



## ***Zehnder Report #1***

February 26, 2005

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Investigative Reporter



# **MAJESTIC RANCH:**

## ***A Living Nightmare for Kids***

A report about . . .

. . . the deplorable conditions for children confined at Majestic Ranch, a privately owned and unlicensed residential facility in Randolph, Utah;

. . . the failure of child welfare agencies and law enforcement officials to properly investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect at the facility;

. . . the need for immediate governmental action to insure that evidence is preserved and witnesses are interviewed, including all children currently housed at Majestic Ranch, recent former residents, and current and former staff;

. . . the huge gap in current law which allows facilities such as Majestic Ranch to be unlicensed and to escape unannounced and routine inspections by child welfare agencies.

The report is available online at:  
[www.kidsincaptivity.com](http://www.kidsincaptivity.com)

# Preface

by Thomas F. Coleman  
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While this report raises serious concerns that more than 60 children at Majestic Ranch are at risk of ongoing abuse and neglect, it does much more than that. It calls into question the resolve of the State of Utah to protect vulnerable children within its borders and the ability of government agencies to respond effectively when evidence of child maltreatment is presented to them.

I only recently became acquainted with Isabelle Zehnder when she sought out the help of the Emancipation Project to assist her in rescuing two girls who were confined in a facility much like Majestic Ranch but in a different area of the country. I was impressed with her determination and her research abilities. I was even more impressed when she went on an expedition to determine the well-being of another child who was the granddaughter of a stranger who asked for Isabelle's help.

When Isabelle told me that she had discovered a much larger problem involving more than 60 children at a facility in Utah, I knew that she was a real crusader who was destined to make a difference. In a way, Isabelle informally adopted the 14,000 children who are confined in residential treatment facilities run by private businesses for a profit. Fortunately, her husband, children, friends and colleagues have been supportive as she devotes endless hours to specific rescue cases and exposing institutional abuses.

With her tenacity and leadership as a spark, I and my colleagues at the Emancipation Project decided to support her efforts in Utah. We have published a brochure which explains the problem and calls attention to her website – [www.kidsincaptivity.com](http://www.kidsincaptivity.com) – on which her Zehnder Reports will be published. Report #1 concerns Majestic Ranch. Some of us are joining Isabelle in Utah to distribute our brochure and her report in order to bring these problems to light.

The Emancipation Project will be asking members of Congress to send Zehnder Report #1 to the Attorney General of the United States with a request that the Department of Justice intervene to protect the children at Majestic Ranch since the State of Utah has, so far, been unable or unwilling to do so.

Perhaps state law enforcement officials in Utah will take action in the coming weeks which will make intervention by the United States Department of Justice unnecessary. And perhaps, with the support of people of good will, the Legislature will fill the void in current law so that residential facilities such as this do not go unmonitored as they are now.

But in the meantime, Isabelle Zehnder and the Emancipation Project and others will press forward, advocating for the end of abuse and the beginning of a new era of responsible government oversight, with appropriate licensing and unannounced inspections, of places such as Majestic Ranch. As it stands now, the whole situation is very unmajestic.

# Forward

By Isabelle N. Zehnder

On October 8, 2004, I received a phone call from a friend that has changed my life.

I learned that three children who I love and care deeply about had been placed in abusive residential programs. The thought of all three of these siblings being sent away raised serious concern. They were loving, kind, smart, well-behaved, normal children who were depressed because of their abusive home environment. Their issues did not warrant being sent thousands of miles from home to these facilities. Putting them in these environments has proven to be wrong and damaging.

The oldest of these children had lived with me years ago because he would no longer stay in his abusive home. He was a funny, caring, loving, and very bright child who we all loved dearly and who became a part of our family. There were some challenges, as there always are when raising normal teenagers, but none I was not willing to work through.

Six months later I was lied to by his parents who told me that he would be going to a local boarding school. I could see him any time, they said.

When I attempted to challenge their decision I quickly learned the law was on their side and though we provided a loving, caring, nurturing home for him -- though we had every intention of raising him through college -- we had absolutely no rights and his parents, regardless if there was abusive or not, had all the power.

He was unjustifiably abducted from my home in the middle of the night by a teen escort service hired by his parents. During this abduction he was told his father was sending him to surf camp. It wasn't until he was headed for the mountains of Western Samoa that he learned what his fate would be for the next two years.

The abuse he witnessed and endured while he was held captive in Samoa is unconscionable. Until October 8, 2004, I knew nothing about the place where he was sent.

It was on October 8th that I learned one of his younger sisters had disappeared and there was suspicion she, too, had been abducted and sent to one of these facilities. Those suspicions were eventually confirmed.

I recently learned she was abducted, against her will, in the middle of the day in a McDonald's parking lot! She was a 17-years old, a 4.2 GPA student who loved to dance ballet. She had never been in trouble, she did not drink alcohol, and she did not do drugs. She was a sweet,

loving girl who did not deserve to be humiliated or traumatized like this.

