost. I experienced it all: mental, physical and sexual abuse. I was trafficked, and when I finally escaped, I lived in a safe house for seven months. But I was still empty.



I went on to meet another bad man, and he was very abusive. One morning, I just looked at him, and I thought, *I've got to get out of here.* I grabbed my bag, and I left at about four or five in the morning. I went to the river. I had a bottle of vodka and a really sharp knife that I took out of his pocket.

I was going to end my life.

Jeremiah 29:13 says, "Seek me with your heart and I will hear you." I sat there, looking up, ready to die. I asked God if He could help me. I said, "Whoever is up there, I need your help, because I am so done with my life. I'm so done. I have so much trauma, and I am here, homeless. I don't have anywhere to go, and I'm out here at five in the morning, and if you can help me, I need your help." And somehow, I felt something. Peace. Like a calm came into my chest. So I put the vodka away. I put the knife down. I walked to a friend's house, and she opened the door.

God started sending people to me.

That week, multiple different people on the streets told me they had shoes for me. I didn't take the offers.

*What's with the shoes?* I thought. Now, I know God was sending me a message.

One night, while I was still staying at my friend's, her water went out. We needed to go to the convenience store to get a few gallons of water. A lady watched me from her car. She stared at me for the longest time.

She finally came up and started talking to us. She said she had shoes for me. I thought, *I'm going to roll with this and see why people keep offering me shoes.* So I said okay.

“ You will seek me and find me,  
when you seek me with *all your heart.*

JEREMIAH 29:13

We jumped in her car. She gave me the shoes, but then we sat there for three hours talking about God. I told her about my grandkids. She told me, "God is with you. You need to go back to your family." And before I left, she hugged me. I had prayed earlier that week, "God, if I could just get one hug." He sent her.

Her name was Mae. She gave me a Bible, wrote her name inside and wrote, "God is with you." I never saw her again.

I'd never read the Bible before. I went home, opened it up and found Jeremiah 1:5: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you." And I wept. Because I finally knew: Someone loved me. Really loved me. Even after everything.

God started changing me.

It didn't happen overnight. I relapsed a few times. But I kept reading. I gave Him my addictions, and He started taking them. He started healing me. "He's showing me how I need to be," I told someone once. "He's showing me how to forgive."

Six months in, I wasn't using anymore. I wasn't smoking. It was just me and God, every single day. I read the Bible from front to back. And then I heard Him say, "You need to find a church."

My grandkids had been going to Čhankú Wašté for years. I'd never really been around, so I didn't know anyone. But my grandkids said, "Grandma, they're from the camp. You can trust them." So I texted Matt Hadden and said, "You don't know me, but I'm Talia's grandma. I want to go to church."

Matt's wife, Amanda, picked me up the next week to go to Creator's Fellowship. And when Pastor Chad preached, it



Camille, center, standing on the porch of her new home built by CWR Construction with friends from Connection Church in Longmont, CO

was everything I'd been reading and wondering about. It was like God was saying, "This is your place. This is your home."

I started volunteering, cleaning the church, going to women's Bible studies and helping during camp. And then I got asked to be the wellness director. I didn't expect that. But God knew my heart.

Now, I get to run parenting classes. Parents come even though they're fighting their own addictions and struggles. It's so difficult to be a parent and not know how to parent, especially if you grew up in a broken home.

Some of the classes are about CPR, car seats, tantrums and bonding with your baby. Moms ask questions. They do their worksheets. They even bring homework back, and if they bring a support person, they get extra incentives.

We've gotten donations of diapers, wipes, cribs and car seats. And we give it all away to families who need it, because poverty here is real, and God's heart is close to the broken.

And I always ask, "Can I share a spiritual concept with you?" Many say yes. Even those who are traditional Lakota still let me pray. And I see God move.

One of the women I'm walking with now was trafficked, too. We were in the same safe house. She told me recently, "Camille...you're just different. A good different." And I know that's Jesus. That's His light.

I am a new person, and I'm worthy of His love. That's what He told me: I am worthy of His love.

And He said He was going to bring me peace, and He did. And He told me not to fear, because fear brings torment

and casts out perfect love. He's taught me so many things. He told me to love my enemies, and it'll heap coals on their heads. And let me tell you, it changes them, too.

I always said I wanted to help people, and God said, "You're going to help people. This is where I'm putting you."

So here I am: Client advocate. Wellness director. Teacher. Grandma. Friend.

And most of all, daughter of the King.

I was empty my whole life, and I was trying to fill the void with men and drugs and alcohol and money and TV, whatever. These things never satisfied me. But you know what satisfied me after I took that away? God.

