



Horses of Hope

The Mane Event



Horses of Hope

HORSES OF HOPE NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 1

January 2012

Hello From Horses of Hope Staff

Special Dates for 2012

We hope that God blessed you and your family during the holiday season, as He did us. It is now the beginning of a new year, and we are all very excited to see what the Lord has in store for us in 2012. Horses of Hope has a new addition to the staff family. Amanda has moved from Manitoba to join us with Horses of Hope at Brightwood, and is very excited to be a part of our program. Shannon and Joas will both be working with the program at the ranch, and of course Brent who is the director for Horses of Hope. Michelle has moved to Bethany Homes, to run Horses of Hope out at Wetaskiwin. She is sad to leave Brightwood, but very excited to see what the Lord



will do out at the farm with Horses of Hope.

As most of you know, we have taken January off from sessions in order to plan the New Year. We have spent a lot of time praying about Horses of Hope, and are positive it is going to be an

amazing year for the kids, staff, and horses. The horses are also taking a break, but are very excited to be paired up with some amazing young cowboys and cowgirls.

February: Sessions Begin!

June 2nd: Ride-a-thon Fundraiser

This is a fun day of horseback riding, food, and prizes. Bring your own horse or reserve one of our ranch horses. All money raised goes to help send underprivileged kids to camp for a week in the summer.

June 9th: Horses of Hope Rodeo Day

Bring your family for a down home good time. There will be horsey games, and some good BBQ. Can you rope a cow?

August 4th: Horses of Hope Wet n Wacky Day

This is a fun day geared for the kids, but family members are welcome to come for the excitement. Bring any extra change of clothes, because it's going to be a wet one!

September 22nd: Horses of Hope Family Day

Bring the whole family for a fun day at the ranch. More to follow later on in the year.

October 31st: Penny Carnival

Join us and the community at Brightwood for a fall carnival. Can you bob for apples?

December 1st: Horses of Hope Christmas Party

Let's celebrate the year that we've had, and celebrate Christ's birth. Bring the family for a day of celebration. Make sure you have your singing voices ready so we can sing some Christmas songs!

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and a hope."

"Follow a horse where no one else can tread, through the minefield of pain that surrounds a broken child's soul. From a mistreated horse to an emotionally starved child and back again, a torrent of love revives their barren places. In the presence of unconditional love, a mute girl speaks for the first time. A defiant teenager teaches a horse to trust again...and opens his own heart to love. A rescued horse gives a dying man his last wish. A battered girl finds love and protection in the friendship of a battered horse...Come visit a place where the impossible flourishes, where dreams survive the inferno of reality—a place where hope rises."

Authored by Kim Meeder, founder of Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch

TIME TO MEET OUR HERD!

Right now there are 6 wonderful horses in our Horses of Hope herd. Each child who comes out gets their own horse to work with during each session. We try to pair each child with a specific horse that will contribute to their specific needs.

Cassie: She is a sweet, loveable sorrel Quarter Horse pony. The 16 year old mare is often found with her head stuck in a hay bale. Because of her love for food, she is a little wide in the girth, making her a comfortable horse to ride bareback. Cassie is often selected for our younger Horses of Hope kids, because she is such an amazing little pony.

Dakota: She is a 15.4 hh sorrel Grade mare that likes to try new games and activities, but loves going on trail rides too. Dakota is approximately 13 years old, and was given a nickname by one of our Horses of Hope kids of "Coda". She and Cassie are best friends, and are often found standing close to each other keeping warm, or scratching each others backs.

Dixie: She is a 14hh buckskin Grade mare who sticks out in a crowd with her golden colors and dorsal stripe on her back. The 16 year old mare has become very attentive to other horses and kids around her, and is very curious about new things or objects. Dixie is a very quick

learner, and is often the first to catch on to new games. She is so smart that she has even caught on to how to untie herself when tied, enabling her to catch a snack before anyone notices.

Samantha, aka Sam: She is a 10 year old 15.2hh bay Arabian mare that is extremely good natured. She has had lots of trail riding experience, but can be rather lazy. Sam would much rather be out in the field eating or playing, but when used for a Horses of Hope session, she lights up in order to make the child happy. As a natural born leader, Sam feels the need to be the first in line on trail rides, which also means she gets to be the first one home!

Princess and Shawnee are new editions to our Horses of Hope herd!

Princess is an 18 year old red and white Canadian Pinto mare, while Shawnee is a 14 year old bay Suffield Mustang. As new horses, we will all have to do some of our own discovering, to find out their little quirks! We are very happy to have them on the team.



Cassie



Dakota



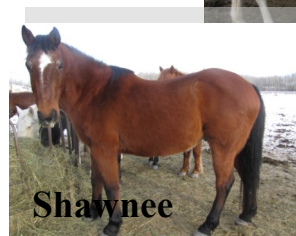
Dixie



Sam



Princess



Shawnee

Meet the Staff

Shannon: Is originally from Campbell River, BC. "I love teaching horses new things, but most of all I love what they teach me.