I also learned that his youngest sister, then 14-years old, was sent to a similar facility in Mexico over a year ago. That facility was shut down last September by Mexican authorities due to evidence child abuse and neglect. Instead of returning home, her parents sent her to South Carolina where yet another one of these abusive residential programs is located.

My experiences with these three children caused me to spend endless hours investigating the large and growing industries of teen escort services which abduct children for a large fee, and mental reprogramming facilities which profit from the frustration of parents and vulnerability of children.

What I am discovering will be published in a series of reports I will be issuing. Zehnder Report #1, about Majestic Ranch, is only the first installment.

I have come in contact with many others who have been in or who are in similar situations and who so desperately want to get their loved ones out of these abusive facilities. At the very least they would like to be able to talk to them and to see them. These children are not allowed contact with the outside world and are held captive as they watch their basic human rights taken away from them.

Parents are the only ones allowed contact with their children, but usually they are not allowed that right until the child has worked the program, usually 3-6 months. By then, the parents have attended what can only be described as a weekend brainwashing session in which they are told not to believe complaints from their child and are required to endorse the program.

I have been a child advocate for many years. The thought of even one child suffering at the hands of abusive adults is painful enough but the thought of thousands is more than I could take. So I set out to learn as much as I could and to try to find a way to help these children.

I invite you to share this disturbing journey by reading Zehnder Report #1 "Majestic Ranch: A Living Nightmare for Kids." I also invite you to do something with the information you learn. Take action. Do something to help these children and clean up this corrupt system.

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# MAJESTIC RANCH:

## *A Living Nightmare for Kids*

### Introduction

“When you want something done right, sometimes you just have to do it yourself.”

This old saying came to mind when I read a [recent story](#) in the Salt Lake Tribune suggesting that law enforcement agencies would do nothing to stop the nightmare for kids at Majestic Ranch. I knew that the authorities had evidence of ongoing child abuse and neglect at this make-shift facility in Randolph Utah which houses between 60 and 80 children ranging in ages from 7 to 14.

How did I know? I had been given a tip by someone who knew that I was interested in monitoring unlicensed residential facilities for children, separating the good from the bad, and exposing those which were mistreating children entrusted to their care.

So I followed the tip, made a few phone calls, and in no time at all I discovered that Majestic Ranch needed to be turned in and the captive children needed to be rescued.

The Tribune story (Feb. 16, 2005) reported that an investigation was initiated by state and local officials after current and former ranch employees filed complaints with Child Protective Services alleging unsanitary conditions, abuse, and neglect of the 60 plus children who stay there. That much I already knew since I had spoken with some of those employees myself.

The story reported that Rich County Sheriff Dale Stacey and CPS workers visited the ranch the prior week. That much I had suspected since I had personally observed agency workers filing into a room on Feb. 7 to strategize what to do about the complaints of abuse and neglect.

But when I read Sheriff Stacey’s quote in the news story I almost fell off my chair:

“I don’t foresee any charges being filed, but that’s not entirely up to me.”

No charges would be filed? How could that be? My own interviews of former staff contained evidence sufficient to file charges.

What about the “truckload of information” that a CPS

employee told me had been turned over to them by former employees? Did that information disappear? Did CPS share it with Sheriff Stacey? Would it be ignored?

I went back to my computer to make sure that I had not misread the e-mail messages sent to me by CPS worker Wanda Lundahl:

### E-Mail #1:

“Somehow (by the grace of God) Michelle R. (last name omitted) showed up at our office today. That is the Michelle that Kar (Karleen Farnsworth) was referring to. She brought a truckload of valuable information. Too much to write about.”

“She will get us the pictures you referred to earlier. Michelle will also be very instrumental in getting together the rest of the staff whom have left the ranch and want to expose the despicable way these children are being treated.”

“Anyway, Misty and I have put together a ‘team’ meeting set for this coming Monday at 8AM to strategize our investigation. All relevant agencies have been contacted and will attend the Monday meeting.”

“I am basically putting this investigation in front of just about everything else I have going right now as I am sickened by the way these kids are being systematically destroyed. Let us pray that this will be the time that we can shut them down.”

### E-mail #2:

“If W.W. just had a bunch of people walk off the job, it is very likely that he will be on ‘hyper alert’ mode knowing that none of the former employees have anything to lose by coming forward with their own accounts of what they have witnessed.

This could mean that important evidence (like the raw sewage thing, the nailed shut windows, the lack of smoke detectors, piles of dead animals etc.) could all be being fixed even as we plan our ambush."

"That is how he gets away with this kind of thing for as long as he has. I know we have to be prepared but we can't wait too long either."

### **E-mail #3:**

"We are all well aware that "clean up" efforts could be going on even as we speak but still, the investigation must be well planned or it will fail to have meaningful results. We (here in Utah) have all been there before with this place. We are assembling a very effective team for the sole purpose of doing all we possibly can (taking legal constraints into account) to help these unfortunate children.

