

Horses and Stories and Veggies

Contributed by Betsy Payne

July in the Windrush Garden. The boys and girls in the at-risk program cultivated the soil and planted the seeds in May, marking many rows with bright blue baling twine...and then they waited. Slowly over the next month little green shoots appeared which rapidly developed into a wide variety of vegetables: peas, lettuce, kale, cucumbers, then beans, carrots, squash, beets, broccoli, and flowers like zinnia, marigolds and sunflowers. Since the summer program for this group began at the end of June they have tended their garden faithfully, scratching up the earth and weeding, weeding, weeding.

“Gardening is only part of the daily program for these children. Mornings are devoted to horse care — grooming and tacking — and then riding lessons.”

Now they are reaping the rewards of their labors – fat heads of lettuce, more than enough for the Windrush community, armloads of cucumbers and zucchini, peas, beans and all the other delicious veggies they planted. And, they are discovering, they ARE delicious. Wednesday is Salad Day, when the campers pick their lunch, wash it and assemble it on a huge platter. They learn that each vegetable falls into a specific category: leaves, stems, fruits, flowers, roots or seeds. Today's offerings, in addition to lettuces, include sliced beets, carrots, radishes, cucumber and zucchini sticks. Everyone has a bowl; everyone digs in, pours on their favorite dressing and chows down! “Hey, I used to hate vegetables,” admits Mike, chomping on a huge mouthful, “but these taste great!” Studying nutrition in school may be a little boring, but when you get to eat the “lesson,” it goes down easily.

And gardening is only part of the daily program for these children. Mornings are devoted to horse care – grooming and tacking - and then riding lessons. Most days the group also learns about driving a horse as Tina Fransioli drives Dusty or Bearito and everyone hops on and off the pony carriage.



Each day turns out to be a good “mixed salad” of fun, learning and new experiences.

Then comes lunch, after which the children do farm and garden activities like making animals and creatures out of vegetables, baking zucchini bread, or making coleslaw. The last activity of the day could be reading horse stories from the library of horse books, writing a poem or horse story or simply recording all of the day's adventures in their journal in words and pictures.

Each day turns out to be a good “mixed salad” of fun, learning and new experiences.

 You're invited

Special Olympics Tournament

Saturday, October 15, 2011

Windrush Farm

Free : Spectators are welcome!

www.windrushfarm.org

The 2nd Annual “Horsie Heisman” Goes To...

Contributed by Megan Piermarini

As it's that time of year again, no not for the World Series; it's the end of our summer programs! You know what that means don't you? It's time to crown the 2nd annual “Horsie Heisman” winner. The Heisman Trophy is a prestigious award given to a standout competitor who is selected for their athletic excellence. There were many contenders for this year's award, but two stood out among the crowd. Last year's winner, Cadance, showed us some impressive stuff once again, but this bobbing for apples champion, just fell short, leaving the field wide open for a new winner. Plus it's more fun this way...

It was a tight race this year, there was much debate, but a decision must be made! This year's contenders could be easy to overlook because of their small stature, but don't look past them just yet because they both have some of the biggest personalities in the herd. The two top contenders in this year's battle for the Heisman were Skittles and Traveler.

Skittles is our 12 year old Welsh/Arabian cross pony. This pony did it all. She was used for eight straight weeks of summer programs, for both the recreational and the youth at risk groups. Skittles wore some of the best costumes this summer being dressed as a superhero one week and believe it or not, a bag of Skittles the next! Now that shows diversity folks! One of her outstanding traits was that she taught the campers about stable management and horse care. She was led in and out of her paddock daily, she taught excellent lessons in the importance of grooming and bathing properly (because she's always dirty!), and don't forget about having to double latch that door (yes, every time)! These campers learned skill, discipline, and determination working with this pony and that was even before she taught them to ride!



This year's winner came dressed as a bag of skittles during one of her summer program weeks!

Traveler is our 20 year old pinto cross pony. Now, try to forget about all those great qualities we saw in Skittles for a second, because this pony worked his own magic this summer! Traveler was also used for eight

straight weeks of recreational summer programs and was a star every moment of it. Our instructors knew that once their riders were on his back, he was making sure they were taken care of. He reached new heights over these eight weeks, teaching many kids to canter and jump for the first time. In fact, he was seen doing this while impersonating rapper Travie McCoy, who recently had a hit single, “I want to be a billionaire,” sound familiar? Now if that isn't the making of a star, I'm not sure what is!