Amanda: Is originally from a farm outside of Winnipeg, MB. "I love seeing how horses help so many people over come so many things. They are our silent counselor. Thank God for horses!"

Joas: Is from Wiarton, Ontario. "I love working with kids because I get to see them grow into their full potential and make awesome life long decisions.

Brent: Is the Director of Brightwood ranch. He came here 8 years ago from Manitoba. He wishes he could ride more but loves seeing the smiles on kids faces as they ride.



Joas, Amanda, Shannon, Brent

Michelle (Bethany Homes): is originally from Hamilton, Ontario. She has worked for Brightwood Ranch for 4 amazing years as wrangler, wrangler trainer leader, and head wrangler. "I enjoy working and riding horses but what I enjoy even more is showing someone the value of what God and horses can teach us.



Michelle

Horse with Spots (Part 1)

Never in all my years of operating the ranch have I ever experienced such severe “buyers remorse.” I had just purchased a very short, very chubby Apaloosa mare. Shonee was certainly cute enough within her roly-poly white body that was completely freckled with black spots. Yet the true reason for the sale by her previous owner of one week—was the mare’s nearly complete refusal to turn or stop at her rider’s request. Certainly, those are both truly important features for a kid’s horse to have!

Nevertheless, there was something about her that spoke to me. Initially, she appealed to me because of her goofy stature. She was not only disproportionately short for her body; she was also incredibly strong.

The first time I saw her, I nearly laughed out loud. Her front legs were separated by a *huge* chest. The gap between her knees was nearly wide enough to park a Volkswagen! Her body was so large and her legs were so short that she looked a bit like a white, freckled minibus with legs!

Oddly enough, it was a combination I had been looking for. As silly as this seemed, her ridiculous conformation, the overall picture of how she was put together, was an important feature in my mind...because most of the disabled kids that we work with are also short and “round.” So a sturdy horse that was low to the ground would be the perfect fit for kids who are a bit heavier and unsure of heights.

Even though my “test drive” with her was somewhat disastrous, complete with constant straining to return to the barn, bucking, and my personal favorite—two attempts at a full-blown “run away”—there was still something *special* about this hefty girl that called out to me.

After loading her into the trailer and paying out one thousand dollars for her purchase price, I climbed into my truck and shut the door. I literally had to grip the steering wheel with both hands for a moment...to keep from *slapping myself in the head!* “Girl! What have you just don?!”

Once at the ranch, Shonee, who had been named after the Shoshone Indian Nation, began her metamorphosis. Somehow, certainly not by any of my genius, this little spotted mare methodically chose to change into what I would consider a candidate for the world’s greatest kids’ horse. In only a few weeks’ time, “simply Shonee,” miraculously transformed into “Shonee the Wonder Pony!”

She continually proved to everyone that she could do anything. She was patient with little kids, unbalanced kids, frightened kids, noisy kids, bouncing kids...and the same list could be dittoed for adults as well. She loved bareback-riding and simply being wallowed with affection. For kids who were celebrating their birthday at the ranch, she was often chosen as the “painting horse” because she made such an incredible “canvas.” There was something wonderful about connecting her dots with bright red, blue, and orange that was of particular delight to our youthful, paint-smearing “artist.”

In Parades, she was always a favourite. I often wondered if her spots didn’t have some sort of magnetic value, because everywhere she went, she seemed to possess a “gravitational pull” on the young at heart of those who surrounded her.

Concerning unpredictable trail situations, she was always as solid as a sunrise. She never really considered spooking or being flustered about anything. She enjoyed carrying a pack saddle because she quickly learned that somewhere amidst all those supplies was a snack waiting just for her. Nothing seemed to ruffle her in the least—traversing a rushing mountain stream, navigating a difficult trail into an alpine meadow, getting tied to a high line at night, or being blanketed, hobbled, or beset by bees or bug spray. Shonee continued to prove daily that whatever shape it took, she simply enjoyed her life. For her, the method, company, or venue of attention wasn’t important as long as she was loved. All that really mattered was love.

Of everyone who adored Shonee, perhaps no one could have been more truly devoted than a young, slender girl named Sarah. After several years of riding at the ranch, it appeared that Sarah’s heart was slowly being surrounded by “spots”. This shy, tow-headed little blond fell hopelessly in love with Shonee the Wonder Pony.

