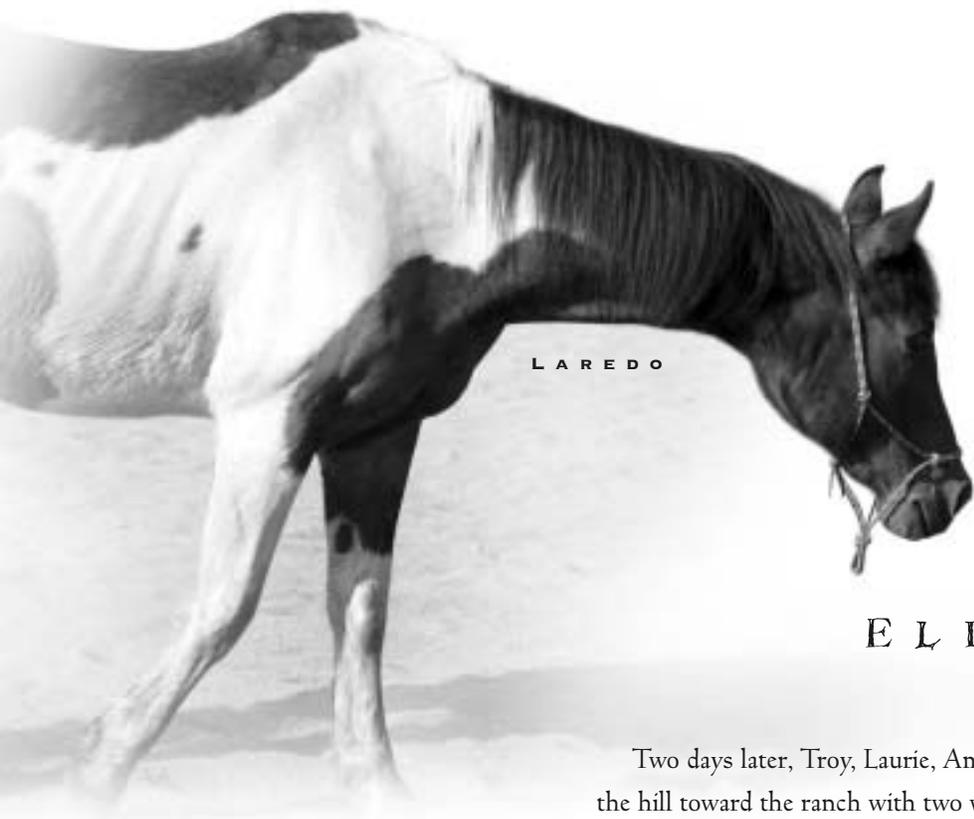


AROUND *the* FIRE

NEWS FROM CRYSTAL PEAKS YOUTH RANCH

SUMMER 2007



L A R E D O



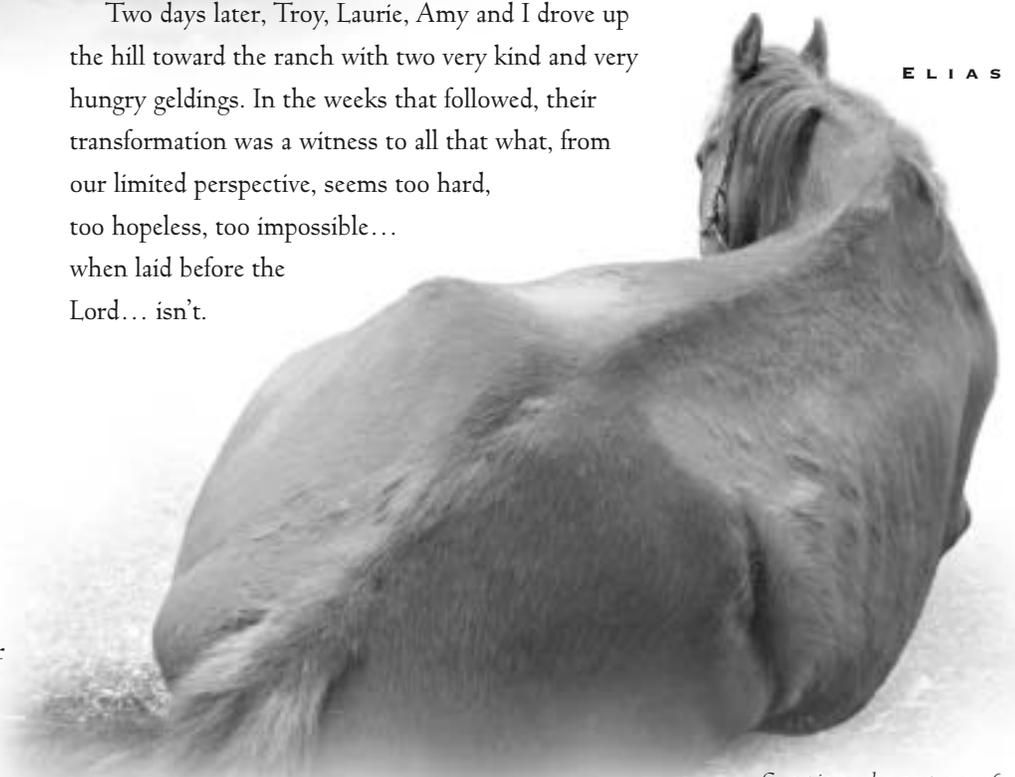
New Boys

E L I A S & L A R E D O



I hung up the phone in complete awe. A very kind young man who I had only met once nearly a year before, had just called to let me know that he would like to donate his two geldings. He explained to me that his kids had lost interest and that he was unable to care for them as he knew they deserved. As he gave me directions to his home, I realized that I knew these horses. One of his neighbors had recently called me and shared her concerns about their drastic weight loss she had observed over the fence and asked what she could do. It's true... the Lord does work in mysterious ways.

Two days later, Troy, Laurie, Amy and I drove up the hill toward the ranch with two very kind and very hungry geldings. In the weeks that followed, their transformation was a witness to all that what, from our limited perspective, seems too hard, too hopeless, too impossible... when laid before the Lord... isn't.



E L I A S

Continued on page 6

"They said YES"

BY TROY MEEDER

As I watched them make their way up the driveway, I couldn't help but wonder, "Why Crystal Peaks? What is it about this little ranch that would cause so many to come from such great distances to learn about ministry for kids and horses?"

Over the next four days the answer began to reveal itself. It had little to do with this place, this ministry or Kim and I. The answer to my question had everything to do with kind hearted folks who loved the Lord and wished to prove it with their lives. They were here because they felt His calling