The element of hope this time is that we have so much info from the inside. We actually have ex-staffers who are EAGER to assist in the investigation and are willing to testify if we are lucky enough to get enough evidence to get this thing in court. This is an edge we have never had before. I hope and pray that this investigation will be successful in exposing the horrid manner that these kids are being treated.

So, I thank you for your concern for these kids and for your efforts to assist them. Please know that we are doing all that we can to conduct an investigation that will result in shutting this place down....or at least placing them under some criteria of inspection....

My memory refreshed, I knew that Child Protective Services had a "truckload of information" about abuse and neglect supplied by former employees of the ranch. So what happened since the time CPS got these statements from staffers which was prior to February 3?

What happened at the meeting with "the team" which met on Feb 7? Why did they wait for several more days to visit the ranch? And in the meantime, did someone leak information about the investigation and impending inspection to the ranch manager which would give him time to clean up the worst visible offenses?

Wanda said something in an e-mail to me which bothered me and kept resonating in my mind:

"There are 80+ kids over there living in hell who have no one to advocate for them. No one at all."

After reading that story in the Tribune on February 16, and remembering Wanda's words about the lack of advocacy for these children, I resolved that I would dig deeper, do a more thorough investigation, and write my own report. The children would have an advocate.

I then called Thomas F. Coleman, a fellow advocate who is fighting to end child abuse and neglect in private residential treatment programs, and asked for his help. Coleman is a human rights attorney and the Executive Director of the Emancipation Project, a nonprofit organization working to liberate minors from abuse.

Coleman was very supportive of my idea to conduct an investigation and write a report about the problems at Majestic Ranch and the failure of Utah agencies to effectively protect the children and prosecute those responsible for their mistreatment. He offered to create a brochure to publicize the report and to travel to Utah to join me when it would be released. I was not alone.

Coleman suggested that I should remain aware of the fact that Majestic Ranch has been under investigation in the past and had managed to end up with a mere slap on the wrist from authorities. He reminded me that the ranch has made some major political contributions and that the owner of the association affiliated with the ranch has poured more than a million dollars into political coffers in recent years.

I realized that my quest for the children at Majestic Ranch was an uphill battle after I read dozens of new stories on the website of the Emancipation Project – [www.emancipationproject.org](http://www.emancipationproject.org) – about Majestic Ranch and similar facilities throughout the United States and abroad. I thought it was ironic that government agencies in Samoa and Mexico had closed such abusive facilities in recent years but that the State of Utah would not even require places such as Majestic Ranch to be licensed.

A statement made by Katrina Payne, who worked as a "house parent" at the ranch for more than a year (Tribune story, Feb. 16) underscored how difficult my job would be to get a closed system to stop wrongdoing by a business enterprise which is part of that system:

"Everyone knows everyone up here. We've called the local health department before to complain and they said 'We work with Majestic really closely and we don't think there's a problem.'"

Uphill battle or not, I vowed to move forward and to

unearth as much information as I could about what really goes on at Majestic Ranch and to share the truth with anyone who would listen.

Perhaps if enough new information went public, Craig Barlow, head of the Utah Attorney General's Children's Justice Division, would decide to take legal action. It bothered me that the Tribune's Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> story reported that "Barlow said currently the state has no grounds for removing the children from the school or notifying their parents, most of whom live in other states."

If CPS and the Attorney General had even a portion of the information I had gathered from former ranch employees, it seemed to me that the state had a legal or at least ethical duty to share that information with parents of the children living at the ranch.

Should not parents be able to rely on the duty of government officials to warn them about evidence of unsanitary conditions, obnoxious odors from the flow of raw sewage on the property, dispensing of medications by unlicensed personnel, dangerous use of restraints, cruel punishments, and a variety of other health and safety violations?

Parents, who live hundreds or even thousands of miles away from the ranch, probably assume that child protection workers in Utah will warn them when evidence of child abuse, neglect, or endangerment surfaces. Little do they know that they will probably be the last people to learn of such allegations.

The following pages contain summaries of evidence I have obtained regarding ongoing child abuse and neglect at Majestic Ranch, the failure of child protection agencies to effectively protect the children and prosecute the offenders, and the gaping hole in Utah law which allows places such as Majestic Ranch to remain unlicensed and virtually unmonitored.

It is my heartfelt desire that this report will stimulate a public conversation about these problems and that administrative agencies and elected officials will sit up, take note, and take appropriate corrective actions.

## **Conversation with Ranch Manager**

I called Majestic Ranch and told the receptionist who answered the phone that I had a son and I wanted information about their program before I made a decision to send him there or not.

During that conversation I was told that if my child needed therapy it was no problem. They had therapists come on site to do individual counseling and group counseling. I was also told that the "family reps" are trained to work with children who have special psycholog-

ical problems and needs.

When I asked about education, I was told that the children work at their own pace by using what I later discovered is a home schooling program.

When I asked about discipline techniques, she put me on hold. Then a man came on the phone who identified himself as Wayne Winder. He told me that they use the Mandt system.

