



HIGH PLAINS JOURNALTM

The delectable taste of a smooth wine. Immortalizing a beloved stallion with horsehair pottery. The sensation of soothing bath soaps. Eating as a family around a handcrafted wooden dining room table. All these experiences plus much more are available at two Rosewood Creations stores nestled in Great Bend, Kansas. Besides the pleasure of treating yourself or loved one to a gift, an added bonus is contributing to the greater life purpose of local people with disabilities.

"My whole goal is for people with disabilities to be accepted in the community," said Rosewood Services founder and executive director Tammy Hammond. "Through value you gain acceptance."

Rosewood origins

Hammond became inspired to dedicate her life to aiding people with disabilities. Being a horse lover all her life, Hammond invited a struggling coworker with disabilities to spend time with her horses. Seeing

FINDING A
LIFE PURPOSE,
ONE
WINE
AT A TIME

how much the woman enjoyed being around horses, Hammond was inspired to create a more formal equine therapy program.

Hammond's husband, Eric, was supportive of Hammond's new life dream. While Hammond prepared the paperwork and other foundational pieces for organization, "Eric worked for four or five years. He was supportive of what I wanted to do," said Hammond.

Although several banks turned her down, the couple did eventually secure the financial backing they needed.

Hammond opened the main office in Great Bend in 1998, and Eric joined her four years later as they made plans to expand the equestrian program and ranching operation. These plans included a new barn with bunk rooms and a 150x180 indoor arena at the Rosewood Ranch, located 5 miles north of Pawnee Rock, Kansas, so the therapy could continue year-round. The full working horse and cattle ranch became one of the main attractions to their clients.

See **Rosewood**, 3A

2015 AGRITOURISM ISSUE



May 11, 2015

www.hpj.com

\$4.00

Journal story and photo by Rachel Keeley Turner. Cover artwork by Heather Noll.



High Plains Journal and Midwest Ag Journal

An edition of High Plains Journal

May 11, 2015
Volume 133 Number 19

Published weekly by:

HPP Management, LLC
P.O. Box 760
1500 Wyatt Earp Blvd.
Dodge City, KS 67801-0760

Telephone:
800-452-7171 or 620-227-7171
Fax: **620-227-7173**

www.HPJ.com
www.EquipmentForTheFarm.com
www.JournalGetaways.com
Email: **journal@hpj.com**

Classified ads: **1-888-227-7171**
Display ads: **1-800-452-7171**
Subscriptions: **1-800-353-1841**

Tom TaylorPublisher
Holly Martin Editor
Dave Bergmeier .. Managing Editor
Jennifer Latzke..... Assoc. Editor
Kylene Scott..... Assoc. Editor
Larry Dreiling.....Sr. Field Editor
Northwest Field Office
785-628-1117
Doug Rich.....Sr. Field Editor
Northeast Field Office
785-749-5304
Jennifer Carrico..... Field Editor
Midwest Field Office
515-833-2120
John Seatvet..... Sales Mgr.
Jeff Sibley..... Class. Adv. Mgr.
Pete Weil.....National Accts. Mgr.
Rod Swafford..... Livestock Mgr.
Jeff Keeten.....Circulation Mgr.
Sarah Farlee.....Marketing Dir.
Todd Fuller.....Dir. of Consumer
Marketing
Craig Diell..... Production Mgr.
Luke Waldron..... Art Dir.

Annual Subscription Rates
United States \$68.00

Periodicals postage paid at Dodge City, Kansas 67801. High Plains Journal (ISSN 0018-1471) is published by HPP Management, LLC 1500 East Wyatt Earp Blvd., Dodge City, Kansas 67801-0760.

Postmaster: Send address changes to High Plains Journal, P.O. Box 760, Dodge City, Kansas 67801-0760.

High Plains Journal, including Midwest Ag Journal, an edition of High Plains Journal, is an agricultural publication published weekly, with a special issue in October, in five editions for Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico.



**HIGH PLAINS/MIDWEST AG
JOURNAL**

Wine

Continued from 1A

“Our clients now have the opportunity to experience life on a ranch, which is something they may not have been able to enjoy otherwise. It is just one of the diverse set of choices we are able to offer them,” said Hammond.

In May 1998, Rosewood Services was established, providing people with developmental disabilities the opportunities to fully live and experience life. The same year, the Rosewood Roots & Wings Foundation was formed as a 501(c)(3) organization to help provide funding to advance the physical and mental needs of disabled individuals in central Kansas.

In 2002, the Rosewood Horse Therapy Program was founded and has been successful ever since. The program is certified by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International and touts PATH-certified instructors. Over the years the program has expanded to assist students—“clients” or “folks,” as Hammond and Rosewood staff refers to them—with various types of developmental disabilities. Equine therapy training is given to approximately 90 adults and children throughout the work week. Some advanced students have even won top honors at the National Snaffle Bit Association World Championship competitions. Around 40 to 50 students also perform in an annual rodeo Rosewood hosts every year, which the general public is invited to. Rosewood’s own equine genetic breeding, which also resulted from the therapy program, has also resulted in world-famous horses as well as gentle horses used for equine therapy purposes.

“We have more success raising our own horses than buying them. We have purchased some in the past, but they don’t always work out. A successful therapy program starts with raising kind, gentle horses,” said Hammond.

Every facet of their enterprise has been built with their clients in mind, and this dedication is shown throughout each of their numerous services.

Rosewood Services and Creations

Due to the success of their equine programs, Hammond and her team wanted to expand the opportunities for their clients to enrich their lives.

“Our focus is to offer a variety of opportunities for people they otherwise wouldn’t have,” said Hammond. “This is what keeps us moving forward.”

