

# OUR HISTORY

We Raise Foundation began in 1905 as the Evangelical Lutheran Sanitarium Association, a tent colony for tuberculosis patients, in Wheat Ridge, Colorado.

The beginnings of the organization were modest indeed. There is no evidence the founding fathers had any conception of the impressive proportions which their ministry of mercy was to assume, nor of the widespread services which the organization would render in the years to come.

## 1903

Disturbed by the fact that the Lutherans in Denver were not able to provide adequately for their many brothers and sisters afflicted with tuberculosis who were coming to Colorado in quest of health, the Rev. J. F. S. Her, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Denver, advocated the establishment of a tent colony for the care of these people.

So, 15 members of St. John's meet to address the problem and initiate the necessary steps to undertake this project by founding the Evangelical Lutheran Sanitarium Association of Denver, Colorado.



In May, 1905, the Association purchases 20 acres for its "Health Farm" in the Wheat Ridge, Colorado, area. Fifteen tents are erected, including the tent designated as "Walther League Tent No. 1," which was donated on July 17. The first patient was admitted on June 8. Dedication of the tent colony takes place on September 10, 1905.



1905

Lorenz W. Frank, M.D., was appointed Medical Director of the Sanitarium in 1913, a position he held until 1948. Most of the medical policies that made treatment successful at the Sanitarium were due to Dr. Frank's knowledge of TB and his diligent efforts to combat it.



1913

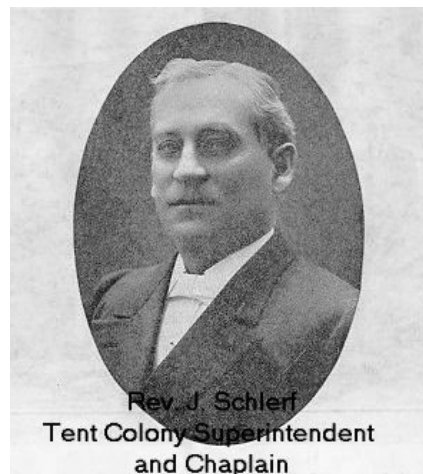
1910



The first Sanitarium Christmas Seals are issued in 1910. Distribution of the Seals is done largely through the Walther League, the international youth organization of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

♦ ♦ ♦

The Rev. John Schlerf is installed as the first full-time superintendent and chaplain of the Tent Colony in 1910. Up until this time, Pastor Her had served in this capacity.



1916

The Rev. H. H. Feiertag is installed as superintendent and chaplain on May 7, 1916. He succeeds Rev. John Schlerf, who died suddenly on October 23, 1915.



The tent colony, which has increased to 29 tents, is becoming worn out. The increasing number of patients makes it necessary to replace the tent colony with a modern pavilion. Ground is broken on June 14, 1921; dedication services are held on August 7, 1921. The tent colony is dismantled – during 16 years of service nearly 950 patients had been sheltered there.



On July 20, 1930, the 25th Anniversary of the Wheat Ridge Sanitarium is observed.



1921

1923

In 1923, the Walther League issues a successful appeal for \$100,000 for the purpose of liquidating the remaining debt and purchasing necessary furnishing and equipment.

1927

At the 35<sup>th</sup> convention of the Walther League in St. Louis in 1927, the League formally takes over the Sanitarium.