I later learned from independent research that the Mandt system can be dangerous unless it is used by persons who have received specific training and are certified by a state agency. ([See Affidavit of Isabelle Zehnder regarding conversation with Wayne Winder.](#))

I was also informed by Winder that children are punished by making them shovel manure and sit in isolation, including sitting on a toilet for extended periods of time in a bathroom next to his office.

When I asked Winder about communications with the outside world, he told me that I would not like his response. If my child went to Majestic Ranch, I would not be allowed to see or speak with her for three to six months. Once they reach "level 3" they can have one phone call per month with their parents. Level 4 kids can have two calls per month.

From other sources, I have learned that Majestic Ranch requires parents to sign a 40 page contract before the child is admitted. Here is what two parents had to say about portions of the contract which bothered them (To access the Affidavit of Randall and Ana Wills, see: [www.kidsincaptivity.com/zehnder-report/affidavits.htm](http://www.kidsincaptivity.com/zehnder-report/affidavits.htm)

"My wife and I read and signed the 40-page contract, and even though there were several items that should have bothered us, we were convinced that our son would receive the help he needed, so we overlooked these items."

"Some of these items that should have really bothered us were: No direct communication with our son until he became level 3, all communication that he received would be read and possibly censored, our son could be restrained at the discretion of the staff, and if the behavior of our son became violent then he would be sent to the 'treatment facility' known as Tranquility Bay."

News stories about the facility at Tranquility Bay in Jamaica reveal it is a place rampant with child abuse. See News Stories (2004) [www.emancipationproject.org](http://www.emancipationproject.org).

The State of Utah should have a duty to notify parents when it receives information, especially from staff or former staff of a facility, that conditions at the facility are abusive or harmful to children. This is especially so when child protection agencies are aware that parents are being required to stay away and not communicate with their child for three to six months or even longer if it takes the child longer to reach an upper level in the system.

## **Affidavits of Former Staff**

In the course of my investigation, I spoke with several former and current staff members of Majestic Ranch. Four have come forward with sworn affidavits. Others have been hesitant to submit written statements, probably out of fear of retaliation, although they opened up to me on the phone and verified the facts contained in the written affidavits.

Apparently, CPS had the same problems in getting some staff to give written statements. CPS worker Lundahl told me that two former staff members stated that they feared for their lives and the lives of their children if they were to speak out. ([See Affidavit of Isabelle Zehnder, Conversations and E-Mails with Government Officials.](#))

### **Jared Quick**

Jared Quick signed an Affidavit on Feb. 24, 2005 about his observations and knowledge of the conditions at Majestic Ranch. ([See Affidavit of Jared Quick.](#)) Jared worked at the ranch from July 2004 to January 2005.

#### **Intimidating disposition**

Wayne is a very large man, about 6'7" to 6'8" so a lot of people are intimidated by him, especially the children. Jared told Wayne he did not intimidate Jared which made him madder.

Jared has seen Wayne Winder grab children by the backs of their necks and drag them on the ground. Jared has seen Wayne chase children, drag them, throw them to the ground, and perform unnecessary and harsh restraints while they were lying on their stomachs.

Jared was fired by Wayne Winder for reading a book. Wayne has a very bad temper and was having a bad day. He took it out on Jared. Wayne admitted that he fired Jared because of his temper and has asked that Jared come back to work. Jared refused.

#### **Dangerous restraints**

Majestic Ranch claims they practice the Mandt System for restraints. Jared did not receive any formal Mandt System training. The only training he received was first-

level training that was given to him by Wayne Winder. It was very informal and he allowed staff to use books to take the tests. Jared did not learn anything that helped him in restraining children during Wayne's training. Wayne never brought in a professional trainer to train staff on any level of the Mandt System because he said it was too expensive.

Children at Majestic Ranch are restrained often. Many times they are restrained for the wrong reasons and not as a last resort as they are intended. Some staff and management abuse the use of restraints.

Children as young as 7 and 8 are thrown to the ground, while others are so accustomed to being restrained that they willingly lie down on their stomachs and pull their arms and legs back in preparation for the restraint.

There were many times when Jared knew other forms of discipline or redirection would have stopped the child's negative behavior. Restraints at Majestic Ranch are overused, are not performed properly, and are dangerous to the children.

All restraints that Jared has witnessed and performed have been done with children lying on their stomachs. They are then put into the hog-tied position. Their hands are placed behind their backs, wrists touching. Their legs are pulled back and must touch each other but they cannot be crossed. Their legs are then pushed down towards the child's body, bent at the knees. If the child resists or if the staff is in a bad mood restraints can get out of hand.

Jared has seen pressure applied to children's legs by large men sitting on the child's calves and on their backs. He has seen two large men at one time sitting on a small child's body; one on his legs, another on his back. He has also seen them pull their arms backwards and upwards, causing severe pain. Children who are restrained in this manner cry in pain. Most restraints lasted 5, 10, 15 minutes. He has seen adult men sit on children for that long. If the child kicks or resists staff are told to continue with the restraint.

