



SHEPARD MEADOWS THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER SPRING / SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Volume II, Issue 4 – August 2020



JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

In lieu of a formal gala this year we are holding a Farmyard Party here at the Farm on September 12, 3 to 7pm. As of the writing of this Newsletter, we are nearly SOLD OUT! Following the Governor’s order, we have capped the event at 100. If there is a change, we will notify all of our friends via email and social media. You can also contact us at the farm to be placed on a waiting list, email info@shepardmeadows.org! Special thanks to the OakBridge Group, an Ameriprise Private Wealth Advisory Practice, for sponsoring the event!

DID YOU KNOW? – HOW HORSES SLEEP

Horses can sleep laying down and standing up! Horses have a special internal system of ligaments and tendons called the *stay apparatus*. This system allows the horse to lock their major joints in their leg. This position lets their muscles relax to doze off without falling down. Typically, when horses are sleeping while standing up, they will distribute their weight to three of their limbs so they can rest a hind limb.

In the wild, horses are vulnerable to predators while laying down. To protect themselves they doze off throughout the day while standing. When they need a deep, REM sleep they will lay down for short intervals each day. Even then, they often have another horse standing nearby. The average total sleep for a horse is only 3 hours every 24 hours.

NEW FRONTLINE WORKER PROGRAM

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Shepard Meadows developed a program for Frontline Workers that was funded by Torrington Savings Foundation. The program is designed for individuals to experience the tranquility of the farm while working with a horse to be mindful.

The program is an opportunity for our first responders and front-line workers to practice some important self-care. There is no cost to participants, and at the time of this writing there are still funds available. Email program@shepardmeadows.org for more information!



SUMMER FAMILY FUN

In late summer we held our first picnic night. Families and extended families joined us on Saturday, August 1st for a fun summer evening. The staff set out horse blankets in the courtyard (socially distant), then families came with picnic baskets and ate dinner with the herd. It was a truly magical evening, especially watching the children visit the animals and roam freely about the farm.



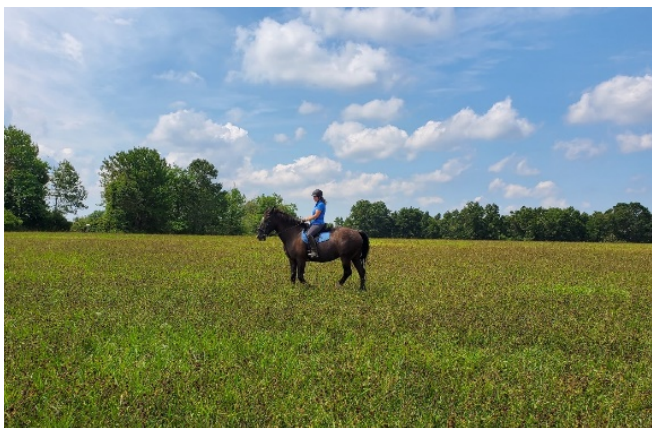
WELCOME LILY – NEW STAFF MEMBER

Lily Bensko joined us this summer as a PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor and Equine Specialist. A recent graduate of Equine Studies from the University of New Hampshire she jumped right in once program got underway. We are so happy to have her with us and her riders adore her. She is also involved in every aspect of our equine care including feeding, exercise and yes, mucking stalls.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

This year marked the second year that we participated in the Travelers Birdies for Charity Program. Just shy of \$10,000 with the 15% match we reached our goal.

These funds become available to us in the fall when we about to enter the winter season and need it most. We are beyond grateful to all our friends who generously donated in our name.



Here's Lily exercising Bart!



Welcome Tess!

SAY HELLO TO TESS, THE LATEST ADDITION TO OUR HERD!

This spring we welcomed Tess into the herd. She is a well-trained 17-year-old American Quarter Horse Chestnut Mare who has settled right into program. A favorite of our adult beginner riders, she relishes her central location on the farm. Her private house and paddock area enable her to watch all the comings and goings, and she nickers at all who pass.