and quite simply... they came. After many days of countless conversations, I began to hear a resounding anthem. Each in their own unique way wished to reach out to the hearts of hurting kids around them. Some wanted to reach a few, others wanted to reach thousands. All wished to make a difference. Ultimately, they came because they heard the voice of their Lord... and they said yes.

In the two Information Clinics that we hosted this season, we were blessed to share the 'life of ministry', the hardships and trials, the laughter and joy, with nearly 250 incredible participants. Each of this year's

classes came to Crystal Peaks for instruction, encouragement, fellowship and good old fashioned fun. They came from everywhere... Florida, Colorado, Maine, British Columbia, Arizona, Texas & Ontario, Canada, just to name a few. In those four short days together, we talked about healing brokenness, ministry, horsemanship, how to teach, how to build, even how to be "in the game." New friendships were forged. Ministries were born. Lives were forever changed. All, because of one simple commonality... *they said 'yes.'*

It is hard to believe that 2007 is already half over. Life is passing by so very quickly. Looking back at these past two clinics, I am deeply moved at how much this 'new family' has encouraged me. They, in their simple faithfulness, have challenged me to keep

stepping up. They continue to mirror back to me how *much* the Lord wishes to do through us if we relax in focusing on our own needs and begin to focus instead on helping those around us. They remind me daily of what an incredible blessing it is to keep choosing to listen to the still, small voice of our Lord... and say yes.





