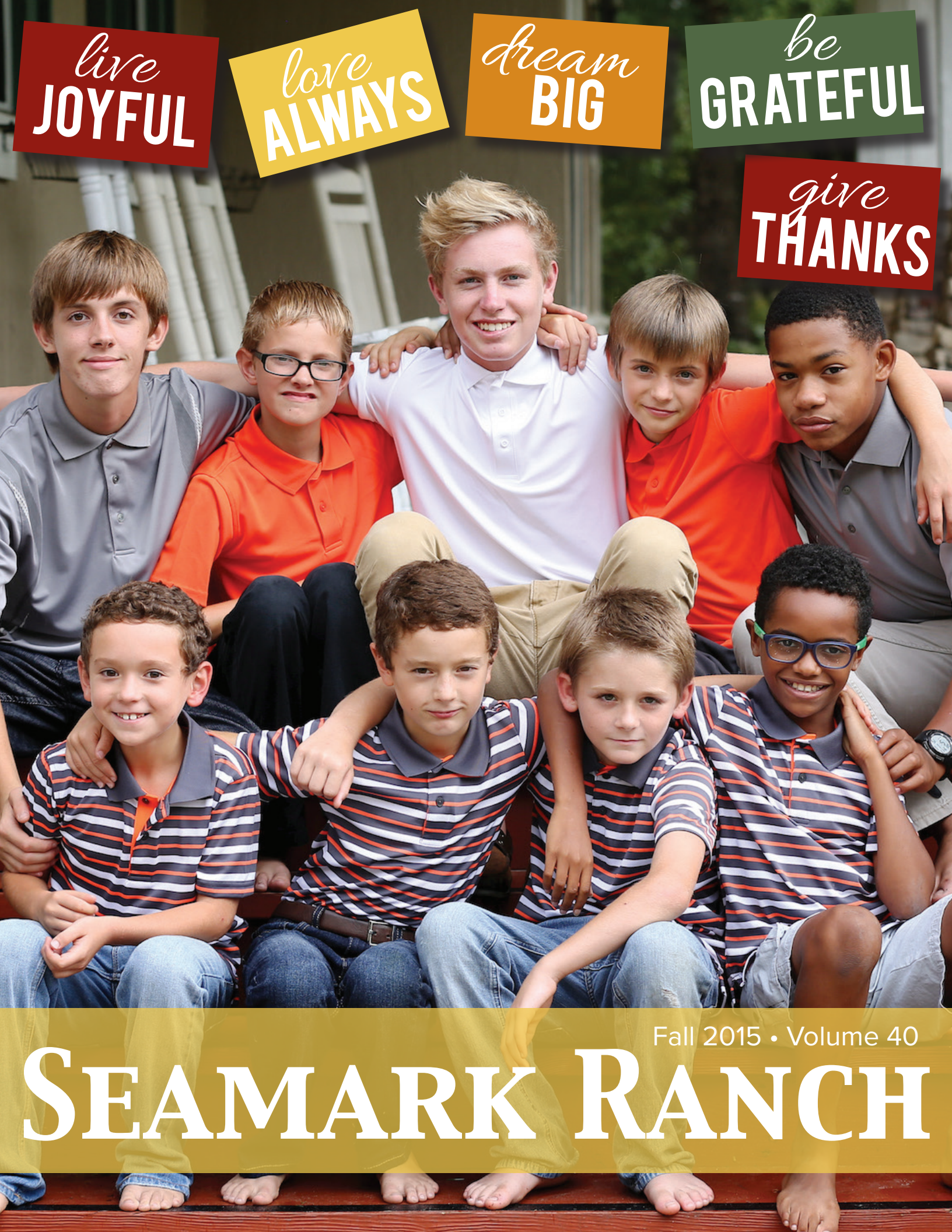

Fall 2015 • Volume 40

Seamark Ranch

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More than a Home, A Family

1 San Jose Place, Suite 31
Jacksonville, FL 32257
Phone (904) 288-8885 Fax (904) 288-8875
www.seamarkranch.com

Seamark Ranch is a Christ-centered home for Northeast Florida's children from families in crisis.

A Tale Of Two Children

Let me tell you a story of two very different children. At fourteen, Stacey came to Seamark after many years in the foster care system. Stacey was so broken that Seamark was unable to help her before she fell back into the State system. Only recently did we discover that after years of pain, loneliness and heartbreak Stacey, now a mother of two, is currently serving a multi-year sentence in a Florida correctional facility. In a recent eight-page letter Stacey poured her heart out fondly recalling sitting on our Girls' Home porch eating warm cookies, enjoying family movie night, and playing hide-and-seek among the hay bales in our pastures.

