



**“The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”**

— Nelson Mandela



Rainbow Acres

*This year we will be highlighting some special people and organizations who are making a difference in the lives of those with disabilities and their supportive families. We hope you make use of these connections as it is our hope that they will link our Special Needs Community in a more personal and supportive way.*

**introducing rainbow acres**

**Rainbow Acres** was founded in 1974 but existed as a dream long before that time. Founder **Ralph Showers** became an accomplished American Baptist pastor, but spent much of his childhood struggling through school with learning disabilities including dyslexia. Showers dreamed of creating a place where people with disabilities could lead lives guided by purpose, dignity and spirit.

Despite daunting physical, emotional and operational setbacks, Showers cultivated his dream and established Rainbow Acres – a special place where progress occurs every day among it’s resident Ranchers. Over a 20-year period, Showers served as President and CEO and created this uniquely-rural residential community for adults with developmental disabilities in the beautiful Verde Valley, just south of Sedona, Arizona. His “whole life concept” involved providing for all aspects of development.

In 1996 Reverend Gary W. Wagner became President and CEO and continued building on Showers’ vision. With Wagner’s leadership, Rainbow Acres’ facilities and programs have grown and blossomed, enhancing the quality of life for the Ranchers. Rainbow Acres has developed programs that are “firsts” in this type of residential community: the Clavinova Connection program which integrates Yamaha™ programmable keyboards as an aid in music therapy, a Fine Arts program, stained glass and weaving. From a vocational perspective, residents work in a variety of paid and unpaid positions in the surrounding communities of Sedona, Cottonwood and Camp Verde as well as on the Ranch. Vocational training and preparation is done on the job and in classes taught on campus.

Since 2001 it’s campus has expanded from 13 to 50 acres with many new buildings; (12) modern homes each accommodating (10) residents; (2) four-plex apartment buildings for the more independent residents; the Palmer Community Center for dining, miscellaneous events and everyday activities; (2) full-scale greenhouses to grow vegetables; and a barn for the horses and other animals. The ranch once dotted with double-wide trailers and a grain barn, has grown into a state-of-the-art facility that houses an entire community in beautifully-furnished homes, offering a wide variety of life-enriching experiences.

Several years ago **Jen Murphree**, a staff member who was with Casa de Amma and was instrumental in our success, made a move to Arizona and began working at Rainbow Acres. She provided these answers to some of the questions we had:

**WHAT HAS MADE THE BIGGEST IMPRESSION SINCE WORKING AT RAINBOW ACRES?**

Since working at Rainbow Acres what has impacted me the most is this place and how resilient the people are. We believe that God has a plan for this place and that no matter what, that plan will succeed. Celebrating our 45th anniversary this year, it is easy to look back and remember the many twists and turns we have been through together - and we became a stronger community through all of these experiences!

**HOW HAVE THE RESIDENTS AT RAINBOW ACRES INSPIRED YOU?**

They inspire me in the way they treat each other. I find that the qualities that most people are searching for; honesty, resiliency, patience, kindness and peace, understanding in hard times - are things that come much more easily to the people living here than they do to others. When I need reminders of how to live, I look to the residents of Rainbow Acres for the example.

**WHAT IS IT ABOUT RAINBOW ACRES THAT MAKES IT A SUCCESS?**

We are a success because the Ranchers (aka our residents) know they belong and they have a home. They make it their home by investing in their relationships, their jobs, art, music, animals, and they believe in their future.



I tell people to be up for any challenge. Try something new. Fear is the beginning to a new adventure!  
— **Lauren**



People who are scared don’t have to be. I tell my friends to just relax, they can beat their fears.  
— **Saphoura**



I used to be afraid of elevators. My cousin taught me that if you have people you can reach out to when you’re afraid it makes your fear go away.  
— **Shari**



I’m not scared of anything I always try to relax and focus on what’s real instead of what I’m scared of.  
— **Trevor**



I would ask them what they afraid of and then I would give them a hug.  
— **Tati**

**a different kind of boo**

On this morning after Halloween you are likely feeling a bit groggy and lamenting the extra candy you indulged in last night!

Halloween is often a time of spooky and scary decorations, kids dressed in their favorite characters and a reminder that it is going to get dark sooner and winter is coming. At it’s core however, Halloween taps into the fear and fright that we can all relate to.

While ghouls and goblins may not keep you up at night, we all deal with our fair share of fear and fright. As we get older the fear of the dark or monsters under the bed give way to fears of a bad diagnosis, loved ones facing tragedy and countless other scenarios that lead to misfortune for ourselves or those we love. It’s not IF we deal with fear, it is HOW. We asked some residents what they fear and how they deal with it . . .



I’m afraid of my phone going below 10% power! Seriously though, when I’m feeling afraid of doing something I am inspired by this quote, “You’re braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.” Live life to the fullest!  
— **Bob**

Don’t let your fears stand in the way of your everyday life. Be aware of your surroundings but don’t let your fears be your demons!  
— **Jessica**



I’m afraid of snakes! When it comes to dealing with my fears my best advice is just face them head on, but I still don’t want to get bit by a snake!  
— **Brad**