Sweet Jed

BY ANNE WALTERS

As the heat of summer begins to set in, Jed's alias as the "surfer dude" seems more and more appropriate. His long white mane falls past his eyes and well below his neck. Resting against his golden palomino coat, he resembles someone who's spent many hours in the glow of the sun. It's his walk, however, that really completes the picture.

He has a casual,

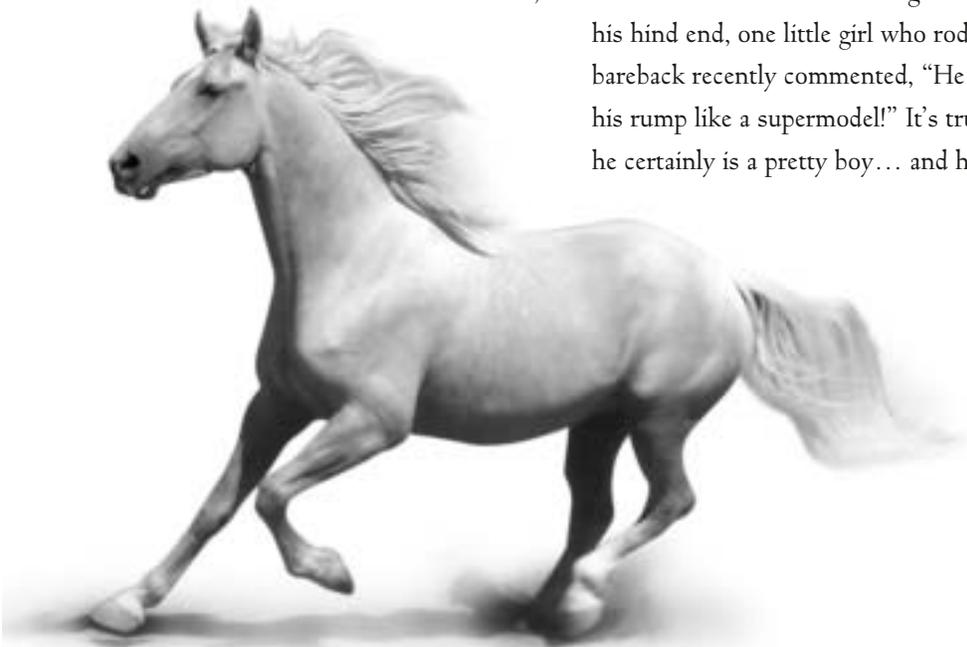
unhurried way of sauntering up to you in the corral. It is this same laid-back attitude that makes him a favorite. Even though he is only a youngster under saddle, his heart is as steady and bold as a seasoned veteran.

When Jed first came to the ranch, his muscles were atrophied from living primarily in a stall with little exercise. Because he still seems like he's learning how to use his hind end, one little girl who rode him bareback recently commented, "He swings his rump like a supermodel!" It's true that he certainly is a pretty boy... and he has

been known to stand with his hind legs crossed in the corral... and he was recently in a prestigious photo shoot... hmmm, maybe she's on to something!

Jed has come a long way in his training in a very short amount of time. He's learning to simply relax and really listen for cues in the round pen. Beneath his handsome exterior lays a very quiet interior that seeks to please those in his presence. His ears silently flicker to seemingly catch the very heart and soul of those who call him 'friend.' He is a deep, sensitive soul that thrives on being rewarded with a soft rub, hug or child's kiss on the muzzle.

On occasion Jed will be referred to as Jedidiah—a name I recognized from the Bible but just couldn't quite place. Only a few days ago I stumbled upon the story that explained this unique name. King David and Bathsheba had a son who they named Solomon, who later succeeded his father as king and was renowned for his great wisdom. At Solomon's birth the Lord loved him so much, that He sent word through the prophet Nathan that Solomon should be called Jedidiah, which means "beloved of the Lord." I could only smile to myself as I thought what a beautiful and fitting name for our sweet Jed. He is certainly beloved by me, many kids, visitors, and staff, and—truly now I know without question—beloved of our Lord.