Born with a genetic deficiency in her vision, Sarah began wearing thick, corrective glasses at the age of two. Learning is challenging enough for kids who can see clearly...it is incomprehensibly harder for those who cannot. Sarah remembered being asked by an inquisitive peer, “Are you blind? You look so funny in those lined glasses.” Her casual yet brave response was, “Nope, these lines are prisms, and they help to exercise my eye muscles so they get stronger.” Sarah was never ashamed of the path God chose for her. Even now, she understands that her “uniqueness” has made her compassionate, tenacious, and thoughtful.

After six years of prised glasses, eye patches, eye exercises, and vision therapy, Sarah underwent corrective surgery on both of her eyes. While recovering from her operation, she exclaimed in complete wonder to her mother, “Mom, I never knew I had freckles!” Through an incredible amount of hard work and perseverance, Sarah currently enjoys nearly perfect vision and wears glasses only to assist her with distance.

At the ranch, Sarah found the balance in friendship that she so earnestly sought. There was no question that in her eyes, that “balance” was named Shonee.

Innocently unaware, each was leading the other by their simple example of what the foundation of true friendship should really be. Sarah never noticed the funny looking way that Shonee was built, and Shonee never noticed that Sarah had any more struggles than any other girl. All they seemed to truly care about was how much each loved the other.

Layer by layer, Shonee became the freckled bricks in the rising wall of Sarah’s self-confidence. Together they became a visual example of something all kids and adults should practice. Instead of quickly judging each other for their unique differences, each seemed to understand and embrace those very distinctions for exactly how they were created...as one of a kind. Sarah and Shonee chose strong friendship, each complementing the other, each making the other better...each loving the other exactly how they were.

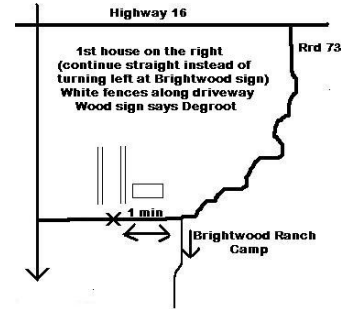
Every day they were together, each honored the value of the other, proving how truly precious every moment is with those you love. Because in the end, we never know when the next moment...will be the last...

This story was taken from ‘*Bridge Called Hope*’ by Kim Meeder. Kim Meeder is the cofounder and director of Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch in Oregon, a unique nonprofit organization that rescues abused and neglected horses and pairs them with children in need. It is from Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch that our Horses of Hope program was derived.

Want to share one of your Horses of Hope stories? Please feel free to share with us. You might see your story and a photo of you and your horse in one of our newsletters! If interested, you can talk to one of the staff next time you’re out, or send Shannon an email at shannon.phillips@hopemission.com.

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Directions to the indoor riding arena
 from Highway 16

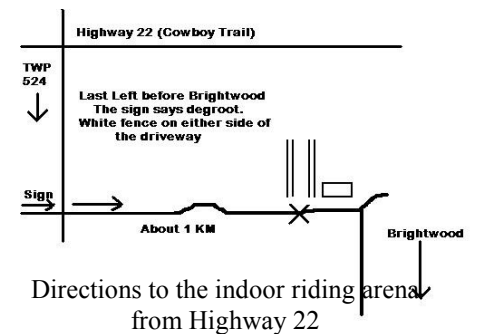


Like us on Facebook!

It's a great way to stay informed as to what's going on in the program, as well as a way for you guys to be able to connect with one another. Each week look for our new inspirational

Interested in Summer Camp?

See below for more details



Brightwood Summer Ranch Camp Schedule

Main Site

Junior Camps (ages 8-10)
 July 1-6, July 8-13, July 15-20

Squirt Camp (ages 6-9)
 July 22-25

Intermediate Camps
 Ages 8-10: July 29-August 3
 Ages 11-13: August 5-10, August 12-17
 Ages 8-12: August 19-23

Tipi Village Site

Junior Camps (ages 8-10)
 July 1-6, July 8-13, July 15-20, July 22-25
Intermediate Camps (ages 11-13)
 July 29-Aug 3, August 5-10, 12-17, 19-23



Brochures and registration forms are available on our website: www.brightwoodranchcamps.com or by calling the ranch with the phone number listed above.

Ministry of Hope Mission



Teen's Camps

Horse Camps Guys
 Ages 12-14: July 1-6, July 8-13
 Ages 14-16: July 15-25
Horse Camps Girls
 Ages 12-14: July 29-Aug 3, Aug 5-10
 Ages 14-16: August 12-23

Canoe Trip (Guys Only)
 Ages 14-17: July 8-13, August 19-23

Training Programs

Leadership Development Program
 Ages 15-17: July 1-25, July 29-Aug 23
GO Team
 Ages 13-15: July 14-16, Aug 12-23
Wrangler Training Program
 Ages 14-17 Girls: July 1-25
 Ages 14-17 Guys: July 29-Aug 23
RHYTHM
 Ages 14-17: July 29-Aug 10, Aug 12-23