Twelve-year-old David had moved through several foster homes before a caring school counselor recognized his downward spiral and recommended Seamark Ranch. When David came to us he was completely withdrawn, on anti-depressants and reading at a 2nd grade level. Through love and hard work David found hope and healing. After seven years in our Seamark family David graduated from Seamark School. A week later he had a full time job and is now working and attending college.

In 2013 there were over 18,000 children in the Florida Foster Care system. In Stacey's case taxpayers will spend over $200,000 to fund her care and incarceration.[1] Furthermore, when Stacey is released her chances of a productive, self-sustaining future are limited. In contrast, Seamark Ranch means hope, healing and opportunity for the children who find a home and family here.

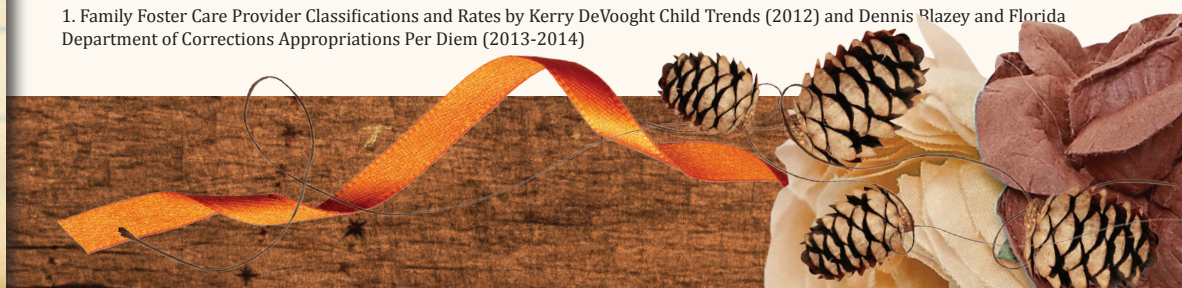
Our two homes and school stay at capacity. It is heartbreaking to turn children away because we have no room for them. Once our 2015 operating budget is met, all additional gifts can go toward building our next home. Please begin now to pray for our next home and consider a special gift this holiday season to hasten the day when we can help even more children.

From our Seamark Family to yours, we wish you a happy Thanksgiving and a very merry Christmas!

Executive Director,
Fred & Debbie Meiners

Fred Meiners
Executive Director

1. Family Foster Care Provider Classifications and Rates by Kerry DeVooght Child Trends (2012) and Dennis Blazey and Florida Department of Corrections Appropriations Per Diem (2013-2014)



Seamark Happenings

MEET OUR NEW PRINCIPAL

Please join us in welcoming John Green and his family to Seamark Ranch and Seamark Ranch School. John and his wife Monica, also a successful teacher, have two children; Jackson, age 11, and Savannah, age 10.

John was formerly the principal of Lakeside Junior High School in Orange Park, Florida, named one of the top 75 junior high schools in the state of Florida under his leadership. During his 22 years in teaching and administration, John was named the Clay County Chamber of Commerce Spotlight Teacher (2002), twice named the Florida Star Conference Coach of the Year (2000, 2002), and given the Florida Shriner's most prestigious honor—"The Standing Tall Award" (2005).

Principal and Education Coordinator, John Green

We recently sat down with John and learned a little bit more about his commitment to helping youth succeed academically and personally.

How did you become acquainted with Seamark Ranch and Seamark School?

About eight years ago we began a mentoring program at Lakeside Junior High School called REAL Manhood to introduce young men to authentic manhood based on Jesus Christ as our model. My family and I had attended a Seamark Open House for the community and I just felt God's presence all over the ranch. I told our other mentors we needed to take the boys to serve there. We have brought boys and their fathers to the ranch to volunteer ever since. We started a tradition of ending each volunteer day with a group picture on Prayer Hill. Each one of those photos is special.

How have your professional and personal life experiences prepared you to serve at Seamark Ranch?

I started as a substitute teacher, became a coach and a Language Arts teacher, worked in a drop-out prevention computer lab, and then served as a school administrator. During those twenty-two years I have been blessed to work with some of the finest educators in our community and with thousands of young people from every type of background imaginable. The lessons I learned keep me very humble and each one is a gift I can use to love our Seamark kids. A few years ago I knew God was calling me to ministry. I did not know where, or when, or how, but I knew He was calling me to serve full-time. I believe God was preparing me and my family to serve at Seamark Ranch.