The MARATHON

BY KIM MEEDER

It's true... running a marathon IS hard. But it is not impossible. Laughing to myself, I often muse that if I can do it... ANYONE can! On April 29, three of the ranch staff ran a half marathon (13.1 miles) and four of us ran the full distance of 26.2 miles. During the five months of training prior to the race, I noticed something that I had not expected.

Aside from the usual suspects of sore muscles, blisters and time frame challenges... I noticed that inevitably whenever the topic of a 'marathon' came up in conversation, the response was nearly universal... "Oh, I could NEVER do that!" The given reasons that followed were as unique and various as the individuals that spoke them. But, they all said virtually the same thing, in essence, "I can't do that."

After the singing of our national anthem, the runners were off in a conglomerate mass of well wishing smiles and bouncing shoulders. After what seemed like running

nearly in place for the first half mile, the runners finally began to spread out a bit and find their own individual rhythm. Fueled by adrenalized excitement, we ran fast, dodging through the maze of runners as if it were a game. By mile five, we began to settle into a reasonable pace. By mile seven, we prayed for everyone we could think of. By mile thirteen, 'discomfort' began to surface. By mile eighteen, the pain became intense. By mile twenty, I realized that I had six more miles to contemplate how to keep moving forward through what felt like fire.

Although I had noticed them before, it was during this time of suffering that I became more aware of just how *much* I appreciated them... the cheering bystanders. Just like those running the race, each one was unique in their style of encouragement.

"C'mon Girl! You can do it! Lookin' good, lookin' good! Just one step after another and you'll be home soon..." There they stood, cheering for *each* runner... for HOURS. I was amazed and utterly captivated by every one of them. I couldn't help but wonder, "Lord? Do they really know how much this means to me? Do they really know how much this is helping to keep me moving forward?"

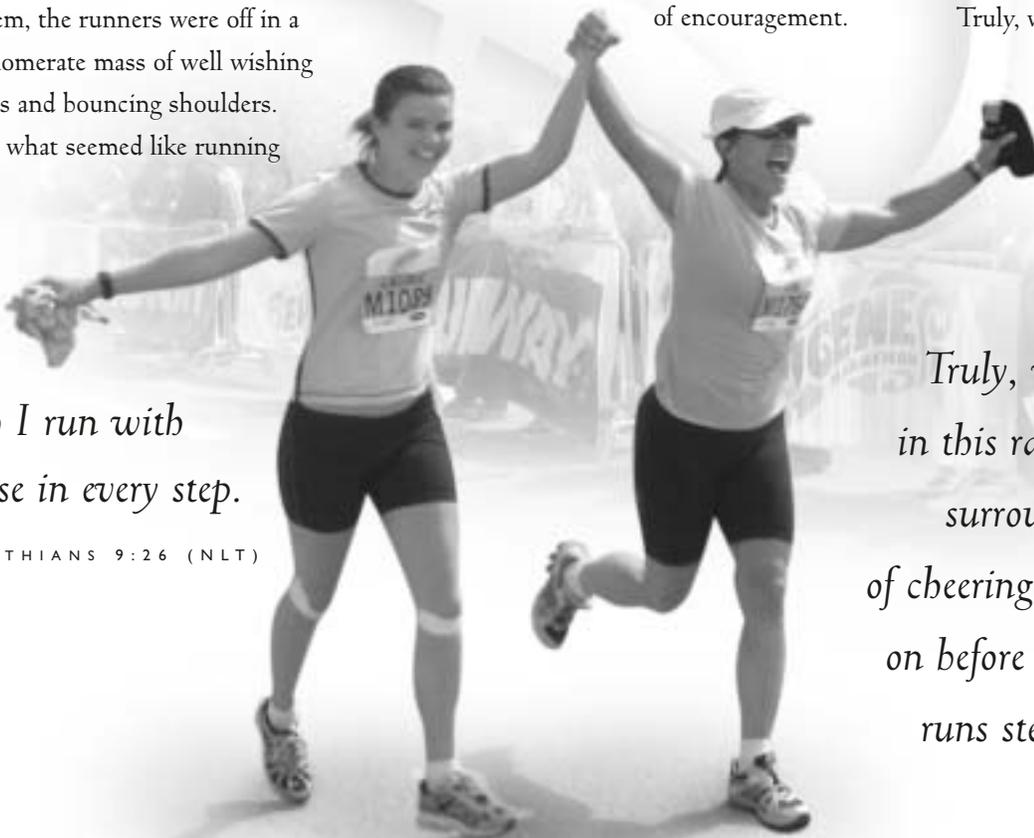
While trotting down the river trail, one painful step after another, the truth of our Lord came. "Yes child... they do know. They are just like the great 'Cloud of Witnesses' that you cannot see. They are symbolic of those who have gone on before you in faith and are now cheering for you to never quit, never give up, keep on running this life of faith. Keep putting one foot down after another until you're home..."

