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WILDLIFE



Preston Barta/For Denton County Magazine
Jeremy and Katelyn Sons with one of their rescued deer at Clear Creek Adventure Ranch.

Compassion is the
lifeblood of this Sanger
animal sanctuary

By Preston Barta
For Denton County Magazine

Down a winding road in Sanger, where the branches of ancient pecan and walnut trees weave a protective canopy, a different kind of story unfolds. It's a story written not with ink on paper, but in the hoofprints and heartbeats of rescued animals.

This is Clear Creek Adventure Ranch, a sprawling sanctuary born not from a grand design, but from an ever-expanding heart. Here, founders Jeremy and Katelyn Sons have turned a personal calling into a powerful mission: to plant seeds of compassion, one animal and one child at a time.

The journey to creating this haven wasn't planned. It simply happened.

"We always talked about wanting to have an animal sanctuary," Jeremy explains, his voice resonating with a passion that's both gentle and fierce.

Originally, they envisioned a rescue for dogs, a natural extension of their habit of taking in strays. But their path, like the creek that borders their property, followed its own course. Today, the ranch is a bustling, vibrant home to more than 60 animals,

each carrying a story of hardship, survival and profound transformation.

Perhaps no story embodies the spirit of the ranch more than that of Alice, a Brahman calf who became a catalyst for change. When she arrived, she was little more than skin and bone, so weak she collapsed almost immediately.

"We didn't think she was going to make it," Katelyn says, as she recalls the harrowing first moments. "Her eyes rolled back in her head, and it was a real situation."

Friends with cattle experience advised them not to waste their time, warning that a calf that far gone couldn't be brought back. But for Jeremy and Katelyn, the choice was clear. "We just said, you know, if we don't try, who will?"

With round-the-clock feedings and tireless care, Alice not only survived, but she also blossomed into a sweet, affectionate companion who now follows Jeremy like a shadow. Her recovery left an indelible mark on the couple, fundamentally shifting their perspective.

"I couldn't imagine a life without her," Jeremy says. "How could I ever consid-

er eating another animal when Alice has shown me so much love and personality?" That conviction became a cornerstone of their mission. Since July 8 of this year, they haven't purchased meat.

This deep empathy is the lifeblood of Clear Creek. It is a place for the runts, the neglected and the abandoned — the animals that others have deemed not worth the effort.

Walking through the property is like turning the pages of a living book of resilience. You meet Willie, a Nigerian dwarf goat whose mother died shortly after his birth. Without the vital colostrum from his mother's milk, his immune system failed; a blood infection stole his sight, and he was blind by three days old.

Yet today, he navigates the world with a joyful spirit, bouncing around and nuzzling Jeremy's beard. Then there's a three-legged dog, found in a homeless encampment in California with a leg that looked as if it had been gnawed off, who is now "by far out of 11 dogs, the sweetest dog [they] have."

For every animal, there is a story of human failure

and a second chance at a life filled with love.

"It's almost a greedy, selfish situation," Jeremy says, "because the more you give, the more you're going to get back from them. So, it's like, why wouldn't you?" He believes this is a truth that can't be taught, only experienced. "Once you realize that, it switches something in your brain where you can't see animals in a different way."

This is the very experience Jeremy and Katelyn want to share. Clear Creek is more than a refuge — it's an educational mission field.

They open their gates to visitors, especially children, fostering connections that transcend a simple petting zoo. Here, children learn that pigs, goats and cows are not just livestock — they are individuals with distinct personalities. They see that Sam, the baby doll sheep, loves to be petted, while his twin brother, Frodo, is more reserved. They learn that animals don't dwell on their past hardships.

"They don't spend half a millisecond feeling sorry for themselves," Jeremy says. "They're just getting

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