Both ponies had impressive statistics in and out of the ring, but there can only be one winner...

So who will it be Skittles or Traveler? After much debate, long nights, and many hours of overtime, we have finally come to a decision! It is because of the diverse lessons that Skittles gave that made her the recipient of Windrush Farm's 2nd Annual “Horsie Heisman Trophy”! Unfortunately, we don't have an actual trophy for her, but she gratefully accepts gifts in the form of apples and is usually hungry, well, just about all day long! Once again, congratulations to the 2011 “Horsie Heisman” winner, Skittles!

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Fall Webinar Series

Windrush Farm and Horses Helping People Massachusetts are proud to announce the Fall 2011 Webinar Series designed to share industry knowledge with professionals and volunteers.

All webinars are FREE thanks to Windrush Farm's sponsorship. The topics include: Sept 19: How to develop effective communication tools for each participant; October 17: Social Media for EEA&T Centers; and Nov 21: Introduction to Interactive Vaulting. Learn more! Take a peek and sign up if you're interested. And please share the link with friends you think may be interested.

Visit www.horseshelpingpeoplema.com/webinar or the Windrush blog: keyword webinar

A Magic-Like Union

Contributed by Janet Harrold

Beautiful things happen when children with autism and horses are brought together. This magic-like union is at the heart of "Horse Play," a program designed specifically for children on the autism spectrum who range in ages from 5-12.

This summer's session was well received by all who attended. Listen to what one of the volunteers had to say: "Lila improved a lot on speaking to the horse and became more confident giving verbal commands. I saw her fine motor skills improve as she worked with buckles and latches and becoming more comfortable grooming her horse."-Casey

Each child got his or her own horse or pony to care for. Because the horses have a natural way of calming the children's sensory systems, they often help their language skills to emerge.

The children were encouraged to explore, to process and enjoy the sights, sounds and textures found on the farm. This type of horse play was an unmounted approach, concentrating more on contextual factors and interaction between the children and their gentle partners. Fun and games were also high on the list, along with arts and crafts.

The parents were thrilled as a sense of camaraderie unraveled in the barn. One parent marveled as she exclaimed "Every morning I asked Jon, "Do you want to go to school or Windrush?" Jon loves school but he always said Windrush. He really enjoys his time here."-Mary

The assessment from Susan, the instructor, was that huge progress was made by each of the children as they developed unconventional ways of accomplishing motor tasks. She reminds us that we are all more capable than we think. Each child leaves feeling more confident than when they arrived.



Beautiful things happen when children with autism and horses are brought together.

Save the Date



Dance the Night Away on November 12

Our annual gala, **Dances with Horses**, will be Saturday, November 12 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge. Tickets are \$195 and can be purchased at www.windrushfarm.org.

This is an important night and generates 15% of our operating budget. Please join in the fun! (And support a good cause at the same time)

To preview auction items and check out photos, visit www.windrushfarm.org.

Mandy Hogan, Anne Gray, Janine Jacques, Paul Spiers and Carole and Ben Moore enjoying the Dances with Horses event.

Save the Date



Windrush Trophy Winners

Special Olympics Fall Tournament Finals

Saturday, October 15
Windrush Farm
Admission: Free



Come cheer on the competitors in the Special Olympics on Saturday, October 15.

Dances with Horses Gala

Saturday, November 12
Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge
www.windrushfarm.org

Windrush students will participate in an end of the year show to highlight their accomplishments. There will be awards, refreshments, and photo opportunities. We encourage family, friends, donors and neighbors to come cheer on the competitors.

It's called Dances with Horses for a reason! Join us this year.



Holiday Barn Party

Wednesday December 7
Windrush Farm Big Barn
Admission: Free

Stacey Weston

For being honored by the YWCA of Greater Lawrence at their 28th annual Tribute to Women. The luncheon honored women leaders for their contributions to both business and their local communities. Weston was honored for her work as principal scientist at Pfizer, Inc. in Andover and her community service work to not only Windrush Farm but also for lung cancer and COPD. Stacey, we're proud to have you as part of the Windrush family.