Jared has seen grown men, in anger, pull children's arms back until their hands were touching the back of their necks, putting pressure on the child's arms during restraints. A 13-year old, small-built child's shoulder was dislocated during a restraint. He was not taken to a doctor for a couple of days and then was given a brace.

Children were sometimes made to shovel manure. If they refused or otherwise misbehaved they were made to sit in the manure for extended periods of time until they decided they would resume shoveling.

On 3-4 occasions Jared saw children who were restrained in the manure. These restraints resulted in

manure getting into the children's hair, face, ears, and mouths. I have seen children forced to remain in that position, with grown men sitting on their legs and backs, for 5 to 15 minutes at a time.

### **Isolation room**

During Intervention/Isolation, children are taken to a basement with one staff member. The door is locked and the staff wears a key around his neck. The children eat, shower, use the bathroom, do school work, and sleep in that room the entire time they are in isolation.

Mattresses were placed on the floor. They have no contact with other children or staff. The windows are screwed shut so they could not get out if there was a fire in the middle of the night. It was basically a lock-down area. The most I saw in there at one time was 3 children.

### **Punishment**

Another form of discipline was called ADAPT (All Day Alternative Physical Training) which was used for children who misbehaved. There were a wide range of reasons children were sent to ADAPT.

While they were there, they were forced to sit on crates in the snow. They were sent out in the clothing they were wearing at the time, which in some cases would mean a pair of shorts and hooded shirt. Some children sat out there for 3 hours or more. Children were sick often with colds and fevers.

While in ADAPT children were made to shovel manure, shovel snow, or perform other physical manual labor. The length of stay in ADAPT depended on what they did wrong, but the allowed amount of time was from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Children routinely were restrained while they were in ADAPT.

### **Psychological issues**

Jared felt that many of the boys he worked with did not need to be in a program. It appeared that some of the children who were there had parents who did not want them. Some had anger problems and issues but none deserved the treatment they received at Majestic Ranch.

Many boys who were fine when they arrived finally snapped from the pressure, sadness, and pain.

Some children tried to commit suicide by drinking cleaners or by cutting themselves. Some had ADD, some were bi-polar. Many took strong medications.

### **Unlicensed dispensing of medication**

Staff were given no training in disbursing strong prescription drugs. Shift leaders were the ones who were sup-

posed to distribute the medications but they were not always available to do so. Jared had disbursed medications during those times. There was no nurse on site.

### **Lack of medical care**

The children were sick often, more than normal children. When children were injured or sick they were not taken to a doctor right away. There were many occasions when children never got medical attention for illnesses and injuries when they should have.

### **Unsafe and unsanitary conditions**

The windows were nailed shut in the dorms which was a fire hazard. There was a mouse problem in the kitchen. The sewage backed up at least once a day. Though it was frozen when I left you could still smell it. Sewage overflowed onto the ground daily.

### **Child labor**

Children had to do work for owners Dan and Donna Peart. They were made to (1).paint Dan and Donna's cabin, (2) clean around the Peart's houses, and do other chores. Children had to do all the work around the facility.

They had to do their own dishes. It was not sanitary. They washed them in a bucket and rinsed them off. They didn't change the water sometimes for the 60 kids that were there. They then dripped dry. Children were the ones who cleaned the bathrooms. They also worked on the ranch cleaning lambing pens, and going on the sheep trail.

### **Brittany Painter**

Brittany Painter signed an Affidavit on Feb. 24, 2005 about her observations and knowledge of the conditions at Majestic Ranch. (See [Affidavit of Brittany Painter.](#)) Brittany worked at the ranch from September 2002 through December 2004.

### **Child labor**

There were piles of dead animal carcasses in different locations on the ranch. There was a huge "bone yard" filled with dead cows, sheep, dogs, pigs, chickens, and more. When children signed up for work duty they had no idea they would be asked to move these maggot-infested carcasses from these piles and place them onto a large truck. They then had to get onto the truck and throw the carcasses onto the bone yard. If they were able to do this without throwing up they were given a soda. Children came back covered in blood and dirt.

Most of the time there was not enough staff to take these children to shower so they had to stay in their blood-covered clothing for hours until they took their shower at bedtime.



## **Abusive practices**

Some staff members made children sit in manure as punishment. If they refused to sit in the manure the staff physically tried to get them to sit down. If they would not cooperate staff was instructed to restrain them at that point. During restraints children were thrown to the ground, in the manure, at times with their faces in the manure. The children talked about the restraints and showed staff the manure all over their bodies. There was usually not enough staff to take the children to shower so they would have to wait to shower until the evening, often with manure on their bodies and clothing for hours.

## **Stark deprivation**

Children were told they were there to work on their issues and problems. Children as young as 7 had no dolls, no stuffed animals (only very few upper-level children had stuffed animals, and they were limited to two), no toys, no outdoor play equipment, no bicycles, nothing. There were several games but children were rarely allowed to play with them. They had virtually no fun activities for the children.

