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International Director of Zona Juvenil Ministries speaks about Youth Ranch program in Guatemala



Story by Eiryn Reynolds

The Zona Juvenil Youth Ranch creator and founder spoke to Gardner-Webb students about the inner-workings of the program on Monday, October 10th.

Mark Wakefield, international director of Zona Juvenil Ministries, spoke about his program and the breadth of its impact at 4:30 p.m. in the Communications Studies Hall. Jenna Shackelford, a student who attended Wakefield's presentation, said "hearing about Wakefield's ministry is another reminder of how blessed we are, and it really motivated me to be obedient in Christ by serving others".

The Youth Ranch Home, according to the Zona Juvenil Ministries website, is "a place of healing, hope, love, joy, and encountering Christ" located in Western Guatemala. The ranch currently houses more than twenty boys and young men, ranging from ages ten and up. It serves as a protection home for boys who have suffered from abandonment, abuse, and neglect. Wakefield created the home as way for boys to learn "life skills, responsibility, and leadership," in preparation for successful lives after the transition out the program.

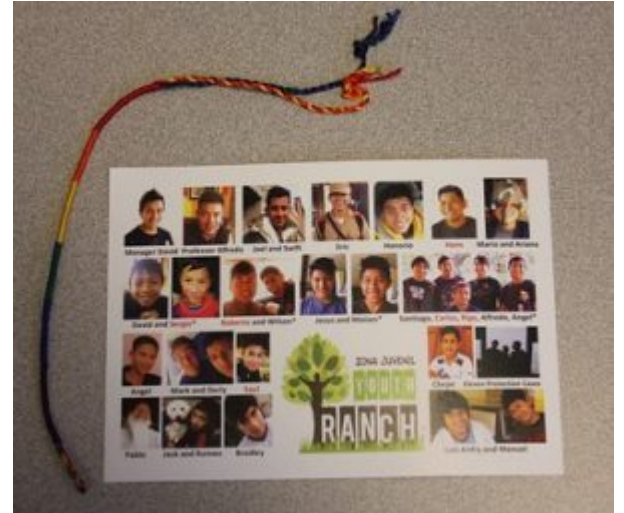


Boys in the Youth Ranch have daily chores to do on the ranch, such as taking care of the animals and cooking meals. Each boy is also required to participate in either public or homeschooling educational programs as long as they live at the ranch. According to Wakefield, the Youth Ranch currently offers homeschooling up to the middle school level, and provides those who choose to go to public school with at least three hours of additional education after they come home. The additional education, Wakefield explained during his presentation, is to ensure that every boy receives quality

instruction and personal attention in every academic area.

Furthermore, Wakefield teaches the boys about God's forgives and love throughout their time at the ranch. He encourages them to participate in bible studies, lead prayers and practice serving God every day. "We [are] a faith sustained ministry," Wakefield writes on his website, "and we see [daily] how God provides our every need."

Dr. Bob Carey, Communication and New Media department chair, and Dr. Lisa Luedeman, Communications instructor, are considering putting together a media-missionary trip to the Youth Ranch Home over the summer. Interested students can contact Dr. Carey at bcarey@gardner-webb.edu.



For additional information about the Zona Juvenil Youth Ranch visit <http://zonajuvenilministries.com/> or www.facebook.com/mark.w.wakefield. To learn more becoming involved with the program, contact Zona Juvenil Ministries at zonajuvenil@hotmail.com.