A lot has been happening at Special K Ranch that I could write about but I’ve chosen to use my space in this newsletter to give tribute to one of our beloved brothers, Mike Gregg.

We all were saddened on February 9th when we received a phone call from Theresa Keister Burwick, sister of Mike Gregg a former resident at SKR, telling us that Mike had just passed away after returning from getting the mail. Mike came from Idaho in 1999 to live at SKR, fulfilling a life-long dream, to live on a ranch. Mike would have been 64 on June 3rd. He left SKR last August to join his sister and her family in Kentucky. Mike was an avid collector of brochures, particularly of Zoos, from all across the country. His speech was limited but he could produce a brochure about nearly any topic from his vast collection. He loved to give hugs and we have missed his visits to the office just for that purpose. Mike was the first SKR family member to go to be with Jesus, who he dearly loved.

The following is an excerpt from a letter we received from Mike’s sister and family after settling in their new home in Kentucky.

“The Theresa and Scott, you made Agape House – Mike’s home. You have walked with him through health issues and behavior challenges. Theresa, you have brought order to Mike’s life that we, his family, thought impossible. His manners and thoughtfulness are a new blessing in his life. What we thought impossible, you have accomplished. And we know that was no small feat! Thank you so very much!

To all the rest of you who make Special K Ranch what it is, thank you, thank you, thank you! Mike grew up in his years there. He became a part of a community, learned to care more about others, and even learned to ride a horse!!

And now he’s in another community. After a week of walking around shell-shocked, Mike is relaxing and settling in well. He’s pouring over maps, looking through his stuff and taking frequent walks up to the mailbox to put in letters he’s writing. Ray has set a goal of giving Mike a lot of positive feedback and setting some work expectations. I think you’ll enjoy this interchange they had last week.

Ray: Mike, would you like to help me dig a hole for the tree we bought?
Mike: No
Ray: Why not, Mike?
Mike: I might fall in the hole. (No kidding)

Next morning, after some cajoling, Mike helped Ray with the tree. The rest of the conversation later at dinner:
Ray: Mike, what was the best thing that happened to you today?
Mike: I planted the tree.”

Our heartfelt thanks!!
Theresa and Ray Burwick
Kristin & Keith Williams, Mike’s niece and husband
Fletcher & Jennifer Keister, Mike’s nephew and wife

Mike Gregg 1948-2012

The heavens are telling the glory of God. Psalm 19:1
You have often heard me introduce my good friend Tim Potts as my twin brother. It’s true that Tim is not really my twin brother by human blood, but more so by the blood of Christ. Tim has called Special K Ranch “Home” for almost 23 years and he has been a blessing in my life for the past 13 years. I can’t tell you how many times I came away with my priorities in life refocused after spending a weekend with him. I was reading an article about Down syndrome the other day and a statistic caught my attention that I really felt applied to my good friend Tim. The article said that one of the things that causes decline in people with Down syndrome in their later years is the stress related to a significant life event such as the death of a loved one. It went on to say that this particular stress hastened the affects of Dementia or Alzheimer’s, a common disease among people with Down syndrome. It all began to make sense; we have been witnessing the steady decline of Tim since his mother, Grace, passed away this fall. I am not going to go into a lot of detail about our fears and concerns regarding Tim’s health and safety. We just knew it was time for Tim to make the move to Beartooth Manor where he would get the 24 hour supervision and care he now requires. Tim will still be picked up for church and special events: we hope to keep him in our day program one day a week. He will always be a part of the Special K Family. I just want you to know that it was not an easy decision but the right decision.

We also received a phone call this week from Mike Gregg’s sister, Theresa. She informed us that Mike had passed away due to some heart problems. Mike had moved to Kentucky to live with his sister and her family on the farm in August. He will probably be remembered most for his love of maps and zoo brochures, and let’s not forget about his stubbornness and that awesome teddy bear look he would give you to get his way. I am so glad Mike got to spend his last few months with his family. It just goes to show you it is God’s timing and plan not ours.

On Saturday we received a call from Stephanie Lalim, a long time resident in the Stumvoll house. She wanted us to know that her mother Bobbie had passed away Friday night from a lengthy battle with cancer. Our prayers go out to the Lalim family and we are thankful that we know she is in a better place.

