



2020 Annual Report

Erik's Ranch, Inc.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Erik's Ranch & Retreats is a first-of-its-kind innovative living, working and social model for young adults with autism. In addition to excellent housing and recreation options, members have meaningful employment opportunities that utilize their passions, interests and expertise.

MISSION STATEMENT

Erik's Ranch & Retreats provides safe and unequalled living, working, social and recreational environments for young adults with autism, using its guiding principles of lifelong learning, individual community building and bidirectional integration through voluntourism. We're committed to giving these individuals a rewarding life on their own terms, experiencing dignity, compassion and the joy of continuing possibility.



DEFINING OUR PURPOSE

Autism affects more children than diabetes, AIDS and cancer combined, with 1 in 68 diagnosed today. As these children reach adulthood, many over age 18 are living in their parents' homes, unable to get or keep a job, have no friends and subsequently suffer from depression and other mental health issues in addition to their autism. As parents decline, these adults will be placed in group homes or institutions, so the capital investment in housing is inevitable. Our solution to this epidemic is that we provide individual housing and meaningful employment in a single model allowing our members to 1) match their strengths and passions to their employment; 2) have many supported positive social and recreational opportunities enabling independence; 3) engage in surroundings that encourage family and community participation; 4) become productive tax-paying citizens; 5) thrive and are included/accepted members of society and educate the larger community.

ERIK'S RANCH & RETREATS MODEL

Erik's Ranch & Retreats, LLC, provides independent living, working and social environments for young adults with autism on behalf of Erik's Ranch, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Not only are both locations home to young adults with autism, but what sets Erik's Ranch & Retreats apart is that these young adults operate boutique and ranch style guest accommodations at our two destination locations: the Retreat in Edina, Minn., and Erik's Ranch, in Paradise Valley, Mont. We are working tirelessly to change society's perception of autism by focusing on what young adults with autism can do versus what they cannot. Our goal is to provide hope and a future of endless possibilities for the more than 500,000 individuals with autism who will reach adulthood in the next decade.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our model is based on the following principles: lifelong learning, individual community building and bidirectional integration through voluntourism (combining vacationing and volunteering).

I. Lifelong Learning

Learning opportunities offered to our members assist in building relevant career and life skills and contribute to their sense of independence. Instead of relegating these adults to mundane, repetitive tasks, we work with them and their families to design life plans that incorporate lifelong learning.

II. Individual Community Building

Because individuals with autism often have difficulty with social skills, Erik's Ranch & Retreats encourages and facilitates relationships with families, caregivers and beyond—to a larger network of community members and volunteers from around the country and world. We call it individual community building. Guests staying at Erik's Retreat or Erik's Ranch experience the opportunity to get to know our members for the valuable skill or job they perform such as concierge, tour guides, historians, horse grooms, bakers, apprentice sous chefs and more. These relationships can be safely sustained over time through social media platforms, linking members to an extended community of friends around the world. In addition, Erik's Minnesota Adventures and Erik's Montana Adventures, our tour guide company, provides young adults with ASD the opportunity to showcase their unique talents and expertise. As experts in a given field, they lead volunteers on tours within the arts, history, sports, environment—whatever their passion. Activities are as diverse as our member's imaginations. In Minnesota our tour guests can learn from a WWII history buff at the Commemorative Air Force Museum, get a behind-the-scenes tour of Canterbury Park from a young woman who grew up on a dude ranch, spend a hot day at Lake of the Isles learning how ride a Segway, or learn about the history of Minneapolis by taking a guided limo ride along the cities most celebrated lakes. In Montana participants can get a bird's-eye view of our ranch by taking the Antelope Butte Hike, watch bears forage for food from a safe distance during a Grizzly Meadow tour, fish the Yellowstone River, and saddle up for an authentic western trail ride.

