

# Happy Trails Riding Academy

A publication of Happy Trails Riding Academy, a nonprofit organization of therapeutic horsemanship for people who have cognitive, physical or emotional disabilities.

Winter 2016

## Christopher's Story

Christopher Webb started riding at Happy Trails several years ago after hearing amazing stories of past student experiences. Christopher and his family met with Lisa and immediately hit it off. This 6th grader from Valley Life Charter School now rides Thursday evenings in Lisa's vaulting class. He loves every minute of it -- especially his one on one time with Emma, his favorite horse. Christopher said, "Emma is kind, calm and great with kids!"



Vaulting Instructor Lisa Cotta-Meek & Christopher

Interactive vaulting is gymnastics on the back of a moving horse during which teamwork is critical as there is often two to five riders participating at one time. The appeal of a therapeutic vaulting class is that it provides an environment where the vaulter can progress at their own speed while still being part of a group working together.

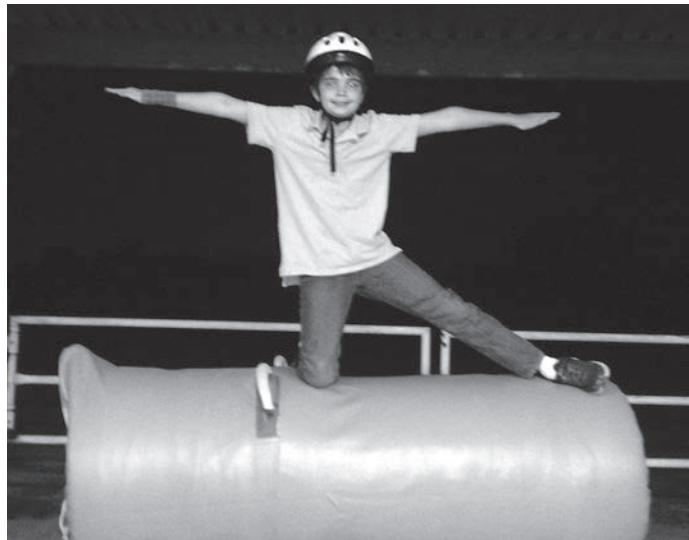
"Christopher gives great effort in every class and likes to be challenged, a dare-devil of sorts", says Lisa Cotta-Meek.

Outside of Happy Trails, you'll find Christopher playing video games with his good friends or studying graphing in his math class. He very much looks up to his big brother Jeffery and hopes to be a mechanical engineer someday.

When asked why he loves Happy Trails so much, Christopher shared that it's a great place to meet friends and just have fun. Christopher's mother Jennifer mentioned that Happy Trails has brought Christopher so much confidence and has given him a strong outlook on life. Happy Trails is a safe environment and has given Christopher so much to be proud of.

We are confident that Christopher will continue to excel in class at Happy Trails. As a local non-profit Happy Trails is grateful to be able to support and partner with wonderful people in our community such as the Webb family.

## Roundup



Christopher on vaulting barrel

## A Perfect Score

Happy Trails just underwent our accreditation site visit with two representatives from PATH, International. This takes place every five years and involved a tour of the property to check on safety standards, a review of our classes, an examination of all administrative paperwork, an interview with staff and volunteers – around 100 standards in total.



We are pleased to announce that Leslie, Lisa, the staff and volunteers of Happy Trails received 100% - we passed every standard! The two representatives of our national organization were extremely impressed with our facility and our program. They commented several times that the Happy Trails facility was immaculate and could serve as a model for other therapeutic riding centers.

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Class & Barn Manager  
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**Save the Date**

Night at the Races -  
Friday, May 19, 2017  
  
Round Up -  
Friday, October 6, 2017

# Letter from the Board of Directors of Happy Trails

Dear Happy Trails Family,

This is my favorite time of year, between Thanksgiving and Christmas, because it is a chance to look back on the year and remember all of the blessings in my life -- while enjoying a pumpkin spice latte or two! This has been another great year for Happy Trails. I am thankful for you and your continued generous involvement.

With your help, we supported a record number of riders, cared for the hardworking horses, maintained a beautiful facility, fixed an unexpectedly broken well, and put on a couple of successful fundraisers. Wow, it has been a busy year!

I am touched by the stories of our riders. It is amazing how Happy Trails is able to help people overcome obstacles in their lives, achieve the unexpected, and more fully enjoy life. This wouldn't be possible without kind side walkers, talented instructors, and many others in support roles.

I am amazed by how clean and well maintained the Happy Trails facility is every time I come visit. I know this is the direct result of the hard work from many volunteers. Thank you for doing little things like cleaning the barn, pulling weeds, and painting fences. Your efforts add up and have created an environment where miracles can happen.

Most recently, I had a blast at the Roundup fundraiser. There was delicious food, excellent entertainment, and exciting silent and live auctions; but most of all, it was good to see the arena packed full of people! Thank you too, for coming to our events and supporting Happy Trails with a variety of donations.

I am also thankful for the random things you do to keep Happy Trails going. Unexpected needs pop up and you find ways to help us get through. This was exemplified in fixing our broken well. Not even a year after adding a well to secure our water position, the older well broke beyond repair. Thank you for the generous and fast acting donations, which allowed us to keep operating without any hiccups.

It is an honor to serve as a Board Member for Happy Trails. Your commitment encourages me to give my best and makes me proud to represent Happy Trails in the community.

I look forward to working alongside you again this upcoming year! Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,  
Laura Morrelli



**Happy Trails**  
**Non-Profit of the Year**  
**Tulare Kings**  
**Hispanic Chamber**  
**of Commerce!**

# A Season for Giving

Happy Trails has started its 2017 Adopt-A-Thon campaign!

As you make your plans this holiday season, please keep Happy Trails in mind. Consider an alternative gift by making a contribution to help others through our Adopt-a-Thon program. Every single donation goes directly toward offering therapeutic horsemanship lessons to children and adults with disabilities.

There are many different levels of giving in the Adopt-A-Thon campaign, providing you the option to choose the aspect of our program that you would most like to support:



Adopt-a-Rider:  
\$2,500



Adopt-a-Horse:  
\$1,000



Adopt-a-Class:  
\$500



Adopt-a-Ride:  
\$250



Adopt-a-Smile:  
\$25

We are thankful for our many friends who make our mission their own.

## Meet Nicole and Lozen!



Nicole with Thumper

Hello! My name is Nicole Payne and I am Happy Trails' most recent riding instructor. I grew up in Arizona and enjoyed learning about and growing with horses in 4-H from the time my family got our first horse in elementary school until I graduated high school. After nearly a decade in the program, I knew I wanted to continue working with horses and also serving the community. I studied equine science and psychology at Colorado State University and graduated with a degree in each field in May of 2015. A year later I took my certification test with PATH International and became a registered therapeutic riding instructor. I am very excited by the opportunity to be living in a new place, doing the job I've spent the past several years preparing for, and I am looking forward to learning and growing with Happy Trails!



Lozen Hendrix

Hi! My name is Lozen Hendrix and I am Happy Trails' new class/barn manager. I recently moved from central Oregon. I enjoy hiking, drawing and am known as the chicken whisperer in my family. Horses have been a huge part of my life since I was six years old. I'm thankful and excited to be at Happy Trails to help our riders reach for a better tomorrow.



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You can now follow Happy Trails on Twitter & Instagram @ HTRidingAcademy



## That's a lot of fence!

Happy Trails' volunteers  
painted more than 2.5 miles  
of fence in 2016!



Tulare FFA Members



Kings United Way



Sleep Train Employees



Farmersville Key Club



Church of Latter Day Saints