It was a tough week for everyone at Special K but God ended my week on a fond memory making evening. My wife Carla and I were doing relief this weekend: she had the McCormick girls at our house and I stayed with the Agape guys at the ranch. Carla had invited us over for dinner with the ladies and our good friends, Kenny and Sue White. We enjoyed a wonderful dinner of good food and laughter. After dinner Cindy, Shorty, Angela, Bret, Kenny, my son Jonah and I all jumped into the hot tub for a soak. We had so many people in it that the water was flowing over the sides as Carla served some of the resident’s homemade Mocha Frappe drinks. What a fun time of telling stories, splashing each other, more laughter and some of the guys making their own bubbles without the spa jets on. (Did I just type that out loud?) As I was sitting in the hot tub just taking it all in, it became very apparent to me that God is sovereign, eternal, all knowing and my Rock. We ended the evening by watching the movie “Courageous”. GOD IS GOOD!

“The Lord himself goes before you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” Deuteronomy 31:8

YES! If you can’t tell I still Love my job and this ministry. Press On,

Mike

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**MONTANA STATE TAX CREDIT**

If you live in Montana you can lower your state tax when you make a qualified planned gift to a Montana charitable endowment. We would be happy to visit with you about a gift annuity that qualifies for this tax credit. This gift benefits you by giving you a tax credit, an income stream, and increases the Special K Ranch Endowment that helps present and future program needs.

**A GIFT FROM LIFE INSURANCE**

Another possibility for making a gift is to name Special K Ranch the beneficiary of a life insurance policy that is no longer needed.

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**CONSIDER A GIFT**

- New or used passenger car/economy for administration
- A mini van for a house family
- Hay, Feed Grain
- Calves, Ewes
- Commercial Vacuum

- Food Storage Building
- Greenhouse heater $1,150
- And an installation kit $430
- Propagation mat $120 (4 mats per table) and 1 thermostat @$85
MEMORIALS AND HONORARIES November 1, 2011 - January 31, 2012

We are pleased that the people memorialized and honored on these pages are part of the ongoing ministry of Special K Ranch.

A special thanks to those making these gifts.