Truly, we *are* in a race... ALL of us... it is the race of our lives.

*So I run with
purpose in every step.*

1 CORINTHIANS 9:26 (NLT)

*Truly, we are never alone
in this race. Not only are we
surrounded by millions
of cheering saints who have gone
on before us... the Lord of All
runs step for step with us.*



What a glorious ‘ripple effect’ that we can choose to become a part of. God encouraged the saints, the saints encouraged Jesus, Jesus encourages us... and we can encourage each other. It matters more than we know.

Sometimes we run fast with much exuberance. Sometimes we run slow with much pain. Whether we think we can do it or not... does not change the fact that we are. And no matter where we are within this journey, it is still true... a little encouragement goes a long way.

In my mind, everything changes when we realize that there is no pain in this race so great... that the mercy and love of our Lord for us... is not greater still.

We are *never* alone in this race. Not only are we surrounded by millions of cheering saints who have gone on before us... the Lord of All runs step for step *with* us. And when this is not enough, He does something *even more* remarkable... when our strength runs out... if we ask... He will give us His.

So, within the bigger picture, I guess that it really doesn't matter if we think we can run a marathon or not, we ARE. Each one of us is currently either running, walking, skipping or crawling. We are in it together... ALL of us. When we understand that we are part of a team that is bigger than our own needs, it makes greater sense what an enormous gift it becomes when we cheer for those within the race around us. Our own difficulties become less so when we begin to focus on those around us who could use our encouragement. What a glorious ‘ripple effect’ that we can choose to become a part of. God encouraged the saints, the saints encouraged Jesus, Jesus encourages us... and we can encourage each other. It matters more than we know.

On this day... is there someone I can encourage?

Because of the cheers of those throughout and alongside me during the race, I finally reached the finish line with tears in my eyes. As with every marathon that I have ever run, I imagined running right into my Father's arms and hearing Him say, “You made it, you never stopped, you never quit, you ran to the very end and finished well. Welcome home my child.”



New Boys Continued on from page 1

ELIAS & LAREDO



They seem to silently prove that there is no 'starving virtue' within me, no 'limping good intention' or 'wounded desire to help'... that God's unconditional love and the grass roots of His word cannot heal.

Truly, what unconditional love and grass hay can do! "Elias" and "Laredo" have quietly gained back their former glory and in the process, also gained full access to the hearts of those who live, work and play here. Even though his condition was quite severe, Elias continues to gain weight, muscle and stability before our eyes. Together, they are two of the fastest weight gaining horses that the ranch has ever recovered. In less than two months, Laredo is already taking positive steps toward becoming a very sensitive children's horse. Perhaps because of his painted coat and quiet ground manners, he is already a favorite horse for the very young to paint. It makes me smile to think that when he came, he seemed to prefer not being touched or caught by anyone. Now, he chooses to bow his head into the halter and a child's full 'body hug' to the side of his head seems to suit him just fine.