III. Bidirectional Integration through Voluntourism

Bidirectional integration is created through voluntourism. Guests who stay at the Ranch or Retreat, and people who sign up for experiences, are voluntourists—and provide reciprocal interaction with our members. This type of voluntourism is dramatically on the rise. More people than ever are seeking volunteer experiences that give back to communities and populations that are underserved. Voluntourists are the backbone of our self-sufficient operation. As guests and participants, they supply our major revenue stream and the necessary social interaction for our members. Consistent exposure to new people and ideas will go far to expand the life skills and abilities of our members who often struggle to initiate and maintain social relationships.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic posed many challenges to our mission in 2020, but like the rest of the world, we adapted. The safety of our members, guests and staff was of paramount importance as we modified procedures to continue operating. Some of our changes included shifting to a contactless check-in model for guests in Minnesota, requiring staff to wear masks and gloves while cleaning rooms, and providing guests with disinfectant to sanitize rooms to their own comfort.

The pandemic was especially difficult for our members on the autism spectrum. It disrupted routines, employment and social interaction. During this time, the support of our Life Plan Coaches, several of whom live on site, was more critical than ever. In order to prevent self-isolation and provide members with events to look forward to, we held virtual game nights, movie nights and other safe, socially distanced activities.



MEMBER UPDATES



Meet our four new members – bringing us to 15 members living and working at Erik’s Retreats – each of whom bring unique skill sets and talents to Erik’s Ranch & Retreats:

Lucas joined Erik’s Ranch & Retreats in October 2019. Lucas grew up in Hudson, WI and comes from a big family. He completed a two-year certificate program in Life Skills at Bethany Global University and now works at Lunds & Byerlys. Lucas has a kind and generous spirit and loves helping others, particularly those experiencing homelessness. He is passionate about outdoor activities such as kayaking, skiing, and riding a Segway. He loves to travel and enjoys visiting family in Florida.

Brian joined Erik’s Ranch & Retreats in December 2019 from Lino Lakes, MN. Brian is happily employed at Jerry’s Foods near Erik’s Retreat in Edina. He is passionate about birds, especially his own bird, Coco. When he is not working, he likes to volunteer at a parrot rescue center in Forest Lake, MN. He would volunteer there every day if he could, but for now, he makes it there two days a week. He is a true Minnesota outdoors person and loves fishing, snowmobiling and spending time at his family’s cabin.

Dylan joined Erik’s Ranch & Retreats in February 2020 from Apple Valley, MN and is a talented writer. He enjoys writing short stories and sharing them with his Life Plan Coach, James. He likes video games and is a game show enthusiast. He even created a game show night for our members and staff to play which was a blast for everyone.

Leif joined Erik’s Retreat in November 2020 from Victoria, MN. He jumped right in spent time working at our Montana ranch doing grounds work, checking in guests, assisting with housekeeping and leading tours. Leif works at the Goodwill in Chaska, is a talented musician, avid runner and a history enthusiast. He enjoys travelling with his family, and they have spent time at our ranch together on multiple occasions.

GUEST REVIEWS

We are ecstatic to confirm that Erik's Ranch & Retreats continues to be a Superhost—the superior host designation of Airbnb! This accolade is based upon the following consistencies:

- 80% of reviews are 5 stars
- Maintain a 90% response rate or higher

We have entered our third year with this badge and look forward to continuing the momentum! We're also proud to announce that we received the Traveller Review Award 2020 from Booking.com with a 9.6 out of 10 guest rating, and we were also listed as one of the top three small accommodations in Minnesota by Travelmyth. Our guests continue to rave about the exemplary service, the immaculate cleanliness and the staff that go over and above to ensure their stay is comfortable. Here are a few excerpts from guests:

“Erik's Ranch is stunningly beautiful, and our hosts showed us incredible kindness. Our daughter loved riding a horse around the ranch (so graciously guided!), we waded in the creek, hiked around in the beautiful wildflower meadows, and watched the stars come out... Thank you, Erik's Ranch! We would love to come back.”

“Absolutely blown away with the experience, not only did I feel safe but it truly felt magical. The entire team was friendly and extremely helpful, the horses were so SWEET, and last but not least, the views were out of this world! Their mission of helping those with autism was beyond amazing, I loved everything about this experience and can't wait to come back!”