Moving forward encompassed several different new growth plans. One included extending their cattle herd size and purposes. On approximately 900 acres of land, Rosewood Ranch now has around 75 head of cattle, mainly a mixture of Red Angus and Simmental Angus. They hope to raise more than 60 calves this year and take some to the sale barn. Others will be supply for special brand of sausage, seasoned with a unique recipe of their own, has also become a popular item in their retail store.

Additionally, their retail store contains other food items made by their clients in their industrial

kitchen. Tomatoes and jalapenos grown year-round in the Rosewood greenhouse are used to make salsa and their own “cowboy candy.” Their produce is taken to farmers markets and sold locally. Area vendors and businesses in the area are repeat customers and have come to trust the goods the Rosewood clients grow from scratch. In fact, one person from Rosewood have been hired to tend to greenhouse/garden centers in commercial businesses in Great Bend. A sign outside Rosewood Gallery, their furniture store, also lets townspeople know tomatoes are available to purchase inside. This has been a popular draw for people to come in, and as a bonus, see the handcrafted work of the Rosewood workers.

While the furniture pieces are not cut in-house (though such plans are in the works), all the furniture items sold in Rosewood Gallery are stained and assembled by hand by Rosewood clients. The store opened in 2001, and its floor plan design was intentionally left open so customers could walk in and see the furniture being made.

“The store turns the whole concept on its head because it allows people to come in and see how wonderful the idea behind it is,” said Michael Dawes, who has been the director of marketing since 2012. “Our people get to earn recognition through their efforts.”

Clients with artistic talents find life purpose at Rosewood Studio, where they make a collection of handmade artisan items. Bath soaps, lotions, bath balms, body wash as well as candles, decoupage vases, jewelry and other decorative goods are all made at the studio. Horsehair pottery is a popular requested item, and customers frequently provide workers with hair from their beloved horses to be used in the glazing process for a keepsake memento. Created items make their way not only to Rosewood’s Wine Cellar, their main retail store, but also to local craft markets and fairs. The studio contains their industrial kitchen as well, where their greenhouse’s produce is used to cook their special treats for purchase. Finding a purpose for everything is a common theme around every part of Rosewood Services, and each area has stemmed from wanting to help their folks find a way to help the community.

“Some people see a disability but there’s an ability in everyone. It’s just about finding it,” said Dawes.

Rosewood Winery and Wine Cellar

One of the most distinctive aspects about Rosewood is its own winery and wine cellar. What originally started as the beginnings of an orchard slowly morphed into what is grown on the Rosewood Ranch today—150 grapevines.

“I was watching my sister make wine, and I thought the process might work well for our folks,” said Hammond.

After several years of experimenting and researching machinery to work for their clients, and after a year of working through red tape, Rosewood Winery and its wine series was created. Named after their top line of horses, the wine collection boasts over 30 varieties of wine, including merlots, caber-



A Rosewood client stains a piece of furniture that will then be assembled and sold in the company’s furniture store in Great Bend, Kansas. (Journal photo by Rachel Keeley Turner.)

nets, and strawberry and blackberry flavored wines. Their product has been taken to several wine competitions where it has placed well, winning four gold medals. Rosewood wine has also spread throughout the region to nearby Kansas cities. They deliver their product to 32 liquor stores, including locations in Salina, Topeka, Wichita, McPherson and Hutchinson.

“I see it growing,” said Hammond. “Someday we may have warehouses in other locations, if the growth continues.”

Though the popularity of their wine benefits all involved, the main purpose behind the wine possesses the sweetest taste. The Rosewood winery is the only winery in the nation that was built specifically to employ people with disabilities. This fact is a source of pride for Hammond and her Rosewood family, in addition to the employment skills her clients learn from working at the winery and the other facilities.

Clients who work at any of the Rosewood sites must go through an employment training where they take classes about the ins and outs of having a job. Once the classes are completed, clients can try out various jobs at any of the Rosewood sites. If they are inclined to a certain location, they can start with that task or job. After working at Rosewood, several clients have successfully been hired in jobs in the local community.

“Right now we have 15 percent community employment. That’s well above the state average,” said Dawes.

Hammond said such a success rate was “incredible. It is truly a testament to the dedication of all involved in the program.”

“Sometimes folks could get a job, but weren’t prepared. We wanted to figure out what they needed to know so they can be successful,” Hammond said.

Rosewood Services has nearly 180 clients with a staff of nearly

170 employees, a ratio necessary to be able to provide 24-hour care for some clients. In addition to helping their workers to receive job preparation training, the Rosewood staff helps their folks travel to medical appointments, social outings and events like the Special Olympics. Hammond said she and her staff enjoy providing these services. Without them, they would not have an opportunity to participate in such events.

When people purchase items from the Rosewood Wine Cellar, or participate in wine tastings, they are helping propel clients to further their success. The Wine Cellar has countless products the clients make at the different locations, and Dawes said he believes the community has supported the store.

“We do what we do and to the highest degree we can. The energy, the heart shows and people support that,” said Dawes. “We support ourselves but only through people coming back through our doors.”

Jennifer Stoddard, an employee at the Rosewood Wine Cellar, agreed.

“It’s really rewarding to work in a store where not only can you be excited about the products but the purpose behind the products,” Stoddard said. “I think we take pride in what we do, but it’s pride in the folks behind the products. When you look and realize about all the work and steps behind the product...it sells itself.”

Pride and acceptance are what continues to make Hammond strive to provide even more services in the future.

“Our whole philosophy is we will not just put people in a program, we make the program around the people,” she said. “Through the various programs, our folks gain value. We take a lot of pride in what we do. It’s all about creating an opportunity for a life purpose.”

Rachel Keeley Turner can be reached at rturner@hpj.com or 620-227-1887.