

# 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.

## Meet Colleen....

Any encounter with Happy Trails rider, Colleen Soares, will instantly brighten your day. Born with cerebral palsy, this delightful 33-year old is a wonderful addition to Happy Trails. Colleen was born with cerebral palsy. From infancy to three years of age she received services at the UCP agency in Hanford. She started to volunteer there in 2015 and was hired in 2016. She works Monday through Thursday keeping the office clean for their clients and families.

Colleen was introduced to horseback riding as a member of Wayfinders at Fresno State University. This two-year program assists students in transitioning to independent living. Wayfinders students also enjoy a variety of activities during their free time. They are given the opportunity to choose which ones they would like to participate in and are supported and encouraged to try new experiences.

To say Colleen found her perfect activity would be an understatement. She began with volunteering in the barn at Tally Ho Horse Park in Clovis. It was there as a young adult, she took her first ride ever and instantly fell in love. It wasn't long before she was riding independently off the lead rope. Within two years she was encouraged to try jumping. This girl has no fear!

Unfortunately, Saturday lessons were discontinued and transportation issues prevented her from taking the leap to the next level. It was eight years before Colleen was able to ride again. A conversation with her Central Valley Regional Center counselor prompted her to contact Happy Trails in 2021. By February 2022 she was back in the saddle. "I was surprised at how much I still remembered. Just like riding a bike, I guess you don't forget," Colleen was quick to report.

Colleen is looking forward to the start of Fall Session when she will be included in a group therapeutic riding class.

Fall 2022

# Roundup



Colleen & Whiskey

"I'm looking forward to a different class where I can meet other people," she tells us. "Happy Trails is a very positive place for me. Even if I have a bad day, I know I can leave here with a smile!"

## 2022 Round Up

Friday, October 7th at 6pm

To Reserve Your Tickets or Donate a Silent Auction Item Please Call (559) 688-8685

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# Dear Friends,

As we transition into the Fall things are looking a little more "normal" around here. Our riders will be back to a 12-week session. We continue to monitor all safety protocols on and off of the horse. Our riders will have a chance to show off all they have learned at our Annual Horse Show in November.

We have had lots of new additions to our Happy Trails family. Sarah, our Certified Instructor, welcomed her son Owen Alexander last August and Natalie, our Barn/Class Manager, welcomed her daughter Lilah Jane in July. We also have new therapy horses in our barn. You can read about them on the next page.

A big shout out to Greg Hamstra of Hamstra Dairy, for donating 50 tons of hay to feed our horses for the next year. Since 2017 Greg has provided the alfalfa hay for our herd. His dedication to our program is so appreciated.

Happy Trails is honored to host for the second year the United Way of Tulare County Community Breakfast. As a United Way affiliate for over 20 years our program is a shining example of their work in our community. Not only have they provided financial support but have guided our organization through their Standards of Excellence to make us a stronger non-profit.

Our annual Round Up will be held on our property on October 7th. It's a fun night to visit our one of a kind facility, fellowship with friends and not only raise funds for our program but become an advocate for our mission. Look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you for your continued support.

*Leslie Gardner*

Executive Director

## Camp Happy Trails

It was another successful year for Camp Happy Trails. Anyone eligible for Therapeutic Horsemanship is welcome to learn, explore and make new friends! In June over 30 participants joined us for a week of different theme activities that included a horse element. Every day they were treated to a learning experience, physical activity, snack and take-home craft. This year's theme days were Valley Nature Day, Bring-a-Horse-to-Work Day, Healthy as a Horse Day, Down on the Farm Day and the ever-popular Water Day.



# Don't Miss the Happy Trails Round Up

Join us for the Annual **Round Up** fundraiser **Friday, October 7, 2022, 6:00 pm** at our facility. It is a fun filled night to enjoy good food and great company all while benefiting Happy Trails. Event festivities will include a social in the horse barn with featured Happy Trails riders, a silent auction, a fabulous dinner catered by Sue Sa, a blind wine pull and barn dance with music by The Josh Day Band.



Ways to get involved in this year's Round Up:

1. **Become a sponsor – sponsorship levels start at \$500**
2. **Attend the event – tickets available for \$65 each/\$520 table of 8**
3. **Buy a ticket – to win \$5000 CASH**



## Welcome to the Barn

We are excited to introduce TWO new faces that you may see in classes this fall!



**Lady** an Appaloosa mare

Lady was born in 2001 and joins the herd after a life of pleasure riding with her previous owner. She is very interested in the goings on of the barn, vocalizing to her neighbors and two-legged coworkers as they move about. Her social attitude and medium stature make her one approachable gal. As our only appaloosa, Lady brings some unique color to the herd. Check out her one-of-a-kind mane and coat color!



**Wanda** a Chestnut Quarter Horse mare

Wanda comes to us after an active career on a feed lot, mooing cattle around alongside bustling teams of cowboys and cowgirls. She is tall and sturdy, and her coat gleams like a new penny in the sun. Wanda was born in 2002 and is learning to live life at a slower pace!

There are THREE horses in the barn who are here on trial. What does it mean for a horse to be "on trial"? Think of them as being here for an extended job interview! Horses who are on trial do not yet belong to us, but may work into certain services once they have been exposed to some of the unique responsibilities they'll have as a Happy Trails horse. Staff spends dedicated time with each horse outside of classes to learn about their individual personalities and to determine if they are an appropriate fit for us. Stay tuned....



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## Equine Services for Heroes



**Joseph Katz**, US Army, 1989-1992 Gulf War • **Leon Gendron**, US Army, 1972-1976 Vietnam War  
**Shemijah King**, US Navy, 2014-2018 Operation Enduring Freedom • **Edison May**, US Army, 1964-1966 Vietnam War  
**Andre Jennings**, US Navy, 2003-2017 Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Valient Shield  
**Samantha Davis**, US Navy, 2010-2014 • **Ralph "Grandpa" Slayton**, (not pictured), US Army Korean War

For more information about the Equine Services for Heroes program, please call Happy Trails at (559) 688-8685.