



# SHEPARD MEADOWS EQUESTRIAN CENTER, INC. SPRING / SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Volume IV, Issue 6 – July 2021

## PROGRAM UPDATE

Shepard Meadows' spring session was the busiest session to date, and it was so wonderful to see everyone at the farm. Thank you to all our participants and their families for a great eight weeks. The staff at SMEC is so appreciative of everyone's understanding and support as we have grown our programs through a pandemic.

This spring/summer we have partnered with the **Bristol Senior Center** and the **Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services** for programming. It truly shows how special SMEC is that individuals of all ages can have a great time at the farm. We have programming already scheduled with the Parks and Recreation Department through the end of the year. We have had a waitlist for every session so far and are looking forward to seeing many new faces.

The second summer session begins August 2<sup>nd</sup> and will run for five weeks, please reach out to Emily with any questions at [program@shepardmeadows.org](mailto:program@shepardmeadows.org).



*Bristol Parks & Recreation Program*



*Bristol Senior Center Program*

## BY THE NUMBERS, IT'S A RECORD-SETTING YEAR!

During the first half of 2021 we have provided over 1,000 program sessions. This is a record for the Center and includes all of our program areas: Therapeutic Rides, Community Rides, Veterans Program, Equine-Assisted Learning, Youth Development, and Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy.





## BRISTOL YOUTH COMMISSION RECOGNIZES OUR VERY OWN YARELIS VEGA

On Wednesday, May 12th, our youth volunteer received an *Individual Youth Award* for demonstrating outstanding volunteer efforts to help others through the use of her own thoughtfulness, energy, special talents, skills and personal abilities.

Nominated by Sister Ann, our Volunteer Coordinator, Yarelis received her award from Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu in a ceremony at Muzzy Field. Congratulations Yarelis!

## VOLUNTEER NEWS

We have had a very busy spring and summer of volunteer activity here at Shepard Meadows! We are so grateful to so many generous and talented people.

The week of April 19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated and thanked our many current volunteers (about 40+) with a fun *Volunteer Appreciation Week*. Also in April, we reinitiated monthly group orientations and trainings for new volunteers, and these have been very well attended. The first Monday of every month is general orientation required of any new volunteer. From that point on, our trainings are progressive for those interested in volunteering in our many and varied programs. For those with horse experience, the second Monday of every month is dedicated to an initial side walker/horse leader evaluation, and for those who are approved after that, the third Monday is dedicated to training for grooming and tacking horses for program participation. Groups are limited to ten each due to our COVID guidelines, and every month we have had ten participants of all ages for this general orientation!

## HELP US BUILD OUR NEW BARN AND EQUINE LEARNING CENTER

In late spring, we announced our plan to build a new barn and learning center. After 16 years, we have outgrown our “Little Red Barn.” The building campaign has begun and includes several naming opportunities. Brochures are available at the Farmhouse and will be emailed and mailed out shortly.

We look forward to a dedicated building with adjacent learning center and 100 feet of aisle space. Stay tuned!



## FUN FACT

Horses gallop at an average of 27 MPH. The fastest horse sprint speed ever recorded is 55 MPH.

## HELPING HANDS



We had a couple workdays that have brought new people to the farm: **Boy Scout Troop 23** came on May 1<sup>st</sup> for a Spring Clean-up that was awesome! About 12 boys came with their scout leaders and some parents to pick up fallen branches and rocks from all over the land. They even framed out some new flower gardens for planting around the arena.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, we had a great group from **Thomaston Savings Bank** for a *United Way Day of Caring*. This group came out ready with chain saws, rakes and shovels and spent a day working hard at trimming, cutting back, and putting down new wood chips, etc. thus widening and spiffing up our Sensory Trail.

Another group from **Bouvier Insurance** so generously came out on June 18<sup>th</sup> and scraped/painted barn and fence areas, as well as built a new fence between two horse paddocks. It is amazing how so much gets done when groups get together and dedicate their efforts to helping us!



*Thomaston Savings Bank on the United Way Day of Caring*

The farm looks so beautiful now and is kept up with the many helping hands from our many smaller groups of volunteers. As the summer wears on, we will have some high school workdays to continue these many projects. We are so grateful to our many volunteers of all ages! If you work for a company that would like to offer help for a community service day, please get in touch with Sister Ann, our volunteer coordinator at [volunteer@shepardmeadows.org](mailto:volunteer@shepardmeadows.org).

## HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A HORSE THAT LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE SMILING OR LAUGHING?

“Flehmen” is the term used to describe the behavior in which a horse extends their neck, raises their head, and inhales as they roll their upper lip back, showing their front teeth. The flehmen response acts in combination with the vomeronasal organ near the palate to strengthen smells. Horses will use this response to amplify smells from urine or manure. A few other common reasons for this response are listed below:

1. If a horse enters a new paddock or stall where other horses have lived.
2. Geldings or stallions will use this behavior when they are around mares.
3. Mares will show a peak in this behavior after giving birth to smell the newborn foal.
4. If a horse eats a weed, takes medicine, or digests something that does not taste very good.
5. Sometimes a sign of a belly ache.



*Tonka Demonstrating*

# TICKETS ARE ON SALE FOR OUR ANNUAL FARMYARD PARTY – ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> FROM 4 TO 8 PM

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL

## FARMYARD PARTY

**SHEPARD MEADOWS**  
EQUESTRIAN CENTER, INC.  
WITH HORSES, MAKING FORWARD STRIDES

To Benefit our Horses, Programs and Facilities.

**IMPACT**  
The horses help me feel better when I am having a rough day. As I brush and groom them, they help me feel calm, less agitated and angry. One thing that I have learned is that horses are great companions and always there for you. Kentucky and Little Moon are the funniest horses there.  
—Maddie

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR EVENT SPONSOR:



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR RIBBON SPONSORS:



Go to Eventbrite (<https://smec-farmyard-party.eventbrite.com/>) or make check payable to SHEPARD MEADOWS and mail to: SMEC, 733 Hill Street, Bristol, CT 06010, please include guest names. For additional information: email [info@shepardmeadows.org](mailto:info@shepardmeadows.org) or call us at 860-314-0007.

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR GRANTORS!

Thank you to the Individuals, Foundations and Businesses that support us – totaling \$60,000 YTD 2021!

- Bristol Rotary Club – Summer Intern
- Canton-Avon Rotary Club – Scholarship
- Thomaston Savings Bank – Youth Development
- Main Street Community Foundation – COVID-19 Capacity Building Grant
- The Barnes Group – Operations
- City of Bristol, CDBG – Afterschool Scholarship – West School
- PATH, Intl. – Individual Scholarship
- CT Enrichment – Summer Programs with Bristol Board of Education – Scholarship
- Travelers Birdies for Charity Program – Operations



Shepard Meadows is to be a highlighted guest at the Farmington Polo Club, on Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. It just so happens to be (Ford) Bronco night. Gates open at 3 PM with the match beginning at 5 PM and running for about 2.5 hours. Enjoy a tailgate party while watching the match and come by our tent to visit. Bring family and friends for a fun Saturday afternoon. We can't wait to hear those galloping hooves and participate in the halftime divot stepping!

## SPONSOR A HORSE

Did you know that for only \$2,500, you, you and your friends, or your company can sponsor one of our horses (or Molly & Mabel, our goats, two for the price of one). The sponsorship lasts one calendar year and helps offset the cost of routine medical care, farrier services, and dental. Over the past few months both Moon and Lola have been sponsored. Available now are Kentucky, George and Moses. Contact us at [info@shepardmeadows.org](mailto:info@shepardmeadows.org) for more information!