God loves me, and He's right here with me. Even though I still go through struggles, I know I'm going to be okay, because He lives in my heart now. All that emptiness I felt as a little girl...it was because God wasn't there. But now He is.

And if He wasn't here, I wouldn't be alive right now. I believe I would've killed myself. I wanted to die. And now that He lives here, I don't feel that way. So I can't lose that.

That's why, when I looked up and cried out for help, He answered. That's all He was waiting for. "Seek me with your whole heart," He says, "and I will hear you."

I have my struggles every day, but God has saved me. He showed me a new way, a new life and the truth, just like He says in the Bible. And it is so true. And He's got my heart, and He has it forever. ⚙️





# Introducing THE BARN

**The Barn is the new hub of CWR Construction. Materials that once risked being damaged in the elements now have a safe place, organized and ready for use. Even in the harsh South Dakota winters, the barn makes it possible to keep working: housing tools and materials with enough flexible open space for a variety of impactful projects. It's a place built for year-round ministry, where every donation and every effort can go further in serving families.**

"A lot of people have given to make this happen. Our hope and dream is that God fills these lumber racks up, so there are resources to pull from," Matt says. The CWR team is continually grateful for the generosity of so many teams, churches and individuals who have made this project possible. Our prayer is that the Lord's going to fill these racks up with the things that we need to keep serving our community. ⚙️

“

It's just a good reminder of what God has done, what He's going to do and how He uses His people.

MATT HADDEN

## ORGANIZED STORAGE

The barn now has pallet racks and custom-built lumber racks, giving us a secure and efficient way to store materials until they're needed for projects.

## EQUIPPING VOLUNTEERS

Dedicated areas for tools, plumbing and electrical supplies make it easier for teams to find what they need and get to work quickly.

## DESIGNED FOR LARGE-SCALE WORK

With two 22-foot doors, trucks can drive straight through the barn to unload supplies or even back in trailers for tiny home construction.

## STEWARDING RESOURCES

An insulated paint and caulk closet prevents supplies from freezing and going to waste, ensuring materials last year-round.

## BUILT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

The concrete floor, welded racks and donated pallet systems all came together through the generosity of churches, volunteers and unexpected donors.

## ADDITIONAL HOUSING

A small apartment inside the barn provides space for CWR staff to live onsite while serving.





# THE CHURCH WITH NO STEEPLE

*What began in a cafeteria now has walls of its own, thanks to two leaders who never stopped showing up.*

*with Rol Bradford and Sandra Buffington*

Red Shirt is the kind of place where the wind outtalks people. Tucked in a high and lonely corner of Pine Ridge, the land rolls toward the horizon, punctuated by cottonwoods and the odd cluster of trailers. Cell service is shaky, paved roads are few and outsiders wouldn't find themselves here unless they meant to.

But every other Wednesday evening, a small miracle unfolds.

Children pile into the community school, their coats dusted with the high plains wind, their stomachs empty. A woman with silver-streaked hair arranges crockpots, casseroles and grocery bags rustling with paper plates. Dinner is served without fanfare, just warmth, both in the bowls and in the people. The room hums with conversation, laughter and the clatter of cafeteria-style seating

being rearranged for worship. There is no steeple, no stained glass. Just a simple pulpit sitting atop a school desk and the fierce conviction that this, somehow, can be holy ground.

## Two calls, decades apart

Sandra Buffington did not plan to plant a church at age 81.

"I didn't feel like I could handle it," she said plainly, seated at a cafe-style table as children's laughter echoed in the background. "But the Lord didn't say 'do it.' He said, 'Start it.' So I did."

She speaks in the confident, direct cadence of a woman who once owned a rodeo company — and still carries the grit that it required. For decades, in addition to tending to their ranch, Sandra and her husband ran Buffington Rodeo Company, an itinerant outfit

that hauled livestock, gear and the Gospel from Minnesota to Montana and everywhere in between. "I told the Lord that before every performance, we would have prayer, and so we did," Sandra says. "And then one day, I just felt the Lord call me for more. I said, Lord, every time we have a rodeo, we'll have church. And so we did. Sunday mornings at 10, we'd have church."

But it wasn't until much later, after raising three daughters near the Canadian border and returning home to South Dakota, that Sandra felt a fire she couldn't ignore. She wanted to start a church again. She wanted to reach the Lakota children growing up in the same wild places she had, where faith and tradition often sit uneasily beside each other.

Then came Rol.

## From the sidelines to the pulpit

If Sandra is fire, Rol Bradford is steady smoke: slow to move, impossible to ignore once he's in the room.

He wears a black cowboy hat that shades clear, deliberate eyes that have

seen decades of reservation winters and gym lights flickering above high school courts. This Wednesday evening, he sits at a round table, a plaid shirt tucked into a dark vest and a black scarf knotted neatly at his neck.

