

CAUSES THAT MATTER



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Iris Clubhouse: Finding Community

“I never liked my first name,” says Bear whose birth name was Charlene. “I was named after someone who treated me very badly,” she says. “Charlene died a long time ago. Bear chooses to live positively.”

Living with a positive outlook is not always easy for Bear. She has mental health issues that can be tough. But she and 14 other folks are living happier, more productive lives thanks to their experience at the Iris Clubhouse in Casper.

The Iris Clubhouse gives people living with mental illness a safe place to be

involved, make friends and get their lives back.

Because of you, the Wyoming Community Foundation was able to grant funds to help open the Clubhouse.

Need Presented Painfully

In 2015 Dan Odell had an eye-opening experience. He was working as chaplain at a funeral home in Casper.

“We had seven or eight suicides in a row,” Dan says. “Something had to be done and

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THERE ARE:

2,400 people

in Natrona County living with significant mental illness

The Iris Clubhouse has a goal of moving to a location that will support

25 *and* 125
daily members regular members

One member reported that he had been in the emergency room or psychiatric hospital

11 times in 2017.
In 2018, he has visited the ER just once.



Bear has found friends and acceptance at Iris Clubhouse.

Four-Legged Ranch Hand

Georgene Hager Memorial Fund

If you live in Wyoming, you've seen cattle. They dot the landscape and greet you as you drive along the highways. You might say they're as much a part of Wyoming's landscape as the pronghorn antelope that roam alongside them.

Cattle and ranching are a way of life for many in Wyoming. So, it's no surprise that herding cattle is still a part of the Wyoming rancher's way of life, too. For many, cattle dogs help make life out on the prairies a bit easier.

Ask any rancher with herding dogs and they'll tell you they are truly a part of the crew – one of the most reliable ranch hands. If you've seen them work, you quickly understand their worth.

Watching these dogs is amazing. In fact, cattle dogs are so impressive the National Cattledog Association (NCA) exists in part, to showcase their talent.

For Bob Wagner, who has a ranch just four miles south of the Wyoming border and who helped organize the NCA trials in Cheyenne, his path to owning a cattle dog was a bit unusual. And comical.

“My wife, Jan, and I were working cattle, pushing them into the corral, and I was getting impatient,” says Bob. “I told her to ‘walk up, walk up’ which is a dog command.”

Needless to say, Jan soon got Bob a dog. And he's incredibly thankful she did.

“I'd rolled four wheelers in ravines before we had dogs. I can move a group of cattle so much easier with dogs,” he says.

Showcasing Work, Talent and a Wyoming Tradition

For Bob and many others, the NCA cattle dog trials are twofold: a way to share the talent of the animals while also supporting the ranching culture.

Thanks in part to the generosity of the late Georgene Hager LeBar, a rancher who

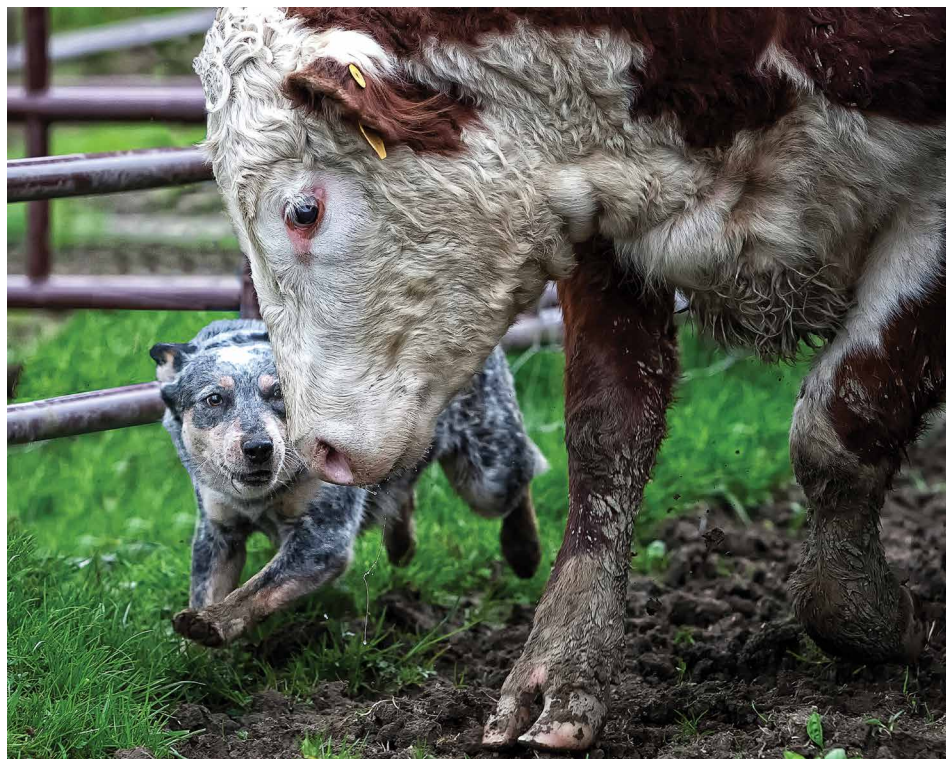


Photo: Jeff Jaquish

grew up near Torrington, and later lived on a ranch outside of Douglas, the NCA does just that. Georgene created a fund at the Wyoming Community Foundation to support stock dogs.

