

Growing Faith on a Farm

You've probably heard of Sunday school classes being the catalyst for mission trips, cell groups and friendships, but have you heard of a Sunday school class spawning a farm? 

Neither had Joe and June Richey—at least not before they started Questfarms, a farm that houses and employs special-needs adults. They were inspired to start the farm after teaching the Christian education class at their church and realizing their students needed support beyond the childhood years.

“When we came here we came with an idea. There weren't any books that said: ‘This is how you start a farm for mentally-challenged people,’ so we had to just pick along,” says Joe Richey.

The Richeys' 25-plus-year ministry provides these adults a place to work and live. On 26 acres of land in Scott, Kan., Questfarms houses 18 farmers, staff, three homes, three tractors, a barn, an office, a craft shop and four greenhouses. Ranchers plant, plow and maintain the ranch. They even go to the market to sell their product. Joe says his prayer is that the residents, whose ages range from the 20s to the 80s, will gain a positive self-image, develop independent living skills and find spiritual peace at the farm.

“We like the farm concept,” says Lara Ingram, executive director of Quest. “One of the main reasons is because when a person, one of our residents, plants a seed and they water it, it grows into a flower or tomato. They realize, *I did that*. And it really helps to build their self-esteem and that they are successful.

“Our prayer is that the farmers may reach for their stars in quest of a full, meaningful life; that they might reach their

full potential, realize their self-worth, and help others.”