



THE POWER OF ONE

MISSION

Garden Gate Ranch is a faith-based Christian organization providing safe housing and restorative and transitional services for sexually-exploited women and their children.

VISION

Garden Gate Ranch seeks to rally our communities to ensure that all women are free from exploitation and abuse.

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One moment. One statement. One young mom. One broken heart.
This was the moment when everything changed for me.

My husband, Steve, and I were foster parents for 13 years, taking in babies and toddlers and helping where possible. We lived in Texas at the time, and one of our placements was for two little girls.

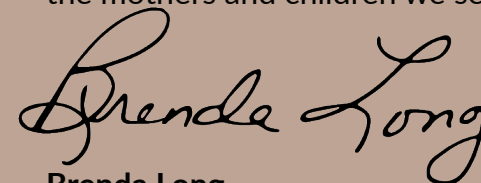
When we met the mother, I instantly saw why she was in her current situation. This young mom had just turned 18, and her girls were 18 months and three years old, with no support from family, friends, or community. Not only did we want to help with the care of the children, but we also wanted to help the mom get her children back and be her support.

I approached the CPS worker and shared with her my desires to help this mother. I was shocked by her response. This CPS worker told me that I couldn't help the mom, and that this young mother had to do it on her own. The worker proceeded to tell me that if she discovered that I did help the mother, they would remove the girls and pull our foster care license, and we'd never foster again. Long story short, this mother's children went up for adoption, and she never saw them again. To this day, I wonder what happened to her.

My husband and I eventually returned to Iowa and pursued fostering again. Our hearts were pulled toward young moms without the support to properly care for their children. We volunteered to take a teen with a baby, so long as she wanted to be a mom. At the time, we were told they didn't place a teen mom and baby in the same foster home, which was shocking to me. A few weeks later, I received a call from the same worker inquiring if we would take a teen and her baby into our home. They must have changed their policy. We said yes, and to this day, this family unit is still together and has grown to a dad in the home and four additional children. They are still part of our family today.

The Texas mom's story broke my heart and seeded the desire that now fuels the ministry of Garden Gate Ranch: To help mothers be mothers; to assist them in whatever healing and growing is needed to allow them to keep, support, and nurture their children. We saw the power of this loving assistance through the young teen and baby we fostered here in Iowa, and we continue to see it every day with the survivors we serve at the Ranch. One yes and one broken heart contributed to the birthing of GGR, and thanks to your partnership, there are now ample opportunities for more and more yes's and countless healed hearts to come.

Thank you for your loving assistance of
the mothers and children we serve,



Brenda Long
Founder & CEO





WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

The United Nations defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons by improper means (such as force, abduction, fraud, or coercion) for an improper purpose including forced labor or sexual exploitation

WHAT IS SEX TRAFFICKING?

The act of forcing or manipulating another person to have sex or engage in sexual behaviors for the monetary gain of someone else (in exchange for something of value – money, drugs, housing, food, etc.)

Polaris Project’s recent National Survivor Study surveyed 457 survivors of human trafficking, making this report the largest national survey of survivors in the United States.

The top 3 reported needs of these survivors after exiting a trafficking situation were:

- 1. Accessing behavioral or mental health services with providers that understand my trauma (75%)
- 2. Finding people I trust that care about me and could help me (73%)
- 3. Finding a safe place to stay (70%)

At Garden Gate Ranch, we meet these needs by:

- 1. Offering trauma-informed addiction and mental health therapy at no cost to the survivor.
- 2. Building rapport with survivors through patience, authenticity, and unconditional love, and connecting them with a supportive, community network.
- 3. Providing a beautiful, secure home with a private bedroom for each survivor and her child.





**GARDEN GATE RANCH'S
2 PHASE RESTORATION PROGRAM**

1 THE RANCH HOUSE is Garden Gate Ranch's continuing restoration home, built upon a strength-based, trauma-informed approach to survivor aftercare.