What do you see as the biggest educational need of our children today?

There are five areas where kids, really all people, need to grow: spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical, and life skills. Reading will be a great challenge. Reading is the life skill that literally drives all the others. If we can teach a child to be a life-long reader then they can be successful at any task or job they seek.

Tell us something about you that most people would not expect?

I was in two locally filmed movies that unfortunately were not real box-office hits! In GI Jane I was an extra playing a Navy Seal in training and in Sudden Terror: The Miami Bus Hijacking I was an extra playing a police sniper. I got a pretty good head shot in the hijacking movie but otherwise I am just a quick blur in the background! It was a lot of fun and great for our community.

LOOK FOR OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER TO LEARN HOW SEAMARK RANCH IS GROWING!

I AM THANKFUL FOR EVERYTHING, EVEN THE BAD BECAUSE IT PREPARES ME FOR THE NEW. - EMILY, 10

I'M THANKFUL FOR SEAMARK RANCH ACCEPTING ME.
- TREY, 14

Make your gift last all year, become a monthly donor. It's simple and convenient.

CELEBRATE 12 ~~DAYS~~ MONTHS OF CHRISTMAS

Thank you for your desire to make the holidays special for the children of Seamark Ranch!

As your family makes plans for the holiday season, we hope you will remember Seamark Ranch. On these two pages you will find some creative ideas to consider throughout the holiday season and into the New Year. Regardless of the option you choose, please know that Seamark Ranch is very grateful. Please continue to pray for Seamark this holiday season. Every day we joyfully experience God's answers to your prayers.

HOLIDAY DROP-OFF & HAYRIDE

Saturday, December 6, 2015
10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

(904) 529-1951
mail@seamarkranch.com to RSVP

SEAMARK'S WHITE CHRISTMAS

Celebrate a Seamark White Christmas by collecting any of the following much-needed items during the month of November.

- Paper Towels
- Strong PAPER Plates
- Napkins
- Toilet Paper
- Kitchen and Yard size Trash Bags
- Zip Lock Bags (all sizes), Plastic Wrap and Foil
- Liquid Laundry Detergent
- Dishwasher Detergent

Then join us for a hayride and refreshments on our Holiday Drop-off Day at the Ranch.

MORE WAYS TO MAKE SPIRITS BRIGHT:

Gift cards and gift certificates offer flexibility to meet a need or make a memory. Consider a holiday gift card to:

- Department stores such as Target, Walmart and Kohl's
- Grocery stores such as Publix, Winn-Dixie and Walmart
- Photo processing at Walmart, Target, CVS, Walgreens, etc.
- Family restaurants, movie theaters, bowling alleys, skating rinks, Adventure Landing, etc.
- Small stocking stuffers to Starbucks, Sonic, McDonalds, Chick-fil-A, etc.
- Sponsor a "family night out" for one of our homes to an area restaurant or a holiday event.
- Sponsor a "family getaway" with tickets to area theme parks or other family destinations to be used during the year.

The Joy of the Season

FOR THE CLOTHES, THE FOOD IN MY STOMACH, AND THE SHOES ON MY FEET.
- ALYSSA, 13

LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT GIFT:

Are you searching for the perfect gift for family, friends, coworkers, clients and colleagues? Why not make a lasting gift – a donation to Seamark Ranch.

BE THE REASON SOMEONE *Smiles* THIS SEASON

Contact us at (904) 288-8885 or carleen@seamarkranch.com to arrange your donation and give us your list of honorees. We will mail each a lovely Seamark holiday card acknowledging your thoughtful gift. Lists must be received by Wednesday, December 16th to insure delivery before Christmas.

This year give a gift that will make a difference in the life of a child and bring a smile to those that mean the most to you.

Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

December 1, 2015

Seamark Ranch has joined #GivingTuesday, a global day of giving. On December 1, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving #GivingTuesday kicks-off the holiday giving season by inspiring people to give to the charities and causes they support.

MAKE A RESOLUTION TO BECOME A FINANCIAL DONOR IN 2016

Visit www.seamarkranch.com/donate

Follow Us

WHAT GOD HAS DONE SO FAR IN MY LIFE.

- BRAYDEN, 9

Honors & Memorials

All gifts are tax deductible and, unless designated, are used towards general Ranch operations. Thank you for your support of Seamark Ranch.