Burnstock Riding Club

For staffing a table to sell used tack at the ECTA tack show at the Topsfield Fair Grounds and raising more than \$1,000 for Windrush Farm. You ladies rule!

Dennie Davis

For continuing her reign as the Windrush Farm grounds beautifier extraordinaire. Thanks to her efforts, Windrush Farm always looks spruced up and clean.

Kristina Young

For donating her photography expertise to shoot some new photos for our upcoming website reveal. Kristina is a Topsfield based family photographer and her work is stunning. We're appreciative to her donation of her talent. kristinayoungphotography.com

Morgan Stanley and Deloitte

For selecting Windrush Farm as their service day location. Staff members from both companies generously gifted their time and labor to help build a horse shed and clean the grounds.

Board of Directors

Paul A. Spiers, Ph.D.	Michele Meyer
Candy Alsop	Cornelius J. Murray III
Christine Chudy	Benjamin Nutter
Nathaniel Coolidge	Brock Reeve
Paul Donohoe	Janet Schickling
Robert Gore	Richard Seinfeld
Charles J. Kittredge, Jr.	Deborah Shade
Julie Lake	Diane Thompson
Amy Mandragouras	

What Happened in 2011 Thanks to YOU?

Windrush Farm provided services to 1,487 people for a total of 13,494 hours.

This included 431 kids and adults with disabilities and “at risk” youth.

More than 440 volunteers donated close to 29,000 hours of work this year.

Our program staff included 6 certified instructors, 2 therapists and 25 horses.

Windrush Farm completed 586 industry enrichment hours.

Highlights:

Collaborated with the Bedford VA Medical Hospital for six sessions throughout the summer, helping more than 40 returning soldiers as part of our **Horses for Heroes Veteran** program.

Introduced a pilot program called “**Riders and Readers,**” geared to motivated our youth “at risk” clients to read books and then work with horses to reinforce the idea that learning and fun go hand-in-hand.

Hosted a day program for children with juvenile arthritis and their families from the Arthritis Foundation of Boston. The program included an educational piece for parents while the children participated in therapeutic riding, grooming, and educational equine-related games.

Stay tuned for more in our annual report due out this fall.



New Look Alert

The Windrush Farm Board of Directors recently went through the strategic planning process to roadmap the next 5 years at Windrush Farm.

As the first step of this plan, the organization has undergone a re-branding process. You will notice the transition this fall as our website and all materials start to take on the new look featuring our newly developed logo.

We look forward to the future and to continuing our mission to expand the personal, emotional and physical capabilities of all our clients, students and partners through our horses and environment.

 Do you tweet?

Follow us at www.twitter.com/windrush_farm

Mary Letwin: Going the Extra Mile for Windrush

There is a saying that the most successful people “go the extra mile,” putting in their best effort to get things done. Windrush is fortunate to have one such person in Mary Letwin, who contributes her time and talents to the farm by schooling horses, building jumps, and assisting with various events such as Groton House. Despite being a busy veterinarian, wife, and mother, Mary always finds the time to help out at Windrush.

A lifelong equestrienne, Mary began riding lessons at the age of 8 or 9, despite being born into a decidedly “non-horsey” family. “My older sister started riding and my mom couldn’t leave me at home alone,” Mary recalls. “My sister soon quit, but I got hooked, and I’ve been riding off and on ever since.” Mary joined the Windrush family more than 15 years ago, when she was in search of a new lesson barn. After trying several local stables, Mary remembers, “I got hooked on Windrush as soon as I started.”

Mary’s riding skills and ability to connect with the animals soon became invaluable to Windrush, and she was entrusted with

training several horses. One of her many success stories is Dusty, who arrived at Windrush “very unsure of how to canter more than 3 strides in a row.” Mary remembers, “Over time, he became skilled enough in dressage and over fences to event successfully at the Beginner Novice level, giving him more confidence and letting him see more of the world. Whenever spectators (or a dressage judge!) commented on what a “steady Eddy” Dusty was, I made sure to tell them that his real job is being a therapeutic riding horse, reshaping him into a Windrush ambassador.”

Mary’s current project horse is Chief, and she is working her magic with him as well. Mary explains that Chief is “a very skillful horse who was dealing with some anxieties that affected his use in lessons. With patience and reassurance, and consistent work that he knows how to do, he has become much more calm and confident again.” Mary says that she feels honored to have the privilege of schooling some of the Windrush horses, noting that, “Even the horses are capable of more than they think they are!”