Children appeared miserable at Majestic Ranch. For fun upper-level children (and there were not many) were allowed to go to church. Sometimes, during the summer those children were allowed to ride the horses once a week. As a privilege they were given work detail such as painting the owner's cabin, etc. It was considered a privilege because they were allowed to eat normal food like pizza after they worked. There was nothing fun for lower-level children except to watch a movie once in a while. Some staff tried to make things fun for the children but it was not part of the program, just something we did on our own because we felt sorry for the children.

## **Runaway secrecy**

One night two girls climbed out a small window. They stole Dan Peart's truck, drove to Woodruff and got caught. The Pearts' told everyone to keep it quiet. Wayne Winder told everyone that one of the girls was sent to Tranquility Bay in Jamaica, another WWASP facility (he threatened to send children who misbehaved to Jamaica where, he said, they have no child abuse laws,) and that the other girl was moved to Cross Creek, again another WWASP facility. If any child is caught discussing the situation they suffer consequences.

## **Lack of psychological treatment/training**

Not only was Brittany not told about problems children had when they came into the program, but she was not trained to deal with them.

Some of the conditions that Brittany was aware that

children suffered from include: (1) bi-polar; (2) suicidal; (3) extreme depression; (4) killing animals; (5) ADD-ADHD; (6) run-aways; (7) drug addicts as young as 11 years old; (8) sexual abuse, molestation, and rape; (9) children with bed-wetting issues, usually as a result of sexual abuse; (10) self-mutilation; (11) alcohol syndrome; and (12) mentally challenged.

Brittany was in no way trained to deal with these serious issues. Therapy was provided only to those whose parents paid an additional fee for the children to see an outside therapist. Out of all the children at the facility, only six or seven of them went to therapy every week or two.

## **Lack of medical treatment**

On many occasions children were hurt or sick and they did not receive immediate, if any, medical treatment for their conditions.

Brittany and other staff told Director Tammy Johnson one of the girls had a bad rash with huge sores on her legs, arms, and buttocks. Tammy diagnosed the rash as eczema without taking her to the doctor. After repeated complaints from staff she was finally taken to a doctor where she was diagnosed with scabies.

## **Unlicensed drug dispensing**

There was no on-site nurse to administer drugs or to monitor the children's health. There was no other on-site medical staff or psychiatric staff. Supervisors distributed medications. If the supervisor was busy then any other staff could distribute the medications to the children. There were medications such as Zoloft, birth control pills, Lexapro, sleeping medications, and more.

## **Unsafe and unsanitary conditions**

Thirteen or more girls are forced to share one bathroom. There was not enough hot water for all of the girls to shower so many showered in cold water, even during the winter months when temperatures fell well below freezing. Sometimes there was no running water at all in the girls' dorm and they had to go to other dorms to shower.

When Brittany first started working at Majestic Ranch, the girls lived in a decent dorm. Then all of the girls were moved to a stinky basement. After two girls tried to run away they nailed or screwed the windows shut. It would have been nearly impossible for the girls or the staff members to get away in the event of a fire. They finally bought a used mobile home and the girls moved in there. The windows were nailed or screwed shut again.

The kitchen was filthy. Food was mishandled and children were fed cross-contaminated meats. When the dorms were full a child's bed was moved into the kitchen for about two weeks.

The dishwasher did not work well so children had to wash their own dishes in a tub of soapy water shared by a lot of children. The dishes were not cleaned to food handler's standards because an extra rinse with Clorox was not done. The kitchen ran out of hot water before the dishes were done so they were being cleaned in cold water. The kitchen staff complained that the dishes were not properly cleaned.

### **Poor food and nutrition**

Children were given only one glass of milk per day. If they complained they were warned they would receive powdered milk instead. They were fed a lot of Cisco canned foods. They were fed mostly packaged, unhealthy foods.

Two cooks, Karette and her husband, did not feed the children healthy foods and often the children were hungry. Many times children were given only a sandwich and they were hungry for hours. They gave children hamburger that was still raw in the center and chicken that was not thoroughly cooked.

### **Child labor**

Children are forced to do their own laundry (there was only one washer and dryer in the girls' unit that was broken most of the time). The dishwasher was not large enough to accommodate all of the children's dirty dishes so children were forced to wash their own dishes. Children are forced to clean their own living quarters. There is no cleaning staff.

As a privilege upper level children are allowed to clean Dan Peart's personal cabin and to paint his cabin. As a reward, they are allowed to eat "normal" food.

Children go to herd sheep on sheep trail with Peruvian men who live on the ranch as well as one staff member. They are gone for a day or two and sleep in the mountains. Brittany witnessed boys having to herd sheep in the hail, rain, and mud.

If someone official came to visit the facility the children were made to deep-clean the facility and to make sure everything was spotless.