BOARD OF DIRECTOR NEWS

(Patricia) Pearl O'Rourke, M.D. joined the board of Shepard Meadows this summer. Pearl grew up in Bristol, attended Bristol Eastern High School before going to college and Harvard Medical School. She worked as a pediatric intensive care doctor in Boston and Seattle until 1998 at which time she accepted a position at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in health policy. In 2001, she returned to Partners Health Care in Boston as the director of the legal ethical oversight of research involving human participants. She recently retired from Partners and is splitting her time between Boston and Plymouth, CT. She comes to the board with a long-held interest in horses and experience in pediatrics, healthcare, and research. Pearl is also a dedicated volunteer with morning barn chores and takes weekly riding lessons with us. Photo is Pearl riding Tess.



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR GRANTORS!

Shepard Meadows continues to actively seek donations and grants to support our horses, programs, and operations. This spring and summer we received the following from our benefactors:

- Main Street Community Foundation, the Bristol Brass General Grant Fund and the Terry and Marguerite Fletcher Family Fund - \$5,000 to support the care of our therapy horses
- Bristol Rotary Club - \$1,000 for summer programs
- Torrington Savings Foundation - \$1,250 for Frontline Worker Program
- West End Association - \$2,500 towards our Veterans Program
- Barnes Group Foundation - \$2,500 for operational support
- Allied World - \$1,500 matching grant
- American Legion and American Legion Post 72, Southington - \$1,000 toward Moses Sponsorship



FUN FACT!

Horse Eyes contain cones, or cells that sense color. Humans have three types of cones, which sense red, yellow-green, and blue light. Horses have only two types of cones and lack red cones. They see color, but in a more muted palette than we do. Featured is Bart's left eye.



VOLUNTEER UPDATE

New volunteer applications seem to keep coming in! As we are calling back many of our seasoned volunteers, we now have several new volunteers as well. We have started having Saturday workdays with high school students who by now were wanting to get out of their houses. Some of the work projects have included fence and bench painting, rock picking, manure clean up, raking lawns and of course, barn chores and some trainings. All our trainings at this point are on an individual and very small group basis, but our hope is that this gives Sister Ann, our relatively new Volunteer Coordinator, a chance to meet everyone and give individualized training in grooming, tacking, horse leading and side-walking. Email her at volunteer@shepardmeadows.org

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This spring and summer have been challenging on so many levels. While I certainly do not want to go backwards, but rather focus on the trail ahead, I do need to acknowledge that the toll of closure and the limits placed on our programs over the past few months has stretched us thin. Unlike many other businesses, we could not simply close our doors, we have a dozen precious animals to care for. Our expenses remain nearly constant, even without program running.

Through all this, we continue to know that the work that we do is critically important, and we know that the more people we can reach, the better! Our programs are open to everyone in the community, with or without special needs.

Horses give us far more than simply a ride on their backs. Come join us for a session of unmounted horsemanship and feel it for yourself. Horses change lives and we count our blessings every day that we have the privilege of working at Shepard Meadows, together helping to provide our services to you.

Be well,
Shelly

WAYS TO HELP US

Individuals, families, groups, and businesses can help us in so many ways. Contact the Executive Director directly for additional information: at shelly@shepardmeadows.org call the farm at 860-314-0007 x10, or visit shepardmeadows.org/donate.

- **Volunteer** – We operate with a large volunteer team, whether you are a skilled carpenter or electrician, know how to operate heavy equipment, paint fences, or clean paddocks, you can volunteer an hour a week, or several, it's up to you!
- Use **Amazon Smile** instead of ordering directly from Amazon. Just set Shepard Meadows as your charity and we receive .05% on all eligible purchases. It does add up if a crowd orders that way.
- **Sponsor a Horse** – Individuals or groups can sponsor a member of our herd. The annual donation of \$2,500 helps off-set feed, medical care, farrier and dental. Acknowledgements are posted on our website. Indy and Moses are sponsored for 2020, but you have several others to choose from.
- **Financial Aid** – Contribute to our restricted financial aid fund to help support a participant who cannot afford to participate in our programs. You can direct the funds as well. We have had aid sponsorships by location of residence, disability focus, and program type.
- **Wish List** – Tools, equipment, technology, tack, even a good vacuum cleaner all come in handy here at the farm. Wish list information is listed on our website.
- **Donations** are ALWAYS welcome! You can direct your funds specifically to what is important to you, for example equine support, operations, facilities, or a specific program such as veterans or youth-at-risk. You name it, we can make it happen. Donations can be one-time or monthly of any amount.