

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.

Fall 2017

Meet Norbie

My name is Norbie. In 2004, my vehicle was struck by a rocket propelled grenade in Baqubah, Iraq. During the attack, I lost my arm, sustained a brain injury, lung damage and a liver laceration. The extent of my injuries was so severe that I had to be placed in a medically induced coma for two months. I would have to relearn



Norbie Lara & Rootin' Tootin'
Ridge D'Lite

to walk again, talk again and learn to do things with one arm, that most people take for granted. It was a life changing experience to say the least. The physical recovery is something that I have seemed to master. I can pretty much do anything that anyone else can do with my one arm. I golf, play softball, volleyball and am learning to skydive amongst many other things. What I still struggle with to this day, is Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS). It is estimated that there are over 400,000 men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, struggling with PTS. I am one of those individuals. Because I know what it's like to struggle with PTS, I helped found a charity called A Combat Veteran's

Hope. We provide many opportunities for engagement and education for Combat Veterans and their families. Our mission is to empower Combat Veterans through engagement with each other and their local community. We provide as many venues as possible in which interaction is encouraged and engagement is fostered. We want our Warfighters to understand that PTS simply defined, is a very normal reaction to an abnormal situation. With the right support, those who have PTS can live a pretty normal life. There are resources nationwide and here in our community that can assist them and their family. Of course, we had to enlist the aid of our community here in the valley but also wanted to find organizations that were willing to help our veterans through unique programs. Thankfully, we came across Happy Trails. Because of past experiences with well-intentioned organizations, our leadership team doesn't like to send those we serve through any type of

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Roundup

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SAVE THE DATE

Happy Trails "Round Up"

Friday, October 6 at 6pm

To Reserve Your Tickets or

Table Please Call (559) 688-8685



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Message from the Board

Dear Friends of Happy Trails,

It has been an exciting summer!

First, Night at the Races was a huge success! We fed 520 people and raised \$124,000 for Happy Trails. Thank you to all of our sponsors, donors, contributors (the race prizes were amazing!), and attendees.

Then, Happy Trails' Summer Camp hosted 25 campers, who had fun learning about animals, nature, and music. I especially want to thank the presenting sponsor -Bank of the Sierra- and all of the Happy Trails friends who donated and made the event possible.

I am excited to welcome two new board members: Elizabeth Jacques and Cindy Brown. Elizabeth is a financial advisor for Morgan Stanley with an extensive equine background, including volunteering at Happy Trails, and is a recent graduate of Leadership Visalia. Cindy has been an Agriculture Education teacher in Porterville for over 35 years, and brings a strong Happy Trails presence to S/E Tulare County. I look forward to working with both of them!

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for Round Up on Friday, October 6, 2017 in the Sence Pavilion at Happy Trails. This is a fun BBQ dinner which showcases our facility, horses and riders. I would love your involvement! For the first time ever, sponsorship information has been included in the newsletter (see enclosed flyer). To take part, please call the office at (559) 688-8685.

Sincerely,
Dr. Neal Spiro, President of the Board



Lozen Hendrix, Amy Bane & Darnell Franks sporting their derby hats



V-Town Derby Dames & Riders Lane, M.E. & Jenny

Meet Norbie

programs unless our leadership goes to it first. Even though I was very afraid of horses, I volunteered. I was introduced to Ridge and after about the second or third therapy session, began to see why Happy Trails does what it does. Every week I looked forward to spending time with Ridge doing the groundwork and just focusing on him. Ridge is quite the character, and I have formed a unique bond with him. I think one of

my favorite things to do is spend time with him in the round pen, just he and I. With Program Director Lisa's guidance, I have not only overcome my fear of horses, but even did what I said I would never do again, ride a horse. We are so thankful that Happy Trails is here to help our Combat Veterans. In a few weeks, I'll have completed the session. Something tells me I'll be coming back.

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Camp Happy Trails

This summer we decided to shake things up from our regular riding session and indulge our students and volunteers (and staff!) in a series of unmounted equine activities in the form of camps. Each week had a unique theme which included games, snacks, a take-home craft, and a whole lot of learning! Who knew there was so much to know about horses that didn't involve riding? From their role in Native American culture to their jobs as a mail service and pack animals in the mountains, and from harvest season to heartbeats to heart-shaped markings, horses are complex creatures that add a lot to our lives!

We had the pleasure of hosting a number of industry experts throughout our camp (two-legged and four-legged alike), and, even though we weren't riding, members of the Happy Trails herd joined us at times for demonstrations and activities. The summer fun culminated in a barbecue, games, an art show, a final Pony Express delivery, singing, S'mores, and a slideshow of all the good times we shared as a group. We are already looking forward to what next year's camps will bring!



Horse mask painting during Native American Week



Settlers means of travel during History Week

As with all the programs and events we offer, we have a lot of people to thank for the time and resources they shared to make this endeavor a success: IDEA Printing & Graphics, Christina Gonzalez, Golden West FFA members, Eric Anderson, Logan Henderson, Sequoia Garden Club, Patricia Evans, Kim Givich, Lou Womack, Ruth Heuer, Steve Gardner, Ron Jefferson, and Experience AVL.



Herb tasting with Sequoia Garden Club during Nature Week

Farewell to Frankie

When I think of Frankie **tolerance, patience and kindness** are words that come to mind. She, like all the other horses that have passed through our barn and are still in our barn, gave so much to our riders it is difficult to capture in just a few sentences.

She was so **tolerant** with the riders that have very busy bodies and who were unable to express themselves with words.

Her **patience** was tested when riders struggled making a decision or had difficulty finding their words, she would stand and wait while the rider accomplished the task at hand.

The riders loved her and she would show them **kindness** in return by moving over to help them keep their seat, greeting them before they got on with a kiss and reach back to kiss them goodbye.

She will be missed not only by me but also for the riders who were fortunate to ride her.

-Klara Bergtholdt-





*An investment from your heart...
Riding builds strong wills*

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Phase I Complete

Happy Trails with the assistance of the community has invested in excess of a million dollars, which includes funds expended, value of donated items, and labor, in the purchase and development of our permanent facility. With the help of Visalia Rotary Community Foundation, County Center Rotary and local contributors Phase I of our hay/storage barn and has been completed. Phase I included infrastructure, a new drainage system including a

ponding basin and a 25' x 100' pole barn. The barn was designed for the future growth of our program and the height allows for over 50 tons of hay storage. Phase II will include concrete in 3 bays, concrete curbing, siding and a roll up door for a storage bay.



Thank you to

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for redesigning our website.

Check it out at

WeAreHappyTrails.com