At the Ranch, survivor needs are met through private bedrooms, healthy meals, church functions, healing curriculum, therapy, academic lessons and more. The Ranch House provides holistic support through a variety of therapies and programming in key areas such as safety, sobriety, trauma, self-care, spirituality, and relationships.

2

THE COTTAGES are independent transitional living units that help Ranch House graduates transition smoothly into life on their own.

Upon graduation from the Ranch House, every interested resident is given a personal living space for her and her child, complete with two bedrooms, a kitchen, living room, bathroom, garage, and in-home laundry. Here, she furthers her independence by working in the community and pursuing career goals while maintaining the safety and support of the Garden Gate Ranch team.





OUR HISTORY

A LOOK AT THE STORIES
THAT STARTED IT ALL



One Simple Prayer:
Brenda Tells the Story

ONE SIMPLE PRAYER

Three years before Garden Gate Ranch first opened its doors, Founder & CEO Brenda Long entered her prayer room and asked the Lord one simple question:

“What can I do for you?”

Immediately, she felt God’s presence all around her. He started speaking to her about women being sold for sex against their will. She heard the silent cries of women saying:

“No one is looking for me.”

“No one cares.”

“They look right at me, but they don’t see me.”

“They don’t think I’m worth fighting for.”

“Will somebody come?”

“Will someone help?”

At that moment, she knew these were the ones she was meant to help. The vision for Garden Gate Ranch was born.

ONE GENEROUS DREAM

When the Ranch House’s previous owners began construction on the 7,000 square foot home, the husband asked his wife, “What are we going to do with this place when it comes time to move on?”

“Don’t worry,” she replied. “We’ll donate this home for a women’s shelter.”

That exact same year, the Lord broke Brenda Long’s heart for hurting women and their children—an experience that seeded the mission of Garden Gate Ranch. This ministry is not here by chance. *God had this home planned for survivors of exploitation since its construction in 1999.*

ONE ROUTINE HAIRCUT

On a day like any other, one man went out for a haircut.

But then: One conversation led to one networking connection, and suddenly this day at the salon held the power to change lives.

The man settled into the stylist's chair and she began his normal trim. As they chatted, he shared about his and his wife's plan to downsize and move into town. When they built their home 19 years ago, they had discussed that one day they would love for their property to be owned by a ministry that helped abused women.

The man had no idea, but his stylist knew Brenda—our Founder & CEO—from church. After he left her salon, she called Brenda and asked if she could tell the man about Garden Gate Ranch. "Of course!" Brenda replied. "Give him my phone number. I'll let him make the first move."

When this man told his wife about the mission of Garden Gate Ranch, she was so moved that she wanted to donate her 401K to us to provide a home for these women and their children, regardless of whether or not we bought this property or another. They were in 100% to help restore lives.

A couple of weeks later, the man called Brenda. He offered to sell his and his wife's \$1.25 million property to Garden Gate Ranch for \$400,000—an incredibly generous donation!

We did buy the property, *and for a grand total of \$250,000.*

A year later, we opened our doors and have been serving exploited women and their children ever since.

What a legacy this family is leaving for generations to come. And it all started with a haircut.





**MOMENTS
OF IMPACT**



*From Survivor to Thriving:
One Graduate's Story*



“One morning after doing grocery shopping, I wasn’t feeling really great. I was at a stop light when I looked up and saw on a license plate 2 Corinthians 5:17. I had remembered a staff member saying that was how God would speak to her sometimes, so I pulled out my pen and wrote it on my hand.

“When I got home, I looked up the verse and it said, ‘Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things have passed away, behold new things have come.’

“I felt so encouraged that I was no longer the same person anymore. I’m not where I want to be yet, but I’m not where I used to be. I am a new creature! Me! That’s truly a loving God, that he would make old things pass away and make me a new creature.”

