



VICTORY RANCH

# Victory Ranch Inc. - History



## Why I started Victory Ranch Inc. – My Vision

*Our society at times forgets about the many kids and Veterans that struggle every day for a normal life. We take for granted things like a home, three meals a day, a car for transportation, loving parents, good health... a future. Enjoyed by most, but dreamed about by many.*

For several years I had wanted to match my equestrian skills, yearning to serve those in need, and a way to help kids that have special needs, abused, or are otherwise disadvantaged. Volunteering for various non-profit organizations and organizing equestrian fundraisers through the years have provided me with a way to learn and grow my vision. I am deeply grateful and blessed for the opportunities to help impact other's lives.

Since the 1960's, when I volunteered to help juveniles in Roxbury, MA, and Autistic kids at the Joseph P. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Boston, I have volunteered with many organizations across the country to help disadvantaged, at-risk, low-income, culturally-diverse kids.

In 2003, I served on the Board of Directors and volunteered for years with **BOK Ranch** in Woodside, California. I worked with Autistic youth and adults as a leader and side walker with the horses.

While volunteering with BOK Ranch, I realized that there were other needy kids that were not being served in the community. So, I decided to start my own equestrian organizations focused on providing a therapeutic experience. Over the years, I could see and witness how the interaction with the horse helped to change the kids and adults I worked with. Professional research validated what I knew and witnessed.

How could I use my God-given talents of knowing the spirit of the horse and knowing how to help and work with needy kids? This was the question that was answered quite clearly one day to me. Why not start a program that would benefit the disadvantaged youth. This idea and goal blossomed into founding a non-profit organization dedicated to providing therapeutic horse programs.

On September 16, 2006, while having dinner with a good friend of mine (a fellow Mounted Deputy Sheriff with the San Francisco Sheriff's Dept. Mounted Unit), I shared my vision of wanting to start my non-profit. He helped direct me to an on-line organization where you can register your non-profit. I dialed up the company and registered Victory Ranch Inc. as a non-profit company. The next step was to register Victory Ranch Inc. as a legal entity. I decided to register in Nevada, and then apply for IRS 501(c)3 status soon after.

I saddled up my horse and rode into the town of Woodside one afternoon to meet with **Dean Witter III** (known as Kip). He also rode his horse into town to meet me. Kip and I were both members of the Mounted Patrol of San Mateo County, and I wanted to share my vision with him. He was very receptive and supportive of my idea of starting a non-profit with innovative programs for disadvantaged kids (under-served, culturally diverse, low-income, and underprivileged). He encouraged me to apply for 501(c)3 status, and offered



a grant through his Dean Witter Foundation to help get us started! His seed financial support was very helpful in being awarded 501(c)3 status by the IRS In January, 2007. He continues to be a good friend!

I created the **Kids & Horses Education Program** (now known as the **About the Horse Program**), that is a comprehensive program that teaches all about the horse, and culminates with the students riding the horse for the last two of eight sessions conducted at the ranch. Hundreds of kids have graduated as Buckaroos through the years. They receive a cowboy hat and kerchief along with their Buckaroo Certificate.



Next question at the time...where to get the kids? I reached out and connected with social service agencies and organizations in the San Jose, CA area. I created a partner relationship with Santa Clara County Foster and Adopted Parents Association and EMQ (later changed to EMQFF, when they merged with Families First – now called Uplift). There was immediate interest for an after-school and summer program that centered around the horse. We commenced program operations in the 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. Of 2007. For over fourteen years now we have been able to change many behavioral disorders for the better, and witnessed hundreds of happy participants!

In 2017 I felt it was time to reach out to fellow Veterans. I am a partially disabled Army Veteran. I was able to start the **Homeless Veteran Ranch Day Visit Program** and partnered with Homefirst in San Jose, California. It was so rewarding to see the happy smiles and enjoyment from the Vets that came to the ranch. We now partner with the Reno Veterans Resource Center and the VA-Reno.



Our commitment to serving the needy continues at our new ranch facility in Reno, Nevada. We have continued to provide our programs since moving here form California...more kids and veterans that we can make a difference in their lives!

We have created new partner relationships with the Eddy House, Mountain Circle Family Services, Washoe County Family Services, Koinonia, Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation, Veterans Resource Center, VA-Reno, The Children's Cabinet, and the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony.

Our success, in part, can be attributed to the financial support from local foundations, that have provided grant awards, along with our annual funding partners. They include: DEW Foundation, The Jack Van Sickle Foundation, Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller - Reno, The John Ben Snow Memorial Trust, The Hurlbut-Johnson Charitable Trust, The Corbalis Family Foundation, and the Harvey L. and Maud C. Sorensen Foundation. We are blessed with the financial support!



***We resumed programs in June 2020 and follow the COVID-19 Guidelines***

**Victory Ranch Inc. looks forward to growing our Family...we are here to serve!**



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