## **Karleen Farnsworth**

Karleen Farnsworth signed an Affidavit on Feb. 21, 2005) about her observations and knowledge of the conditions at Majestic Ranch. (See [Affidavit of Karleen Farnsworth](#).) Karleen worked at the ranch for three weeks in January 2005 and quit when she could not tolerate the conditions there any longer.

During her short stay there, Karleen witnessed child abuse and neglect, animal neglect, and unhealthy living

conditions. Her past employment history with the Utah Youth Corrections, and her training with that agency, alerted her to the fact that Majestic Ranch was a bad place for children to be and a bad place for employees to work.

With the facts she knew about abuse and neglect, Karleen called Craig Barlow in the Attorney General's office. He told her to call Debbie Kurzban in the Department of Licensing which she did. She also called Ken Stettler's office and was told by an employee to call Child Protective Services in Logan.

Karleen then reported the child abuse and neglect to CPS in Logan but never heard back from them again.

Karleen disclosed the following facts in her Affidavit.

### **Staff dissatisfaction**

During her last week on the job, Karleen was told by her shift leader and the supervisor that several unhappy staff members have walked off the job and demanded better working conditions, better food and water for the children, better medical treatment for the children, and better housing for the staff. Management threatened to turn in the staff for child abandonment if they left, and some staff stayed as a result of that threat.

### **Mental health concerns**

Karleen was required to work with a wide range of children at Majestic Ranch, from kids with no prior reported problems at home to children who had previously been in a mental institution. Some of the girls were bi-polar and others suicidal. Others suffered from abandonment issues, post traumatic stress disorder and night terrors.

This information really makes one wonder why Majestic Ranch is not required to be licensed as a mental health facility by the State of Utah.

Karleen reports that most of the girls suffer from sleep disorders. In the 10 to 13 year-old dorm, girls routinely woke up screaming in the middle of the night, some with night terrors and others with nightmares.

### **Unusual punishments**

Karleen's affidavit goes into great detail about unusual punishments and practices which endanger the health and safety of the children. For example, children who have too many consequences or even just a "bad attitude" are made to stand outside on a milk crate for extended periods of time in sub-freezing temperatures.

Children who refuse to shovel manure are made to do so with their bare hands.

### **Lack of nutrition**

Nutrition is lacking. Children are fed a minimum amount of poor quality, high carb foods. Most foods are packaged or canned. Children are served a bare minimum of fresh vegetables and fruit.

### **Inadequate medical attention**

Karleen's affidavit also discusses the lack of prompt and necessary medical attention. For example, an outbreak of scabies has not been properly dealt with.

Food and water were making the children sick with vomiting and diarrhea. Staff bring their own food and water to avoid serious stomach problems.

One boy had rotten teeth and one tooth fell out. In the three weeks Karleen was there, he was not taken to a dentist.

A girl suffered from severe knee pain for the entire time Karleen was there. She was never taken to a doctor.

Another girl's glasses were broken for a month and she was never taken to an optician to get new ones.

### **Unlicensed dispensing of medications**

There are many children at the ranch who are taking medications on a daily basis. The medications are administered by staff who do not have any medical license. For example, a 19 year old female staffer routinely dispensed medications.

Some children complained they were being given the wrong doses of their medications. When Karleen was at Youth Corrections, unlicensed staff were not even allowed to dispense aspirin.

### **Animal Abuse and Neglect**

When Karleen approached a dog to pet it, the children told her not to touch the dogs or they would be shot. Karleen was told by her shift leader that someone in a high management position shot sick animals in front of the children.

Weanlings are made to stand tied with no water access, making them at risk for strangulation and dehydration.

The donkeys have overgrown hooves that are curled at the tips and the mature horses have overgrown hooves.

### **Child labor**

Children, mostly boys, are forced to work outside after dark shoveling snow in the freezing cold.

Girls are forced to clean the owners personal guest house which is located across the facility.

There is no paid cleaning staff. Children clean classrooms, the kitchen, their dorms, the bathrooms, and do their laundry. They do their own dishes in dirty water. There was no sanitation system while Karleen worked at the ranch.

### **Unsafe conditions**

The windows in the girls' dorms were screwed shut and there was no smoke detector in one of those dorms.

Staff are told to sleep with their beds blocking the door so the children will not escape at night, thus posing a hazard in case of the need to quickly escape in case of a fire.

There is only one bathroom for 12 or more girls and the door is always propped open so there is no privacy.

Bedding is not cleaned on a regular basis. Some of the bedding had not been cleaned for over a month.

The cook does not wear a hair net or use gloves in the kitchen when handling food. Conditions in the kitchen are unsanitary, with details provided in Karleen's affidavit.

The children are not allowed time to wash their hands before meals.

There are dead animal body parts around the yard.

### **Brainwashing**

Karleen witnessed a 15 year old girl who ran visualization exercises for the children. As she was playing music, she would tell the children to visualize their families leaving them because they were bad children. This caused all of the children to break down in tears.