-A Ranch House Resident

“I felt weightless on the horse. Not just physically, but like a weight was lifted off my shoulders.” -A Ranch House Resident

During one resident’s first visit to the horse stables, she smiled so brightly as she was taught to groom her horse and then allowed to ride it. She told staff that her time riding was beautiful. The next day, she said she couldn’t believe that Garden Gate Ranch cared about the little things, like giving her the experience of riding a horse.

“She really has never learned how to play before.”

One of our staff members recently shared this about a Ranch House resident. They first observed that this mother didn't know how to “play” when they took a trip to a children's museum. She stood by uncertainly as others scrambled across an indoor playscape. She didn't know how to engage. Having grown up in a dysfunctional household, she'd had little opportunity for childlike fun.

Since that day at the museum, she's been learning how to play with her kids by watching the direct care staff.

“She just learned to read a book with her son, and learned to make the animal sounds,” a staff member said after spotting this mother reading a book to her little boy and making duck sounds all the while. “It was just really neat to see her take the initiative to engage with him, to see them start to interact with each other like that. They were having a good time together.”



IN 2024, YOU PROVIDED...

21

DIFFERENT STATES
REFERRED SURVIVORS

1,324

NIGHTS OF
SAFETY

536

HOURS OF
VOLUNTEER
DIRECT CARE

620

HOURS OF GROUP
CURRICULUM
SESSIONS

205

HOURS OF
INDIVIDUAL
COUNSELING
SERVICES

93

HOURS OF
MEDICAL
APPOINTMENTS

27

DIFFERENT
CLASSES &
CURRICULUM

2,803

HOURS OF
CHILDCARE

50

HOURS OF
RECOVERY
PROGRAMS

2024 MILESTONES

JANUARY

2024 marked the first year Garden Gate Ranch served survivors who came to the Ranch with multiple children. What an incredible blessing to be able to offer freedom and healing to mothers with kiddos. Thank you for making such a ministry possible.

MARCH

Equine assisted programming became available to Ranch House residents through your support and a partnership with Menagerie Stables. Almost immediately, survivors began to find hope, courage, and healing through their interactions with the horses.

MAY

Thanks to you, Fuzzy the sheepadoodle and Cocoa and Breeze, two Rocky Mountain mares, joined the Garden Gate Ranch family! These sweet support animals provide companionship and affection to Garden Gate Ranch mothers, children, and staff alike.

AUGUST

Our second Independent Transitional Living Cottage reached completion. There are now two cottages on Garden Gate Ranch's property that can be used by graduates of the Ranch House program as they transition back into the community. We can't thank you enough for financing these single-family units.

OCTOBER

We hosted our first annual 5k For Freedom—a fun run/walk intended to educate our community on the realities of human trafficking, as well as garner further ministry support. Read more about this event in our Community Impact section on page 36.

NOVEMBER

One of our Ranch House residents was accepted into college! Thanks to your support and her determination and hard work, she is chasing her dreams into 2025. This opportunity for further education will enable her to secure a stable job and provide for herself and her children after graduating from the Ranch.



*Say Hello to Cocoa & Breeze:
Meet the Ranch Horses*



To our friends,

In my time at Garden Gate Ranch, I have been privileged to see God work beautiful and hard victories in the moms that come here. One of these victories came in the form of a mom asking to leave our program.

She was unhappy that day and adamant that she and her child would be leaving GGR. In that moment, I chose to leave her to her thoughts, went to my office, and turned on worship music. I sang praises to God, trusting He had her, no matter the choice she ended up making.

About an hour later she wanted to talk and brought a laminated piece of paper along. This was a tool she had been given in GGR's programming to help her express her feelings when she didn't know how to name them herself.

This tool opened the door for real conversation. She didn't want to leave, she just didn't like where she was at that moment. We talked about words, why they matter, and how going forward she'd say, *"I just don't like this place very much today,"* instead of, *"I want to leave now."*

We hugged it out and I told her how incredibly proud I am of her, which stands true still. She is fighting for her and her child's future even when it can feel so much easier to give up.

