

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine

Monday, 31 January 2011 11:20 - Last Updated Thursday, 07 April 2011 09:21

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**Since 1990, Wickenburg's Remuda Ranch has treated more than 10,000 women and girls suffering from eating disorders. Dr. Dena Cabrera, psychologist and director of educational outreach at Remuda Ranch, shares their story.**



Eating disorders have reached epidemic levels in the United States. Today, approximately 11 million people suffer from anorexia and bulimia. These are serious disorders that devastate individual lives and destroy families. More people die from an eating disorder than any other psychiatric illness, including depression.

To help in combating such statistics, Remuda Ranch opened its doors more than 20 years ago in Wickenburg. The goal was to offer innovative, life-saving treatment to women and girls struggling with anorexia and bulimia. Throughout the years, that goal has never changed.

State-of-the-art inpatient treatment is conducted on historic ranches. In decades past, these ranches welcomed visitors from throughout the world seeking the dude ranch experience; today, women and girls, as young as eight, also travel from around the globe searching for hope and healing. And they find it in the tranquil beauty of the Sonoran Desert and the compassionate care from the Remuda Ranch staff.

At Remuda Ranch, the focus is entirely on the individual. Each patient has a team of eating disorder professionals exclusively committed to her recovery. Her length of stay is individualized and flexible, depending on various factors like age and severity of the illness. Some patients stay for 30 days, while others may remain in treatment for 45 to 60 days.

In addition to individual and group therapy, Remuda Ranch patients engage in innovative treatment strategies including equine, art, body image and challenge courses. The ranch has seen firsthand how interacting with a horse can bolster a girl's confidence and communication skills, or how working with a simple set of paints can help a woman to communicate the severity of the abuse she suffered early in life. The patient's family is highly involved in the treatment process. They regularly participate in phone sessions with the patient and her therapist. The family comes to visit about halfway through treatment for Family Week. This is a time of learning and growth for everyone.

To make excellent care more accessible to those on the East Coast, Remuda Ranch opened a second treatment program. Remuda East in Virginia offers the same treatment in an equally peaceful and healing environment.

To help those suffering from obesity, compulsive overeating and binge eating disorder, Remuda Ranch created the Emotional Eating program. This 30-day residential program helps women and girls break the cycle of emotional eating and develop a normal, healthy relationship with food.

### **To Learn More:**



#### **Remuda Ranch**

800.445.1900, [www.remudaranch.com](http://www.remudaranch.com).

Dr. Dena Cabrera, psychologist and director of educational outreach for Remuda Ranch.