The following supporters have made contributions to Seamark Ranch in honor or in memory of family, friends and loved ones. Gifts were received between March 23, 2015 and October 15, 2015. Friends of Seamark also joined in a Season of Prayer, praying daily for Seamark needs from Mother's Day, May 10 to Father's Day, June 21. Many also took this opportunity to pay tribute to a parent or loved one with a special gift to Seamark Ranch. Names are listed alphabetically by the person being honored or memorialized. We regret any unintentional omission or misspelling of names. Please call the office with any omissions so that we may include them in our next newsletter.

Tributes may be made by mail or online at www.seamarkranch.com. Tribute forms may be printed from our website or we will gladly take your information over the phone and mail an acknowledgement card to your recipient. Please call our office at (904) 288-8885 if we may assist you in this way.

Season of Prayer - In Honor Of:

All Children in Need of Loving Families
Justin and Caroline Feagle
Dan Davis
Dorothy Smith
Jan Frazer
Ms. Amelia Day
The Harrison Family
Timothy and Susan Harrison
Cole Michael Smith
Mike Price
Florence Kaufman
Kirk and Amanda Landau
Jayne Klein
Louis Field
Katie, Chris, and Georgia Messer
Mark and Susan Messer
Heather Myroup
Dave Myroup
Lila Odom
Billy and Teresa Atkins
Our Parents
Charles and Kathy Davenport
Seamark Houseparents
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Boudreaux
Guy Boyce Suddath
Mr. and Mrs. L.P. Suddath

Season of Prayer - In Memory Of:

Mary T. Brokas
Mrs. Celeste U. Brokas
Gerry and Woody Farley
Elaine Farley
J. Decker Frazer
Ms. Amelia Day
Godly Parents
Norma M. Suttle
Scott Hamner
Mr. and Mrs. Victor Groner
Frank and Carolyn Kraus
Staci Suppa
My Parents
Nancy Philips
Our Parents
Charles and Kathy Davenport
Robert and Mary Sanford
Patricia Sanford
Herbert E. Scott
John F. Scott
James Spoon Sr.
Wallace and Jenny Belgard
Guy Boyce Suddath
Mr. and Mrs. L.P. Suddath
Millie Witt
Wes and Melody Longstreth & family
Peggy Zitiello
Tommy Zitiello

In Honor Of:

Alice Benton
Fred and Debbie Meiners
Brenda Davis
Dorothy Smith
Ben and Diana Davis
Brandon and Anna Starks
Tyler Crump
Bill and Samantha Kastelz
Jim Farley
Elaine Farley
Cason Feagle
Ken and Lynetta Griner
Ms. Meriam Holder
Stacey Geisel
Bill and Samantha Kastelz
Dale and Lou Ann Hamilton
Roberta Hamilton
Ruth Handley
Jim Handley
Mike and Leigh Ann Harris
Linda Allen
Robert E. Lindenschmidt
Fred and Debbie Meiners
Sue McManus
Susan Carson
Ron Pellum
Joseph A. Livingston
Mrs. Frank Pruitt
Mr. and Mrs. Manson Alley
Dr. Joanne Roberts
Elaine Farley
Hawley and Emily Smith
Jennifer Meyerowitz
Mr. Howard Stahl
Joan Meir
Ronnie "Cuz" Strickland
Still Water Christian Life Center
Dwyn Taylor
Seamark Mudder Team
Juliet West
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Read
Allene Zvara
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Read

In Memory Of:

Bernard Allen
Ladies Faith Class, Lake Asbury Baptist Church
Henry J. Allen
Linda Allen
Armando and Antonia Astolfi
Susan Mack
George "Uncle Buddy" Brandt
Bill and Samantha Kastelz
Bessie Marie Burrell
Reginald E. Richardson
Hugh E. Drew Sr.
Mrs. Lyndal Drew
Robert Earl Dukes
David Archer and Susan Meiners
Grady McCoy
June Falls
Paul and Mary Ann Williams
Ralph Garner
Bill and Teresa Atkins
Duanne Goddard
Lori Ann Goddard
Reinaldo and Keith Grubb
Fred and Debbie Meiners
Rusty Harkins
Daniel and Linda Althouse
Doug and Diane Althouse
Edward and Merrily Bailey
Ron and Debbie Limuti
Taylor Bailey
Calvin E. "Bud" Hayden
John, Joanne and Ashlyn Rose
Ann Hyman
Elizabeth Hyman
Larry and Estelle Lindenschmidt
Robert Lindenschmidt
Fred and Debbie Meiners
Erwin Marks
Fred and Debbie Meiners
Ron Nelson
Marlene M. Nelson
Edward H. Pettit
Retired Administrators of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad South Club
A.J. Pionessa
R.E. Richardson
Woody Porter
Dan and Deanna Spencer
Pastor Bobby Register
Fred and Debbie Meiners
Cecil Richardson
R.E. Richardson
Rachel Robertson
Fred and Debbie Meiners
Douglas D. Roseborough
Barbara B. Roseborough
Jane Faye Royal
John, Joanne and Ashlyn Rose
Jerry G. Smith
Herschel and Martha Allen
Lois Thames
Lance and Carleen Haney
Gloria Wrenn
Billy and Teresa Atkins