“Wonderful stay! House is well-equipped and the views are breathtaking! Words cannot describe how beautiful the landscape is...and it's surreal to be so isolated (no other humans in sight). We loved it! Can't recommend this place enough...”



MONTANA UPDATES

Despite the challenges of a global pandemic, it was a big year for our Montana ranch with some exciting updates. One major addition was our brand-new stable bedrooms: five guest rooms attached to our barn – a delightful blend of upscale ranch with rustic hostel, perfect for budget-minded travelers.

We also added several outdoor communal spaces to our ranch. Thanks to help from our friends at Keller Williams and SPC Commerce, we successfully completed a new patio at the greenhouse in May. The patio offers a wonderful space for guests to enjoy morning coffee, sunsets and cocktails. We are grateful for our group of Minnesota volunteers as well who helped build a staircase on the hillside so that guests are able to access the patio.



After a long day of enjoying a variety of Montana adventures, there's nothing like sitting back and relaxing by the fire. And we are thrilled to offer this experience for guests with our new fire pit at the lodge. An added bonus of the firepit is that it provides our members with another opportunity to interact with guests and share their music talents and historic knowledge of the area.

Along with this year's additions, we also made progress on new guest experiences for the future. Glamorous camping, or "glamping" as it is better known, is becoming increasingly popular, and we've scouted an area that will be perfect for this hot new trend on Chimney Rock, our mountain top oasis. For those looking for a more authentic Montana experience, we developed a plan for a new guest yurt situated at Dry Creek.

MINNESOTA UPDATES

Montana wasn't the only place with exciting progress in 2020 – we also made significant updates in Minnesota as well that will benefit our guests and members for years to come. We're happy to announce that we doubled the number of guest rooms/long-term stay opportunities at the Edina retreat thanks to some volunteer demolition work by our friends at SPS Commerce and Coldwell Banker.



We also launched our live on-site volunteer program. In exchange for reduced rent, our on-site volunteers help with a variety of needs at Erik's Retreat, such as mentoring our members, assisting with maintenance and housekeeping as well as guest support.

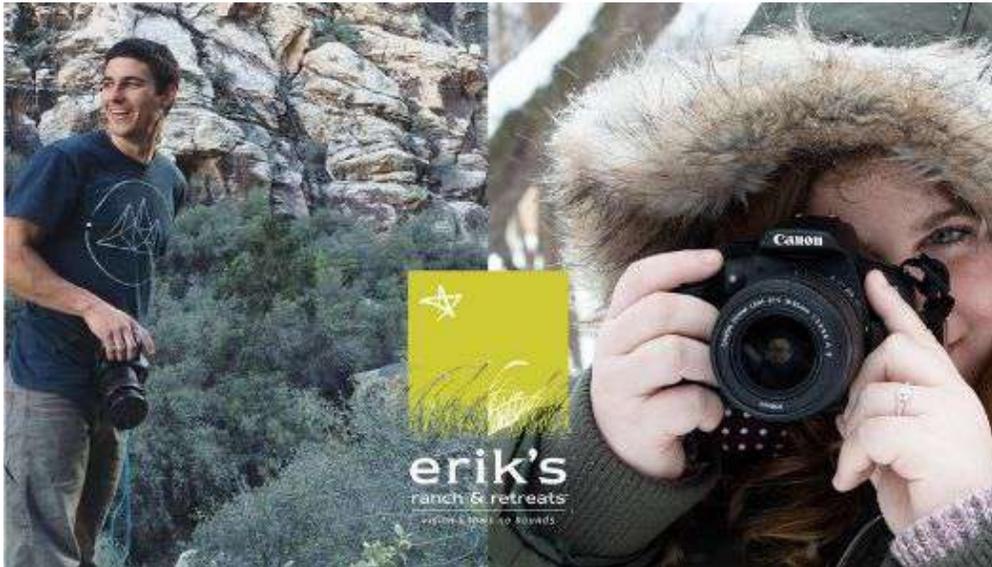
Our members had a terrific time leading our Minnesota Adventure tours this year which included Tim's Cocktail Tour, Matt's Segway Skills Session, our Segway Tour at Cedar Lakes and our City of Lakes Limo Tour. We also dazzled families this year with our Holiday Lights Limo Tour, which took guests around a Minnesota winter wonderland to soak in the beautiful decorations.



