

# A Legacy of Endurance

Roundup River Ranch Celebrates 20 Years of Camp Without Barriers

BY LAURA LIEFF



**A MILESTONE THIS** significant deserves recognition and Roundup River Ranch is eager to celebrate. Founded in 2006, the organization offers free, medically supported camp programs for children with serious illnesses and their families. Over the last two decades, Roundup River Ranch has provided almost 40,000 camper experiences, each fostering independence, belonging and resilience. “This year is about gratitude,” says Sarah Johnson, president and CEO of Roundup River Ranch. “For 20 years, our Vail Valley, Denver and surrounding communities have made it

possible for children with life-altering diagnoses to attend camp completely free of charge.”

While the organization’s 20th anniversary will span a full year of celebration and participation, Johnson says A Taste of Camp and A Grateful Harvest remain its signature community events. Additionally, she points out that every action — including attending an event, volunteering for a camp session, touring the campsite in Gypsum on Community Day (June 14) or simply spreading the word — helps ensure future impact. “We’re celebrating all year by sharing camper stories, inviting the community to engage in ‘20 Ways to Power Hope & Joy’ and welcoming supporters to see camp in action. Milestones like this absolutely belong to our volunteers, donors, families and medical partners.”

Johnson, who stepped into her role in 2022, says that Roundup River Ranch’s last two decades represent happy camper experiences, parents who are able to relax knowing their child is safe and a community that consistently shows up. “We have removed financial and medical

barriers so kids can experience independence, joy and confidence,” she explains. “That consistency and the trust families place in us means everything.”

## ‘The Power of Camp’

With an exceptional legacy already in place, Johnson says the transformational power of the camp drew her to Roundup River Ranch. “When you see a child who has spent much of their life navigating hospitals and medical appointments confidently climb the Challenge Course or perform during Stage Night, you immediately understand the power of camp,” she adds. “It’s a privilege to help steward the organization into its next chapter of impact.”

One of Roundup River Ranch’s main goals is ensuring that kids can “just be kids.” Johnson explains that because children facing serious medical conditions often grow up quickly with the medications, appointments and uncertainty they endure, camp allows their diagnosis to take a back seat. “What may seem ‘ordinary’ to many of us is actually extraordinary for these children,” she says. “Because they are extraordinary every single day of their lives, ordinary becomes something truly special. That safe space to experience the freedom of childhood builds resilience that lasts long after summer ends.”

In addition to everything the organization offers, there is even more to look forward to this year and beyond including three new cabins, a new low ropes course and a dedicated session supporting behavioral health diagnoses. Johnson adds, “We are overwhelmingly grateful to the Vail Valley community and we look forward to building the next chapter together.” †

For more information, visit [roundupriverranch.org](http://roundupriverranch.org).