Each one of us can learn so much from this amazing world. The more time that I spend with our sweet 'boys', the more the Lord seems to reaffirm something deep within my heart. They continue to silently prove that there is no 'starving virtue' within me, no 'limping good intention' or 'wounded desire to help'... that God's unconditional love and the grass roots of His word cannot heal.



Special Thanks BY TROY MEEDER



"Thank you."

Those two simple words carry such a vast array of meaning. Thank you for the pie, thank you for the new bike, thank you for the kind note, thank you for the hug when I needed it most. I can remember trying to thank Mimi, Kim's grandmother, for her homemade biscuits. They were so incredibly good that a simple "thank you" just never seemed like enough.

As Kim and I quietly left the campus of Focus on The Family this past visit, I was deeply aware of just how much this great ministry has meant to Crystal Peaks. Silently, my heart began to murmur that simply saying 'thank you' already felt far too small. Just as it was after our first visit in 2004, I knew intuitively that this interview would also change our lives.

Since the airing of our recent visit with Dr. Dobson and Dr. Maier, many have chosen to respond to this ministry in ways we could have never dreamed. Cards, letters, gifts, prayers, financial assistance, even a few far away land donations are starting to 'visit' our little mailbox at the bottom of the hill. Each day the staff is given the incredible

privilege of bringing an armload of 'goodwill' up to the ranch office. Even greater than before, opening the mail has felt more and more like... 'rain in the desert.' Thank you for that.

Thank you... ALL of you... for your letters of encouragement, prayers and generosity. To Gino in Mendocino, Chris in Rock Springs, JR and Diane in Stayton, Kenny in Texas, Tim and Lori up the road, the Melnor's in London and Dr. Starky in Tanzania. To everyone that has reached across the miles to become a part of our extended family... we reach back and grasp your hands in overwhelming gratitude. Thank you for believing in us. Thank you for caring for the children and horses who call this place home. It is because of you, all of you, that together we look forward to serving Him in the years to come.

You have become His hands and feet. You are the life giving support that keeps the lights on and hay in the barn. From all of us here at the ranch... we thank you.

Yes! I would like to help Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch fulfill their mission

Please use my donation for:

- Where it is needed most
- Endowment Fund
- For the children
- For the horses
- Ranch Equipment
- Staff education
- Volunteer program

Payment Method:

A check payable to Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch CPYR for \$_____

Credit cards are accepted at:

www.crystalpeaksyouthbranch.org

Send donations to: Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch, 19344 Innes Market Road, Bend OR 97701.

You can also make your donation at www.crystalpeaksyouthbranch.org

Our current wish list is also available at our website

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail (please) _____

My Gift is _____ in honor of _____

My Gift is _____ in memory of _____

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail (please) _____

Round Up!

BY KELSIE PATKA

Summer time is here! With that comes some of my favorite days of the year... "Round Up" Thursdays! This is a special time that we have set aside for kids, both young and old, to just come and play. Each Thursday afternoon, during the summer months, becomes a new adventure filled with crazy games and gigantic fun. One can expect a great deal of running, getting wet, eating goofy things and dunking heads (or whole bodies) into crazy concoctions that might be better if you



actually don't know what it is.

Imagine for a moment that you are a young child, perhaps one who has only known a life of adult responsibilities beyond your tender age. This is a time where you can come and be free; you can be playful inside and out. From my point of view, the very best part is that it's not only the kids who play... many times the parents join in on the fun as well! Kids play, parents play... and greatest of all... families play together.

I have found in my life that laughter is a powerful healer of brokenness. It has become one of our greatest privileges to inspire roars of laughter as often as we can. If you are ever in the area of Crystal Peaks next summer during a Thursday; it is one of the most joy-filled places in Central Oregon. You are certain to hear laughter ringing through the arena and drifting over the grassy hill... and we welcome you to join in the fun!

Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch Co.
(541) 330-0123
19344 Innes Market Road
Bend, OR 97701
www.crystalpeaksyouthranch.org



NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BEND, OR
PERMIT # 3