1930

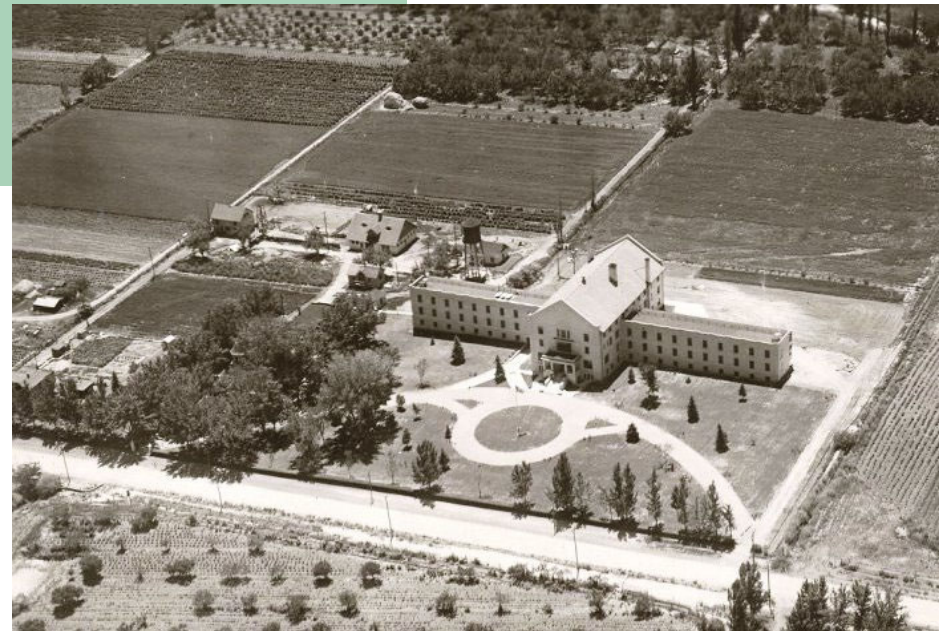
1933

On February 26, 1933, the Chapel of the Good Samaritan is dedicated.





# THE TENT CITY



# LIFE AT THE SANITARIUM





On November 21, 1942, the Wheat Ridge Foundation was established for the purpose of assisting Lutherans in other tuberculosis sanatoria in the United States and Canada and to assist Lutheran pastors working in TB sanatoria by providing them with funds to purchase religious literature.

♦ ♦ ♦

In 1942, the Sanitarium Association adopts a new constitution, which changes the word "Sanitarium" to "Sanatorium."



A Medical Social Service Program is established in Chicago, Illinois, at the Cook County Hospital.

1942

1947

1940

On February 4, 1940, the Rev. E. J. Friedrich succeeds the Rev. H. H. Feiertag as superintendent and chaplain of the Sanitarium.

1944

Wheat Ridge Foundation scholarships for Medical Social Service are established by resolution of the Sanatorium Association.

1946

On June 22, 1946, the Association adopts a resolution to reorganize the Evangelical Lutheran Sanatorium Association under the name of "Wheat Ridge Foundation" and amend the Articles of Incorporation.

The decision is made to convert the Medical Social Service program into a Lutheran Family Service program.

1952



On May 4, 1958, the Rev. Edward May is installed as Executive Director of the Wheat Ridge Foundation.

1958

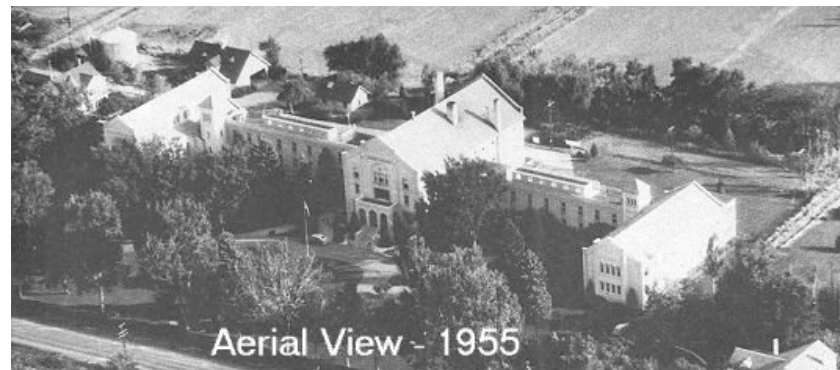
In 1959, the Lutheran Hospital and Medical Center, a Colorado corporation, is organized. Basic transfers of property are authorized.

1959



In 1955, the Medical Mission Program is established with grants in India, Hong Kong and Nigeria.

1955



The Lutheran Hospital and Medical Center receives property of the Lutheran Sanatorium and starts operating under its name on November 1, 1960. Medical Mission work begins in Guatemala and Japan.

1960

In 1968, the Wheat Ridge Foundation separates from the Walther League and becomes a free-standing organization.

1968

In 1970, the Wheat Ridge Foundation gives a grant to Rev. Granger Westberg, which launches the parish nurse movement.

1970



1961

The Wheat Ridge Foundation relocates to the Walther League Office in Chicago in 1961.

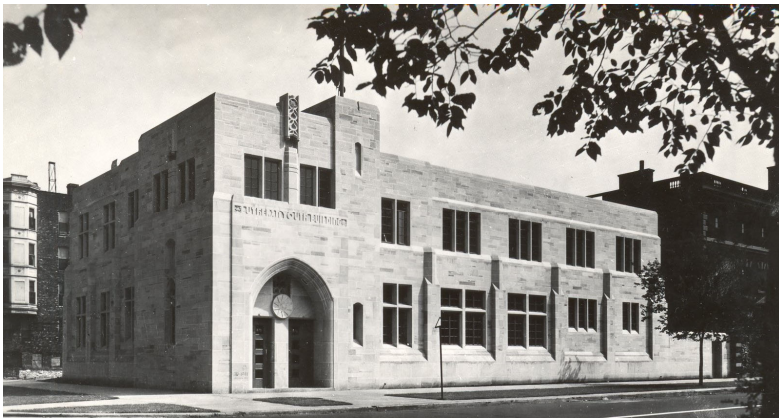
1973

Robert J. L. Zimmer becomes president of the Wheat Ridge Foundation in 1973.