Your support enables the programming that allowed her to wrestle and make a brave choice. You have given her and women like her a safe community that allows them to grow and learn their true identity in Christ. You have given them all the space to seek a future that is more than they thought possible.

Thank you for being a part of healing and hope for our sisters in Christ.

- Stephenie Henson | Operations Director



In 2024, we had...

187 INCREDIBLE
VOLUNTEERS

4,419 TOTAL
VOLUNTEER
HOURS

“Volunteering at Garden Gate Ranch is the highlight of my week. I help out as a Direct Care Coach, and I can’t wait to get to see the residents and share in the previous week’s accomplishments and struggles. I love growing alongside these women. They are an inspiration in my life to see through new perspectives and to appreciate the things we most often take for granted.”

- Susan Peterson | Volunteer



In 2024, we had...

183 MONTHLY GIVERS

6 GRANT PARTNERS

20 PARTNER MINISTRIES

Program Partners

21st Century Rehab, Adelhorst Kennels, Ankeny Smiles, Bearfoot Horse Trimming, Broadlawns Medical Center, Celebrate Recovery, Central Iowa Veterinary Services, Christ Life Center, Crossroads Clinic, DMACC, Dog Grooming by Sally, Dr. Brad Hagarty Colfax Dental, Food Bank Of Iowa, Freedom Aviation Network, Freedom Community, Freedom For Youth Ministries, Heartland Christian Counseling, Helping Hands, Hope Ministries, ISU Extension & Outreach, Life 107.1, Lions Club of Warren County, Menagerie Stables, MercyOne ENT, MercyOne Pediatrics Care & Family Medicine, Midland Prairie Veterinary Services, New Life Counseling, Optometric Associates, Ruth Harbor, Safe Families, Single Parent Provision, Southside Dental, Team Jesus, The Well, WIC, Wildwood Hills Ranch

1,019 TOTAL DONORS

“I’m smiling to myself again, just being thankful that I’ve been able to have a part in blessing Garden Gate Ranch. I know that when they receive items they’ve requested for personal care and upkeep, it means other funds coming in can then be directed to building God’s ministry. I don’t have children of my own, so it is a warming feeling knowing that I can partake in the beauty of family by touching the mothers and children in need.”

- Wendi | Ministry Partner

“When we first learned about the reality of sex trafficking in Iowa, we were heartbroken. The statistics were overwhelming, but the personal stories were even more so. These women—many of them mothers—desperately need support as they rebuild their lives. Through a neighbor, we discovered Garden Gate Ranch, and we knew this was God’s way of calling us to help. They provide not just safe housing, but hope, healing, and the support needed for true restoration. We give because no one should have to walk this journey alone. These women and their children deserve love, dignity, and a future free from exploitation. Garden Gate Ranch is making that possible, and we are honored to be part of their mission.”