At 56, Rol found Christ at a cowboy tent revival in New Mexico. It wasn't a lightning-strike conversion, he says, but a slow breaking. "When you've got that much sin dragging behind you, it takes a long time to adjust," he says, his voice dry but warm.

He'd spent much of his life coaching sports at Red Cloud High School on the reservation, becoming a local legend in the process. In the 1980s, the Los Angeles Times dubbed him "Supercoach" for helming six teams at once while finding time to mentor Lakota kids.

But Rol's real legacy may be what he did after the scoreboard stopped mattering. When his pastor fell ill and left the ministry, Rol found himself holding the keys to a church he never intended to lead. "I was in no way ready," he said. "But there was no one else." He kept showing up anyway.

Later, at a Bible study, another Lakota man said something that stuck with him: "I wish we could get more native men to stand up for Jesus Christ." That conversation birthed Iron Sharpens Iron, a ministry that eventually grew into horse camps, soup kitchens and Bible studies spread across the reservation through the Lakota Cowboy Ministry.

Now, Rol and Sandra are co-shepherds in this improbable revival.

TOP  
Matt Hadden gives a sermon  
in April 2025

MIDDLE  
Red Shirt Elementary



Scan the QR code to hear more from Sandra and Rol and get a glimpse into Red Shirt Community Church.

April 2025: Red Shirt Community Church meets in the cafeteria





“

It's been hard to do a lot of the things we're trying to do. *But the Lord makes it worthwhile.*”

SANDRA BUFFINGTON



## Building something from nothing

It started with a casual comment during a school election. “I’d really like to get a church going here,” Sandra told a friend. She didn’t expect the principal to overhear.

“What are you girls talking about?” he asked.

When she explained, he didn’t hesitate. “Why don’t you use this building?”

Sandra was stunned. “We can have church in a public school?”

“Oh yes,” he said.

So they did.

Every other Wednesday, they set up in a small multipurpose room adjacent to the gym. Sandra organizes the potluck. Rol recruits a preacher. The children are shepherded into the gym for games and lessons.

Their approach is refreshingly unvarnished. No fancy lights. No fundraising campaigns. Just food, cafeteria tables and a shared belief that God is very much in the business of building churches in overlooked places.

## A faithful persistence

Red Shirt is far from the centers of reservation life. Most attention — and funding — funnels toward Pine Ridge or Kyle. But for Sandra and Rol, that makes the mission all the more urgent.

“There’s so much more we could do,” Sandra said wistfully. They dream of a bus to pick up families without transportation. They want to offer Bible studies, kids’ activities, maybe even revitalize the abandoned baseball field nearby.

And God continues to provide.

“God’s changed my direction so many times,” Rol said. “I started out with a Bible study in Rapid City. Then, a jail

ministry. Then a soup kettle. Now this.”

Sandra, too, seems less concerned with results than with faithfulness.

“These kids,” she said, watching two children run by, “they come every time. They never miss. Their tummies are hungry, but so are their souls.”

It’s tempting to think that spiritual revolutions happen in cathedrals, capitals or college campuses. But sometimes, they start with a folding chair and a slow cooker, in a windblown town most maps barely name.

In Red Shirt, revival smells like garlic bread and sounds like laughter, and it’s being quietly led by an 81-year-old rodeo matriarch and a Lakota cowboy-turned-community builder with calloused hands and a patient voice.

Not exactly your typical church planters. But exactly the people this place needed.

TOP  
Elders pray over a new believer

MIDDLE  
Rol Bradford welcomes congregants

BELOW  
Sandra Buffington joins in worship



## A more permanent home

Now, that borrowed space has begun to give way to something more lasting. One of the school portables has been fully transformed into a church building. The pulpit no longer sits on a school desk, and worship doesn’t have to be packed up when the bell rings.

Two more buildings sit nearby, ready for what’s next: one to house a future pastor, another to welcome visiting ministers. It’s not flashy, but it’s solid. And the Lord is working through the people who enter the doors.

It may not look like much from the outside. But in Red Shirt, God is building His church, and He’s just getting started. ⚙️



## Join Sandra and Rol in praying for Red Shirt Community Church

### 1. Find a pastor

Currently, the church invites guest pastors to speak. They are praying to find someone who would be willing to take on a more permanent pastoral role.

### 2. Salvation and leadership among Lakota men

Pray that God would raise up Native men, like those connected to Iron Sharpens Iron, to boldly follow Jesus and become spiritual leaders in their families and communities.

### 3. Continued unity in ministry

Pray for continued strong unity among churches across the reservation as they work together to serve their communities and share the Gospel.