1977

In 1977, Wheat Ridge provides a seed grant to begin Stephen Ministries' training, which has since equipped thousands of people for caring ministries in their congregation and community.





The Wheat Ridge Foundation celebrates its 75th Anniversary.

1980

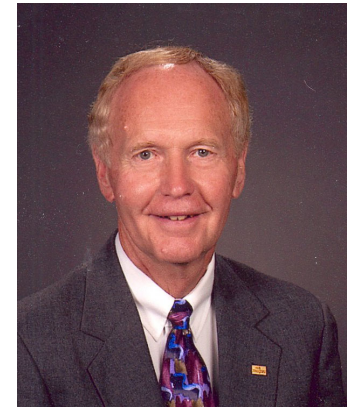


In October 1989, the Carter Center of Emory University and the Wheat Ridge Foundation host "The Church's Challenge in Health" conference, a national gathering of religious leaders.

1989

Richard W. Bimler is named the new president of the Wheat Ridge Foundation in 1991.

1991



1987

The Wheat Ridge China Rehabilitation Project, led by Dr. Marcy Ditmanson and Joyce Ditmanson, begins in 1987.



1990

In 1990, Wheat Ridge receives "Recognized Service Organization" status from The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

1992

Wheat Ridge Ministries is chosen as the organization's new name in 1992.



In 1993, Wheat Ridge is officially recognized as an "Affiliated Social Ministry Organization" of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

♦ ♦ ♦

The Walther League gathers for its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reunion on May 21-24, 1993 in Chicago, Illinois.



In 2000, Wheat Ridge Ministries launches its first Hearts for Jesus Project – "Hearts for Jesus: Hope for China!"

♦ ♦ ♦

The Good Samaritan Fund Grant is established and co-funded by Wheat Ridge Ministries and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to help congregations establish programs for immigrants and refugees.



1993

2000

1992

The initiation of the area representative structure takes place in 1992.



1996

In 1996, Wheat Ridge Ministries establishes its "Congregation Health and Hope Grant" program, which awards grants to congregations starting new health and hope ministries.



2005

Wheat Ridge Ministries celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2005 and hosts "Living Well: A National Symposium on Health and Hope" in Denver, Colorado, just miles from where the Evangelical Lutheran Sanitarium Association was founded.



The Walther League Legacy Fund surpassed the one million dollar mark at the 2005 reunion of Michigan Walther Leaguers in Frankenmuth, Michigan. The Fund continues to provide funding for programs that benefit young people in the United States through Wheat Ridge Ministries.

2005



  
*Be inspired—Make an impact*

Wheat Ridge Ministries launches a new visual identity and brand message in March 2011.

2011

2006



Dr. Richard Herman becomes the fourth president of Wheat Ridge Ministries on January 1, 2006.

2008

Wheat Ridge Ministries hosts its “National Symposium on Health and Hope” in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in October 2008.





Mr. Paul C. Miles becomes the fifth president of Wheat Ridge Ministries on October 26, 2015.

2015



In September 2020, We Raise, in partnership with the MIGMIR Fund, awards a \$300,000 grant – its largest ever – to MAAFA Redemption Project, a faith-based residential institute for at-risk emerging adult men of color (ages 18-30) located on Chicago's West Side.

2020

2013

Wheat Ridge Ministries launches WeRaise.us, a Christian crowdfunding platform that helps organizations engage their online community to support new, inspired ideas.



2018

In February 2018, the organization repositions to a new name, new brand identity, and new mission.

As We Raise Foundation, the organization partners with Christian nonprofit organizations and emerging leaders working at the intersection of poverty, violence, and inequality.

The priority granting areas include education, workforce development, and criminal justice programs.



**WE RAISE™**  
FOUNDATION

*Generosity Multiplied*



We Raise, in partnership with the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis, awards a \$500,000 grant – its largest ever – to Keyway: Center for Diversion & Reentry in St. Louis. Keyway partners with women in the criminal justice system to support their successful reentry.



2022

2021

We Raise, in partnership with Siebert Lutheran Foundation awards a \$300,000 grant to St. Marcus Lutheran School in Milwaukee for its “Building Stability and Prosperity for Community Transformation” project.