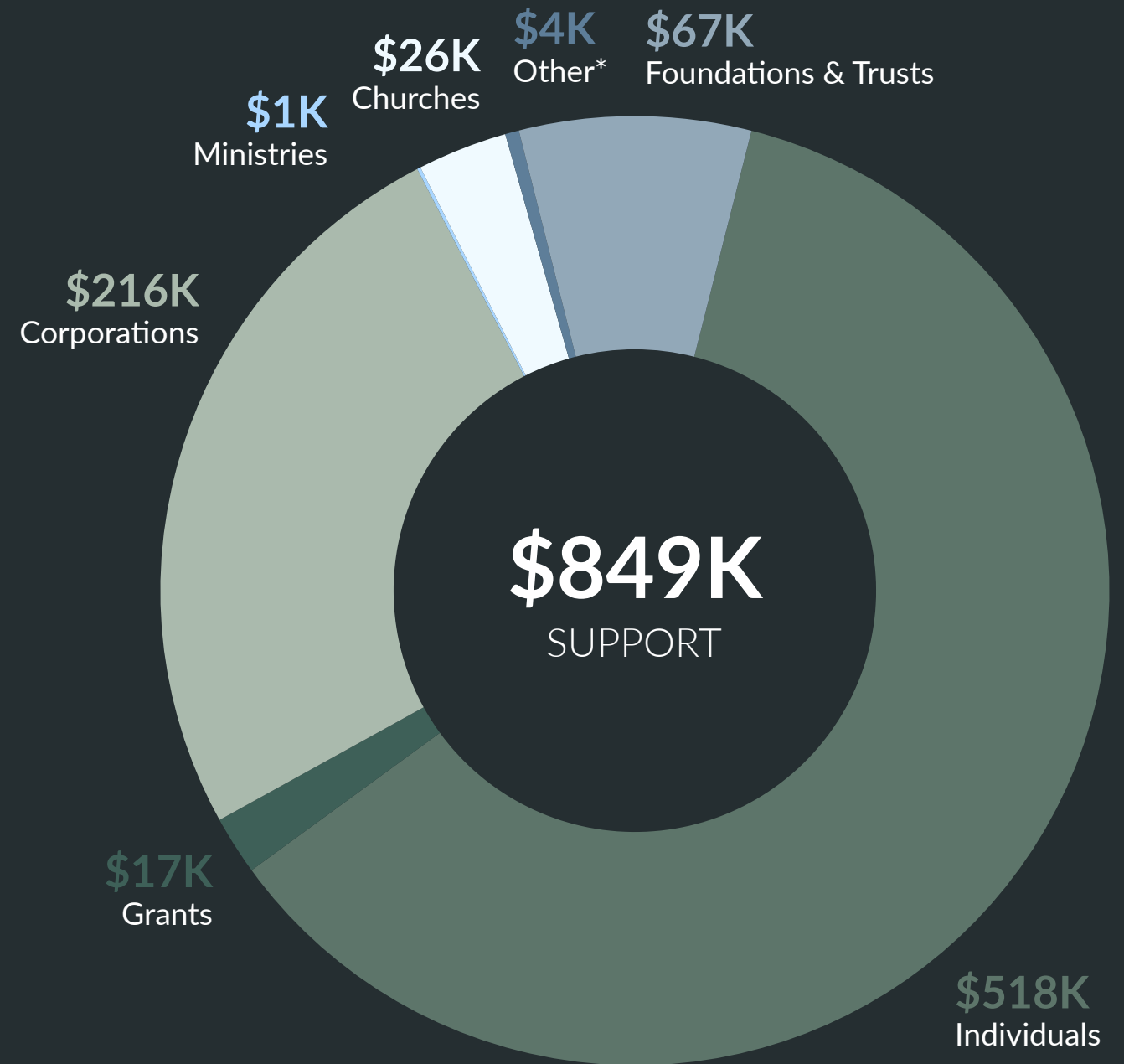
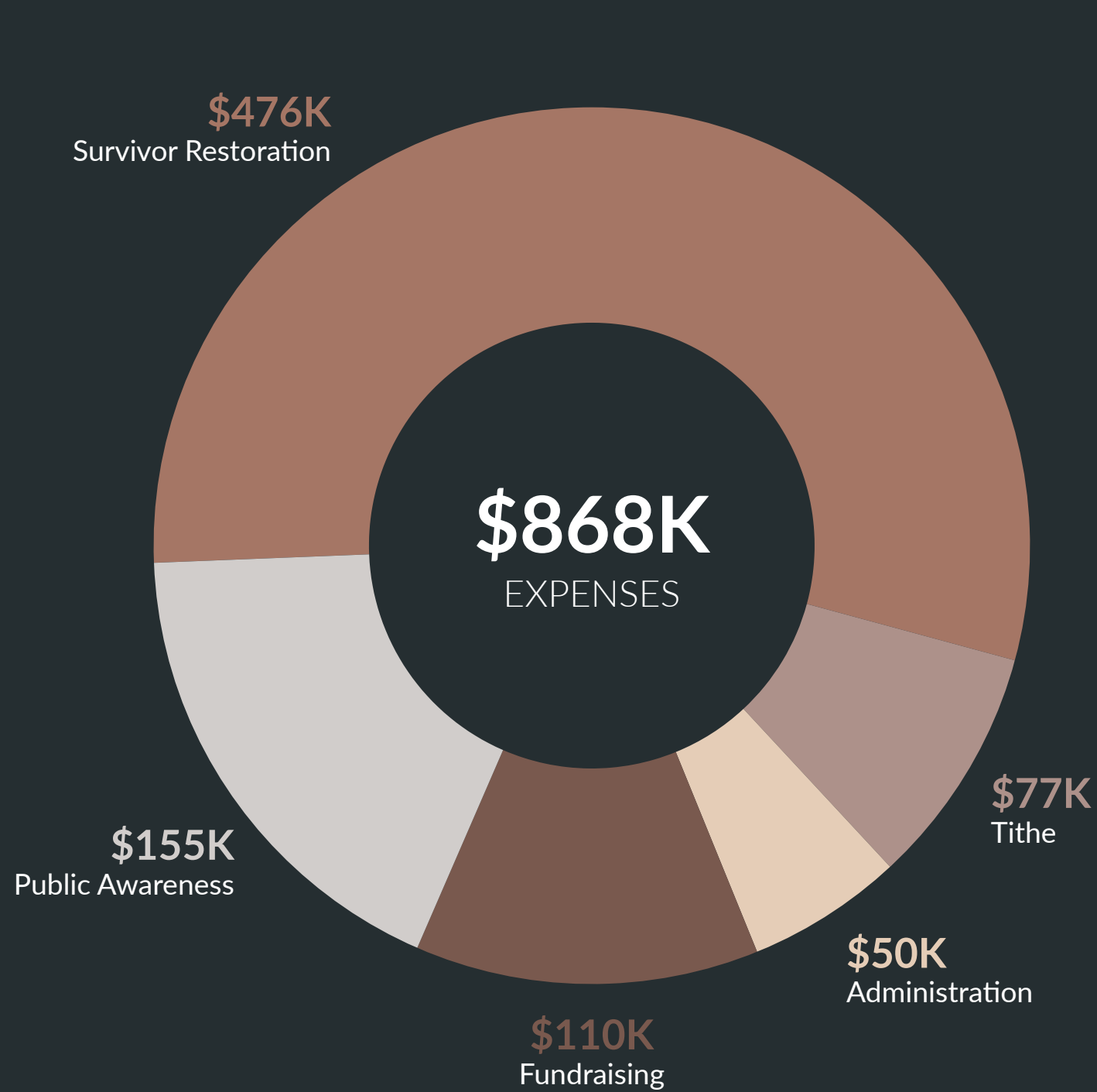
- Brittany & Kelly Schneider | Financial Partners

