

New Hope Farms Gets Boost On 30th Anniversary Of Serving People

New Hope Farms, celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, owes its beginning to Rainbow Acres, a working ranch for disabled adults in Arizona.

Two Baptist pastors with \$145 between them set out to prove that mentally disabled adults could live happy, productive lives when placed in a supportive, yet challenging, environment. With Rainbow Acres' success, others followed their example.

New Hope's founders, Wally and Marlene Fenton and Larry and Joy Goehner, saw firsthand what the resident "ranchers" in Arizona could accomplish and what that meant in their lives. They had a vision of developing a similar Christian living experience in Washington.

Fenton's parents, who owned a ranch on the Bickleton Highway six miles east of Goldendale, donated 20 acres, a barn and a ranch house. An additional 20 adjoining acres were donated later.

The goal was to provide a lifetime home where residents could maximize their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual growth in an atmosphere of love and acceptance.

Within four months of its inception in July 1978, given the generous support of churches and individuals, the farm opened its doors to residents.

The major difference in the farm today from the founders' vision of a financially independent working

farm is that the facility is now licensed, overseen and mostly funded by the state of Washington Department of Developmental Disabilities, and federal Medicare and Medicaid.

While the initial emphasis was on self-sufficiency through animal husbandry and raising farm products, Washington laws did not permit that

Hope Farms held its open house and a spaghetti feed in Goldendale, with entertainment from the Rolling Hills Sweet Adelines. The event raised \$2,668.76 for maintenance of the facilities.

One of the truly remarkable characteristics of the farm is the longevity of its residents. About half of the residents have lived there for more

than 10 years, two of them having been there since its beginning. Several more have lived there more than five years.

The residents consider New Hope Farms their home, and the other residents and staff their family. This level of permanence sets New Hope Farms apart from every other resident program in the state.

There have been major challenges to the survival of the farm through the years.

Family members have been willing to devote the time and energy to seeing it through its growing pains.

New Hope Farms is the only rural, nonprofit, private, group facility in the state that serves the developmentally disabled.

As the farm came under state purview, it was difficult to classify and license because there were no precedents. The farm was became officially licensed in 1997.

The farm staff and state workers have a collaborative partnership to seek the best future for the residents. ■

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Above, New Hope Farms residents gather for a portrait. Below, residents put on a talent show celebrating 30 years of community contributions.



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The difficulties of raising crops and animals for sale in a competitive and highly regulated market were underestimated.

While the emphasis continues on personal growth, residents now set their own pace. On June 14, New