Annual Gala Goes Virtual

Due to COVID-19, our annual gala run by a parent and volunteers, which we typically host in the spring, was delayed until October 2020 and held virtually. Though it looked different than years past, the gala was a tremendous success as we raised \$71,698 through sponsorships, donations, and a silent auction. In addition, our raffle begun in February and culminated in October raised another \$20,000. The prize: a stay at our Ranch or Retreat.

The theme of our 2020 gala was *An Evening IN with Maggie Jones and Seth Langbauer*. Maggie is a member at Erik's Retreat and an aspiring photographer, and the gala highlighted her unique experience teaming up with and learning from professional photographer Seth Langbauer.



Guests of our gala also had the option to have ingredients for a delicious dinner delivered right to their homes. They then enjoyed a virtual tutorial from our member Tim and a pair of guest chefs as they demonstrated how to prepare each dish. It was truly an inspiring evening filled with uplifting stories from our members, guests, staff and supporters.



BY THE NUMBERS: GUEST OCCUPANCY RATES 2020

- Erik's Retreat
 - YTD
 - 313 nights sold
 - Averaged a 15% occupancy rate during high season (June – Aug.)
- Erik's Ranch:
 - YTD: 894 nights sold
 - Averaged a 66% occupancy rate during high season (June – Aug.)
- Cargill-Earl Guesthouse:
 - YTD
 - 257 nights sold
 - Averaged a 95% occupancy rate during high season (June – Aug.)
- Main House/Lodge:
 - YTD
 - 64 nights sold
 - Averaged a 53% occupancy rate during high season (June – Aug.)
- Sophia's House
 - YTD
 - 217 nights sold
 - Averaged a 93% occupancy rate during high season (June – Aug.)
- Stable Rooms:
 - YTD
 - 356 nights sold
 - Averaged a 57% occupancy rate during high season (June – Aug.)



PROGRAMS

Erik's Ranch & Retreats is a paradigm shift in the concept of integrating adults with ASD into the community and educating the public about autism through many facets.

Erik's Ranch & Retreats programs and projects include:

- Erik's Ranch, Montana: High end ranch style guest accommodations
- Erik's Retreat, Minnesota: Residential living and working model, with boutique style guest accommodations.
- Erik's Minnesota and Montana Adventures, tours for guests and locals

Building the Dream in Montana and Minnesota

Erik's Ranch & Retreats provides members (young adults with autism) individual housing, meaningful employment and social opportunities in a single model allowing our members to 1) match their strengths and passions to their employment; 2) have many supported positive social and recreational opportunities enabling independence; 3) engage in surroundings that encourage family and community participation; 4) become productive tax-paying citizens; 5) thrive and are included/accepted members of society and educate the larger community.

At Erik's Retreat, members assist in running guest operations as tour guides, concierge, chefs, horse trainers and grooms, gardeners, historians—whatever their passion. Additionally, members participate in recreational activities that promote wellness, social interaction, community integration and personal fulfillment.

A Place of Their Own—Erik's Ranch

The acquisition of the former Triple R property in January 2016 includes three structures that we rent to guests: The Lodge, the Stables and the newly renovated Creekside Cabin. Erik's Ranch opened April 25, 2014, and opened its doors to guests just one month later. This includes Erik's Ranch Cargill-Earl Guesthouse we built in 2014 and Sophia's House finished in 2018.

