

STABLE NOTES

Heartland Horse Heroes

Spring, 2015

Our Mission

Heartland Horse Heroes mission is to provide and support equestrian activities for individuals who have mental, physical, emotional, social challenges, or learning disabling conditions.

Heartland Horse Heroes offers Therapeutic Riding lessons conducted by a PATH Certified Instructor at Sprouse's Corner Ranch in Buckingham, VA.

Heartland Horse Heroes is a non-profit 501 c-3 organization that is accredited by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH).

Magic Happens Here

Heartland Horse Heroes is a place where dreams build, smiles shine, challenges are faced, and magic happens. Horses sprinkle the world with the magic of their spirit, and that spirit helps young folks see the world from a new perspective. A perspective of understanding all things can be accomplished. We have several mottos at HHH, one is, "Just because you can't do everything, doesn't mean you can't do anything." Another is, "If you never give up, you always win!"



At HHH we have programs designed to help youngsters grow, learn, and become interested in life no matter their challenges—physical, cognitive, abuse, neglect or simply lost in today's fast paced world. Our therapeutic riding programs blend riding time which engages muscles, nerves, co-ordination and thoughts aided by the movements of the horse, and new thought process.

Devoted and talented volunteers and our program director guide participants along the horse assisted path to learning, growing and healing.

HHH is diverse in the programs we offer to heal, motivate and encourage. Our PATH Certified *therapeutic riding courses*, either in group sessions as with students from Buckingham County Schools, (other schools and districts are invited to participate, simply contact us.) or private one on one sessions, (available by request) create a new dimension in

developing motor skills, responsiveness, posture and self-awareness. Many times children discover they can indeed smile and sit tall on the back of an understanding horse.

We offer programs for at-risk youths, those youngsters who are too often lost in the world of self-doubt, mistrust, abuse or neglect. Sadly today our young folks must face too

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Heartland Horse Heroes

Magic Happens Here (continued from Page 1)

many challenges—challenges coming at them from all directions. Peer pressure today can often be much more intense than in years past, and for today's youth there is often no escaping it, as social media can follow them everywhere. Another very real challenge for young folks today is the shortage of role models, mentors and even intact families. These things matter. Our program, *Inner City Slickers*, based on the *Cowboy Code* and created by Michael McMeel, is a program designed to give kids the resources of self-confidence, personal pride, trust and respect—respect for others, and themselves. This program touches their spirits and hearts giving them a whole new perspective. We see the magic happen right before us.

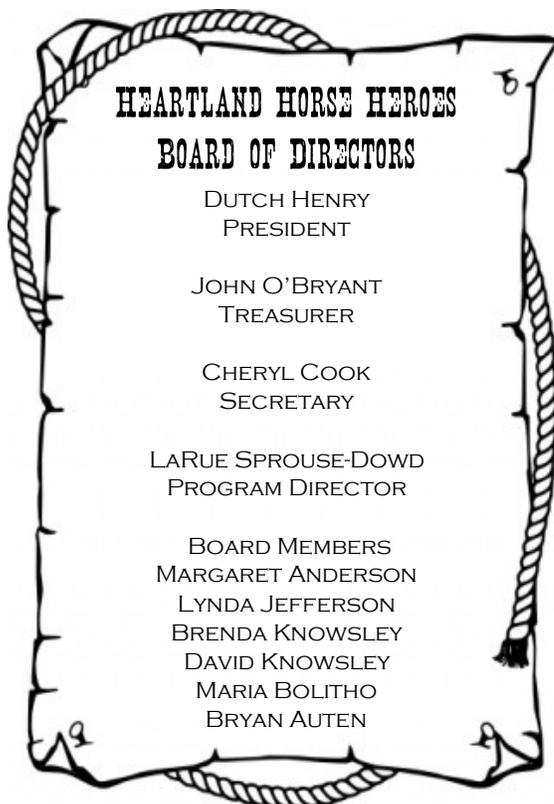
We'll be launching a new program for at-risk youths, in conjunction with Buckingham County Schools. Based on the novel, "We'll Have The Summer," by Dutch Henry, Martha Foster created a multidisciplinary classroom program designed to help teens improve life skills,

develop character and trust by interacting with and developing a relationship with horses. This will take place while simultaneously developing Language Arts

Skills in a purposeful way. (Other schools and districts are invited to participate, simply contact us.) This comprehensive and fun program promises to change lives by opening new worlds to youngsters and offering mentoring.

Heartland Horse Heroes is truly a place where wonderful, loving things happen. Visitors are wel-

come, just contact us. If you'd like to help us and our horses help, please contact us. Volunteers are always welcome—we have many opportunities for anyone who would like to feel the spirit of the horse and the changes that spirit creates join us. You need no equine experience, just a desire to change lives ... If you have a youngster who would benefit from a little magic, introduce us. Magic happens here.