“My husband & I support Garden Gate Ranch because they provide a place of protection, hope, healing and love for women with children who want to leave sex trafficking. Garden Gate Ranch allows moms and their children to stay together while empowering them with choices, equipping them with new skills and teaching them about Christ, the true source for a new life.”

- Christine & Mark Leusink | Financial Partners



2024 FINANCES



*Includes product sales, Cottage Program fees, and interest on savings account.
Included in total support is \$71K of restricted funds.



Garden Gate Ranch is accredited by ECFA and upholds the seven integrity standards: Doctrinal issues, governance, financial oversight, use of resources and compliance with laws, transparency, compensation-setting and related-party transactions, and stewardship of charitable gifts. Learn more at ecfa.org.



Garden Gate Ranch is one of many organizations featured on Candid Guidestar and has received their highest transparency rating award.



Plans for the Future

In the long-term, we have three main goals:

- 1. Build a Second Unit of Independent Transitional Living Cottages:** Additional spaces for Ranch House graduates to live on-campus while transitioning back into the community.
- 2. Open the Pathway House:** A 24-hour immediate rescue home intended to get survivors off the street and into safety as they begin their path to wholeness.
- 3. Start an Economic Empowerment Program:** A way to provide skills and job training to the women in our Continuing Restoration program.



Community Involvement

You powered our ministry this year as you joined other individuals, entrepreneurs and businesses to show care and support to the women and children we serve. Your impact included:

- Donor drives held by individuals and business partners to supply daily necessities like diapers and gas cards.
- Community members providing Christmas wish list gifts for the mothers and kiddos at the Ranch, making their holidays extra special this year.
- Multiple businesses coming alongside our 5k for Freedom event to sponsor details like banners, t-shirts, and educational statistic signs.
- Amazing volunteers gathering to stuff envelopes for our year-end mailings, wrap Christmas presents, and decorate the Ranch House for the holidays.
- A group of entrepreneurs highlighting our ministry at their annual business retreat and raising nearly \$10,000 for our mission.
- Churches and community groups asking us to speak on the topic of human trafficking and how Garden Gate Ranch offers safety and restoration after exploitation.
- Rotary groups rallying in support of local anti-trafficking efforts and providing financial grants to Garden Gate Ranch.



5k For Freedom

This year, we hosted our first annual 5k For Freedom, a fun run/walk designed to increase our community's awareness of human trafficking and expand our ministry's support network. The event took place on a beautiful October morning at Copper Creek Lake Park in Pleasant Hill, IA. Participants had the opportunity to raise support prior to the event, then learned about our ministry and the realities of human trafficking that morning, via an opening ceremony and signs positioned along the trail. We had over 170 participants, 7 event partners, 3 event sponsors, and \$10,000 raised.



GET INVOLVED

VOLUNTEER

INVEST

EXPLORE LEGACY GIVING

GIVE A MONETARY GIFT

INITIATE AN EMPLOYER MATCHING GIFT

SHOP OUR AMAZON WISH LIST

RUN A PASSION PROJECT

CONNECT

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR PRAYER LETTER

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.gardengateranch.com



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



BRENDA LONG
BOARD PRESIDENT



CHUCK MELINE
BOARD CHAIR



LINDA GILLESPIE-RIPLEY
BOARD CO-CHAIR



JUDY MELINE
BOARD SECRETARY



COLLEEN MORRISON
BOARD TREASURER



BEN WECKING
BOARD MEMBER

Our motto at Garden Gate Ranch is, “For the Love of Each One.” As we reflect on the impact of this ministry from the moment our doors opened on April 1, 2020, the results of investing in one woman at a time shows us what the “Power of One” truly means.

One man building a home with *one question* for his wife: What will we do with this home when we need to downsize? *One answer*: We will make sure this home will be a safe haven for abused women.

One vision, leading to *one woman* who walked in obedience to the call of God, who heard the questions of the exploited:

“Is anyone looking for me?”

“Does anyone care?”

“Will somebody come?”

“Will someone help?”

Garden Gate Ranch was born in response to these cries. One “yes” opened the door for many women and children to hear a resounding, “Yes, we are looking for you. Yes, we do care. Yes, we are coming. Yes, we will help!”

One woman, one child, one decision to leave her familiar surroundings and come to a safe place called Garden Gate Ranch. She steps over many obstacles to arrive—to conquer fear of the unknown, to find hope for a future, to take hold of heart healing and adopt a vision for freedom.

We are blessed with a vision, with a call, and with you, our supporters. You hear the cry, and you respond in such a way as to offer hope, healing, safety, and a new life for each precious mama and child that is entrusted to us.

By your gracious donations of time, money, and acts of kindness, we are seeing what the “Power of One” can accomplish.

Thank you for your partnership.

Linda Gillespie-Ripley
Garden Gate Ranch Board Co-Chair





Platinum
Transparency
2025

Candid.



GARDEN GATE RANCH
P.O. Box 8351 Des Moines, IA 50301
www.gardengateranch.com
515.393.8400