2ND ANNUAL SEAMARK MUDDER A HUGE SUCCESS :

On April 18, 2015 750 participants triumphantly completed the 2nd annual Seamark Mudder! The 5K mud race included 25 obstacles and wound through ponds, trails, Black Creek; finishing with a 100 foot water slide into a muddy pond at the foot of Prayer Hill. Post-race runners enjoyed food trucks, a pancake breakfast hosted by the Keystone Heights American Legion Post 202 and a welcome shower! The event raised over $70,000 to benefit Seamark Ranch. Special thanks go out to all the Mudder sponsors and our dedicated volunteers for another great race!

Save the date for next year's
Seamark Mudder: April 16, 2016

11TH ANNUAL JOHN L. COLEMAN GOLF TOURNAMENT

Even the threat of a hurricane could not dampen the success of the 11th annual John L. Coleman golf tournament held on August 31, 2015 at Jacksonville Golf and Country Club. For the second year Seamark Ranch was the grateful beneficiary of the hugely popular tournament sponsored by the CSX Retirees. This year's event raised over $25,000 in proceeds thanks to Kathy Coleman, Tournament Coordinator, and her dedicated and hardworking team. We are grateful for the many ways the Retirees and CSX Foundation support Seamark Ranch throughout the year. Our thanks to the CSX Retirees team, tournament sponsors, golfers and all the CSX retirees for making the tournament such a success.

Save the date for next year's
John L. Coleman Charity Golf Tournament: October 3, 2016

DAY AT THE RANCH BRINGS NEW FRIENDS

Hundreds of guests visited the Ranch on Saturday, October 24th for a morning of fun and fellowship. The Keystone Heights American Legion Post 202 kicked off the morning with a delicious pancake breakfast to bluegrass, gospel and country music favorites provided by local band, Woods and Bridges. Guests toured the campus stopping at the Equestrian Center, Seamark School and homes to learn more about each Seamark program. Along the tour route, guests selected their favorite from among 19 scarecrows and cast their vote at the Agricultural center where barnyard games, a petting zoo, and tours of the gardens and animals awaited them. The Northeast Florida Honey Bee Association was also on hand to share the importance of bees and beekeeping to Seamark's farming operation and our backyard gardens. Guests could take home a pumpkin thanks to the Asbury United Methodist Church pumpkin wagon. Our thanks to all who helped with the event and to all our friends, old and new, for sharing the morning with us!

Save the date for more Fall fun next year
A Day at the Ranch Saturday, October 22, 2016

Seamark is thankful for the overwhelming generosity of business partners and friends that donate their time materials, skills and resources to make our newsletters and publications possible. Special thanks to Quality Images, Mac Papers, Agnes Lopez Photography, Diane Arsenault Photography and Krista Rae Photography for your dedication to the children of Seamark Ranch.

If you are a local business and would be interested in donating your time and/or services to Seamark Ranch please contact us at (904) 288-8885 or email us at mara@seamarkranch.com

1 San Jose Place, Suite 31
Jacksonville, FL 32257

T 904.288.8885
F 904.288.8875
E mail@seamarkranch.com

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This year, on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, Seamark Ranch is participating in #GivingTuesday, a global day dedicated to giving. Since its founding in 2012, #GivingTuesday has inspired giving around the world, resulting in greater donations, volunteer hours, and activities that bring about real change in communities. We invite you to join the movement and to help get out by giving to Seamark Ranch this December 1. Be sure to get your workplace, friends and family involved in #GivingTuesday too. We encourage you to join the movement and visit www.givingtuesday.org to learn more about how you can make a difference.

Make an online donation of $100 or more December 1st, #givingtuesday and we will send you a special Seamark Ranch keepsake ornament.
www.seamarkranch.com/donate

USE THE HASHTAG #GIVINGTUESDAY AND #SEAMARKRANCH TO TELL OTHERS WHY YOU SUPPORT SEAMARK RANCH.