Ultimately, Erik's Ranch will provide young adults with ASD private apartments in eco-friendly lodgings and meaningful employment opportunities serving and supporting our discerning guests. In turn, this will lay the foundation for important life skills development including social skills, self-confidence, independence, financial responsibility endless recreational opportunities (only 40 minutes from the north entrance into Yellowstone National Park, adjacent to Gallatin National Forest with miles of trails to explore, one hour from Bridger Bowl and two hours from Big Sky) and hope.

The key principals behind our innovative living, working and social model—lifelong learning, bidirectional integration and individual community building—are driven by volunteer guests who participate with us as part of their vacation or trip to the area.

A Place of Their Own—Erik’s Retreat

Erik’s Retreat in Edina, Minn., opened its doors to its first member in February 2014. Today, 16 young adults on the autism spectrum call Erik’s Retreat home. Members live independently in their own apartments with a dining area, living area, bedroom, bathroom and full kitchen. Additionally, highly skilled and professional life coaches work with each member to develop a life plan that includes personal goals. Our staff monitors and documents progress achieved in meeting these goals. Recreational outings are a vital part of members’ life plan goals that encourages physical fitness, healthy choices and socialization opportunities and members have the option of participating in several daily activities ranging from outdoor activities like biking, skiing, hikes, watersports and rock climbing, indoor activities like concerts, shows, museums and festivals (all during non-COVID times) to name a few.

Onsite Career Opportunities

All onsite career opportunities align with members’ skill sets, strengths, passions, expertise and directly support our guests where they are the stars, not the outcasts. Guests, in turn, provide necessary bidirectional integration that stimulates and cultivates social skills, meaningful employment opportunities, purpose and hope.

- Tour Guide Concierge
- Horse groom/trainer
- Historian
- Baker
- Landscaping/Gardener
- Housekeeping
- And more

Erik’s Minnesota Adventures

Erik’s Minnesota Adventures (EMA) is an innovative tour guide program for young adults with autism that launched in May 2012. In 2020, we provided 114 tours for guests in Minnesota and Montana. As tour guides, our members lead guest on tours, providing an opportunity for them to showcase their unique talents and expertise in specific areas within the arts, history, sports, environment—whatever their passion. Each tour in the Twin Cities metro invites six to 30 guests to participate in adventures such as a Segway tour of Cedar Lake, a craft cocktail tour led by a young man who enjoys the finer things in life.

Erik’s Minnesota Adventures is poised to give adults with ASD meaningful options, where autism does not define them. Voluntourists have an important role: By virtue of being guests on a tour, they provide tour guides with rewarding jobs. By listening and learning, guests help build tour guides’ self-esteem, self-worth and sense of accomplishment. These tours build stability for our tour guides as they: 1) provide meaningful jobs; 2) cultivate and nurture much-needed social stimulation allowing our members continued learning and growth as they build confidence and 3) act as a catalyst for a worldwide advocacy platform where members are included as productive, purposeful members of society. As Voluntourists begin to understand the depth and

talents of this population, we believe they will become advocates in their neighborhoods, places of employment, schools, places of worship etc., and find creative ways to be inclusive of those on the autism spectrum.

Erik's Minnesota Adventures has received support and rave reviews of our groundbreaking program from countless preeminent autism organizations nationwide. Here's what a few of them have to say:

- David Kearon, project manager, Housing and Adult Services, Autism Speaks, had this to say about the tours: "Erik's Ranch & Retreats will provide necessary supports within an independent living program that will focus on facilitated employment opportunities, life-skills training, social opportunities and recreational programming for... individuals across their two sites. We feel that the onsite work opportunities—and Erik's Minnesota Adventures in particular—are especially promising because of your efforts to match the members' strengths and interests to the jobs and to encourage family and community participation."
- Researchers at the University of Minnesota Institute on Integration measured Erik's Minnesota Adventures, reviewing specifically how providing meaningful employment for young adults with autism improves quality of life. "The results of the evaluation indicate overall positive changes in participants' social skills, social opportunities, self-esteem and quality of job training. Overall, it is recommended that Erik's Ranch & Retreats remain on its current path with additional recommendations made for improvement in a few areas."



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2. Keri Taylor Director of Erik's Retreat

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