Dates to Remember

Fridays March 6 - May 22, 2015

- Buckingham County School Spring Therapeutic Riding Program
- Friday 12:30 pm - 3:00 pm

April 25, 2015

- Inner City Slickers Event for At Risk kids at Sprouse's Corner Ranch

Meet Our Newest Board Members

Nothing happens at a non-profit without volunteers, and Heartland Horse Heroes has some wonderful people dedicated to making life changes for young folks. We'd like you to meet our newest board members...And yes, we have room and opportunities for you!

Brenda & David Knowsley - Both Brenda and David are military veterans. Just as they hold a profound honor and call to serve our nation, so are they driven to honor, serve and help youngsters. Both possess a powerful connection with youngsters. David has jumped right in and has immediately become our go to board member to fix and build things, and help with a lot of the behind the scenes duties, as well as working with our at-risk youth. Brenda has so powerful a connection with young folks she has assumed co-chair responsibilities for our *Inner City Slickers* program for at-risk youth, along with Maria Bolitho. This program has proven to create profound changes in young folk's lives. Brenda and David have been volunteers at HHH for over a year and have recently joined the board.



Maria Bolitho - Marie has also been part of the HHH team for several years. Maria enjoys a bond with youngsters, especially troubled kids, so magnificent they see her as a trusted confidant, mentor and dear friend. Her connection to youngsters is so deep participants of our *Inner City Slickers* program write her letters regularly, to which she responds immediately. A huge part of that program is follow-up, and Marie is a master of it. In addition to joining our board of



directors she has taken the reins of management for our *Inner City Slickers* program along with Brenda Knowsley.

Cheryl Cook - Recently we posted on our Facebook page we needed a replacement for our retiring secretary. Cheryl had long felt a tug to volunteer at HHH and be a part of changing young lives, so she followed our Facebook page in the hopes she might find a way. That way was paved when she saw our notice we were in need of a secretary. She responded the same day the notice went up, joined our board and stepped right in as our new secretary—bringing with her skills of meeting minutes recording, and much more. In addition to secretary she'll also serve as volunteer coordinator. She will also take over the duties of social media, and revamp our website and is considering creating a blog! She, as are all our board members, is dedicated to helping HHH grow.



Bryan Auten, DVM - Bryan, a local veterinarian and owner of Slate River Veterinary Clinic, has put on several programs for our participants, and the children all took to him. He has a sweet way with the children, caring, teaching and understanding. He decided he'd like to become more involved and joined our board bringing with him talents to help kids understand the horse, and themselves.



Thank You Melvin C. Draft Family Foundation

Thanks to the Melvin C Draft Family Foundation we were able to install underpinning and heat in our classroom! Bob Draft, as co trustee of and the foundation, so believes in what Heartland Horse Heroes stands for and accomplishes with, and for, the youngsters of our community that for the second year they've honored us with a grant. We thank you Bob and your family's foundation for your support and

belief in Heartland Horse Heroes. The kids thank you too!





Heartland Horse Heroes

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You can change lives - help us help - VOLUNTEER

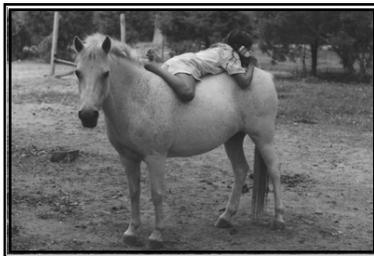
Surprise What A Pony!

Surprise will soon celebrate her 34th birthday and the beginning of her second decade as a Therapy Pony! More kids who are dealing with unkind life situations have learned to smile, sit straight and feel the glory of accomplishment while riding, leading or loving Surprise over the years than anyone could count.

Surprise has always loved being a friend to all, a teacher, healer, confidant and cheer leader. All horses have the gift of being human's best friend and even spiritual guide—some have an extra magical way of teaching us to hear them, learn from them, thrive with them. Surprise is one of those.

Half the children in Buckingham county VA have learned to ride with Surprise's gentle guidance, or taken her to shows, or have had children of their own who have mastered equine essentials from the thoughtful tutelage of Surprise. You see, long before Surprise began her second career as a Therapy Pony, she had been a teacher, a lesson horse.

She has always been an award winning show pony, and LaRue Dowd, our host at Sprouse's Corner Ranch, and program director for Heartland Horse Heroes, remembers showing her



own pony as a youth, and competing with Surprise. She remembers Surprise at VA State Fairs winning not only the blue ribbons for Gymkhana, but Hunter too. "Something few ponies do at the same show!" LaRue beams. Surprise has, over the years, introduced more children to the art, fun and excitement of showing, striving to

be the best they can, and winning ribbons, than perhaps any other pony in VA. She has the heart, desire and love to teach. And does with grace.

Surprise has no plans on retiring any time soon. She continues to give regular riding lessons for beginners. She is one of Heart-

land Horse Heroes primary Therapy Ponies. Often she'll be the first new participants learn from, her understanding, compassionate ways, and short stature, easily overcoming fears some children bring to therapy about horses. She has often gotten youngsters over their fears allowing them in time to move on to taller horses. She loves her job, her life, and her kids.

Surprise the teaching pony. Short in stature, towering in human connection, teaching skills, love and understanding. She is a Therapy Horse, in every sense of the word.