Each year the NCA hosts trials across the country, and always in Wyoming. This year, they held the national finals in Cheyenne. Because Cheyenne was such a great host, the city will be home to the finals again next year.

“Cheyenne is a relatively big city, but very much has a small-town mindset,” says Bob. “The community really swung in behind us.”

The NCA lets folks like and I you see the instinct, talent and obsessive focus these dogs have for work. You also quickly see how important the animals can be to the ranching way of life.

It is “absolutely addictive” Bob says of the trials. Likely, the dogs feel the same way.

STATS AND FACTS

NCA's mission is education and to encourage efficient, **low-stress and humane cattle handling with well-trained cattle dogs.**



Each dog must gather **six cattle, 200 yards out and herd them through gates.** The handler's whistle signals to the dogs as they maneuver the cattle through the course.



There are **325 members** of the NCA, nationally.

Rooted in Wyoming

You might not consider Wyoming an oasis for veggies. Summer is gone in the blink of an eye and the dry air surely isn't a recipe for prize-winning crops.

Rooted in Wyoming (RIW), an organization dedicated to building and nurturing school and community gardens is not letting this stop them though. With some TLC, hard work and know-how, there are plenty of home-grown foods to go around. Right in time for school!

The school gardens are engaging kids and also providing some fresh greens for school lunches. A first for area schools.

"I looked at what my kids were getting from school lunches a few years ago and wondered why we weren't doing better," says Bonnie Gregory, director of Rooted in Wyoming.

She believed Wyoming gardens could play a leading role in school lunches. Veggies could help keep kids healthy and connected to the land.

"I realized we could build and grow gardens that would teach our kids where their food was coming from," she says. "It would let them connect to the outdoors and it would be nutritious. Why weren't we doing it?"

That's when Bonnie decided to start RIW.

In 2016, Bonnie and others had high hopes for the organization. But there was still a lot needed if they were going to sustain the program. RIW needed some administrative help. The Wyoming Community Foundation reached out a hand.

Because of YOU, the Wyoming Community Foundation was able to partner with Rooted in Wyoming as its fiscal sponsor, giving Bonnie's great organization the chance for solid footing.

Because of your support, in just two years, six gardens have been built with the help of both kids and adults.

The harvest is filling and nourishing stomachs and minds. And by getting their hands dirty, planting, eating and learning – kids are fulfilled.

"All of the kids involved come from different places – some from difficult places," says Bonnie. "But they are engaged and happy when they're working on the garden. All the kids are dirty, having fun and contributing."

"The gardens," Bonnie says, "are a level playing field for each of them to feel ownership."

For Bonnie, that's an unexpected surprise. And just as important as the fresh, home-grown food.

STATS AND FACTS

6 Number of gardens

2 Number of new gardens planned for 2019

Over 6,000

Number of hours devoted to the gardens

Being taught: math, science, history, art, nutrition, self-reliance, pride, community and health!



Sheridan area kids have fun, get dirty and take pride in their gardens.

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at that point, I got involved with the National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI).”

Another colleague attended a national NAMI meeting and came back with the idea of a Clubhouse.

Dan, who is now the director of the Iris Clubhouse, says it gives people a place to be themselves, check up on each other, but also understand.

“Mental health issues still have a stigma attached,” says Dan. “People are often ostracized from friends

and family because of something they’ve said or done. People here understand. It’s a community.”

Making a Difference

Because of you, the Clubhouse is a making a difference.

“People here all understand. No one judges. We’re here to work and get things done.”

It provides people the opportunity to find a community. And to find purpose. They hold planning meetings at 10am each day they are open – deciding who will water the garden, set the table, make lunch, serve as waitstaff and clean up.

They write a daily report summarizing who was there, what they had for lunch

and what activities they took part in.

There is a sense of purpose. There is accountability. Most importantly, there is a sense of belonging.

“We had a volunteer at NAMI named Pam who I had known for five years,” says Dan. “I had never seen her smile. Not once. Until last November. In just her second week at the Clubhouse she was smiling and even told a joke!”

It’s clear the Clubhouse is a special, welcoming place.

“I have a hard time making friends,” says Bear. “People here all understand. No one judges. We’re here to work and get things done. To learn cooperation, work with people and cut people some slack.

It’s awesome!”

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2-3

Wyoming Afterschool Alliance
10th Annual Statewide Conference:
Empowering Children’s Future

Little America Hotel, Cheyenne, WY

Register at:
wyafterschoolalliance.org

October 11-14

Wyoming Women’s Foundation’s
Wyoming Women’s
Antelope Hunt Dinner
and Auction



6pm Cocktails
7pm Dinner

Ranch at Ucross, near Buffalo

Tickets:
wyomingwomensantelopehunt.org



THANK YOU! Look inside to see the difference you’ve made.

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