The girl who ran this visualization process would sometimes pick on a specific child and make them feel bad. In one case, she asked the victim of sexual abuse to visualize the episode and to imagine what she could have done to have prevented the molestation. This process caused the sexual abuse victim considerable trauma.

Karleen's affidavit gives numerous other examples of this visualization process being used to manipulate the children and to make them feel bad about themselves.

### **Raw sewage**

At the time Karleen was on staff, there was a problem with raw sewage on the premises. It was frozen and not visible, but could be smelled from the water tap.

## **Sara Concetta**

Sara Concetta signed an Affidavit on Feb. 21, 2005 about her observations and knowledge of the conditions at Majestic Ranch. (See [Affidavit of Sara Concetta](#).) Sara worked there from Sept. 21, 2004, to Feb. 11, 2005.

### **Last minute cover up**

Just prior to her leaving, children told her that Wayne Winder got notice that the Fire Marshall was coming for an inspection. Winder was seen putting up smoke detectors and making corrections to bring things up to code in advance of the inspection.

Just before she quit her job, children told her that Winder had made them come into his office and asked them to fill out a form which inquired as to whether they felt threatened at Majestic Ranch or by him personally.

Some of these children told Sara that they said no because they were afraid if they told the truth – that they were afraid of Winder – there would be consequences.

### **Abusive practices**

Sara witnessed a staff member engage in an abusive restraint of a child. (Details are in her affidavit.) She believed that if the staffer had been given proper breaks, this would not have happened.

Staff are with the children 24 hours a day and are rarely given time away to gather themselves together for a mental health break.

On her first day on the job. Sara saw two boys being forced to shovel manure. One of them protested and was then thrown into the manure pile with his face into the manure.

There were three boys not long ago being held in an intervention room for punishment. The windows were screwed shut and the door locked. A staffer kept the key around his neck.

There would have been no way for the boys to escape in case of a fire if the staffer was in another part of the facility at the time.

### **Under staffing and lack of training**

The children are placed into teams. Each team is supposed to have two staff members. But due to staff shortages, there is only one staff member per team.

People who are hired are not required to have prior experience working with children. Background checks are not completed until the staff has been working with the children for several weeks. There is virtually no

formal training for staff.

### **Inadequate clothing and hygiene**

The children do not receive adequate clothing even though the parents are paying thousands of dollars per month for the program. Dirty clothing is often worn because of inadequate laundry facilities.

### **No classroom instruction**

There is no formal classroom instruction per se, even though this is supposed to be a boarding “school.” Everything is done on an “independent study” program instead of lectures and classroom discussions.

### **Medical neglect**

One girl had scabies. It was reported by staff but she did not receive medical attention for three weeks. She was in considerable pain because of the delay in treatment. In the meantime, due to lack of proper medical practices, several other girls came down with scabies.

### **Unlicensed drug dispensing**

Staff were required to dispense medications to children even though they were not licensed to do so.

Sara consulted with an attorney who advised her that, since there were so many children with serious psychological conditions and who used strong medications, there should be a licensed nurse at the facility at all times.

Sara felt that management was requiring staff to break the law by dispensing medications.

### **Raw sewage**

The septic tank backed up and raw sewage was flowing on the property. Staff and children had to walk over it in order to get from one place to another.

### **Lack of good nutrition**

The food is disgusting. Meat is served which is bloody and raw. Milk is diluted. Walls in the kitchen are filthy. Cooks do not receive training. The children are not given enough to eat and often go to bed hungry

## **Conclusion**

The facts contained in this report are only the tip of the evidentiary iceberg.

[Other staff were interviewed](#) but were reluctant to sign affidavits, probably due to fear. Nonetheless, their verbal

statements more than corroborated the facts in the affidavits that were received

This report, and supporting documents, raise serious questions about the failure of child protection agencies in Utah to protect the children at Majestic Ranch and to conduct a proper investigation.

Why have not more staff members and former staff members been called by these agencies for interviews?

Why were the children not interviewed when law enforcement went to the ranch to inspect it?

Was Majestic Ranch tipped off about the impending inspection, and if so, were any of the agency personnel responsible for giving the tip?

Why have the parents of these children not been notified that CPS was given evidence of abuse and neglect?

What will it take for the Utah Attorney General to prosecute?

The report also raises questions about why Utah law does not require facilities such as Majestic Ranch to be licensed and subject to unannounced inspections.

Finally, any reasonable person reading this report will wonder when the law will be strengthened to protect children entrusted into the care of a private business.

This report is being made available to the Governor, Attorney General, and all members of the Utah Legislature. They are being advised about the existence of this report and are being provided with the link to the online version on my website – [www.kidsincaptivity.com](http://www.kidsincaptivity.com) – they can read it online and print it out.

The report is also being given to members of Congress with the hope that one or more of them will forward it to the Attorney General of the United States, asking for a full investigation into the allegations and evidence raised in this report.

There is a need for official intervention into this unacceptable situation in Utah. With the help of the media, the public will learn about this scandal and hopefully will join in this demand for reform – for the sake of the children.