HONORARIES:
LYLE ABRAHAM
John & Lois Weikel
ED ADAMS
Don & Sue Parks
DOLLY ALLAN
Jim & Ruth Hatten
PEHR ANDERSON
Dan & Helen F Walker
KEITH & DEBBIE BAKESLEY
Donna Beutler
ANNA BAKKER
Jeremy & Julie Siemens
JEAANNETTE & ERVIN HOSSFELD
ROBERT DORVALL
KEVIN DOMER
GARY DENKER
Montana Seed
IRMA DAUM
Mrs Mary Ruetten
JUDY CUFF
Mary J Wallace
O.V. CRUMBAKER
Mary J Wallace
JUDY CUFF
Mrs Mary Ruetten
IRMA DAUM
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DUANE GRÖB
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DOUGLAS HANSON
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Keith & Donna Nelson
SLYVIA & HANZ HAYNIE
Donna Beutler
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Irene German
EUGENIE HEIKEN
Bruce & Lillian Devries
BETTY HELGESON
Patrick & Julia Helgeson
TAM HELM
Myrna M Stone
WILLIAM V HICKSON
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LARRY HILL
Lisa E Dawson
LYDIA HOFCHALTER
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ROBERT & Judy Richman
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Judy Brewer
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Susanne Keller
SCOTT & TERRI KEYSER
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CARSON KIECKER
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GAIL KINDSFATHER
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Ronald & Karen Wood
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Donna Beutler
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Richard & Beverly Johnson
LIAM MCWILLIAMS
Jim & Linda Peters
PATRICK MELCHER
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J.K. MUNSELL
Frank & Lois Rooney - Munson
HAZEL MURRAY
Rodney & Linda Halvorson
CHARLES MUSSETTER
Ms Josephine Mendenhall
BRAD NASH
Robert & Sherrie Willems
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Robert & Sherrie Willems
ESTER NELSON
William & Fay Haynie
PAUL & VICKI NUNBERG
Donna Beutler
HOWARD OLSTAD
Don Jacobson
OUR PARENTS
Vincent & Cleo Koefeld
BOB PIERCE
Russell J White
RAY & RUBY RANDALL
Howard & Lyndette Randall
SKR STAFF & RESIDENTS
Mylo & Kay Sather
BILL & MAYBELLE RITTAL
Donna Beutler
JIMMIE & MAE RITTAL
Donna Beutler
MILDRED ROODS
Bob & Jamie Popelka
JOHN & FRIEDA ROTH
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Ken & Colleen Ekle
JOHN SHERMAN
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Sandra & Hank Peck
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James W Jones
KEITH & BERNICE TROUT
K. & Virginia Huckins
VIRGINIA ULSCHAK
Margaret & Leslie Frank
GORDON VAN FOSSEN
Ruth Warren
TONY WALTER
Rodney & Linda Halvorson
RICHARD & SHARAE WERON
Jere Bogrett
DORIS WHITCOMB
Ray & Judith Lampi
ROBERT & PHYLLIS WILLEMS
Robert & Sherrie Willems
BRUCE WOOD
Audrey Thompson
HOWARD YATES
Gloria Swanson
GARY ZEIGLER
Dodie Zwiefel
ROGER ZEIGLER
Ken & Colleen Ekle
DAN & DARLA ZIER
Donna Beutler
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Ken & Colleen Ekle
GENE ANDERSEN
Eleanor Andersen
KENT ANDERSEN
Eleanor Andersen
KEITH ASBELL
Donna B Ashbell
ED & EILEEN BACKMANN
Dan & Judy St Don
NICK & MARIE BADILLA
Nick & Dora Badilla
Jere & Julie Siemens
ANNA BAKKER
Nick & Dora Badilla
PETER BAKKER
Nick & Dora Badilla
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ARLENE BARRETT
Arlene Barrett
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JOE BEAUDION
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KATHERINE BOWERSOX
Donna Bowersox
MARIE BROYLES
James & Peggie Bays
John & Ermyl Broyles
Kathryn Broyles
Conrad & Phyllis Burns
Hai & Cheryl Dantic
Marlene Dolecheck
A will is the simplest form of a planned gift and it affords everyone the opportunity to help others and have a living legacy. Consider naming Special K Ranch in your will for a percentage, a specific amount, or as the sole beneficiary. Special K Ranch could also be named as beneficiary of a life insurance policy, your tax-deferred IRA or other retirement plan. The blessings you have received will continue to bless and help others. (Check with your attorney for the proper legal forms and wording.)
I’m pleased to introduce Steve Aadland, the new Development Director for Special K Ranch and the Special K Ranch Foundation. After not having someone in this position this past year we are very excited about having Steve on board with us. Steve grew up on a third generation family ranch in Absarokee, MT. He received his Bachelor Degree from the University of Montana and his Master Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Colorado Boulder. For the past five years he has been working for the University of Montana Foundation in the Development Department. He brings a varied experience in fundraising, grant writing, and donor development. Steve began work with us on February 23rd. He is anxious to meet and become acquainted with our growing number of supporters and Friends.

Steve can be reached at steve@specialkranch.org or (406) 550-2224

Robbie Larson receiving a $2,000 check from Roger Waltermann of the Lewistown Kiwanis Club. For the past 12 years they have hosted the Montana Repertory Theatre production for a fundraiser and shared the proceeds with Special K Ranch. Also in the picture is Robin Willems, Steve Aadland (SKR Development Director), and Larry Goehner (SKR Exec. Dir.).

Dallas and Paul working on a Silversmiths job.

Shorti and Angela putting fleece in the bailer on sheep shearing day.

Transplanting started early in February.

Check out our website at www.specialkranch.org and on Facebook for news, activities, and pictures.
Kiwanis International President Alan Penn from Ohio visiting with Laurie while touring the ranch on February 27th.

Shooting for the Future Special K Ranch 26th Annual Fundraising Dinner

Tuesday April 10th
At the Billings Holiday Inn Trade Center

*The doors open at 5:00 p.m. and the evening begins with a silent auction and socializing with residents, staff, and friends of Special K Ranch, with a live auction later in the evening.

*Dinner is served at 6:00 p.m. followed by introductions, information about the residents daily life at the ranch shared by the residents, and the announcement of Rancher of the Year and Most Improved Rancher of the Year

To attend the dinner or host a table for 8, call Brenda at 322-5520, RSVP must be in by April 2nd