



Staff photo by Roxanne Brown

Lee Cowan, 17, of Oakland, Derek Teran, 15, of New York and James Gordon, 16, of Melbourne work on their studies at Green Isle Children's Ranch in Groveland. Teran and Gordon said the program has made a big difference in their lives.

Heart-healing ministry gives troubled boys a stable home

ROXANNE BROWN
Staff Writer

GROVELAND

Five years ago, the Green Isle Children's Ranch started accepting girls into its program for troubled youths, which until then had only accepted boys. The ranch built a girls' cottage and altered its Groveland campus into a co-ed setting with a girls-only location in St. Cloud.

The experiment didn't work out, and after about two years, the camp stopped accepting girls — for the time being.

A HOME FOR A YEAR OR TWO

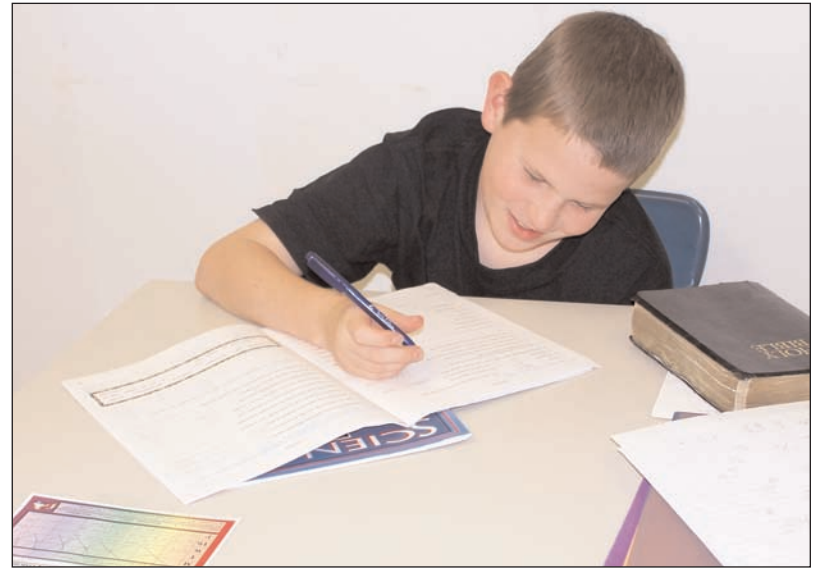
About 20 boys whose lives are in need of a drastic turnaround live at Green Isle, and the Ranch's employees are there to minister to them and do what they can do to steer them in the right direction.

"This is a ministry for 'at risk' young boys, so it's more than a school," said two-year executive director, Pastor Danny Hartzog. "We try to help them get a hold of a vision for their lives, and work towards helping them figure out what God has in store for them. Like our door says, it's a place of miracles — a place where lives are transformed," he said.

Founded in 1987 by Don Brown, the 80-acre campus can care for up to 32 boys.

Hartzog said they try to give the boys the closest thing possible to a normal home.

Green Isle takes boys from the



Staff photo by Roxanne Brown

Logan Pittman, 12, of Bartow smiles as he works on his schoolwork at Green Isle Children's Ranch in Groveland.

ages of 7 to 17, and although its main focus is Central Florida youths, children from any state are accepted.

The minimum stay for consideration in finishing the program is one year, but they can stay for up to two years.

The nonprofit program survives through volunteers, donations and prayer. The program takes any boy regardless of the family's ability to pay, so the school's expenses can be steep.

The school also offers tutoring in the afternoons. Volunteers from the community donate a few

hours to the ranch's students.

Hartzog said there are many areas within the program where volunteers are desperately needed.

"Everything I've ever done in my entire work history just came together here at Green Isle," said Assistant Director Eddie Judge. "It's just amazing how the Lord puts it all together."

PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT

Green Isle is a self-contained facility with a school, a cafeteria

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