# Wopila tanka

## GREAT THANKS

We want to acknowledge those who give so that we may continue pressing on to give everyone in our community access to a restored life. Through your kindness and obedience to what the Lord has called you to, we want to thank you. CWR is better because of you. Your act of obedience in support of what God is doing here through CWR is greatly appreciated.

We want to recognize our donors as of the third quarter. We are deeply grateful and encouraged by your faithful giving.

### HIGHLIGHTING OUR TOP DONORS

Bronze	Silver	Gold
\$1,200+	\$6,000+	\$12,000+
51	13	6
DONORS	DONORS	DONORS

DONOR TOTAL  
as of the Third Quarter

212

TOTAL PARTNERED CHURCHES  
Boots on the ground

35

Mobilized 600+ volunteers

In addition to the generous individuals who have contributed financially, we have been truly blessed by the support of our volunteer teams this year. These dedicated volunteers – the boots on the ground – have given their time, collaborated with one another and poured their hearts into everything they do. ☀



## Camp



287

KIDS ATTENDED AT LEAST 1 DAY OF CAMP

with an average of

110

CAMPERS PER DAY

## Wellness



2,468

VISION SCREENINGS  
completed across

16

SCHOOLS IN OUR COMMUNITY

### SERVING IN THE CLINIC

59

NEW PATIENTS

5

DENTISTS

5

DENTAL  
HYGIENISTS

4

DENTAL  
ASSISTANTS

## FAMILY

5

BIRTH  
CERTIFICATES

3

SOCIAL SECURITY  
CARDS

4

FAMILIES BEING  
WALKED WITH

### GET INVOLVED



Interested in serving or partnering with Čhankú Wašté Ranch? Scan the QR code to get in contact with our team.





# Goals for 2026

While we have a heart to grow and expand our services in every lane of ministry, we remain confident in God's leading, trusting that He will provide everything needed to accomplish His purposes in the coming year. We ask you to pray that we would walk in wisdom to know when to push harder or when to let off the gas.

• **Mobile dental services** | We'd like to develop a mobile dental service to reach students in local schools across the reservation.

• **Optometry license** | We envision the Wellness Center growing into a fully licensed optometry clinic.

• **Expanded Discipleship Pathway** | We'd like to increase the number of young adults who can participate in our Discipleship Pathway. We'd also like to introduce an additional pathway that welcomes retirees into intentional spiritual growth.



AVAILABLE NOW



BROUGHT TO YOU BY ČHANKÚ WAŠTÉ RANCH

## THE GOOD ROAD *podcast*

We started this podcast adventure to engage, educate, and inspire our listeners.

Thank you for tuning in!



### WHAT OUR LISTENERS ARE SAYING

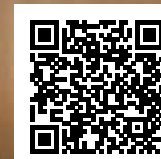
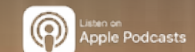
"It is so interesting to hear how this ranch came to be. God bless the ministry at Chanku Waste Ranch."

"What an absolute gift to people! Thanking God for what He has done and what He will do through you all."

"Thank you for this! Even though I have heard this God story many times, now we can share it to get more people to invest in this ministry. Thank you for all you do in South Dakota!"

"Love this!"

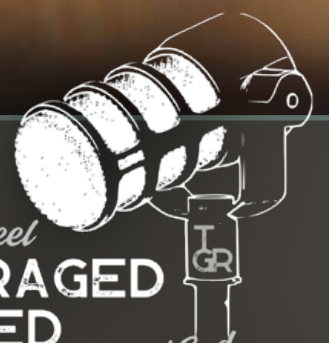
### LISTEN & SUBSCRIBE



### WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If there's something you'd like to hear, shoot us an email at [goodroad@chankuwaste.com](mailto:goodroad@chankuwaste.com).

*We pray you feel  
ENCOURAGED  
EQUIPPED  
EXCITED about all God  
is doing around you.*







118 Čhankú Wašté Dr.  
Porcupine, SD 57772



Scan the QR code to access a  
digital edition of this magazine  
and exclusive video content!



Čhankú Wašté Ranch is a ministry partner of Send Relief Inc.



**Thank you to  
print partner,  
Citicom**

Professional print solutions with gratitude  
and compassion in everything we do

**CLIENT-FOCUSED | DRIVEN | GRACIOUS**

[citicomprint.com](http://citicomprint.com) | [info@citicomprint.com](mailto:info@citicomprint.com)



**PPA Agency is proud to  
support Čhankú Wašté Ranch**

With 40+ years in business,  
we're a **creative agency** driven by Christian  
values of trust, fairness and honesty.

Looking for marketing assistance? Let's chat.

**PPA Agency**

[ppaagency.com](http://ppaagency.com) | 614.837.1998