In addition to schooling horses Mary has tackled innumerable other projects around the farm, including constructing jumps. “As part of helping the horses learn more and experience new things, my husband and I have made a lot of the jumps at Windrush,” Mary says. “This lets the horses jump things other than plain poles, such as flower boxes, planks, and panels, and they make the outdoor ring look very fancy!” She adds, “Other than that, I just try to stay out of the way of the folks that are doing the real work at Windrush, the tireless instructors, students, and barn workers.”

Mary always puts her best effort into all of these projects, and enjoys “going the extra mile” for Windrush. “The calm and caring atmosphere, the excellent horse care, and the overarching philosophy that everyone is capable of more than they think they are, make Windrush such a wonderful place to be.”

And besides, Mary adds, “Who needs other hobbies when you have horses in your life?”



Whenever spectators commented on what a “steady Eddy” Dusty was, I made sure to tell them that his real job is being a therapeutic riding horse, reshaping him into a Windrush ambassador.

Photo courtesy of HoofPix® Sport Horse Photography, LLC.

A Partnership Based on Trust

Contributed by Hayley Barrett

When veterans return from war, whether recently or years ago, the lingering effects of conflict can make the transition to civilian life challenging. Windrush Farm responds to this challenge by offering 'Horses for Heroes,' an Equine-Facilitated Learning program that serves more than 40 veterans from the V.A. Hospital in Bedford, MA.

The farm is a revitalizing place for these brave men and women. They experience new things in a secure, supportive environment.

Even socializing takes on fresh appeal. As veterans talk to each other and to the enthusiastic volunteers, stories of happier times emerge and tensions ease. After a picnic lunch, the participants are paired with horses.

"The 'Horses for Heroes' curriculum is progressive," explains instructor Susan Lutz. "The veterans begin by grooming the horses to foster a sense of connection. They become familiar with the horses' non-verbal cues." As a participant relaxes, their horse responds by relaxing too and they start to build a partnership based on trust.



"Whether a veteran will be grooming, leading, or riding, we educate them about how to prepare themselves and the horse for success," Susan states. "We encourage them to make a plan, to be conscious of how their body positioning, breathing, and attitude influence the horse." If while working, the H4H participant notes any signs of rising tension in themselves or the animal, they practice appropriately adjusting their behavior to restore the quiet connection. This confident self-awareness can tremendously benefit their relationships with other people as well.

'Horses for Heroes' is an empowering experience for all who participate. Committed program volunteer Dee Thompson expresses her deep admiration for the people she assists, saying, "I think it is Windrush Farm's honor to serve these men and women who have protected us. To think we are among veterans from WWII to the present, I find that just incredible." In addition to basic horsemanship, veterans learn about themselves and how much they can do, promoting a welcome sense of accomplishment. Their physical and psychological health is enhanced and they return home with happy memories of new-found friends, both human and equine.

Wish List

- Stamps
- Leads
- Equispot
- Freedom 45
- Extra small Troxel helmets
- Repel-x concentrate fly spray
- Stonedust (18-wheelers)
- Paint
- Sun loving perennials
- Grub hoe
- Electric pencil sharpener
- Hon 3 drawer file cabinet
- Gravel
- Keurig coffee cups
- Double ended snap hooks
- Heavy round elastics for stirrups
- Gift certificate to Costco, Staples, Modern Postcard, Middleton Feed Supply, and Lowes
- Paper towels and toilet paper (septic friendly)
- 10 gallons of Benjamin Moore exterior latex paint, white

Designed by Elena Maccarone, 617-877-3772

Calendar

September 6 – Fall Session Begins
October 10 – No Class
October 15 – Special Olympics Fall Tournament
October 18 – Estrogen Equestrian Trail Ride and Walk
November 1 – Fall Annual Fund Kick Off
November 11 – No Class
November 12 – Dances with Horses Gala
November 23-25 – No Class
December 7 – Holiday Barn Party
January 2 – Winter Session Begins



 *You're invited*

Dances with Horses Gala

November 12, 2011
Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge
Open bar, silent and live auction,
dinner and dancing!

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
No. Reading, MA
Permit No. 96

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